

MINUTES OF WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

MEETING Held on Wednesday 8th January 2025 at the Village Hall Withington, at 19.00.

1. **PRESENT:** Cllr David Craig, Cllr Glenys Webb, Cllr Catherine Boyce, Cllr Mike Viney, Cllr Alex Barrell, Cllr Nicky Lowe, Cllr Bruno Brenninkmeijer, County Cllr Paul Hodgkinson and 2 members of the public and the Clerk/RFO.
2. **APOLOGIES,** District Councillor Jeremy Theyer
3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**
Members were reminded to declare any interests that may arise during the meeting.

MINUTES – TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20th November 2024 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

4. **Questions from members of the public that are not on the agenda.** None raised.

5. **Setting the Precept and Budget for 2025/26**

Finance budget papers had been produced with a forecast up to the 20/12/2024 which shows the Parish Councils position. Last year's costs were £5,900 which are more than were budgeted for, but the upgrade of the website was budgeted for in a previous year's budget.

The precept for this financial year was estimated at £7100 which is an increase on last year, but takes into account an increase in grass cutting, repairs to the playing field, a rise in postage, parish clerks' hours and Microsoft hosting. This does not include a possible purchase of a laptop for the new clerk or increased bank accounts fees from January 2025 and the condition of the current sat bins which are also in a poor state. There are a number of things that the Parish Council will need to think about including a maintenance strategy for the village for the assets they have. This was discussed. The list of expenditure was scrutinised. Councillors asked members of the public in attendance if there was anything on the list that they should not be doing. Everyone agreed that there was nothing on the list that was not necessary. There was a vote on the Precept and the Councillors all agreed the increase from £5900 per annum to £7100, this was unanimous.

08/01/2024 Action 1 The Parish Council is conscious that the increase is high, they would like to explain the detail of the budget increases to the public at the next AGM meeting on the 7th May 2025.

08/01/2025 Action 2 for the clerk to send back the precept form to Cotswold District Council before the 31st January.

6. **Planning updates and applications - including road closures-**

24/03571/FUL Landscaping including replacement of tennis court, pool house, garden pavilion The Old Rectory. This was discussed, Parish Council had no comments. All voted in favour of the application.

24/03632/TCONR Works to trees Paddock House, Wood Bridge Lane – for information only.

24/03761/LBC Listed Building consent for structural repairs to the barn which has recently collapse at the Old Rectory. No comments all voted in favour of this application.

24/03838/TCNR Works to Trees, Manor Hall Withington – information only.

25/00029/TCNR Works to trees in conservation areas for T1 - large Ash. Tree Fell to ground level. at The Old House High Street Withington Cheltenham. The Parish Council has concerns about this application as there is very little information including details on the website. The concern raised is that the Forestry Authority guidance has now changed, that it is now only recommended to take down Ash Trees where they effect public rights of way or highways, even if they have dieback. The reason being that they now have no idea if a tree can survive ash dieback and are trying to create a natural stock of resistant trees which are not easy to find if they are cut down. The Parish Council would also like to know if the tree will be replaced and what with. At this time no other documents have been submitted.

08/01/2025 Action 3 for the clerk to ask for more information.

7. Playing Field trees

There was a Leylandii tree which had fallen down during the last storm and caused some damage to the roof of the pavilion. It was updated that this will be dealt with when they repair the windows and guttering. The issue is that there are a number of other Leylandii trees in that area which are also looking in poor health or have died. The Parish Council discussed what we do about that. There is an issue with picking up the felled tree as machinery cannot access the site without causing damage at this time, it is currently cordoned off. The Tree Surgeons who undertook the work to the fallen tree, recommended that all the other trees are taken out. It was agreed that this will happen when the ground is firmer and machinery can access the site.

8. Clerk/Accountant role.

The role has been advertised on GAPTC, (not yet appeared), it has also been posted locally. There are also a number of Clerk/ Locums advertised on the GAPTC website, which might be an option. It is up to the Parish Council to contact them regarding availability. Cllr Craig also asked that if anyone knows of anyone who might be willing to take on the clerk's role could they please let him know.

Accounts work – Cllr Brenninkmeijer updated that this is in place, he said we are just waiting for the handover as there has been some illness.

9. Village hall meeting update from the 7th December meeting

There was a Xmas event on the 7th December in the village hall with attendance from members of the Parish Council to look for ideas for the village and to publicise the village hall.

The improvements are, painting of the hall and to sort out the Ash Trees and overgrown land at the back of the hall. The flooring is down. At the meeting ideas boards, were placed around the hall. The main issue is to get people to run the various suggestions. There were 72 ideas raised, but they are mostly things that will cost money, the committee are still trying to get ownership amongst the community for the playing field and Sue Smith who lives in the village is actively talking to families to take part in activities that don't cost anything. Cllr Craig is also supporting her and will look at how to take forward the list of suggestions for the village hall. He will circulate a copy to the Village Hall committee and the Cllrs on the Parish Council.

