

Witham Friary Parish Council Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 17 October 2019, 7.30pm

Present: Hugo Brooke (Chairman) (**HB**), John Knowles (**JK**), Marcus Powell (**MP**)
Maddy Ferrari (**MF**), Members of the public, Michael Gay (Ward Councillor)

Clerk: Rachel Nield (**RN**)

19/43 Apologies:

Apologies were received from Will Sheppard (Vice Chairman) (**WS**) work commitment, Colin Horstmann (**CH**) holiday, Fred Nicholls (**FN**)

19/44 Disclosures of Interest

None.

19/45 Minutes of the Last Meeting

MF – for clarity, Playpatch and the Recreation Ground are separate items.

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true and accurate record.

Public Access

- Dr Andrea Dexter introduced herself as the candidate for the Green Party. She is attending parish council meetings in the area to learn what the local issues are. She also advised that there would be a meeting in Wanstrow on 22 October with a Frome based company who are selling providing discounted solar panels.
- Cllr Gay reported as follows:
 - ◇ Mendip District Council accounts will be signed off at the end of the month. Members of the Audit Committee will be questioning both Capita and Mendip regarding the delays.
 - ◇ TrueSpeed is one of the alternative providers who are speaking to various parishes and may be the speediest option. **CH** added that everyone in Witham Friary parish has fibre broadband now if they want it. He noted that Openreach have been very cooperative in achieving this. **CH** was thanked for all his efforts.
 - ◇ Mendip District Council were able to secure additional funding in excess of £300k from the Public Works Loan Body.
 - ◇ The Mendip District Council Policy Scrutiny Board are examining a 30 page document from the Somerset Climate Board which has set out an intention to make Somerset carbon neutral by 2030. Cllr Gay will share information once it is available.
 - ◇ Mendip tree-cover is below the national average but Cllr Gay was pleased to report that Postlebury rates above the national average.
 - ◇ Support is available for residents living near railways who are affected by additional disturbance that raises noise levels one decibel above the usual level. Cllr Gay offered to take this up on behalf of residents which was accepted by the parish council.

19/46 Planning

There were no new planning applications to consider.

19/47 Correspondence and Emails

19/47.1 Rural PACT meeting on Tuesday 29 October. **MF will attend on behalf of the WFPC.**

19/47.2 Possible importation of wild boar. WFPC concerns will be shared with Brewham Parish and reported further to S.S.C **RN to confirm contact details for Brewham.**

19/47.3 2016/2757/HSE. Planning Enforcement Dept at MDC has been contacted and their response will be shared as soon as it is received.

19/47.4 Somerset Rivers Authority Annual Report. It was agreed that this had been of interest and it was noted that Witham Friary did not feature as in an area of high risk.

19/47.5 Climate Change Adaptation Talk. This is scheduled for Tuesday 22 October. Cllrs will attend if possible.

19/48 Finance

19/48.1 Annual Governance and Accountability. The accounts for 2018/2019 have been audited (thanks to A Liggatt). **HB** signed on behalf of the WFPC. **RN to publish.**

19/48.2 Accounts for payment

- £304 J Rosser for work in the Playpatch
- £400 Parish of Postlebury PCC. Donation to upkeep of Witham Friary church graveyard
- £316.22 Came & Co. Parish insurance
- £120.00 AA Liggatt. Audit of WFPC accounts for year ended 31 March 2019

It was agreed that priorities for spending parish funds need to be identified. These will be included in the Parish Plan and the community will also be consulted. **A working group to progress this will be arranged. HB**

19/49 Reports

To receive reports or updates on:

19/49.1 Highways (FN)

FN reported via **HB** that 2 meetings had been arranged but no one had turned up. Cllr Gay agreed to intervene to help with this.

19/49.2 Witham Water (JK)

JK updated the meeting with an update of the situation to date. It was pointed out that the provision and quality of water had improved from previous years but Mendip District Council are now looking to liaise on achieving best practice and communication between all parties. WFPC await a date for a meeting to take place. The main issues were agreed as: communication, quality of the water and lack of transparency.

