

ST PAUL MALMESBURY WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on 23rd April 2025 at 18:30 in Crudwell Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Budgen (Chair), Hatherell, Briggs, Clogg, Jones, Ingham, Maslin, Merriman, Payne, Stephens and Smith (WC)

In Attendance: One member of the public

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the purpose was to allow the Council to report on the work it has undertaken on behalf of parishioners over the past council year, May 2024 to April 2025.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

3. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 24th April 2024 were adopted and signed as a true record.

4. PARISH COUNCIL REPORT FOR THE YEAR

The council continues to be very active on behalf of residents within the parish with a number of new facilities provided. All told it has probably been one of the busiest years for the council and its clerk.

In light of the continuing economic pressures facing residents in the parish the council has, through prudent management of its budget, been able to implement a small reduction (1%) in its local tax demand for 2025/26.

The council has undertaken a review of all policies and procedures and introduced revised versions where appropriate.

Planning

The following are the most noteworthy points of interest during the period

- In excess of 30 planning applications were discussed at council and comments submitted to Wiltshire Council (WC).
- The outline planning application by Miller Homes for 92 dwellings in Milbourne was refused by WC on the 27th September, however the developer has recently submitted an Appeal which will be considered by the Planning Inspectorate.
- The council along with representatives from the three parishes that prepared and delivered the Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan (MNP) are considering updating the Plan using professional assistance which will hopefully be funded by a government grant.
- Large scale speculative residential planning applications on sites within the town boundary continue to be submitted. The effect of these applications receiving consent will have a deleterious impact upon residents in the parish because of the additional pressure it will have on medical, educational and other services.
- Within the parish, two small scale speculative planning applications for residential development have been received for sites that the council considers are inappropriate.
- An intention to submit a planning application from Island Green Power (IGP), a company registered in Bermuda, for a massive solar farm development that will directly affect the towns and villages of Alderton, Corston, Foxley, Grittleton, Hullavington, Malmesbury, Rodbourne, Sherston, Whitley and Norton was received. As part of the planning process the company has conducted a community consultation into which the council has submitted comments following an extraordinary council meeting at which views from residents were received. The determination of the full planning application will be made by the government.

Highways

The council continues to be an enthusiastic member of the Local Highway & Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG). Other notable highway issues progressed during the year were

- The council has now installed six Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) within the parish - one each at the northern and southern ends of Corston, at the northern and southern ends of Burton Hill and on the B4042 by The Knoll and Sir Bernard Lovell Road, with an additional one approved on the C76 to the east of Milbourne.
- In addition to reminding motorists of the lawful speed for a particular stretch of road, the SIDs collect data such as number, speed and time of vehicles that pass it, this data is downloaded monthly and transmitted to Wiltshire Police for assessment and action. The locations of the worst speeding in the county can then be more accurately targeted by the Police's new mobile enforcement teams. Over 40 parish/town councils in Wiltshire are taking part in this initiative to make its roads in the county safer.
- The council has succeeded in convincing Wiltshire Highways to install high visibility halos over the globes on the pedestrian crossing at Burton Hill; visibility of this busy crossing has been much improved.
- The introduction of no waiting restrictions at the far end of Sir Bernard Lovell Road has been approved by Wiltshire Highways; it is anticipated that the required yellow lining will be completed in the coming months.

Projects

The following is a list of the council's current planned projects

- The council has completed the upgrade to the Rodbourne Road playing field. The new play equipment for all ages of children has been welcomed by local residents living on the eastern side of the village.
- The council has completed the installation of a year-round surface on the 41m footpath from the Cowbridge weir to link up with the permissive path into Malmesbury.
- The council has agreement from WC to transfer the small portion of land at Rodbourne Road to the council in order that this area can be used by local residents for allotments; the legal process for this asset transfer is currently in progress.
- The council replaced the bus shelter on the southern side of the Charlton Road, Milbourne following damage caused by a vehicle collision; the bus shelter now comes under the ownership of the council.

Finance

The council has

- successfully prepared and passed the External Audits of its accounts and processes for 2024, with no observations.
- no Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions were received in this financial year, however over £89,000 of the council's accumulated CIL funds were spent on the projects mentioned above.

Playgrounds

- Both the Chippenham Road and Rodbourne Road playing fields have undergone a monthly internal inspection with no safety issues reported. Both facilities passed their annual RoSPA inspections with only minor observations reported.
5. WILTSHIRE UPDATE BY COUNCILLOR MARTIN SMITH, WILTSHIRE COUNCILLOR FOR THE SHERSTON DIVISION

Planning:

With changes in the NPPF and reductions in the Housing Land Supply in Wiltshire, unfortunately speculative development around Malmesbury is continuing.

Cllr Smith has resisted plans at Park Road, Sherston Road and near Milbourne. However appeals are in

for these so it remains to be seen whether or not they get permission. It's clear that Filands and the A429 are liable to get busier over the coming years, so the PC will need to be actively engaging with highways issues in this area.

The Government is also suggesting that if councils refuse too many applications which are then overturned on appeal, they will lose their right to determine planning applications. This is yet more centralisation of the planning system; given that 90% of planning permissions are granted it is difficult to see what the Government's issue is.

Highways:

These continue to be a big issue with residents. The lack of maintenance over the last 15 years is all too visible. Just in time for the local elections, Wiltshire Council decided to up the amount spent on highways, with an extra £20M. This is spread over 2 years.

Speeding:

Talking to residents in Corston, they do seem to think that the SIDs have had an impact on reducing speed, so well done to the council for funding these and installing them.

WC Budget:

The budget for 25/26 was set at £527M. This includes £194M on adult services, £75M on families and children, £43M on highways, £50M on environment (includes waste) and £38M on education

Lime Down:

The statutory public consultation has ended. WC is expecting the developer to work through the feedback and make their submission to the Planning Inspectorate at some time in the autumn. Until then there is not much they can do, although the Stop Lime Down group are readying themselves for the next stage.

Sherston GP Surgery:

The ICB and the GPs in Malmesbury and Sherston have been meeting; the ICB appreciate that the Primary Care Centre can't just shoehorn the Sherston practice into their building but there appear to be lots of hoops still to jump through. It feels like a decision is still some months away so Cllr Smith is working with Roz Savage's team to see what is the best way to apply political pressure on the ICB. He thinks they will need the community to rally around again and show their strength of feeling on this matter.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Cllr Budgen asked when might the question of the Sherston surgery be resolved. Cllr Smith said it had been 18 months since the threat of a merger. The ICB made a big mistake, Sherston did not want to merge and 3500 people should not have to travel to Malmesbury. The Sherston surgery has two years until the lease runs out and it is struggling to recruit staff. The lack of parking and added pressure on the Malmesbury surgery with the additional houses along Filands were also mentioned.

A Rodbourne resident had informed Cllr Hatherell that at the second consultation Lime Down are now seeking to have a route off the A429, with a roundabout by Kingway Bridge straight through to the solar site. Cllr Smith stated J17 will have to be used by site traffic as it is not in the Cotswold National Landscape, unlike J18.

7. DATE OF THE NEXT ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

To be agreed.

Cllr Budgen thanked Cllr Smith for his report and all his help during the year and thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 18:50

..... Chair

..... Date