

Westerleigh Parish Council
Minutes of Full Council meeting
January 18 2016, Westerleigh Village Hall

Present:

Councillors: B Taylor (chair), J Butler, A Gibbs, A Fay, S Blackmore, G Jancey and C Nicholls

Interim Clerk: V Anderson

1897. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr D Boulton and M Crumpton.

1898. Declarations of Interest under the Localism Act 2011

Cllr Nicholls declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 11 (Manor Hall) and left the room at the appropriate time.

Cllr Butler declared a personal interest in agenda item 11 (Manor Hall) as they are independently appointed as a Manor Hall committee member.

1899. Appointment of the Interim Clerk

Following a brief introduction of the Locum Clerk by the Chairman it was proposed by Cllr Jancey, seconded by Cllr Gibbs and unanimously agreed that Mr Vernon Anderson be appointed as the interim Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer.

1900. Reports from South Gloucestershire Councillors on matters relating to the Parish

District Councillor C Young reported:

Planning issues

Policies, Sites and Places (PSP) Plan and JSP

The PSP consultation closed on Friday 8th January, the JSP consultation remains open until Friday 29th January.

19 Heath Gardens

At the committee meeting, initially a split decision was proposed – to approve the extension but refuse the garage on the grounds its prominent position would damage the visual amenity and street scene. The vote was lost and the whole application was then approved on a split vote.

Mafeking Hall

Concerns have been raised with both me and the case officer about the delay in discharging the conditions. The applicant was given until Friday 15th January to submit the plans, otherwise the application would be refused and the issue passed to Planning Enforcement.

Site opposite the New Inn, Mayshill

Following the council's refusal of a Certificate of Lawfulness application last year, a planning enforcement notice has now been served on the site where old lorries are being stored opposite the New Inn, Mayshill. The owner has until 25th January to lodge an appeal.

Planning enforcement

SGC legal services are continuing to work with officers to review the council's procedures covering when information (including information about planning enforcement matters) can be shared with third parties. Under the Data Protection Act 1988 councillors are prohibited from sharing with others – including both individuals and organisations (including Parish Councils) – personal data related to any enforcement case

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they are aware of. This applies to information obtained as a complainant as well as that obtained as a councillor.

Once information on any such cases is in the public domain – for example when Enforcement Notices are published, or the Courts publish details of forthcoming cases – then Councillors are able to share and discuss the aspects of those cases that others are aware of.

Network Rail

I am continuing to chase Network Rail about both the vegetation growing on the viaduct and their proposals for biodiversity offsetting related to the electrification works. I spoke to a representative most recently on Thursday 14th January, who promised to chase a response on both matters

Lorries parking on the road outside Sainsbury's

Before Christmas I had a complaint regarding a lorry parked on the road outside Sainsbury's, rather than in the loading bay. The local beat manager, PC Finbar Simmons, spoke to the manager of the store, who has spoken to their drivers and hopes that it will not happen again. However there is a concern that other lorry drivers may choose to park there, ones who are customers rather than suppliers.

A commitment was secured from the developer of the store to fund a permanent TRO if parking issues developed on Badminton Road as a result of the development. However, the original expectation on officers' part was that the problem would be due to customers in cars parking on Badminton Road, which could be addressed by the introduction of double yellow lines.

In the incident reported, the vehicle was unloading, which is not prevented by double yellow lines. To prevent that would require a loading/unloading ban. Officers are willing to promote this but it could have quite an impact on local residents. If objections were received the council would have to hold a public enquiry, with all its inherent costs and time delays.

The first step is to find out whether this is a regular occurrence. Therefore, could anyone who witnesses lorries parked on the road contact me with the details, including whether it was loading/unloading or simply parked there.

Shrub bed opposite Manor Hall

In the previous council, there were a number of concerns about the shrub beds opposite the Manor Hall, with regular complaints from residents that they were overgrowing the path. These were due to be removed and replaced with grass this winter, possibly with a low fence to discourage people from crossing at a dangerous point. I have recently contacted officers to find out when they plan to do the work and am awaiting a response.