19/49.3 Sustainable Witham (MF)

MF reported that Sustainable Witham is investigating the option charity status to sustain ongoing financing.

MF also reported that the October Apple Day was a success and enjoyed by those who attended. Future events are planned such as a Christmas Fair with a Community Café. A list of workshops will be published monthly in the Parish magazine. 5 new requests had been received to join the FaceBook page which is encouraging.

Sedgemoor District Council has declared itself to be fracking free. **MF** asked that be something that WFPC consider also. Fracking affects (amongst other things) water quality and this needs to be taken into consideration in Witham Friary. It was agreed that this is something to be considered within the Parish Plan. Cllr Gay pointed out that a Parish Council can make a declaration to show support and intent without it having any legal enforcement. **It was resolved to write to Cllr Gay to ask why Mendip District Council haven't followed Sedgemoor's lead regarding this. (MF).**

19/49.4 Network Rail (MP)

MP reported that he had received a response from Network Rail in reply to his email enquiry about clearer signs regarding height restrictions by the railway bridge. The reply stated that responsibility for this would lie with Highways. **It was resolved to pass this to FN to take up with Highways.**

HB confirmed that the license for Network Rail to use land by the Recreation ground for the duration of works started on Saturday 5 October. In the period leading up to the meeting some issues had been flagged up ie. Lowloaders being used when they shouldn't be, large vehicles driving through the village and causing damage when this should not be happening.

The agreement allows cars and vans to be parked off and the area to be used will be fenced off.

MF asked if pedestrians could continue to avoid walking on the road by using the Recreation ground. **HB** confirmed that this can continue. He also asked that residents contact the WFPC if they see anything that

they believe is unacceptable and should not be happening as the license in place is legally binding as are the penalties cited for any contravention of this.

Potential disruption to the annual carol service was highlighted but the agreement for parking ends the day before the scheduled event so it is hoped that this will not be a problem.

19/49.5 Communications (CH)

CH had sent in a report on his progress. **HB** acknowledged the amount of work that **CH** had put in to date. He confirmed that the website would be a Witham Friary website with pages for each of the organisations – including the WFPC, with each group taking responsibility for their pages.

19/49.6 Recreation Ground/Playpatch (WS)

In absence of **WS**, it was agreed to leave the Recreation Ground for the next meeting.

MF pointed out that Recreation Ground and Playpatch should sit separately to avoid confusion. **It was agreed that they be separated out.**

19/49.7 Weller's Legal Surgery (HB)

HB attended this free legal consultation facilitated by SALC. He reported back the following:

- Repairs to Tynemead Bridge. Consultation confirmed that parish council money could be spent on repairs in the interests of the community. Any party with an interest in the property can be asked to contribute. All 3 parties have been contacted by **JK** and agreed to contribute. There is no liability for individual councillors and money can be spent on land not owned by the parish council
- Footpaths were discussed
- Wild Boar. In response to concerns raised by a parishioner, legal advice confirmed that a licence is required to own wild boar and they need to be kept securely. Also, that it is illegal to release these.

19/49.8 Footpaths (JK)

The difficult to pass footpath raised at the previous meeting will be added to another meeting when **WS** will be able to update.

19/49.9 Footpath Obstruction (HB)

Advice taken at Weller's Legal Surgery.

19/49.10 Tynemead Lane Bridge (HB)

As reported 19/49.7.

19/50 Other Business referred to the Clerk

- Due to a change of circumstances, **RN** is unable to continue as Clerk but will continue to support WFPC until a replacement is found. **It was resolved to advertise the position through SALC. RN to action**
- Clearance of mud on roads. **JK to investigate further**
- Standing orders for WFPC. **RN to pass format to HB**
- Suggested that a bus shelter be erected for children waiting for school bus. **This was agreed. MF to contact Reeds at Wanstrow**

19/42 The date of next WFPC meeting was confirmed as Thursday 17 October 2019.

For the attention of: Hugo Brooke, Will Sheppard, Colin Horstmann, John Knowles, Fred Nicholls, Marcus Powell, Maddy Ferrari

Mendip District Councillor for Postlebury Ward: Michael Gay