

WYCK RISSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on Monday 14th June 2021 at 6.15 pm in the Village Hall

Present: Tim Simon (Chairman), Andrew Fifield, Brian Finnimore, Robert Montague, Louise Fifield (Clerk), Esther Trinder (co-opted councillor)

In attendance: 3 residents

Apologies

Apologies were received from Hilary Ponti and Andrew and Elizabeth Ransom

Declarations of Interest.

Declarations of interest were received from HP ref College Farm application and BF as he has assisted on the Heath Lawn application

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 22nd March 2021** were approved and signed.
- **Matters Arising**

The first of the previously agreed horse and rider signs is now just before the bends in the road, attached to an existing post and the second, at the top of the drainpipe is still to be erected.

- **County Council News: report by Councillor Mark MacKenzie-Charrington (M M-C):**

Councillor MacKenzie-Charrington thanked both Nigel Moor and all those who voted for him. He has been appointed to 9 different committees, including Chairman of the Planning Committee, and with 20 parishes within the Stow Division it will be impossible to attend every PC meeting but he will provide a written report. MM-C hopes to be as active as Nigel Moor was with Highways which has a further £100m over the next 4 years to add to the 5 year pledge of £125m announced 4 years ago. There are more 'pot-hole teams' improving the response time to reported defects. He reminded us that there is an annual £30K allowance to assist small projects around the local communities.

News on other issues:

- Free school meals continue to be offered over the recent half term
 - Cheltenham General A&E reopened on 9th June from 8am-8pm. From 30 June it will have overnight nursing, returning it to pre-pandemic cover (not 24/7)
 - GCC has announced free counselling for teachers and support staff with issues as a result of the pandemic
 - GCC has a new Chief Fire and Rescue Officer, Mark Preece, with over 30 years of experience and having been Deputy-Chief since 2019
 - At recycling centres the Re-Use cabins have re-opened. Online appointments to take waste are still needed but a slot within 24 hours seems to be possible at Fosse Cross
- The UK Atomic Energy Authority has announced that the application by Severn Edge to build a Fusion Centre at Berkeley has passed the initial assessment stage. This could be generating electricity through a unique new generation carbon free process leaving no nuclear waste, as well as providing employment for some thousands of people.
- **Risk Plan:** Ratification of amendment

TS decided to take legal advice which suggested that we should not include reference to the electricity substation. Therefore the references to this have been omitted. BF told the meeting that the insurance brokers have confirmed that we are covered. The revised draft Plan was ratified.

- **Maintenance of the Green and Pond**

Green: TS

- The triennial tree survey has been completed. One tree identified near the turning to Olive Hill has needed the lower branches trimming as these overhung the public highway below the 5.2 metre clear height required. Generally the trees are in good condition given the prevalence of bleeding canker in the chestnuts. The survey cost was £400 as previously agreed and the follow up work to include removing low hanging branches from another tree was a further £240+ VAT.
- There was a small ceremony of fertiliser application for the Ross's Perry Pear tree in April and due to the pandemic there could only be a group of 6 present including James and Sara Ross plus Andrew Ransom who had kindly arranged for the sourcing and planting of the tree plus TS and LF.
- Ratification of Deed of Grant for access across the Green to Heythrop Cottage. This was completed using the same form of words as the one granted for access to Porters Farm and it was signed by BF and TS. The Deed of Grant was ratified.
- A resident was concerned that the mowing of the grass verge to the side of the pond had spoiled the wild flowers growing there. It was felt mowing this verge was logical as the College Farm side was cut as was the lawn in front of the Village Hall. There were comments in favour of continuing to do this, as it also enhanced the new bench. It was agreed to ask Jack Smith to continue to cut that section at the time of his monthly visits from April to October.

Pond: RM

The pond is showing a small return of the Water Primrose but due to a prolonged wet and cold spring there is likely to be some further return. The EA suggest there should be no more chemicals used, and that we keep a watching brief following which they will return at the end of the summer. RM will keep them regularly informed of any changes. Jack Smith has completed his second visit for pond surround maintenance.

BF commented that the inflow pipe has partially silted up as a result of heavy rainfall over the winter but this is not an issue currently. A resident asked if there was now any cover for wildlife. RM said that the banks of the pond are left un-cut so these provide cover.

Nothing has been done to the small pond at the entrance to Olive Hill this year, but later in the year it will be trimmed. BF commented in relation to the flood water management that there seemed more silt washed into the pond than usual. RM said this was going to be dealt with at the end of the summer.

- **Planning:**

1. Infilling of mineral voids and relocation of metal recycling facility and new access: Land at the Gravel Pits, Fosseyway, Lower Slaughter.
TS told the meeting that Highways have recommended refusal. WRPC have objected, along with many others.
2. Maces Farm Listed building consent to replace existing lean-to extension to rear of property with larger breakfast room extension
This will not be visible from the road and is not seen as contentious.
3. Swimming pool and associated pool building for ancillary use – Little Orchard Wyck Rissington
Comments from residents include reference to much excavation and noise disruption at the Church end of the village, including much 'after hours' work. TS reminded the meeting that building work should only be carried out between 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 1pm on Saturdays and not on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
4. College Farm: Outbuildings and gates installation to complete original alterations carried out in 2006
This application refers to materials used. No comment needed

5. Heath Lawn: Photograph of stonework to comply with condition 5 of 19/04056/FUL/19/04057/LBC
This involved a sample of stonework, and has now been approved
6. Proposed single storey side extension- 21 Wyck Rissington
BF had concerns with the roof details. The conservation officer has subsequently submitted a report suggesting a steeper roof pitch, similar to one suggested by BF, and incorporating the gable windows. It was agreed that WRPC would submit a comment of support based on the revised drawings which satisfactorily address these concerns.

