

MINUTES OF WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON Wednesday 10th November 2021 at the Village Hall
Withington, at 7.00 PM

1. **PRESENT:** Cllr Glenys Webb, Cllr Bruno Brenninkmeijer, Cllr Catherine Boyce, Cllr Alex Barrell, Cllr David Miles, County Cllr, Paul Hodgkinson the Clerk/RFO and 9 members of the public, including the Deputy Area Highways Manager Mr D Tiffney.
2. **APOLOGIES:** Cllr Jane Gibbs, Cllr Nicky Lowe, District Councillor Robin Hughes
3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA. None**
4. **MINUTES of the Meetings** held on the 15th September 2021 were circulated prior to the meeting to Councillor's.

The Chairman updated that Cllr Dunrossil is currently in hospital and wanted to wish her a speedy recover.

Progress report and comments on the meeting held: 15th September 2021

5. Matters Arising

The Clerks was asked to write to EE about the issue of emissions of the new EE Telecom tower, as it is running on a generator which is supplying power 24 hours a day and the issues this is causing to the environment – The Clerk has not heard back from them but there have been contractors on sight connecting up the power supply and it should be connected tomorrow.

The Issue with the street name from Compton Rise to Brassington Gardens has been raised with CDC and they have agreed to action a street name to this road.

The letter to Mr Clifton Brown was raised as the Clerk asked for some help with this. Cllr Brenninkmeijer will help the Clerk with this.

It was updated that the Church Clock has been update.

6. Road Closures in Withington

Due to the ongoing issues with the road closure at the Mill Inn Cllr Hodgkinson arranged for Mr Daniel Tiffney the Deputy Area Highway Manager – Cotswolds to come along to the Parish Council Meeting to answer questions. The current situation has caused great concern in the village and in particular over the last 3 weeks as no work has been carried out.

Cllr Webb thanked Mr Tiffney for coming to the meeting and the following concerns were outlined:

No work has been carried out on the Mill Inn Roof since the 3rd October. Mr Tiffney said he has spoken to the main contractor, and they had allowed for some delay in work in the original application but that they are waiting for an inspection report. The roof will need to be redesigned as the roof supports are no longer suitable for a listed building. The roof is in a more serious condition when they took the existing roof off. The Mill Inn was originally a

thatched roof and then it had a stone roof which was much heavier. The current roof structure will not support a similar roof. A new design will need to be approved by Cotswold District Council Planning dept and this will delay the work. It is expected that the report will be ready next week, Week commencing 15th November. It is hoped that it can be turned around by CDC in around 2 weeks.

The size of the scaffolding was queried, Mr Tiffney said the licence on the carriage way is to ensure safety which is the most important thing. It was felt that no vehicle could pass that part of the road safely. He said that once a licence has been approved, they are then not able to reverse it. The original scaffold assessment was put in place, so that the roof could be covered with a solid temporary roof to stop any water entering the roof space, this allows the work to be carried out in all weathers and will be quicker in the long term but did mean that more scaffolding was required to hold the temporary roof. It was put to Mr Tiffney that the time of year the scaffolding had been approved for had not been properly considered. The impact to the village is unreasonable and short sighted, especially in the winter months.

Mr Tiffney was asked if the road closure width can be narrowed to allow traffic to pass on a one-way system? It was pointed out that the road has been closed currently for 3 weeks, we now need to wait more time for it to go back to planning, it is not a realistic timeframe, that the work will be carried out by the 3rd Jan and so it is expected that an extension will be applied for. Mr Tiffney was asked in light of this can the road be opened up until the contractors have a plan to proceed with the work, it is no benefit to anyone being left closed at the inconvenience of the villagers.

Mr Tiffney was asked why the highways cannot put their foot down and use some influence to reopen the road until the builders are in a position to continue work on the roof. Cllr Brenninkmeijer asked that when the application was submitted, he suggested that highways were misled by the contractor, the work will be very intrusive to the village, and this was not taken into account. Mr Tiffney said he intends to have a meeting with the main contractor, The Project Manager for the Brewery to put questions to them and to let them know the great concerns, and the strength of feeling in the village. He said they can ask questions, but we cannot make them take the scaffolding down, highways do not have that power.