08/01/2025 Action 4 Cllr Craig to send out copies of the suggestions.

10. Clerks update – Discuss any outstanding actions on the table, (circulate ahead of meetings)

Cllr Webb updated that she does not want to continue being the main contact when the defib is activated. Sue Smith volunteered to help her with this, Cllr Webb will be a back up. **Closed** Information to be updated on the Defib website.

2000 trees, invite organiser to the March Meeting. Cllr Viney will send an invite.

Community emergency plan – DCllr Theyer brought this to the Parish Council, Cllr Brenninkmeijer will ask him if there is a template of some sort for the Parish Council to use.

Planning enforcement – discussion on how to deal with this issue and take it forward. Cllr Brenninkmeijer will work on an e-mail wording and the new clerk can send the e-mail., once they are in place.

Bollards at paddock house were discussed as being on highways land. The Parish Council will look to write to the home owner and highways. Cllr Brenninkmeijer will do look at some wording that can generically be used. There was also a discussion on Willowside who have also put some bollards in and they are large and sizeable. The Parish Council is not sure if they have permission to do this.

Highways - Compton Abdale to Withington road repairs – update from CCllrs Hodgkinson. He has raised this and not heard anything else, the Parish Council has also raised this. He said we can only keep asking. Cllr Craig said the road on that stretch is used by HGV's and there is other usage from diversions that have been put in place and caused significant damage. Pot holes have got bigger and at the bottom, the river bank has collapsed. Cllr Hodgkinson said that Highways have been out, someone is going out to look at what else can be done. The rest of the road might need raising again with Anne Johns and he will raise it again with her.

Cllr Hodgkinson has found out who the officers are who dealt with the mobile speed camera that was proposed outside Foxcote. The issue is that Shire Hall are not currently doing anything else with speed cameras along the A436 as there is going to be a much bigger road safety scheme. No one has any additional information at this point that they will share.

Audit the Parish Councils assets - discussion on how this can be carried out. On hold.

Playing field fencing – the last update was that Castlethorpe homes are no longer around and not responding to e-mails. Cllr Craig has spoken to the site agent. This was an offer in kind to help repair the fencing to the value of £4,000. Currently none of the houses have sold and so pushing at this time was not felt constructive, this will be put on hold, until further notice.

Playing Field inspection - Cllr Viney has been dealing with this and it is booked in for February.

Village Green - householder agreed transfer, with some restriction to use of the land.

Village Hall donation agree level of donation for 2025. Use of village hall 6 meetings per year and £600 is budgeted as a donation. Voted on everyone was happy with this arrangement.

Missed rubbish collections – this has now been resolved.

Recycling of rubbish has been raised on the Withington What's app, they want to know where all the rubbish goes and how is it recycled. Some householder have concerns as they have

seen rubbish that was separated put back in the rubbish lorry altogether. Cllr Hodgkinson has asked about this and CDC gives it to a recycler on the A419. Note for Jeremy to ask the question.

11. Finance – payment of invoices.

Cheques raised, Clerks hours £306.20, HMRC £.76.60 DD Wickmedia Ltd £83.28.
Withington Village Hall £24.00 Community Heartbeat trust £151.20 Dry stone wall repairs £350.00.

12. County Councillor Paul Hodgkinson, Update:

Cllr Hodgkinson updated that just before Xmas the new government produced a White paper effectively instructing Councils to move to Unitary authorities. Gloucester, currently has 2 tiers. There has been no discussion, the reasons being it will be cheaper and simpler. Less staff, less councillors, the downside to this is that the Unitary Council will be more remote. Potentially Parish and Town Councils will have more powers devolved to them.

GCC will be setting its budget in February their proposal is 4.99% uplift CDC £5.00 per year uplift.

River pollution since the last meeting he attended the meeting between GCC and the Water companies. The disappointment was that the CEO of Thames Water did not attend. They did hear the plans are going to go ahead to spend money on the Andoversford pumping station.

13. AOB –

Publication of the revised register of electors is about to be published, and Parish Councils are entitled to receive a copy. The Parish Council were asked if they would like a copy and they declined at this time.

Packaging has now been changed to the responsibility of individual firms which is a saving to District Councils. Cllr Bruno said we ought to encourage councils to reflect that in their council tax statements of information and where that saving will be utilised.

14. Date and time of the next meeting –

5th March 2025 (invite Representative from 2000 trees).

7th May 2025 AGM (explanation of budget increases)

9th July 2025

10th September 2025

12th November 2025

Meeting Closed at 21.00