- **Finance**

Appointment of PATA for payroll

PATA provide a service for calculating PAYE following which they pass the Clerk's timesheets and expense claims to the Chairman and RFO for payment. This will be particularly important in relation to the appointment of our new clerk. Their charges are a set up fee of £20 and then £8 per month. All the local parishes in the area employ them. This outsourcing to experts removes a very onerous part of the RFO's workload.

- **Letters and Emails received by the Clerk**

1. Paper from Andrew Ransom

Due to time constraints, the letter had been circulated to the attendees at the meeting. TS explained that AR was very concerned by the decision to increase the Wyck Rissington precept this year by 25% for the first time in 10 years. Allied to this was the question of reserves. AR feels that we should be using them to absorb the increased costs – that a) we shouldn't have increased the precept and b) should be reducing our reserves to 6 months expenditure (£3,000). RM disagreed, explaining that the mistake was not to have increased it before. AF agreed. TS said that recent spending has been necessary – in recent years we have introduced regular maintenance of the pond during the summer months where previously weeds had been left to grow so that they covered most of the pond. There has also been the cost of removing the highly invasive water primrose. More recently there has been the expense of replacing the damaged kerb stones to the private road which leads up to the village hall. ET worried that the need to fell and replant the trees could still be a problem in future years as a result of storm damage. TS noted from the figures that he had circulated to those attending the meeting that even with the 25% increase this year the precept at £4,000 was still well below our surrounding villages which were typically in the £5,500 to £6,000 range. In one village the precept has increased by 105% in the last five years and in another by 65% over the same period. Our neighbours generally hold reserves of 100% of annual expenditure, in one case substantially more. BF would like a system to use going forward – that this should be included in the financial procedures and set the precept in relation to an agreed figure for the reserve. After further discussion it was agreed to revisit the issue of an appropriate level of reserves at the September meeting, in advance of the December meeting when the precept will be discussed.

2. Letter from Quenington PC Councillor about planning application concerns

Ben Rambout has written to all the CDC parishes asking for support for a proposed letter to the CDC planning department. It highlights concerns that the CDC don't take enough notice of Parish Councils comments on applications. Most applications are now passed to 'Delegated' authority thereby bypassing any need to consider the views of the Parish Councils and of the Ward District Councillors. The letter asks the CDC to meet them to discuss the matter and would like to include our name on the letter. Since receipt there have been many parishes replying to agree to this.

BF felt that this was part of a drive to approve more housing. He suggested we discuss it with Andrew Maclean. It was agreed for TS to do this.

3. Filming Enquiry

The clerk has received an email from the location manager on behalf of Merman Films who are producing a TV commercial for MoneySupermarket. Wyck Rissington could be used as a backdrop for the main character's final destination after having returned from the shops. There could be a crew of 35 people and it is scheduled to take place on July 10th. Filming would take approx. 4 hours. There is budget to cover council fees. AF

called him before the meeting to enquire about RAMS and Health and Safety cover including Covid-19 precautions, and it was confirmed that this would all be in place. BF suggested that the VH committee should share any payment made as the crew would need to make use of the facilities. AF to contact him to arrange a meeting between the PC and the Village Hall. Mark and Kate Ransom kindly offered parking at Porter's Farm.

- **A.O. B.**

Another dog bin

It was agreed that another dog bin is needed at the other end of the village, best location being beside the track which runs from the corner at the bottom of the drainpipe.

The WRVH legal structure

A previously circulated document on the Village Hall legal structure was of concern to Kate Ransom. There is some confusion regarding the trustees of the Village Hall Charitable Trust, currently listed as Jeffrey Brain, Ian Meredith, Anne Smith and Robert Phipp. It turns out that none of them now wishes to continue as trustees.. However all the members of the village hall committee are listed as trustees on the Charities Commission website.

TS suggested that trustees should be independent and therefore not members of the committee. If the trust for any reason is wound up, the lease is terminated and the hall reverts to the PC. It was agreed that ET will follow up on this and produce an analysis, thus enabling a) correction of the information on the Charities Commission website and b) establishing the current trustees. The PC will then communicate with the VH committee. Andrew Ransom has indicated that he would be willing to be a trustee and possibly Jeremy Trinder.

Following the meeting the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee has explained that there are two types of trustees: 1) 'management' trustees who are the current Committee members listed on the Charity Commission website and added and removed by the Chairman as they come on and off the Committee and 2) 'property' trustees (i.e. the individuals named) who are separate, needing to be reviewed by the Council

Defibrillator

John Turner (Cherry Orchard) is qualified to assist and demonstrate the defibrillator and it was suggested he is asked to give a 'refresher' demonstration.

Date for the next Parish Council Meeting: Monday 6th September at 6.00 pm in the Village Hall