Mr Tiffney was asked about the contingency for bad weather in the village as the closed road is the main artery to exit and enter the village, the other roads out of the village are steep and difficult when you meet oncoming traffic. The closed road is the only one able to be open in bad weather. Mr Tiffney said that they have added the road to Compton Abdale onto the primary gritting route which will enable that road to be gritted. It was agreed that if it does snow then the villagers will not be able to get out even if it is gritted. Mr Tiffney was asked if this was considered when the application was granted, it is the worst time of year to close the main road, villagers are having to detour 5 miles to get out of the village, if there is bad weather this year what will happen to emergency services being able to access the village, the demographic is of an elderly population and if anyone slips or trips with the ambulance service under so much pressure currently, the village will be in a terribly vulnerable position.

Mr Tiffney was told that a lot of the village rely on food deliveries, if these are not able to come to the village, quite a lot of people are still isolating, and depend on the deliveries as there is no shop and limited bus service. It was pointed out that on one of the roads out of the village at Kings Head Lane there are 3 gritting tubs which have been damaged by hedge cutting and various contractors. There is only a handful of grit placed in one of the 3 tubs, this is not acceptable now that the roads need to be kept open, Mr Tiffney said he would look into this.

Mr Tiffney was asked why the other access road out of Withington had not been repaired before the main road out of the village was shut as some are in a terrible state. Mr Tiffney said they are currently undertaking repairs but that is causing difficulties as the roads are so

busy and large highways vehicles blocking those routes are not helping the situation. He was asked why this was not done before the road was shut. He said this was to do with the scheme of works they have and was not planned into that scheme. Mr Tiffany said they do not have enough resources to do this repair work on all roads that are closed. He said that the repair work will be carried out but that it will not be a full repair.

The "What's App" group in the village have been mainly focused on the road closure, families have reported the frustration of having to get children to school up a steep hill then walk back and drive to work through the diversion which can put 5 to 10 miles on a daily journey. This has been a further strain on villagers due to the increase in petrol costs, it was felt that due diligence was lacking in planning this, Withington is a small village, and their lives were totally overlooked in the process of granting this closure. Some villagers who are nervous drivers and who have to take these alternative narrow lanes to leave the village are finding it very difficult. Mr Tiffney was reminded that as he is concerned about safety what about these villagers and the intrusion and effect this is having on their lives and health and safety by shutting the main arterial road out of the village and then no work is being done on the roof for weeks.

In recent months the village roads were closed for a film crew and for work on the drains by Thames Water. The constant closing of roads does not seem to have been taken into account and the people in the village have had enough. It was updated that Villagers are still waiting to be notified properly that the road will be shut by the contractor, there is no evidence they gave the whole picture to highways in the application. It was also updated that a couple of weeks ago the high winds and bad weather brought down cables at Compton Abdale and the village was shut at both ends for the whole day, whilst contractors were brought in to sort out the cables that had come down. The Kings Head lane had branches down and so it was very dangerous to get out of the village.

Thames Water have also applied to carry out work to install a new drain at the other end of the village and have suggested a time frame of January to carry out the work which will mean closing the road at Compton Rise, this will cut the village off completely. Mr Tiffney said he has spoken to Thames Water, and they are happy to delay their work until the Mill Inn work has been completed.

Summarise

The scaffolding needs to come down until the work is resumed

Better time of year to have done this work

Parish Council and Villagers not involved in the discussion early on in terms of safety

Demographic of village is elderly. The Villagers need to have access to emergency services

Mr Tiffney asked if the Parish Council could help with the decision for the new design of the roof of the Mill Inn by asking them to expedite the work.

Mr Tiffney was asked if a representative of the Parish Council could attend the meeting with the contractor. It was agreed that it would also be good if Cllr Hodgkinson could also attend.

It was also agreed that the meeting should if at all possible be held in the village so that they can see the impact it is having on the community.

