

MINUTES OF WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING Held on Wednesday 24th July 2024 at the Village Hall Withington, at 19.00.

1. **PRESENT:** Cllr David Craig, Cllr Glenys Webb, Cllr Catherine Boyce, Cllr Nicky Lowe, Cllr Mike Viney, District Councillor Jeremy Theyer. Also, in attendance seven members of the public, Harvey Sherwood and the Clerk/RFO.
2. **APOLOGIES:** Cllr Alex Barrell, Cllr Bruno Brenninkmeijer and County Cllr Paul Hodgkinson.
3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**
Members were reminded to declare any interests that may arise during the meeting. Cllr Glenys Webb declared an interest on item 11 (Village Hall) as she sits on that committee.
4. **MINUTES – TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8th May 2024** were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.
5. **Questions from members of the public that are not on the agenda.** None raised
6. **Planning updates and applications - including road closures-** (If information is available after Microsoft outage, was down when papers were being downloaded.)
24/01962/FUL Extension of existing conservatory at 17 Brassington Gardens. For the clerk to send the information around outside the meeting as it was not available for members to look at before the meeting. **(the PC supported this application)**
24/01830/FUL Old Rectory - amendment Variation of condition 2 (Approved plans) of permission 21/04372/FUL - Erection of two-storey extension to the north elevation and associated works. Last application which was granted has minor design adjustments are required and resubmission. **(the PC have nothing to add to this application).**

Clerk updated on road closures – **this will be added to the village “what’s app group.**

7. Internal Audit Report

The AGAR was signed by the Chairman outside of the meeting due to time constraints. The Clerk asked for the Parish Council to approve the accounts from 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024. This was proposed and seconded, and all were in favour.

The Clerk updated on the internal audit report. – There are two parts, a statutory output for the AGAR and an internal audit for the Parish Councillors to be aware of. The matter raised last year on the PAYE and HMRC have now been resolved and the action is closed. The WPC fine paid to HMRC (£295.40) for a late payment in 2023/24 has been addressed through PAYE tools and a direct debit set up to pay HMRC direct. Online banking would permit timely payment of invoices. (this has been paused until a new clerk has been employed by the Parish Council).

Wickmedia invoices paid by cheque have not been cashed since Feb 2021. Internet banking would resolve this problem. Cheque raised 24/07/2024.

Action 1 24/07/2024 as soon as practicable to move to an on-line bank account. For the finance group, to have a conversation about this and take it forward as the bank will only deal with authorised signatories on the Account, suggested at least 4 signatories on the account going forward.

8. Update on Conversation with Anne Johns (Local Highways Manager) and Craig Church, Highways and small works lead outside of meeting.

Actions undertaken outside of the meeting June 2024 - Cllr DC had a conversation with A Johns and Craig Church Highways and small works lead – Updated on recent history with closures, lacking response and historical attitude. Any issues at all from Parish Council send to A Johns. She accepted an invite to attend a Parish Council in principle, but her location and family responsibilities make this unlikely. They have however, agreed to come out and look at the village to better understand the villages difficulties, re- road closures Any small works such as grass or safety notify Craig.church@gloucestershire.gov.uk. Preferably batch small work to fill a half day unless they are safety related. Always point residents to www.fixmystreet.com in first instance for potholes. Always use three words to pinpoint location. Cllr Craig to send an annotated satellite view to highlight problem access routes (woodbridge lane and Compton Abdale)

Action 2 24/07/2024 Cllr Craig was asked to raise with highways the need to review what was previously asked of them, around better signage on Woodbridge lane as all traffic is diverted down there when roads are closed and to ask that if that happens it is made one way as it causes so many problems. Also, that the sign states that it is unsuitable for lorries or HGV vehicles.

Cllr Boyce added that they have heard back from the County Council on the community speed group that they have now accepted that there is a significant amount of speeding traffic on that road, after they put the speed camera pole up on the wrong side of road, they have updated that they may have other plans that are more appropriate on that road, and were going to contact the Parish Council which as yet has not happened. Cllr Boyce will chase this up with them.

9. Harvey Sherwood Measuring and Improving Water Quality in our section of the River Coln. Mr Sherwood gave a brief presentation on the state of the River. It was agreed a good idea to put something on the What's App and village website to raise awareness. Debbie Campbell is setting up a social media platform to set up a group of citizen volunteers in Withington, as this needs to last it will be aimed at parents and children. Teaching children about sampling the water and things to look out for. It was agreed things like that can make a difference, it was agreed that having an understanding around what is put down the systems at home will also help. Mr Sherwood will send additional information and updates on a submission to Ofwat with a proposed template letter in support of increases to Thames Water funding commitments to address investments at Andoversford sewage plant.

Action 3 24/07/2024 Mr Sherwood was asked to send an electronic copy of his documentation so that it could be published on the village What's App.

