

WEST KNOYLE PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk – Mrs. L. C. Wood

Minutes of a Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 8th September 2015 at 7.30 p.m. in West Knoyle Village Hall.

Present: Councillors Mrs Jinny Brockway (Chairman), A. Filleau (Vice-Chairman), Ruth Dresman & B. Wessely + Wiltshire Cllr. George Jeans.

Also: Mr. Albert Russell, Mr. & Mrs. J. Martin, Mr. & Mrs. P. Douglas, Tony Davis, Derek Ward, Janet Howard, Bridget Wessely, Rodney Wayman.

Meeting convened at 7.34 p.m. with Public Session

The Chairman will re-convene the Parish Council meeting after the public session (please note that members of the public are no longer permitted to speak unless invited to do so by the Chairman).

Mr. Brian Wessely read out a letter from Mrs. Janet Howard objecting to the planning application for the erection of 4 flats on land adjacent to 6 Oderne. Mrs. Howard added that there would be toxins from a significant number of car exhausts parking on the site and as she already had a respiratory condition, she did not want this exacerbated. She also said that there would be ongoing highway problems if this development was allowed and the highway verges would be ruined.

Mr. Tony Davis, said that there was an old oak tree and ash tree on the site which would be a shame to lose and that the development would be cutting a hole in the hedge on the most dangerous and narrowest point of the highway within the village. Agricultural machinery and cars already drive on the verges and in the ditches and the road is not suitable for any more traffic.

Mrs. Martin said that she would be very concerned about 8 or more cars coming entering and exiting the site on that narrow stretch of the road through the village. She said that the village was in an AONB and did not want a 'block of flats'.

Wiltshire Councillor George Jeans said that the Parish Clerk had informed him that this planning application was causing concern within the village and despite trying to contact the planning officer involved, he hadn't yet managed to speak to him. Depending on what the planning officer says, Cllr. Jeans said that he may want to 'call in' this planning application which means that it will go to committee if the planning officer is minded to approve the application. Cllr. Jeans said that as far as he is aware, the only hope that the application has of being approved is if the Parish Council supports it.

Apologies for absence received from Cllr. Paul Yates.

104. Minutes – RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 19th May 2015 be approved as a correct record of proceedings on proposal made by Cllr. Filleau and seconded by Cllr. Ruth Dresman.

105. Matters Arising

a) Issues at Willoughby Hedge – Update on scheme submitted to CATG (see Minute 98a) – The Clerk confirmed that she had sent an email to Wiltshire Council officers asking for a progress update on the work that had not yet been carried out. The reply received was 'I can confirm that there have been 2 work tickets issued by my team for the re-painting of all the lining/hatching including the additional arrows at this location, that have as a result been in the system now for some time waiting for our contractors BBLP to action. Regrettably I can confirm that we are not in a positional locally to speed up this process, but I will ask the authorised officer

for such works if these can be prioritised further, over and above the no doubt long list of jobs that BBLP currently have scheduled across the county as a whole.'

b) Community Speedwatch Scheme (see Minute 98b) – as Mrs. Janet Howard was present she explained that the volunteers needed a refresher on their training because it had been such a long time since they had used the speed gun. She said that PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky had offered to help the existing volunteers with the use of the speed gun but more volunteers were needed as there were now only 3 trained scheme volunteers and they really needed 4 or 5. Initial training needed to be carried out in Devizes, the next course is full but there are available spaces in October. Mrs. Howard said that she would get in touch with PCSO Peter.

c) Speed Indicator Device Scheme (see Minute 98c) – As confirmed in the last Minutes, Cllr. Yates had moved the pole and the Clerk now needed to ask the Local Highway Coordinator, Lee Haine, to check whether or not it was now in a suitable location.

d) Illegal waste transferring – The Clerk reported that she had contacted the Environment Agency and had received a report number but had not received any feedback from them. Councillors confirmed that the illegal waste transferring was still happening and that the large vehicle movements were causing a lot of mud on the road. The Clerk asked members to provide her with as much information as possible with regard to vehicle registration numbers and dates/times of movements or to report the matter to the Environment Agency direct.