South Glos budget consultation

The consultation has been updated to reflect a worse than planned for provisional financial settlement together with further information on potential new powers for the council to raise funds. The consultation period has been extended until 31st January to allow people to respond to these updates. The council can increase council tax by 1.99% without holding a referendum and in addition can raise a social care levy of up to 2% towards social care costs. Also, there are questions about payment of the Living Wage Foundation rate (which is higher than the Government's recently announced National Living Wage).

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Changes to the 86 bus service

South Glos is asking for your views on changes to some bus services, including the 86, which serves Coalpit Heath and Greenacres Park. More information is available on the consultation page of the website and the deadline for comments is 11th February.

Ha'penny Bridge and Broad Lane

Broad Lane is expected to close for 4 days from Monday 8th February for resurfacing and the Halfpenny Footbridge is expected to close for approximately 6 weeks from 20th February due to the electrification works.

South Glos Community Awards

South Glos Council is looking for nominations for the Chair's Community Awards by 31 January. Suggested areas of contribution include community development, promoting equality, arts, sports, play, environment, working with older or young people, advice and advocacy and being a good neighbour. A nomination form is available on the council's website.

Town and Parish Council Forum

On 13th January I attended the Town and Parish Council Forum in my role as my group's lead member on Communities. The Forum is open to the Clerks and Chairs (or their substitutes) of all Parish Councils, whether or not they are signed up to the Charter. One item was on the Avon Pension scheme changes and if this is relevant to Westerleigh Parish Council it would be worth making sure you have read the slides from the presentation, which I believe were to be circulated.

Dementia Friend

Just before Christmas I attended a South Glos training session on Dementia Awareness. Last year Yate Town Council employed a Community Development Worker to help make Yate a Dementia Friendly Town. Although there is obviously not the same range of services and shops in our villages, I would be happy to work with the Parish Council to see whether there is anything locally that could be done to help those with dementia.

1901. Reports from representatives of other bodies

The Interim Clerk read out a report from Cllr Crumpton regarding the youth working group. It was reported that the group had recently met and disappointment was felt due to the lack of replies for the tendering of the youth provision. Only one tender had been received which was identified as being expensive and as a result of this the working group are actively gathering information from two other interested parties and looking at a pared down provision of service. It was also reported that the working group were also interested in outreach work to engage with young people who maybe be susceptible to Anti Social Behaviour (ASB).

1902. Confirm minutes of meeting held 14th December 2015

Proposed by Cllr Blackmore and seconded by Cllr Fay the minutes were approved and signed.

1903. Matters arising

Cllr Jancey asked to discuss matters regarding personnel issues outside of the public session. It was unanimously agreed to defer the matter until after the meeting had officially closed to the public.

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1904. Finance - approve payment of accounts

Proposed by Cllr Fay, seconded by Cllr Blackmore and unanimously agreed that the list of payments presented be approved. All invoices relating to the payments were duly signed by two councillors.

To Whom	Details	Net	VAT	Gross
South Glos. Council	Grass cutting	381.48	76.30	457.78
The Head Groundsman Ltd	Grounds maintenance	865.00		865.00
Manor Hall	Room Hire	65.00		65.00
Mrs F Thornton	Salary Month 10	xxxx		xxxx
BANES	Pension contributions	389.57		389.57
HMRC	Tax/NI	572.49		572.49
Hands Property Maintenance	Dog/Litter bins	522.00		522.00
ALCA	Training Course 7/12/15	200.00		200.00

1905. Correspondence

The Chairman, Cllr Taylor, reported that an email from Mr Terry Smith regarding a proposal to restock Bitterwell Lake with fish had been received and that this was a later agenda item for decision.

The Chairman also reported that there had been communication regarding The Pound being included in the boundary of Burma House on a Land Registry document which is now being investigated.

1906. Planning Matters

None had been received since the beginning of 2016.

1907. Manor Hall – Council Representation

Cllr Nicholls left the room prior to debate.

