

BYFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Frances Williams
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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 9 MAY 2024 AT 7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillors: John Gillic (JG) – Chairman; Pom Boddington (PB), Michael Burdon (MB), Christl Davis (CD), Barbara Ridyard (BR), Simon Shepherd (SS) and Nick Thompson (NT)

Others: WNC Ward Cllr Rupert Frost (RF), the Clerk and 8 members of the public

		Action
1.	Declarations of interest in items on the agenda: None.	
2.	To receive and approve apologies for absence: Lindsay Clark (LC) and Santon Crowshaw (SC)	
3.	To elect a Chairman: It was RESOLVED to elect John Gillic for a further term as Chairman, and he duly signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office before the meeting.	
4.	To approve the minutes of the meeting on 16 April 2024: It was RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the meeting as an accurate record and they were signed by the Chairman.	
5.	Matters Arising: None	
6.	Chairman's Announcements: JG reported that the Fiveways Benefice had appointed a new Rector, Rev'd Claire Glover - it was agreed that this was excellent news. He also provided a brief update on the recruitment process for a new Clerk.	
7.	<p>Public Participation:</p> <p>a. A member of the public asked if the Parish Council would support an approach to the operators of the 200 bus service to consider a diversion to Middleton Cheney twice daily to drop off and collect students at Chenderit School. Byfield being outside the catchment area, parents are currently transporting children by car; as well as being more ecologically sustainable, the proposal would provide much-needed additional revenue for the bus operator. Although a similar proposal earlier had met with a negative response, it was noted that Stagecoach was now under new ownership and WNC Cllr RF observed that as the 200 service was heavily reliant on subsidy, it might be of interest. He noted that a separate proposal had been made to alter the route in Staverton to serve residents of the approximately 1100 new houses currently being built, and offered to help facilitate a discussion.</p> <p>b. A resident asked if a one-way system could be considered in Banbury Lane, Bell Lane and New Terrace to alleviate parking and traffic issues around Byfield School. JG pointed out that the Parish Council has no authority on Highways matters but could approach WNC if it considered it a significant issue, and it was agreed to add this to the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.</p>	RF Clerk
8.	Report from the WNC Ward Councillor: Regarding parking in Jubilee Close, RF reported that, although he had succeeded in buying some time for an acceptable solution to be found, if there was no progress soon it was likely that WNC would proceed with their plan to erect bollards preventing residents parking on or driving	

	over the verges. JG observed that, if the Parish Council were to fund the creation of parking bays, it would need to borrow funds which would necessitate a public consultation; he had doubts that other residents would support a costly solution to provide parish council funded parking and access for one street only, but only a proper consultation would gauge support. On Highways matters in general, RF reported that meetings he had set up with representatives of parish councils and Kier had been constructive and he hoped this would lead to improvements.	
9.	Proposal for a Byfield relief road and possible next steps: Nick Coleridge's presentation to the Annual Parish Meeting had met with a mixed response and he had suggested a poll to ascertain villagers' views. It was agreed that any such exercise should be as accessible and fair as possible, to reflect all views. At the APM a villager had mentioned a survey/consultation process and JG agreed to forward details for Mr Coleridge to follow up. Councillors expressed concern that a relief road could bring unwelcome development, risked "killing" the village and that disruptive HS2 traffic would disappear in any case when the project was complete. No Parish Councillor felt they had the capacity to be involved in such a significant long-term project, therefore any "campaign" would need to be led and managed by Mr Coleridge. It was RESOLVED that, in view of the opinions expressed at the Annual Parish Meeting and concerns felt by councillors, the Parish Council should not support an active campaign for a relief road at this time.	JG JG
10.	To agree to renew the Clerk's membership of the SLCC: It was RESOLVED to renew this subscription, based on cost-sharing with Badby Parish Council, and on the understanding that it could be transferred to the new Clerk.	Clerk
11.	Finance: a. The (unaudited) 2023-24 full year accounts were approved. The Q4 2023-24 bank reconciliation had been checked and no issues found. b. (i) The 2023-24 internal audit report was received. (ii) The 2023-24 Annual Governance Statement (AGAR Section 1) was completed and approved. (iii) The 2023/24 Annual Accounting Statement (AGAR Section 2) was approved. (iv) The dates of the Exercise of Public Rights were noted i.e. 3 June to 12 July. c. <i>Income received from 11 April to 3 May:</i> First half precept (£40,883), Aura Wind Boddington (£3,738.23), VAT paid in March (£192.38), Burial Ground fees (£312), Brightwell Pavilion beer glasses refund (£40.78). d. <i>Fund balances at 3 May:</i> Current account £7,321.07, deposit account £108,221.58. No uncashed cheques, total funds available £115,542.65. e. It was RESOLVED to make the payments detailed on the updated schedule. f. It was agreed that JG, CD and the Clerk would review NALC's new model Financial Regulations and produce a recommendation for the Council.	Clerk Clerk JG, CD, Clerk
12.	Planning: a. <i>New application: 2024/2143/FULL.</i> It was RESOLVED to support the application. b. <i>Approvals:</i> Application ref. 2024/1539/FULL at High Banks, Bell Lane. c. <i>Refusals:</i> None. d. BR had circulated a copy of the presentation following her recent attendance at NALC's "Planning Nuts and Bolts" training. It was noted that a Neighbourhood Plan could offer protection against unwanted development and agreed to find out more about the costs and work involved. e. There were no other planning matters.	Clerk Clerk

