

# *WEST KNOYLE PARISH COUNCIL*

## **Parish Clerk – Mrs. L. C. Wood**

Minutes of a meeting of West Knoyle Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.30 pm in West Knoyle Village Hall.

Present: Councillors Paul Yates (Chairman), Marcus Randall (Vice-Chairman), Alex Davies & Paul Vita.  
Also Wiltshire Councillor George Jeans & Sofya ??????

### **Public Session**

The Chairman welcomed Sofya who had expressed an interest in taking on the vacancy of Parish Clerk and had come along to the meeting this evening in order to meet members and see West Knoyle and get a flavour of the meetings & councillors etc.

### **178. Apologies for absence.**

Cllr. Tony Davis sent his apologies as he was feeling unwell.

### **179. Declarations of Interest:**

- None received

**180. Minutes** – RESOLVED to approve Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023

### **181. Matters Arising from previous meetings**

**a) Minute No. 170a) Clerks Vacancy & introduction to Sofya** – The Chairman said that Sofya was currently Parish Clerk at Chilmark and so she had some understanding of how Parish Councils worked and he also knew some of the councillors at Chilmark who all spoke very highly of Sofya also pointed out that Lindsey had offered to provide support to Sofya for as long as needed. This matter would be discussed more formally later on in the meeting.

### **182. Planning**

a) Planning application to consider at the meeting

- None

b) Planning applications determined since last meeting

- PL/2023/09032 – Siting of temporary mobile home for a rural worker, Broad Oak – this planning application was approved for a mobile home to be used solely for agriculture or forestry for a fixed period of 3 years.
- PL/2023/11014 – single storey extension and internal alterations at Broadmead Farm – this planning application was approved.

### **183. To receive report from Wiltshire Councillor**

a) Knowing that Highways would be discussed later on in the meeting, Cllr. Jeans had nothing further to discuss.

### **184. Footpaths, Highways, Traffic & Transport**

**a) Highway & Footpath issues for Parish Steward** – the Clerk confirmed that she had asked the Parish Steward to fill in some potholes in West Knoyle recently.

**b) To report on the Draft Highways Maintenance Programme 2024 – 2030** – the Clerk reported that a draft Maintenance Programme had been presented to the committee at the last Area Board meeting. The Clerk pointed out that a small stretch of road from Pimperleaze Road to Park Corner Farm was due for surfacing treatment on the programme during 2027/28. However, Cllr. Jeans pointed out that he had suggested to Cllr. Bridget Wayman and officers, that they travel roads around West Knoyle in order to reconsider the priority order of some of these roads because as far as he was concerned West Knoyle and Kilmington had the worst roads in the area. Indeed, he said he would stress that they needed to drive from Willoughby Hedge, down through the village of West Knoyle and out to the Lawn Crossroads junction with Shaftesbury-Mere Road. The Chairman confirmed that he had attended the previous Area Board meeting which was actually a Highways meeting where it was fairly obvious that every parish had their issues and that there was such a stretch on budget resources that everyone would have to wait their turn. The Clerk read an extract from the Highways Maintenance Report that said in addition to the highway's maintenance work listed, additional works across Wiltshire would be undertaken using additional investment – this funding would be used on roads that have been raised as areas of concern, either by members of the public through myWilts reports or by inspections made by highways officers. Cllr. Vita asked if the Council could encourage people to be more proactive in making reports and the Chairman suggested that a leaflet drop could be done whilst doing the community litter pick.

**c) To report on issues & correspondence arising from defective sewage plant at Stoney Bridge** – this started in December when the Clerk had some correspondence from a resident who reported that the treatment plant was defective and the contents had to be pumped into a tanker every other day and the protective cover is now left partially open. Mr. Powell pointed out that the treatment plant was due for replacement and pointed out that when they did that, perhaps some car parking could be created around the treatment plant when they create the landscaping. Cllr. Randall said that there were tanks available that could be driven over but the Clerk pointed out that Mr. Powell was finding it very difficult to know where to direct this question. Cllr. Jeans said that he would do some research on this to find out the relevant department and then it was agreed to send in a letter of support for creating extra parking for the residents of the area.

## **185. Play Area**

**a) Report from Woodland Trust regarding boundary tree inspection concerns** – the Clerk confirmed that following the email correspondence about the fallen tree branch in the play area, the Woodland Trust had carried out a ground-based survey on 4<sup>th</sup> October and tree safety work was carried out at the beginning of November along the boundary between the playing field and also along the track leading to the second gate. This boundary is a Zone A boundary (their highest safety category) and as such it will continue to be annually inspected. The Clerk confirmed that she had written back to the Woodland Trust thanking them for providing this reassurance.

**b) Actions and tasks arising from 2023 RoSPA Play Area Inspection report** – the Chairman reported that the rails and sleepers on the bridge had been replaced.

