

WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Meeting held on Monday 14th 2018 at 7 pm in the Village Hall

MINUTES

Present

Cllr A Warner (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. J Thomas
Cllr. L Seymour
Cllr K. Braden
Cllr. S. Gabbatiss
Jane Carlin (Clerk)
County Cllr Hudspeth
District Cllr Cotrell-Dormer
8 members of the public

The meeting opened at 7.00 pm. Cllr Warner welcomed all present

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Gubbins
2. **Approval of Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 8th May 2017**
Agreed by all present and signed as a correct record of the meeting.
3. **Report by Chairman of Wootton Parish Council:** Read by Cllr Warner in Chairman's absence..
Cllr Loftus recorded his thanks to all the councillors, Jane Carlin the retiring Clerk and welcome to Bobby Damerall her replacement. There have been a number of planning applications approved during the year. The annual accounts have been approved and signed off by the Responsible Financial Officer, as has the internal audit report for 2017/18. The balance brought forward to 1st April 2018 is £12,714 – which includes £7,614 in the No. 2 Account. This account specifically holds donations for the Play Corner refurbishment. Fixed Assets held remain at £69,884. Six grants totalling £3,763 (2017/18 - £4,237) were agreed in response to precept applications for 2018/19. This was three fewer than last year.
 - These precepts will be paid in two halves to match the precept payments to us from WODC
 - I would remind applicants that we would like to see full details of how this year's precepts have been spent and a detailed breakdown of how monies requested will be spent in 2019/20.Sadly the provision of public transport is far from satisfactory but we are fortunate to have a limited service from Our Bus Bartons for which WPC gladly continues to make financial contributions. I would also like to thank all the organisations whose members do so much for the village, to the RFO (Ric Adams) and the internal auditor (Phil Parker) and of course to our County and District colleagues. Finally, I would like to encourage more members of the Parish to attend our meetings which are open to all. This enables the Council to hear first hand the feelings and thoughts of those we are here to represent.
4. **Community Police Officer Report:** Phil Workman kindly attended and gave out information sheets reporting a total of 17 reported Crime incidents in Wootton Parish. These were broken down as
 - 1 Assault without injury
 - 2 Assault with injury
 - 3 Burglary Non-dwelling
 - 2 Burglary in a dwelling
 - 1 Missing Person
 - 1 Theft or unauthorised taking of a vehicle
 - 1 Road Traffic Offence
 - 2 Theft from Motor Vehicle
 - 1 Vehicle Interference

- 1 Domestic Incidents
- 1 Making off without payment
- 1 Theft or unauthorised taking of Mail

He reiterated crime prevention advice, especially in the summer months and in particular garden sheds and outbuildings where expensive power tools are stored. All crime prevention advice can be found at www.thamesvalley.police.uk or via Thames Valley Alert, which keeps people informed of crime trends in their area www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk. He also asked if the police could be informed when the 'Nottingham Knockers' are in the area selling door to door household goods. As well as being a nuisance these young men are on the lookout for vulnerable households etc with the potential of passing the information on. Please phone **101** to notify.

The PC raised the issue of speeding, in particular along the B4027. PC Workman mentioned that both Cassington and Bladon have now introduced community speed watches, where volunteers operate a speed gun at chosen times. The purpose is to educate rather than prosecute, offenders being sent a warning letter, which after three such letters would be put on the police database. The scheme needs to be operated through the Parish Council for purposes of Public Liability Insurance. PC Workman to send further details. He also agreed to bring the matter to the attention of Road Policing to see if a speed trap could be set up, although this very much depends on resources.

5. Presentations by Village Organisations;

PCC Revd. Stephen Jones stressed that in villages like ours the Church is very much a focal point for worship, reflection and special events. There is a need to expand the space available within the Church to make it more adaptable for wider use for children to work together for Christian teaching and for special services and concerts as well as providing the 'special place' for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals. The PCC is genuinely grateful that the congregation and other friends give generously but with continually rising costs the necessity of keeping a medieval building in good order is both difficult and ongoing. St Mary's is now preparing for our Open Gardens and Flower Festival and looking forward to another visit from our French friends, whose visit was so moving last year.. Future plans include Harvest Thanksgiving, a Pets Service and the commemoration of the centenary of the end of World War 1 with a Service and tea. We are thankful for the goodwill and support that enables us to journey on in faith.

Village Hall - Marlene reported that refurbishments over the past year have included installation of a new audio visual system and the purchase of twelve lightweight tables to replace the heavy existing ones. New curtains are due to be rehung and the installation of electric hand dryers in the three toilets. Plans are in process for new stage curtains. In October last year the 100th village hall talk was given by Alexandra Shulman, editor of Vogue for 25 years and was an occasion for celebration. Since then Andy Morgan, who was mainly responsible for the talks programme has stepped down from the committee and Mimi Shepherd has moved to Long Hanborough, both of whom were extremely active members and made a huge contribution. Three new members of the committee are welcomed – Terry Hurley as treasurer, Janet Mead for hall bookings and Bernadette O'Brien as talks organiser. The first talk of the new season will be on May 25th and given by Jinny Blom, an esteemed garden designer. The only problem over the past year has been access to the hall – we now require 17 keys for regular users with a spare key in the shop! As a fallback, there is a keypad safe outside Andy Warner's house and the passcode can be obtained by ringing Andy on his mobile. Plans for the future include refurbishment of the kitchen and improved storage facilities

Wootton Conservation Trust - The Trust is delighted that the Wootton Village School has been able to continue to enjoy seasonal visits to the meadows which includes planting snowdrops, wild daffodils and snakes head fritillaries. Maintenance has been greatly helped by the regular visits of the Oxford Conservation Volunteers, who welcome local people, provide instruction as to hand tool use and are fully insured. Their work includes scrub clearance, gate post and catch replacement and repairs to non slip planks on the main river bridge. Currently work is needed near the ponds in order to completely enclose the water meadows - repairing fences is a continuing task and replacing fence posts by hand a slow job. Contractors are unwilling to bring in heavy equipment for small jobs. In the winter months little egrets have been visiting the water meadows and an otter has been sighted. The agricultural subsidy, which largely pays for maintenance of the site will continue for some years after Brexit and it is hoped that environmental management will continue to be a top priority to enable this County Wildlife Site and its valuable grassland ecology to thrive.

Village Stores – (Read in absence) The £787 granted by the Parish Council is used to fund the Parcel Box and Mon – Fri collection by the Royal Mail, which is used daily for both personal and home-business mail. Wootton Stores continues to thrive and is a central village hub as well as providing a very valuable service to the community. Last November was the 10-year anniversary celebrated by the community with cake and bubbly. Recent refurbishment projects have been carried out and Rachel, the manager, and management committee work hard to maintain the scope, service and benefits the shop brings to the village and wider community. New products and services are introduced, often in response to customer requests, along with staple products whilst prices are kept at a competitive and reasonable level. Supporting local producers is an important aspect along with advertising and promoting village organisations. The shop is a great asset to the village providing a warm and friendly welcome and a focal point for visitors seeking information. We are grateful to all in the community who support the shop on a regular basis and especially for the time and effort put in by our dedicated volunteers. New customers and new volunteers are always welcome and would like to encourage more people from the village to join in supporting their community shop. The AGM will be held in July, date to be confirmed. (Julia Hurley)

Wootton CE Primary School - Chris Elliott, Chair of Governors, thanked the Parish Council for the precept grant which is being used to part fund the First Access music programme, which enables all children in the school, including Special Needs pupils, to experience playing a variety of orchestral instruments. The competent music teacher is able to oversee several children at a time in an informal classroom setting and is much enjoyed by all participants. The school currently has 57 children enrolled and like many small rural schools the financial position is fragile and with income per pupil frozen in real terms it costs increasingly more per pupil than the income we receive. As an example, the Universal Infant Free School meals government policy does not come free to the school and we have to divert around £10,000 a year of budget to 'balance' the books on this service. In order to secure the long term financial stability of the school we are looking at two significant initiatives - 1) revisiting the feasibility of relocating the school to a new site within the village. With numbers of 100 – 105 enrolled the school would be much more sustainable 2) Conducting a full consultation on converting the school into a multi-academy trust which will give more flexibility on sharing resources and potential efficiency saving. On a positive note, Chris reports a governing body at full strength which is of huge benefit and a thriving after school sports activities programme such as ice skating in winter and tennis club in the summer months.

Wootton Baby, Toddler and Pre-School Group - Kirstie sent a report, read by her husband Graham, with the good news that for the first time in many years the group is running with regular attenders and provides a social network for Mums in the village and surrounding areas, including external fun events. The concentration this year has been on improving the toddler toys to enable the themes of toys to be changed each week. The Committee has recently expanded to five members and average attendance is nine children a week with a maximum of around thirteen. Currently the group is awaiting a quote to re-organise the internal shed to make the toys more easily accessible and prevent breakages of equipment. The group are especially grateful for the revised cost of hall hire which has made a huge difference to the ability to save and improve the toys and arts and crafts. There are refreshments and home made cake on offer, donated by a couple of the committee members and overall huge satisfaction that so many families are now attending the group.

Playing Field: Ann Day, Chair, gave thanks to the Parish Council and a special one to John, who mows the big field. The play corner is twenty years old with repairs becoming ever more costly and it has been decided to fund raise for new equipment. The school children with the help of Sarah Brown have had fun working on the project working out costings and voting on choice of equipment. A Fun Day is to be organised in the school holidays to report on progress and it is hoped the whole village will get involved in fund raising. The cricket square has been reseeded and levelled – many thanks to Joe and his team from Wootton Place.. In response to queries, the next official Beacon lighting will be November 2018 to commemorate 100 years since the end of the First World War.

Wootton Sports Club – gave a report of mixed fortunes of the two football teams. The first team came a respectable fourth place in division 3 and the reserves found themselves without a manager after just one game. Enormous thanks to Jacob Cooke for stepping in and taking over. It is hoped that all the players will re-sign next season and have more success. Thanks were expressed to Klp Day for his help with the food and drinks after the home games, Joan and Ted Thomas for the effort they put into the club and special thanks to the kit washers, Kath Davis for the first team and Zoe and Ann Day for the reserves.

Cllr Loftus reiterated that future precept requests must be accompanied by a detailed accounting of how the money received in 2017 was spent and how monies requested for 2018 will be spent.

Wootton Relief in Need: : presented a balance sheet.

5. Any Other Business

The Annual Meeting ended at 7.45pm and was immediately followed by the meeting of Wootton Parish Council.
The date of the next Annual Parish Meeting is Monday 14th May 2018 at 7pm

Jane Carlin (Clerk)

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