13.	<p>Highways:</p> <p>a. It was agreed that SS would meet with Raybell or another contractor licensed to undertake works on the Highways, to discuss possible solutions to parking issues at Jubilee Close and likely costs.</p> <p>b. JG will contact the parishioner who at the Annual Parish Meeting requested more attractive signs at the entrances to the village and ask for her ideas.</p>	SS JG
14.	Rights of Way: NT continued to familiarise himself with the various footpaths.	
15.	<p>Council Property:</p> <p>a. It was RESOLVED to install a soakaway along the fence line at the Scout HQ and additional drainage, at an estimated cost of around £1,500.</p> <p>b. It was RESOLVED to improve the steps from the lower car park to the Brightwell and install a second handrail and approx. 9m of post-and-rail fencing, at an estimated cost of around £725.</p> <p>c. It was RESOLVED to contract a “weed and feed” of the cricket and football pitches at the Brightwell, at a cost of £360.</p> <p>d. There were no other updates or new matters.</p>	JG/Clerk JG/Clerk Clerk
16.	<p>Burial Ground and Closed Churchyard:</p> <p>The pedestrian gate to the Burial Ground was not opening easily and it was agreed to see if it shrinks with the onset of warmer weather. There were no other updates or new matters.</p>	
17.	Lights and Utilities: There was nothing new to report.	
18.	<p>Allotments, Pocket Park and Environment:</p> <p>a. PB noted that the central bed is very overgrown and might require professional attention. She will discuss with Charlie Manton and find out what it would cost.</p> <p>b. NT had drafted some ideas regarding nature notices which he would present to the next meeting.</p>	PB NT
19.	Playground: It was noted that MB’s ideas presented to the recent Annual Parish Meeting for improvements to the playground facilities had been well received.	
20.	Arrangements to commemorate Remembrance Day: As the local branch of the Royal British Legion had closed, the Parish Council might be expected to lead the organisation of this year’s Remembrance Day commemorations – JG will discuss with Caroline Crewe.	JG
21.	Arrangements for the AGM of the Brightwell Recreation Ground Association: It was agreed to include setting up a regular standing order to the BRGA on the agenda for the next meeting. JG will draft an agenda for the AGM to which representatives of the clubs using the BRG will be invited, on Thursday 30 May in the main hall at the Village Hall followed by refreshments. PB kindly offered to organise tea, coffee and biscuits, and JG will provide drinks and snacks.	Clerk, PB, JG
22.	Reports from Representatives of Village Organisations: CD advised that the WI had asked to borrow the Parish Council’s gazebo for their cake stall on the Green, and this was agreed.	
23.	Date(s) of Next Meeting(s): 30 May (BRGA AGM), 13 June (full council meeting)	
24.	Close of meeting: The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30 pm.	

Signed:

Date: