BROAD CHALKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the 1031st Meeting of the

Broad Chalke Parish Council

held remotely via Zoom Pro

Wednesday 9 December 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Mr T Hitchings (Chairman)

Mr M Pickford (Vice Chairman)

Mr D Gilbert

Mr E Fry

Mr J Allison

Mrs E Richter

Mrs H Newman

Councillor J Green

Mr S Dawes and Mr T Moss (by invitation)

The Clerk, Mr C Rothwell was in attendance.

**Introduction by the Chairman** covering meeting protocol and arrangements for enabling councillors and members of the public to speak.

If a vote is required, those attending by video will be asked to raise their hand until they have been advised that their vote has been recorded. Any members attending by telephone will be asked to express their vote vocally.

Members of the public are reminded that the Council cannot make any decisions on matters that do not appear on the agenda. If members of the public have questions about matters not on the agenda, they are requested to contact the Clerk outside of the meeting.

There were no requests to attend the Zoom meeting from Members of the public.

1. **To receive apologies for absence.** Apologies were received from Mrs R Holland who has now stepped down, and from Mr T Cave-Gibbs and Mr J Dutson.
2. **To record declarations of interest from Members regarding items on the Agenda.**

There were none**.**

1. **Chairman’s Announcements**.

**Co-option of Councillors:** The Chairman briefed the meeting on the procedure for appointment of new councillor to replace Mrs Holland during the Covid-19 restrictions on elections. An advert has been placed and will remain open until elections are announced (possibly 13 May 2021) in the meantime the Meeting unanimously voted to co-opt Mrs Richter on to the Council. Mrs Richter duly accepted.

The Chairman also put to the meeting and it was unanimously supported that Mr S Dawes and Mr T Moss be co-opted onto the Council but not as voting councillors, the Council being at its full compliment of 9 following the co-option of Mrs Richter.

It was also agreed that all new members have their details entered into the Village Directory as serving on the Council.

1. **To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 November 2020 as a true and accurate record**. Agreed
2. **Matters Arising from the November 2020 Minutes**.
* **Website improvements-** Tim Moss talked the Meeting through the trial page that he had created as an example of a more interactive website. There was significant discussion on the best way to proceed with the Council’s website. It was noted that it is not very appealing and only receives very low volume of ‘hits’. It was also noted that there are other village websites that do a very good job of promoting the wider activities of Broad Chalke, most noticeably the site that John Burrows has established.

The Clerk reminded the Meeting of the accessibility requirements for public body website but also that the Council’s site is primarily to set out the functions and work of the Parish Council and not as a vehicle for wider village promotion. It provides information on the statutory functions of the Council and that of Wiltshire Council, but it is not its function to promote tourism or activities. This would require a significant departure from current purpose and with cost implications that are not budgeted.

It was agreed that there should be a review of the site but that this should concentrate on making it more accessible; including links to other village websites; and bringing it more up to date and relevant to encourage interest but that its focus remains on the business of local government locally.

**Willow Trees.** The Chairman confirmed that draft letter has been drawn up and is to be sent to the owner of the trees.

* **Low Lane Footpath.** Mr Fry advised that he had been in contact with Wiltshire Highways but had received no response. Cllr Green suggested contact with Alex Howson (Wiltshire Council’s Rights of Way Officer) as there are funds available.
* There was considerable discussion as to whether the footpath should be something the Council seeks to upgrade. It was put to the Meeting that it is used so that the busy High Lane can be avoided and that its current conditions (as well as the bad weather and that it is at a level close to the water table) is a result of it being well used. Mr Gilbert advised the Council that if there were to be any works it would need to take account of the springs that rise along it so it would not just be a simple task of laying stone.
* On balance, the Council agreed that it was worth looking into further in light of apparent level of use and as alternative thoroughfare to High Lane, and because of possible funding through the ROW Team. The Clerk to write to Mr Howson and invite to a site meeting. Councillor Green would also mention it to him as a possible priority for the village.
1. **To agree the budget for 2021/2022.**

The November Meeting had discussed the budget detail and agreed amendments that have been recirculated with the Agenda.

The Chairman set out the importance of the budget being based on need and considered that discussions at both the October and November Meetings had arrived at a budget that satisfies this requirement. There may be a need to call upon reserves for unexpected expenditure, but this year in particular, increase should be kept as low as possible. The Clerk advised that a Precept of £9,487 represents an increase of £3.88 for a Band D property from £26.31 to £30.19. Some of this increase is out-with the Council’s control there having been a reduction in the Council’s tax base from 321.82 to 314.21. In percentage terms it will be an increase for Band D of 14.7%.