106. Planning (All applications can be viewed on Wiltshire Council's website

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/environmentandplanning/planninganddevelopment/planningapplicationssearchonline/planningsearch.htm> – and type in the relevant application number)

a) Applications to consider at the meeting:

Application Ref: 15/04529/FUL

Proposal: Erection of 4 flats, new access & associated works

At: Land adjacent to 6 Oderne, The Street, West Knoyle

RESOLVED to object to the above planning application for the reasons set out below:

1. The Parish Council feels that the village is not sustainable enough to support an application for 4-one bedroom flats the occupants of which are likely to be young people or couples. There is little or no employment within the village, no public transport and no facilities other than the village hall and play area.
2. The Parish Council is not aware that there is an identified and genuine need for low cost affordable housing within the village. The village already has a high proportion of low cost affordable housing. Furthermore, the Parish Council is not aware that there is a need for 1-bedroom flats within the village.
3. Although the proposed development adjoins existing properties, it is felt that this development will compromise the landscape. Mature trees, including an old oak tree, will need to be felled and a large mature boundary hedge will need to be removed on the roadside in order to accommodate the new access and visibility splay.
4. Sewerage & discharge – The applicant has stated that foul disposal to be via main sewer. There is no mains sewer in the village. The site is on kimmeridge clay and the site has no acceptable means of foul and storm drainage disposal.
5. Highways – the proposed development and associated access will be on the narrowest part of the lane that runs through West Knoyle. There are one or two places where this lane is wide enough for two cars to pass but on the whole it is single track with passing places. The potential increase of 8 cars for this development would increase the number of cars within the village by about 10% and this would exacerbate the highway safety concerns of residents in the village. Residents have huge highway safety concerns as this lane is often and frequently used (not necessarily officially) as a diversion when there are traffic jams and hold ups on the A303 as a result of the large number of accidents that occur there. The problems associated with this are that drivers are often unfamiliar with narrow rural lanes, driving at speeds which are inappropriate and often in large vehicles which are inappropriate for narrow rural lanes.

6. The village is on the edge of the Cranborne Chase AONB and it is felt that the scale, design and type of development is inappropriate to the nature of the settlement and does not respect the character or setting of the settlement.

Whilst on the subject of planning, Cllr. Wessely asked Cllr. Jeans about the trees at Copsford and said that he understood that planning was granted on the basis that mature trees were planted to provide adequate screening. Cllr. Wessely pointed out that a number of the trees that were originally planted had now died. Cllr. Jeans said that he would check whether or not the condition was applied as a S.106 which was what he requested and if so, he would alert the enforcement officer.

107. Reports

a) Wiltshire Councillors report – Cllr. Jeans reported that Wiltshire Council and Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) have announced they have mutually agreed to end their contract, saying it had become clear the arrangements were no longer appropriate for either party. BBLP started the £150M five-year highway maintenance contract in June 2013. The contract will now end next March. The B3092 Frome road will be closed just outside Maiden Bradley for 9 weeks in order to renew a bridge. Wiltshire Council would be conducting a public transport review and it was likely that only primary routes would be retained. Wiltshire Council currently subsidises all buses to the tune of 50%. The only primary route in this area is from Mere to Gillingham. Cllr. Jeans pointed out that when Wiltshire Council reviewed the car parks they told Town Councils that they needed to take the car parks over in order to keep the buses going. Now we are being told that we may have to lose the buses. The Youth Development Centre now operating as Seeds4Success has applied to the South West Wiltshire Area Board for funding so that it can keep the youth club open for 2 years. They are close to receiving a decision. Cllr. Dresman asked if there was still a 'wheels to work' scheme and Cllr. Jeans advised her to contact Jaki Farrell at Seeds4Success.

b) Neighbourhood Police report – Clerk handed out copies of the September Neighbourhood Police Team Newsletter and said that this mentioned the new trial way of police working, known as System Thinking Operational Policing' which PCSO Peter Tcherniawsky had alluded to at the last meeting. The trial is starting on 14th September and PC Richard Salter will no longer be the beat officer for Mere. His duties will be covered by PC Greg Fergusson who will also be responsible for Tisbury. PCSO Peter Tscheriawsky will remain in his current post but response officers from Warminster/Trowbridge will be dealing with jobs on our patch.