Cllr Boyce took the opportunity at the end of the meeting with Mr Tiffney to talk about other highways issues which effect Foxcote, which is also in this Parish. She updated that some contractors arrived in our lower lane this week - to finish the stream bank reinforcement work over the next week or so. Potholes have also been marked - (presumably for repair at some stage), but not yet sorted. They have put some red hatching on the road at the top of the Foxcote lane at the dangerous Kilkenny junction. Cllr Boyce thanked Mr Tiffney for all the work his dept have done on this junction and said they will still continue to monitor the speed

along that stretch of road as there have been another 2/3 accidents along late road in the last few weeks.

7. Planning application and updated:

21/03962/LBC - Mill Inn remedial support to cheeks of chimney breast to north-east gable and repair displacement to the masonry, deep pointing any fractures and re-bedding loose and displaced masonry units.

21/03977/LBC - The Old Rectory, Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BG
Repair of South entrance steps, East side steps, two bridges and passageway walls

21/04055/TCONR - Trees – at Manor Hall - copy to Cllr Brenninkmeijer.

Chamaecyparis lawsoniana- large clump of coniferous trees to be clear felled, due to excessive shading of two large Native Fagus sylvatica which form an avenue, they are of low amenity value and the area intends to be re-landscaped around a summerhouse with botanically beneficial small trees, shrubs and herbaceous perennials. No.900, No.1901, No.1902, No.1903, No.1904, No.1905- Thuja Plicata- Large clump of Western Red Cedar to be clear felled.

21/03976/TCONR – The Close - Crown Prune/Crown Reduce lime trees T1 - T7 in submitted tree safety report – to Cllr Brenninkmeijer

21/03875/FUL - Land Parcel, South East Of Hill View Withington - Erection of a single dwelling and associated works - Variation of Condition 2 (drawing numbers) of permission 20/03130/FUL to enable installation of additional rooflight and flues

There were no comments or issues with the above planning applications

8. Website Project – There was no update on this project.

9. Vacancy for Councillor – It was updated that we still have vacancy for a new Councillor, as there were a number of concerned members of the public at the meeting Cllr Webb asked if anyone would be interested in joining the Parish Council and if so could they send the Clerk an e-mail.

10. Finance

As Cllr Lowe did not attend the meeting the Clerk will arranged to have the cheques signed outside of the meeting.

Cheques were raised for the following:

- Clerks' salary for August and September for 37.5 hours £339.00
- No payment to HMRC
- Play Area grass cutting there were another two invoices from Andy Cox for £25.00+£25.00+£40.00 = £90.00
- Payment was made to PKF Little John for the Audit £240.00

Cllr Brenninkmeijer signed the bank statement spreadsheet

11. Update from County Councillor Paul Hodgkinson

Cllr Hodgkinson updated on the Covid rate in Gloucestershire which is the highest rate currently in the country. He said figures are not as bad as January but there are currently 70 people in hospital with it in the county currently and it is clear that the NHS locally is now under a lot of pressure, as is the ambulance service. He encouraged all to have their Booster jabs – All those aged 50 and over (plus those who are clinically vulnerable) can now book their booster jab online.

Fosse Cross Recycling is closed from Monday 8th November for essential site repairs.

Residents are able to book at any other site, including [Pyke Quarry HRC](#) or [Shipston-on-Stour in Warwickshire](#), during the closure period.

Cllr Hodgkinson also updated on Cop26 – Chedworth are holding a climate summit on the 20th November to discuss green issues, this is a drop in session and everyone is welcome to go along.

13 Any Other Business

Mr David Craig had written to the Clerk about the lack of football nets in the Play area the Clerk passed this onto Cllr Webb who said that there were some but they had been removed due to vandalised some years ago. They were put in a storage container, and she confirmed that we still have them. It was suggested that Mr Craig attend the next Parish Council Meeting to discuss further and look at some volunteers needed to put them back up. Mr Craig was at the meeting and will look for volunteers to put them up. The issue of the fence behind the nets was also raised and Cllr Brenninkmeijer said he had a contact for someone to look at a repair.

14. Date of the next meetings:

The next meeting will be held on the 12th January 2022 at 19.00

The following meeting after that will take place on 23rd March 2022

Meeting closed at 20.50