The Chairman proposed and Mr Gilbert seconded that Broad Chalke Parish Council’s precept for 2021-2022 be set at £9,487. This was unanimously agreed

1. **Introduction to PC Pete Simmonds, Wiltshire Police Rural Crime Team.**

Unfortunately, Wiltshire Police are not permitted to attend meetings via Zoom and so PC Simmonds submitted a written introduction that was circulated to the Council with the Agenda.

1. **To receive report from Wiltshire Councillor Jose Green**

Councillor Green encouraged the Council to play an active part in establishing priorities for the South West Area Board and the JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment). The Clerk has an initial list of priorities any Councillor that feels there are other issues and priorities that should be added to contact the Clerk as soon as possible.

Councillor Green advised the Meeting of the Local Plan Review and commended Broad Chalke on its draft Neighbourhood Plan and the housing allocations it desired.

Councillor Green also raised Wiltshire Council’s Carbon Reduction priority.

There then followed discussion on the Chalke Pyt telephone mast application that the Council had resolved that it had no objection to at a previous meeting. A resident had raised the matter with Cllr Green. The Meeting felt it important to support appropriate applications that improve communication infrastructure and the position of this mast at the top of Chalk Pyt Lane was felt to not be an adverse impact on the village but would improve telecommunications for people that live and work in the village, and visitors.

The Meeting also discussed Bundy’s field and the disappointment in the length of time following Planning Enforcements notice for the field to be cleared of the unsightly mess. The Clerk updated the latest information from Wiltshire Council; that the Enforcement Officer had been in contact with the owners and would be following up again in January 2021.

1. **To receive Finance Report from the Clerk.**

The Clerk advised the Meeting of balance of funds in the Council’s bank account and of payments since November meeting.

1. **To receive report on highways and drainage matters and to discuss the position of standing water on The Causeway/South Street.**

The Clerk had circulated a full report summarising the issue and recent chronology. This is appended to these Minutes.

The Clerk summarised the current position; the discussions and site visits that had taken place; and the recent correspondence with the landowners.

The Clerk had also sought advice from Wiltshire Council, and reminded the Meeting of the information provided by the Environment Agency last year as set out in the report.

After lengthy discussion it was unanimously agreed that, with the flooding on the Causeway getting worse and mindful that any works in Mill Mead would be difficult due to current waterlogged conditions, the Council has no option but to request that the landowner undertakes appropriate work to clear the drainage ditch. It was agreed that a reasonable time frame for a plan of action to be provided would be 4 weeks, bearing in mind Christmas and New Year but also that action is a priority and is needed at the very earliest opportunity.

The Meeting instructed the Clerk to progress with the first stage of Wiltshire Council’s process in connection with maintaining ditches and watercourses and issue formal letter to landowners.

1. **To receive planning applications**
* 20/09838/FUL: Two storey extension at Underhill, South Street.

Concern was expressed about a large beech tree but it was confirmed that an earlier TPA had approved its removal. There being no highways issues or other concerns the Council agreed that it had no objections.

1. **Groundsman’s Report**

Mr Allison updated the meeting on experience now he was three months in and that he found the majority of the work very enjoyable. The incidence of littering and other aspects of clearing up not as pleasant. Mr Allison wished the Council to note that additional funds were required to maintain wider areas to a better standard and the Clerk confirmed that the budget agreed at item 6 included 5% uplift in Groundsman budget. Any improvement works first need to be agreed by the Council and it was recognised that some areas may not be able to be maintained to a higher standard as funds are unlikely to be available to extend beyond the current schedule of works.

The Chairman commended Mr Allison on the standards he had set and this was echoed by the Meeting.

1. **Schedule of Meetings for 2021**

These were agreed as second Wednesday in the month at 6.30pm via Zoom until such time as F2F meetings are allowed to resume.

1. **Date of Next Meeting.** 13 January 2021 at 6.30pm via Zoom.

**Other Matters**

* Mrs Richter updated on FTTP and advised the Council that on checking the Open Reach website, FTTP is already available.
* Mr Pickford raised flooding at Longbridge. Mr Fry advised that the Parish Steward had indicated that work was due to be undertaken

**The Meeting closed at 8.10 pm**