

WYCK RISSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of Wyck Rissington Parish Council (WPC) Meeting 23 March 2023

Councillors present:

Jeremy Trinder (JT) Chair, Brian Finnimore (BF), RFO, Esther Burdett (EB), Robert Montague (RM), Hilary Ponti (HP).

In attendance:

Mark MacKenzie-Charrington (MMC) County Councillor, Andrew Maclean (AM) District Councillor, Andrew Ransom (AR) nominee for Clerk, Elizabeth Ransom (ER) nominee for Minute Taker and 9 other members of the public

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks

JT welcomed all to the meeting noting that, exceptionally, the first substantive item, following Hazel McKinna's resignation, would be to appoint a Clerk and Minute Taker. The County and District Councillors' reports would also be brought forward before Matters Arising.

2. Appointment of Hon Clerk and Minute Taker

RM proposed and EB seconded the appointment of AR to be Hon Clerk and ER to be Minute Taker. This was approved.

3. Declarations of Interest

None

4. Apologies for absence

None

5. Approval of draft minutes from the Parish Council Meeting on 9 Dec 2022 and the EGM on 5 January 2023

These were approved without amendment and signed by the Chair.

6. County Council Report

The report had been posted on the Village website and MMC therefore focussed on issues which had arisen since drafting the report.

- a) On Sunday 23 April there will be a full test of the National Emergency Alert, in the evening. All mobiles will be rung, whatever their status. In sensitive cases of vulnerable people, special steps may be taken to override the settings.
- b) Fosse Cross waste centre no longer accepts vehicle tyres. Alternative locations for their disposal, for which payment must be made, will be identified.
- c) The County Council has allocated £1.4 million for opium users' treatment. MMC noted that over 60% of the Council's budget is directed to social matters.
- d) The housing growth in the County was placing considerable burdens on the infrastructure, particularly schools and water supply. He drew attention to access constraints affecting the new housing planned in Stow on the Wold towards Broadwell.
- e) MMC clarified that the small electrical recycling initiative allowed residents to place small items separately alongside their usual waste. It was noted that Techtronic in

Bourton on the Water also recycled small electricals for charity and the Tourist Office hosted a scheme for recycling ink cartridges.

7. District Councillor Report

AM updated the meeting on six topics. In all cases, further information can be found on the Cotswold District Council (CDC) website.

- a. Money has been made available for the provision of safer spaces for women.
- b. Starter packs of Fitness Kits are being provided for village halls, on request.
- c. The Planning framework now explicitly includes the criterion of energy efficiency when judging the merits of applications.
- d. Funds for a second stage feasibility study for the Green Route on the old railway have been made available. Whilst AM had favoured making more rapid progress by opting for a more rudimentary surface, he had been persuaded to maintain support for the more versatile though more costly surfacing option.
- e. As part of the national plan to shift water from the West to the East of the country, there are plans to transfer water from Severn Trent to Thames Water in a pipeline over the Cotswolds, which will follow a line affecting Naunton and Sherborne.
- f. The forthcoming local elections are the first to require photo ID to vote. This is not a requirement for postal voting. AM asked residents to be alert to instances where those less used to modern technology may struggle to assemble their Photo ID and to offer help.

8. Matters arising from previous meeting

EB clarified WPC's policies on memorial benches and trees. It recognised the generous intentions of those wanting to add to the amenity of the Green, but there were significant maintenance and ease of mowing issues. WPC has consulted residents whose houses abut the Green and there is a general preference for minimising further additions. Therefore, memorial benches will not be approved, whilst new trees will be permitted in those few instances where an existing tree is failing.

9. Finance Report

BF reported briefly on the current year's expenditure. It is likely that reserves will grow more than had been planned, given the pattern of expenditure. The end year Bank Balance was likely to be just over £8,000. In response to a query about the budget for the coming year, BF indicated that the policy on reserves would be key.

JT clarified the position of WPC on the precept. Its decision not to raise a precept in 23/24 was based on the lower costs expected to be incurred and in recognition of cost of living pressures on residents.

The Finance Report was signed by the Chair.

10. Planning Applications

EB reported that the Grafters Hotel application (Ref 22/04004/FUL) had been refused again and thanked those in the village who had helped make such a forceful case for its refusal. At a property adjacent to the site (though not known to be owned by the applicants) new gates have been installed, despite the expiry of planning permission which had been given in

2016. A member of the public had referred this to CDC, though AM observed that the enforcement arm of CDC struggled to follow up all enquiries.

BF warned that the period of time for consultation on the Wyck Hill Para 80 House (23/00417/FUL) was over, but **JT** noted that a comment from WPC after the deadline would still be taken into account. **BF** confirmed that the proposals are innovative, carefully avoid obtruding on the landscape, and the Clerk was asked to register the Parish Council's support.

