

ST PAUL MALMESBURY WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on 26th April 2023
at 18:30 in Crudwell Village Hall

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

In Attendance: Two members 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 2022 to April 2023.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Jones.

3. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 27th April 2022 were adopted and signed as a true record.

4. PARISH COUNCIL REPORT FOR THE YEAR

Cllr Budgen reported the past year had again been very busy and successful for the Parish Council with a range of activities undertaken and some of their important projects either completed or well advanced. The following are some of the main points from the last twelve months:

Personnel & Administration

The council, along with significant numbers of residents, submitted comments into the Wiltshire Council led parish boundary review as a result of a proposal by Malmesbury Town Council to incorporate a large area of the St Paul Malmesbury Without parish into the town. The proposal was dismissed in September 2022.

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

In light of the economic pressures facing residents in the parish the council was, through prudent management of its budget, able to reduce the local tax for 2023/24 by 11%.

Planning

The following are the main points of planning activity during the period

- In total 55 applications were reviewed and comments submitted to Wiltshire Council (WC).
- WC Enforcement, at the behest of the Council, has investigated a number of breaches to planning consent at various locations around the parish, some remain on-going.
- WC continue to be unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of land/sites for housing across the county which has resulted in all the adopted neighbourhood plans in Wiltshire that are more than two years old suffering considerably reduced planning weight.
- The council has joined a working party of representatives from the three parishes that prepared and delivered the Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan (MNP) with an objective of updating the current plan to enable it to conform to the 2-year criteria. After an informal consultation in the autumn, a formal Regulation 14 consultation is presently in progress. It is anticipated that the amended plan will be adopted later this year.

- The Council, along with many other parish councils in the County, is participating in the revision of the Wiltshire Council Local Plan 2016 - 2036

Highways

The council continues to be an enthusiastic member of the newly expanded Local Highway & Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG). Four highway improvement requests were submitted by the Council at locations in Corston - by Nigeria Cottage and Southside Close, Filands - 4014, and Blick's Hill - A429.

The council was successful in obtaining Wiltshire Highways to accept the need for the speed restriction of 30mph in Burton Hill on the A429 to be extended south to Burton Leaze Cottages, some 500m. It is anticipated that this change will be introduced on 5th June.

The Council has

- completed the installation of an all-weather surface along the permissive element of the Cowbridge to Malmesbury footpath.
- in partnership with Wiltshire Highways, completed an extension to the Milbourne footway to allow pedestrians to walk in safety around the blind corner in the centre of the village and remain clear of oncoming vehicles.
- commenced the upgrading of the Rodbourne Road playground in conjunction with input from local residents.
- purchased two sets of village gates for installation in Milbourne.
- purchased two Speed Indicator Devices for installation in Corston and Burton Hill.
- introduced an improved website, through a specialist local government provider, to make it easier for residents to navigate and remain informed of parish activities.
- planted trees in Milbourne, with donations from residents, and the Chippenham Road playing field to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Finance

The Council has

- successfully prepared and passed the External Audits of its accounts and processes for 2022.
- received £90K in Community Infrastructure Levy contributions in this financial year, with £60K already spent and about £50K committed to 'live' projects.

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

Boundary Review:

Much effort was expended in participating in the Parish Boundary Review; this involved walking some of the proposed boundaries with Town Councillor Paul Smith and Wiltshire Cllr Gavin Grant.

Despite much debate at both Town, Parish and Wiltshire Council committee meetings no compromise solution could be reached and the committee reverted to the status quo.

Although the Town has this back on their agenda, the view of Cllr Gavin Grant is that further proposals are going nowhere without solving the problem of Milbourne. The Town's proposal was based on

Milbourne joining either Charlton or Lea, which had very little support in either community.

Planning:

Cllr Smith was pleased to be able to argue against the appeal for the new houses adjacent to the Corston Nature Reserve and hopes that the basis on which the appeal was refused will deter developers in future.

He also sent out a street letter in Burton Hill in 2021, to encourage more residents to respond to a planning application for self-build houses; pointing out that it was outside the Neighbourhood Plan. It was pleasing that the application was refused in August of last year.

Highways:

Cllr Smith has assisted the Parish Council in getting the speed limit extended at Burton Hill and the SIDs installed in Corston and Burton Hill. The external power socket for the SID deployment is now in place and the speed limit extension is due to be operational on 5th June.

Another small victory last summer was to have the white lines repainted at the key roundabouts at Filands by Dyson and Aldi, the Whychurch roundabout and the Priory Roundabout near Waitrose. The Zebra crossing there was also done.

Obviously pot-holes have been a nightmare over the winter; this hasn't been helped by the transfer of the highways maintenance contract from Ringway to Milestone. The transfer has not gone smoothly and there appeared to be a few weeks in March and April when almost no work was undertaken on the highway. More pothole fixing is in evidence now so hopefully they will be able to catch up.

The council did announce that they have received more than £26M in Government funding for highways maintenance including resurfacing and £3.7M to target potholes. It sounds like a large amount of money until you realise it's the same amount that they were given last year. Considering current inflationary pressures, this will present a major challenge.

Wiltshire Council filled 11,130 potholes and completed 28 major resurfacing projects in the last financial year. Earlier this month a senior Wiltshire Highways officer informed Cllr Smith:

"Wiltshire Council, like many other local authorities, is suffering with a deteriorating road network and reducing budgets by which to address the problems.

The Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance survey (ALARM) recently published their findings in relation to highway maintenance. Local roads underpin all other local services, but the ALARM findings show a worsening picture in their overall condition. Full carriageway resurfacing now takes place across the country, on average less than once every 100 years. Local authority Highway budget shortfalls in 2022/23 were at record levels and the estimated cost of repairs across the entire network is estimated at just over £14 billion.

Rising costs and inflationary pressure means that despite a modest increase in council highway budgets, engineers can now do less and are forced to postpone or even cancel much needed maintenance schemes. This has a negative impact on the network's resilience, and this is evident to all who use the network and the large number of potholes reported daily."

Public EV Charging Points:

There have been a number of meetings to see whether there was any interest in installing electric vehicle charging points at Cowbridge Mill. The Management Company are interested and surveys are currently underway to see whether suitable electricity grid infrastructure can support public charge points.

6. GUEST SPEAKER MAUREEN INWARDS REGARDING THE PROPOSED READING ROOM REFURBISHMENT

Mrs Inwards thanked the council for the invitation and for its continued support of the Corston Reading Room and explained that she was one of four Trustees. Back in 2017 the plan was to refurbish the rear

extension of the building housing the kitchen, toilet and storage areas. At that time the £30,000 raised, plus £10,000 s106 funding were insufficient to cover the cost of the build. There were then delays due to Covid and estimates for the work are now 50% higher and builders require them to have 80% of the funds in place. The current planning consent is due to run out in September this year.

In 2020 permission was withdrawn for users of the facility to park at the nearby pub, as a result nearly all hirers were lost and it no longer attracts external users. It is hoped to obtain permission for a small car park at the front of the playing field.

The building has deteriorated with a leaky roof, rotting windows and a hole in the floor. The plan now is for an interim fix to make the extension waterproof and, on behalf of the Trustees, requested that the dedicated s106 contribution held by the council is used for the purpose of this interim repair.

Cllr Budgen replied that he would need to confirm with the WC officer responsible for s106 Open Space funding approvals whether this slightly unorthodox use of these funds was permissible. This approval would need to be in writing as s106 agreements were lawful documents. It was requested this be done as soon as possible.

7. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Cllr Hatherell requested to know the housing allocation for the parish for the next local plan. Cllr Budgen said the chair of the Neighbourhood Plan working party has an action to contact WC Spatial Planning to identify what progress has been made confirm figures for the MNP area which covers the parishes of Brokenborough, Malmesbury and St Paul Malmesbury Without. Cllr Hatherell also requested Cllr Smith to do so.

As there is an on-going issue of potholes and financial constraints, Cllr Hopkins enquired whether Cllr Smith could use his influence to ensure that potholes are filled in properly and professionally. Some recently repaired along Common Road are appearing again within 3 weeks. This is a waste of money unless they are repaired properly.

Cllr Stephens raised concerns with the amount of infrastructure around Malmesbury Primary Care Centre (MPCC) and is it taken into account whether it can cope with all the new development. Cllr Smith explained that new developments are outside of the Area Plan. Physically the MPCC has the capacity to increase but in terms of staffing probably not at the moment. There is also an issue that Sherston Surgery only has 4 years remaining on its lease and if a new place cannot be found, patients may have to go to Malmesbury.

8. DATE OF THE NEXT ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

To be agreed.

Cllr Budgen thanked Cllr Smith and Mrs Inwards for their presentations and thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 19:02

..... Chair

..... Date