**c) Signage for Play Area** – the Clerk reminded members that she had sent out the proof of the ownership sign for members to consider last week. It was agreed to proceed on the basis of the proof received but to also include 'There is a public access defibrillator outside the village hall'. The Clerk had also given 'No Dogs allowed in this play area' & 'Please do not park in front of this gate' signs to Marcus for erection.

**d) Replacement of equipment and quotations received** – The Clerk reported that Cllr. Randall had provided her with the name of a company that provided recycled plastic play equipment with a view to getting a quotation to replace the suspended log walk, either with something similar or something of a linear nature that takes up a similar space. She had been to one company who had provided a quotation

of £3462.25, another company that wanted to come out and meet someone and a third company who were going to come out and look before submitting a quote. The Chairman said that he would be happy to meet any play equipment companies on site.

## 186. Finance, Policy & Resources

**a) Payments:** The following payments were approved and cheques signed by signatories.

L. C. Wood	Salary 2023/24 – Q4 31.3.24	£220.00
HMRC	PAYE – Q4	£ 55.00
Cash	Petty cash reimbursement (Postage & Travel) 28.11.23 – 31.3.24	TBA
The Sign Shed	Signage for play area (7 signs)	51.64
Mirage Signs	Signage for play area	Authorised to approve payment up to £340
T. J. Thornley	Website - SSL Certificate renewal, Domain renewal, Hosting renewal and website maintenance	180.12
Mole Valley Farmers (via P. Yates)	Timber sleepers, rails, stakes & screws for repairs to bridge access into play area.	461.48

**b) Report on latest bank reconciliation** – the Clerk confirmed that the bank reconciliation stands at £17,078.69

**c) To review and assess the effectiveness of internal controls (schedule attached)** – the Clerk read out the list of assets from the asset register and members confirmed the assets. The Clerk listed the internal controls, read out the risk management strategy and considered the annual insurance cover. It was agreed that the play area inspections & reporting should be reviewed at the next Parish Council meeting and in the meantime the Clerk was asked to check with the insurance company on the frequency of inspections.

**d) To make job offer for role of Parish Clerk and consider terms for contract of employment** – the Chairman reiterated his comments that Sofya came very highly rated by the councillors at Chilmark. The Clerk pointed out that Sofya had not been a Parish Clerk for very long and it may be that both Chilmark and West Knoyle would be prepared to share her training. The present Clerk said that this was her year of accounts and she would therefore see that through i.e. organise and proceed with the internal audit, come along to the next Annual Parish Meeting and Parish Council meeting to present the accounts and answer any questions and both she and Sofya would set the agenda with Sofya taking the Minutes and thereafter attending meetings alone. However, the Clerk said that she would be happy to mentor Sofya and be on the end of the phone if she had any questions or concerns. It was unanimously agreed to formally offer Sofya the job and the Clerk confirmed that she had prepared a contract of employment using the NALC model. It was agreed to offer the role at 8 hours per month at the rate of £14.75 which equates to an annual salary of £1416 (This is based upon Local Government Association Agreed Pay Scales LC1 Scale Ranges (13-17) with an annual review of hours and rate. The Council has pre-approved mileage payments at the statutory mileage rate for private cars (currently 45p) for necessary extra journeys to the Village Hall for the erection of statutory notices on the noticeboard but journeys to the village hall to attend meetings are excluded from mileage payments. The Clerk said that she would do a draft Employment Contract for councillors to approve as soon as possible but stressed that members needed to read this and comment as soon as possible too. The Clerk also pointed out that Chilmark Parish Council currently outsourced their Payroll/PAYE to external providers and she didn't know, at this stage, whether or not Sofya was going to do her own payroll or was expecting the same external providers to do the Payroll – in which case there may be an extra fee to consider.

**187. General Items**

- a) **Update on SID repair** – the Chairman and Cllr. Randall confirmed that they had not yet got around to looking at the Speed Indicator Device.
- b) **D-Day 80** – the Clerk confirmed that this June marks the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D.-Day. There were beacons and celebrations being expected by the pageantmaster. The Chairman said that he would speak to the Village Hall Management Committee to see if they had any plans in mind or thoughts on this.
- c) **Draft Biodiversity Policy** – the Clerk said that it may be necessary in the future for the Parish Council to produce a biodiversity policy and she would probably be able to help with this if required.
- d) **Litterpick** – the Chairman confirmed that he would be organising a community litterpick – it was agreed to arrange this for Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> April. The Clerk said that it would be possible to borrow Mere’s litter pick equipment subject to dates not clashing and that she would forward the Village Litterpick Risk Assessment on to the Chairman. The Clerk also said that she would try and arrange for the litter to be collected as well.

**12. Date of next meeting**

- a) To set date and time of next meeting and date & time of Annual Parish Meeting – it was agreed that both meetings would be held on ??????????????????????????

*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.*