AM responded to concerns about the length of time being taken to reach a decision on Wyck Cottage (22/02719/FUL). It is one of a number of cases where the work of Conservation Officers (all of whom are on contract and not CDC employees) has impeded the timeliness of decision making. He referred to the positive rule change which allows members of the public to attend Planning Committee meetings and to ask questions. He encouraged residents to take advantage of this ruling by attending in person to make committee members aware of the harmful impact of the current practices.

11. Correspondence Received

The pilot on-demand bus service is underway and the Clerk will circulate information on this more widely. Whilst the designated Wyck bus stop is, in fact, in front of the old garden centre at the top of the hill, drivers will, on request, come into the village. Councils have been asked to provide feedback, and **HP** agreed to respond positively on Wyck's behalf.

12. Litter Pick 2023

HP will circulate some possible dates to Wyck residents. The kit is stored in the Village Hall, and once key Health and Safety issues have been addressed, the work can start. The Risk Assessment would be tailored to the circumstances and simplified to avoid discouraging possible participants.

13. Update on flooding issues at Pear Tree Cottage and Heath Lawn

JT introduced this item by outlining the circumstances which had led to the matter being placed on the agenda. Previous owners of Heath Lawn and Pear Tree Cottage had sought permission from the Parish Council to install pipes leading across the Green from their properties. They, and subsequent owners, had taken responsibility for their maintenance as they are an important component of protecting those two houses against possible flooding. Following the extreme flooding in December 2020, it appeared that the current owners of the two properties disclaimed any responsibility for the pipes with the assertion that WPC was liable if they were not maintained. This challenge to the previous understanding thus needed to be addressed by WPC.

Accordingly, **JT** set out the issues in a paper circulated to the village on 21 February 2023. In response, on 23rd February 2023 the two owners made the welcome statement that it was not their intention to impose costs on residents of the village, and attached a report prepared by GCC on Wyck flooding.

Since then, **JT** has been made aware that the owners of Heath Lawn and Pear Tree Cottage are now prepared to accept an easement which will restore the previous practice. **JT** noted however that this was conditional upon the owners of the paddock adjacent to the village green and the owners of Olive Hill agreeing to demands being made of them by the owners of Heath Lawn and Pear Tree Cottage. **JT** concluded that this conditionality was not a matter

for the PC, the decision now in front of the Council is simply – is it prepared to offer such an easement as and when it is requested?

BF took issue with **JT**'s summary as being one-sided. Whilst the observations he wished to make were potentially wide-ranging, he was instructed by the Chair to confine his remarks to those with a bearing on the question in front of the meeting.

In the course of debate, much somewhat tangential to the decision facing the meeting, three issues were clarified.

- a. The GCC Report dated 25 November 2022 is not claimed by the GCC to be authoritative and its author is happy to amend it reflecting facts which have been drawn to his attention since drafting.
- b. The offer by GCC to meet with the Parish Council and affected residents, whilst intended to be helpful, does not need to be taken up. The Parish Council has a very limited locus in this debate, and the wider flooding issue's resolution depends on the interested parties reaching agreement amongst themselves. Completely separate from WPC, **AR** has offered to facilitate these discussions so outside assistance is not necessary.
- c. WPC's sole motivation is protecting the interests of all Wyck residents. It wished to place on record that it does not accept the overturning of previous arrangements.

The Parish Council confirmed that it was prepared to offer an easement to the owners of Heath Lawn and Pear Tree Cottage which would confirm the owners' responsibility for the maintenance of the pipes and enshrine this undertaking in their deeds.

14. Letter of congratulations on the Coronation of King Charles III

Traditionally, the village sends the monarch a letter of congratulation at the time of his/her enthronement. It was agreed that WPC should maintain this practice. A suggestion from Kate Ransom that the children of the village should be the ones to design and send such a letter was well received and she was asked, and agreed, to take the lead in organising this.

15. Any other business

The Hon Clerk reminded the meeting of the forthcoming elections. WPC is entitled to five members, and if no more than five names are put forward, there is no election. The costs of an election, if there is a contest, fall to the village. **AR** asked to be notified by anyone planning to stand, and he would ensure they completed the relevant nomination forms. Once officially constituted, the Parish Council can co-opt members.

WPC's RFO, **BF**, will be standing down at the end of March, though offering his name for re-election to remain on the Council. Residents thanked him for the work he had undertaken on behalf of the village.

On Easter Monday (10 April), teas are being served at the Village Hall to raise money for both St Laurence's and the Village Hall.

16. Date of next meeting

5th June but to be confirmed by **AR**