Following Cllr Jancey's resignation as the council's representative a vacancy now exists. Following discussion it was recognised that there was no one available (other than Cllr Butler who already is an independent Manor Hall committee member) to take on the additional commitment therefore it was proposed by Cllr Jancey, seconded by Cllr Fay and unanimously agreed to leave the post open until such time a member has capacity and comes forward to volunteer. This would be reviewed at the beginning of the new Council Year.

1908. Queen Elizabeth II 90th Birthday

The interim Clerk read out a proposal by Cllr Crumpton to hold some type of event to celebrate and/or commemorate Queen Elizabeth's official 90th birthday which is 21st April 2016.

Suggestions included using Manor Hall car park but members thought it might be better to consider the fields behind if an outdoor event was to be considered as appropriate. Suggestions also included a permanent feature to commemorate the event.

The Chairman asked the public audience if there were any volunteers, Cllr Young (S Glos Councillor) would be interested if play areas were to be included. Cllr Fay was also interested in being involved if this event was including play areas. Mrs Alison Allan from Manor Hall also asked to be included if Manor Hall was to be the centre of events as she was responsible for health and safety regarding the Hall. The Chairman highlighted that the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, Dame Janet Trotter, was proposing to hold a party event involving elderly with 90th birthdays and maybe this could be tied in as a theme.

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Following debate it was proposed and agreed that Cllr Crumpton be asked to form a working party working with Coalpit Heath and Westerleigh community representatives which would include Cllr's Butler and Jancey and possibly Cllr Young, Cllr Fay and Mrs Allan.

1909. Disclosure Barring Service checks for councillors and staff

Cllr Jancey outlined a proposal to include all councillors and staff in DBS (CRB) checks which should be regularly carried out within a possible 6 monthly time frame.

The interim Clerk was asked to comment as he had experience of this. Mr Anderson's view was that it was only necessary when working directly (and alone) with young and vulnerable people and that there were different levels of checks, also having a criminal record does not barr one from becoming elected. Mr Anderson also asked members to note they were in public service as elected members and therefore did not fit the criteria as volunteers for discounted service charges.

Following discussion it transpired that two members already transportable DBS certificates. It was proposed by Cllr Butler, seconded by Cllr Gibbs that DBS checks should only be carried out when necessary. This was agreed by majority with one abstention.

1910. Recording devices

Cllr Jancey outlined a proposal to purchase and use recording devices at future meetings.

During discussion a PA system was also considered but the cost of this was prohibitive as several microphones would be required as well as the main amplifier.

After discussing the pro's and con's of using an appropriate recording devices it was proposed by Cllr Jancey, seconded by Cllr Nicholls and unanimously agreed that one should be purchased and used by the Clerk as an aide memoire until such time the written minutes are approved. The recorded meeting would then be overwritten or deleted.

1911. Restocking Bitterwell Lake

The Chairman read out a proposal by Mr Terry Smith with regard to restocking Bitterwell Lake with fish rescued from Bristol City Councils St George Lake.

Cllr Jancey raised a concern with regard to the proper licensing not being obtained from the Environmental Agency as he had recent communicated with the agency and they confirmed that this was outstanding. The interim Clerk asked Cllr Jancey to forward him the communication so he could follow up on the matter.

After a short debate it was proposed by Cllr Butler, seconded by Cllr Nicholls and unanimously agreed that permission be given once the interim Clerk has established that all necessary licenses and permits are in place.

1912. Council to ratify the precept sum for 2016/17

The interim Clerk asked for clarification that the agreed increase of 2% on precept was an increase on the overall precept demanded in 2015. This was confirmed as being so, therefore the precept to be demanded for 2016/2017 is £77,112.

1913. Review of Council procedures and policies

Members discussed the need to review a number of council procedures and policies. The list could possibly include developing a social media policy and grievance policy and reviewing the finance regulation and constitution.

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It was proposed by Cllr Jancey, seconded by Cllr Butler and unanimously agreed that the matter be brought back to Full Council at the next meeting to allow members time to consider which procedures should be reviewed and in which priority.

1914. Date of next meeting Full Council 1st February 2016 Westerleigh Village Hall

1915. Exempt Matters

Council agreed to go into exempt session for the final item to consider personal and personnel issues

Signed: Date: 1st February 2016