108. Footpaths, Highways, Traffic & Transport

a) Highway and footpath issues for parish steward – The Clerk read out an email received from the Local Highways Community Coordinator, Lee Haine – 'you may have read in the local papers about the fact that Balfour Beatty Living Places are no longer providing the local services for grounds, street cleaning and minor maintenance for the council and this is now provided by The Landscape Group (TLG) directly under the management of Wiltshire Council. The change allows the council greater flexibility to deliver these services. To support this new model we will be replacing the current Community Day provision with immediate effect and replacing it with an 'identified need' service delivery. What this means is a move to works being undertaken where there is a known requirement. For town and parish councils and resident issues, this will be achieved by the works being reported and prioritised through the My Wiltshire App. Town and Parish Councils are asked to report issues in their areas via the My Wiltshire App. The local coordinator will then prioritise the work from the information given. Hence the more information provided at the time of the report, the quicker a decision will be made on the council's actions. It must be noted that just because a report is made it will not guarantee the work being completed. But it will guarantee the council will consider the requires and prioritise the work appropriately.'

b) A303 – recent accidents & local implications + request to government and Highways Agency to pursue dual carriageway and association junction improvements as a matter of urgency – The Chairman said that as

councillors are all aware, there had been a number of fatalities on the A303 lately. Cllr. Jeans said that he had asked this to be raised on the Mere Town Council agenda because he was concerned about the large number of recent fatalities and said that it is not only the safety on the A303 that is of concern but also the impact it has on our roads and neighbouring hamlets and villages such as West Knoyle and Burton. The Parish Council agreed to support Mere Town Council in its representations to the Department of Transport, Highways Agency, MP and Wiltshire Council asking for safety improvements to be made. Cllr. Filleau also asked if it would be possible to have a 'black spot' road sign so that drivers are aware that this is a dangerous stretch of road.

c) Recent road resurfacing works – the Clerk said that she had been in receipt of correspondence from parishioners, via the Chairman, regarding resurfacing works which took place on a 1 mile stretch of narrow road which runs from just below West Knoyle Church in a westerly direction towards Six Acre Lane. This stretch of road is known as The Street but confusingly, the main road through the village is also known as The Street and residents wondered whether the contractors had made a mistake and resurfaced the wrong stretch of road. Other reasons for reaching this conclusion were that the same stretch of road had been repaired by Balfour Beatty only a few weeks prior with bad patches being re-surfaced and it was left in reasonably good condition whereas the road at New Close is in a far worse condition. Residents also questioned the quality of the work that was carried out. The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council had not received any notification of any highway works being carried out in the village and confirmed also that she had written to the Area Highway Engineer who advised that the management of these activities, including site and treatment selection is carried out by Atkins who act as consultants on WC's behalf. He also stated that the C297 New Road is not currently on a list for re-surfacing as unfortunately he has had higher priority sites elsewhere in his combined areas in terms of surface deterioration and traffic volumes. However, he would be happy to consider adding this site when he is next asked to submit a new list. Cher Peterson, the Highways Maintenance Technician from Atkins confirmed that the section of The Street that had been surfaced was correct and said he would forward our concerns regarding the quality of work to Jim Bailey who was responsible for inspecting the site. Both Mr. Peterson & David Button confirmed that they would be happy to add the C297 New Road to the list of priority C road sites for resurfacing consideration. Members agreed to ask Wiltshire Council to prioritise the C297 New Road for resurfacing treatment

d) Temporary Closure of C305 (Part) Park Corner Farm East, Mere & East Knoyle – the Clerk confirmed that she had received notice that this road would be temporary closed from its junction with C297 Mere Park to its junction with C306 Wise Lane North to enable Oakus on behalf of BT to install new apparatus in the carriageway. Cllr. Jeans agreed to find out what this apparatus related to.

109. Play Area

a) Raising money for the Play Area - Report and suggestions for improvements – Cllr. B. Wessely confirmed that it had been agreed that 75% of fundraising from the Fete or Jambouree would go to the Church and 25% to the Playing Field this year. This had resulted in a sum of just under £450 having been raised for the play area. The Parish Council had previously agreed to match this funding and to apply to the Area Board to match the raised funds giving a total of about £1800 to spend. Cllr. Wessely had discussed this with a number of parishioners and the general consensus was to provide for a seating area for adults, if possible, with some cover. Cllr. Filleau said that he had also received some suggestions for a set of regular swings, goal posts and seating. It was agreed that Cllrs. Filleau & Wessely would form a working party to decide what equipment/facilities should be provided for (the Council agreed to delegate the decision to the working party). The Clerk said that she would complete a funding application form once the decision had been made and quotations had been supplied.

b) Hedge cutting – the Clerk agreed to ask Mr. Curtis to cut the hedge from the inside and outside as much as possible.

110. Finance

a) Payments – RESOLVED to approve the following payments on proposal made by Cllr. Ruth Dresman, seconded by Cllr. Filleau and carried with a unanimous vote.

