

Minutes of a Meeting of the Wroxton & Balscote Parish Council held on

Monday 8th January 2018 at 7.30 pm

at Wroxton Village Hall

Present Cllr Michael Robarts

Cllr Duncan Collins

Cllr Mark Harris

Cllr Nicky Hodges

Cllr Suzie Bates

Cllr John Daly

Cllr Miranda Ker

Clerk J Harris

In Attendance

Cllrs Douglas Webb and George Reynolds and 7 members of the public

1/18 Apologies

None

2/18 Declarations of interest

None

3/18 Approval of Minutes

To sign and approve the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 6th November 2017

Proposed by Cllr Collins Seconded by Cllr Bates

4/18 Public Participation

Cllr Robarts asked whether any members of the public in attendance had any questions or issues to raise. In response, there were questions as to responsibility for emptying the bottle bank on the A422 lay-by, the need to repair the 30mph sign at the western entrance to Wroxton which had been damaged in a road accident and a deep pothole in the middle of the A422 lay-by. These questions were addressed by the Chair. CDC are responsible for emptying the bottle bank. Road damage can be reported by any member of the public at any time on a web site called fixmystreet. The Clerk was requested to log the two points raised in these questions

5/18 Finance

a. Bank reconciliation

Copies of the bank reconciliation had been distributed to all Councillors. The reconciliation statement as at 08 January 2018 was signed by Cllr Robarts and the Clerk in front of the Council.

Proposed Cllr Harris Seconded Cllr Daly

b. Budget

It was noted that the cashbook analysis of expenditure would need to be amended before a draft 2018/19 budget could be prepared, but there was no reason to believe that substantial changes would be required compared to the current year. This would be revisited at the next meeting

c. Precept

In line with the discussion at the previous meeting, it was proposed to increase the precept by £2,000 to a total of £10,000, recognising the evidence of a long term likelihood that the Council's income from mast rentals would diminish and also the need to rebuild reserves so as to be able to finance projects within the villages. It was noted that the proposed increase would have a minimal impact on overall Council Tax bills. The precept currently accounts for just £28 out of a total bill of over £1,600 for a Band D property and the proposed increase would add only £7 to that total. It was considered preferable to raise the precept steadily over time, rather than waiting until the situation became critical and being forced into a substantial increase in a single year

Proposed Cllr Collins Seconded Cllr Robarts

6/18 Decisions

a. Council Governance

Cllr Bates confirmed that all the new policies had now been amended as agreed at the previous meeting, it was noted that it had been agreed at that meeting to adopt them

b. Widening of Chapel Lane, Balscote

Cllr Robarts reported that an estimate of £17,000 had been supplied by Highways for a scheme to reinforce the verge on the north side of Chapel Lane, out of which they were willing to meet the labour element of 45%. For the scheme to proceed between £9,000 and £10,000 would need to be funded by the community. He had approached Mr Evans who had led the complaints about the state of the verges to see whether Chapel Lane residents were willing to contribute at least 1/3rd of the required total. It was agreed to defer any decision on funding to the next meeting to allow time for this consultation process

c. Castle Water -The Clerk reported that this Direct Debit is now in place

d. Update on the gutters and footpaths in Shutford Road and Manor Farm Lane

Cllr Robarts reported that highways had cleared the moss and weeds although the work had been done while snow was on the road. Cllr Bates commented that the weeds had been cut rather than removed and that weed growth would certainly return within a matter of months. A more thorough exercise is required to eradicate them

e. Sports Club sub lease

Cllr Robarts reported that the Sports Club was encountering difficulties in getting the sub lease registered, but that it was now close to completion

f. Stonepit 5

Cllr Robarts reported that, as agreed at the previous meeting, Spratt Endicott were in the process of preparing a draft lease and purchase option on behalf of Apollo which the Council would then review. It is hoped to complete the documentation before the next meeting. The lease will oblige Apollo to re fence the site. This, together with rental payments of £500 annually (off settable against the sale price of £11,000 if the option is exercised) should put the Council in a position to make a new application to the Land Registry to register its title to the site on grounds of adverse possession. This in turn would be likely to trigger exercise of Apollo's purchase option

7/18 Planning

No objections to any of the listed planning applications

8/18 Discussions

A discussion took place regarding responsibility for gritting. Highways are responsible for road gritting. Highways fill the bins located in the villages at the beginning of each winter and will refill these if so requested at the expense of the Council. Residents are free to collect grit from the bins on a self help basis. Two large hippo bags of grit were offered to the Council a while ago and are stored by local farms but, without suitable lifting gear, it is difficult to make use of this material. Cllr Webb commented that unwritten advice had previously been provided by OCC to the effect that farms would be covered by their own insurance if they used equipment in support of the public good and the Clerk was asked to research this further. Cllr Webb also indicated that Highways are now willing to supply grit in more manageably sized bags of 25kg each. The Council registered its gratitude to Mrs Kerwood for volunteering farm equipment to clear the recent snow in Balscote

The Clerk shared that the date for the next round of Parish Council elections is the 3rd May 2018 and that Nomination forms for candidates will be sent to her for anyone to obtain. The meeting discussed various ways of encouraging other candidates to come forward

9/18 Correspondence

Oxfordshire Association for the Blind had requested a donation. It was noted that donations had historically been funded out of bank deposit interest which was now negligible and that recent donations had in any case been restricted to genuinely local causes. The question of donations, would be revisited at the next meeting

10/18 Any Other Business

The meeting noted the need for refresher training for the operation of the two AEDs installed in the villages and the need for younger volunteers to undergo training. Cllr Collins will assess the total number of candidates and arrange training. Wroxton and Balscote Village Hall Committees have upcoming meetings, a member of the Wroxton Village Hall Committee agreed to raise this at their meeting and Cllr Harris agreed to raise this at the forthcoming meeting of the Balscote Village Hall committee

Mr Bob Jesson expressed appreciation to the Council for their hard work over the past four years

The meeting closed at 20.35

Date of next meeting 7.30 pm Monday 5th March 2018 in Balscote Village Hall