Grant Thornton	External audit fee	0.00
West Knoyle Social Club	Grant & Donation (for village hall insurance)	359.20
Rob Pearce Ground Maintenance	Grass cutting – play area	210.00
L. Wood	Clerks salary	137.60
HMRC	PAYE Q2	34.40
Playsafety Ltd	Play Area Inspection	166.80

b) Conclusion of Audit for accounts year ended 31 March 2015 - The Clerk reported that the External Audit had been completed on 22nd July with the External Auditor, Grant Thornton UK LLP, returning the Annual Return and reporting 'on the basis of our review, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. The clerk confirmed that a Notice of Conclusion of Audit had been placed on the noticeboard informing parish electors that they may obtain, inspect or take a copy of the Statement of Accounts and Auditor's Certificate and Report by arrangement with the Clerk. The Clerk further confirmed that there had been no audit fee as the Councils income or expenditure had not exceeded £10,000.

b) Pension – Automatic Enrolment - the Clerk confirmed that as the only member of staff for the Parish Council, she had a right to join the Council's chosen pension scheme but did not qualify for auto-enrolment because she only earned £13.23 per week (qualifying amount being £192 per week). The Clerk confirmed that she did not want to exercise her right to join the Council's pension scheme as the earnings did not make it worthwhile. The Clerk had sought advice from the Pensions Regulator on what action the Council needed to take now and they had advised that the Council needs to write to the employee advising them that they can exercise their right to join the Council's pension scheme. If the employee writes back to say that they do not wish to join, then there's no requirement to set up a scheme.

111. General Items

a) Superfast Broadband – The Chairman said that she had submitted letters to Wiltshire Council some months ago. Cllr. Jeans said that he does all he can on the project board and feels that he has been deceived a bit. Mr. Rodney Wayman presented the following to the council. 'Following a presentation from Wessex Internet at a recent Area Board meeting, Bridget reported back to me that Wessex Internet would only carry out a survey to see if their wireless broadband could be brought into the village if it was confirmed that there were funds available to pay for it. I have spoken to various people in the village and I am confident that amongst hands we can cover the cost of getting the signal into the village and Wessex have now been here to carry out an initial survey. From driving around various vantage points to find a line of sight from Wessex's proposed Gutch Common post and to achieve a good line of sight to most houses, the best position is probably a post in one of Paul Yeats' fields above the Grotrian's house. Even if all houses are not in immediate line of sight of the post, the signal can be bounced through the village, via other smaller bits of kit, including to The Middles, up to Barrow Street and back to Bush Farm. Trees blocking the line of sight are the major problem, hence the need to use additional methods to make sure we can get broadband to everyone who might want it. (There might have to be a bit of tree-pruning here and there, but nothing drastic.) Wessex Internet estimate that we could receive broadband speeds of 30-50mbps. In addition to superfast broadband, people can run their telephones on the service via VOIP – you keep your landline number, pay for calls, but save by not having to pay BT for the line rental every quarter. Even though we have undertakings to meet the initial cost of the post, Wessex will still only want to invest in installing it if there will be sufficient take-up of the broadband by residents in the village.

This is where we need help from the parish council. We would like the parish council to promote this solution to provide the village with what is really superfast broadband and to report back to me how many people would wish to take up the service. Installation per household is £199 (or about the cost of one year's BT landline that will no longer be required) and then Wessex offer residential services from £8.50 to £32.50 per month and business services from £99 to £299 per month. We are way too far from the East Knoyle exchange to ever get superfast broadband even if fibre optic cables reach the exchange – I expect we are all on Exchange only lines (there is no cabinet in the village) and BT are unlikely to run a new fibre optic cable to a new cabinet in the village as the cost for such a small and dispersed community would not be economically viable (it actually costs them between 250 & 500k to do this). Wessex Internet are in the process of finalizing the legalities for their Gutch Common mast (and indeed our West Knoyle solution has helped galvanise them into pushing ahead with this). They will then erect that mast and I would hope, all things being well, that we might have superfast broadband by Christmas or early in the New Year.' Mr. Wayman said that he intended to go around every house in West Knoyle with a leaflet and asked the Parish Council to help spread the word. Cllr. Wessely said that he would put this on the website and the Chairman agreed to put a mention in her report for Mere Matters.

b) Date of next meeting – Tuesday, 24th November 2015

Meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.

Members are reminded that the Parish Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime and Disorder, Health & Safety and Human Rights.