10. 2000 Trees next steps, Licence

The clerk updated on the licence for this festival this was discussed. It was updated that there has not been an update meeting with the organisers since 2016. As part of the licence, it states that a post festival meeting will be held with the Parish Council. The clerk updated on the history of the work carried out to try and get the festival organisers to meet with the Parish Council. Mrs J Chappell who is in contact with the organisers offered to contact them and ask them to contact the Parish Council it was agreed this should be looked at as an opportunity to re-establish comms and discuss future events.

Action 4 24/07/2024 For contact to be made with the 2000 trees festival organisers. So that post event meeting can be arranged.

The clerk also updated on the temp event notice which is on the CDC website for an Operatic event being held at Willowside farm.

11. Contribution to the Village Hall – to be tied in with agenda item 13 Playing field equipment, Swings, Bin, fencing.

Playing field equipment – audit report identified a number of issues. Cllr Viney updated on the state of the play equipment, the majority of which is wear and tear. He updated that some pieces of equipment will need repair and washing. Swings seats need replacing. Smaller swing has some repair work needed. He will do some research on the costs. One of the metal struts that comes off the swings has a break in it due to rust and will need replacing. Cllr Viney will look into these issues.

Action 5 24/07/2024 It was picked up that the damage to the swing legs should have been picked up by the Playing Field audit. It was agreed that we need to have a professional opinion from them as to whether the swings can be repaired or decommissioned. It was agreed it was something they should have picked up on and it was not in the report. Cllr Viney took the telephone number of the company and will speak to them.

A letter has also been received from a villager about the spikes on the top of the swings and there was a discussion as to what is needed on them. It is a deterrent for birds. It was agreed that they are needed right across the top of the swings. One of the recommendations in the report is to replace them with cable ties. It was also suggested by Cllr Theyer that a small metal plaque should be on the swings and is also needed for safety compliance.

A parent raised concerns about the size of the hole left in the play area which was left after the dangerous tree was removed.

A parent also raised concern that there is no litter bin in the playing field. It was updated that the last one was set on fire and used for dog faeces and babies' nappies amongst other things and so a decision was taken to remove it. As CDC will not empty it as the Parish Council do not pay Council Tax and they would have to pay for the bin to be emptied. The old bin was emptied by a Councillor who removed the waste and it was felt it was unsustainable and unreasonable to ask someone on the Parish Council to do that. Cllr Thayer said that he had asked recently for a dog bin to be positioned in another parish and CDC are not taking on emptying any new bins. A solution was therefore discussed.

There is a lot of rubbish left in the playing field, broken glass, and the parent who raised this spent a lot of time collecting the rubbish. It was suggested that there should be a community clear up. Ultimately the community needs to take ownership to manage the play area. The Parish Council are happy to support people to keep it clear of rubbish and encourage the community to take responsibility for the area. Cllr Craig has messaged the parent and will wait for a reply.

Action 6 24/07/2024 to bring a group of people together who use the playing field to encourage them to work with the Parish Council to take ownership and see what needs to be done to the play area.

There was an update on the village hall garden tidy up. This included parents and children which was great to see.

Fencing – Castle Thorpe homes proposal to replace the fence was discussed previously. The proposal is to erect mesh fencing. Part of the quote is to clear the old concrete and old posts and gain access to do the work. Cllr Craig has asked if the village clear the area will they still contribute the fencing. He is still waiting to hear back from them. Cllr Craig will chase this up. A number of ideas were put forward as to what could be used as an alternative such as an environmentally friendly hedge.

The Chair to the village hall asked if there will be a contribution to the village hall, it was agreed that yes there would.

12 Clerks advert – The clerk passed over her letter of resignation which states that she will no longer be Clerk as of the end of 2024. Currently the post has not been advertised. Cllr Brenninkmeijer is working on the Job description. The Clerk had some more adverts from GAPTC which are similar to her role for the Parish Council to look at.

Action 7 24/07/2024 for Cllr Craig to find out where Cllr Brenninkmeijer is with this, when he is back from his travels. The Clerk to send the link to the information about GAPTC to Cllr Craig.

13. Review of Councillors Roles and balance of workload

Cllr Craig raised this agenda item as he feels that there was a need to discuss the various roles that need to be cared for within the Parish Council. Currently there are the roles for: -

Chairman, Cllr Craig

Deputy Chair and Tree Warden, Cllr Brenninkmeijer

Finance lead, Cllr Barrell

Cllr Craig asked what else Cllrs thought needed to be done. It was felt that the environment is becoming more important, so a role dedicated to that is important, a focal point for matters that effect the Parish. He asked for Cllrs to think about this and come back with any thoughts on new roles that are required. This will include the playing field which may need some dedication, also perennial actions and notes that take up the Clerks time. Currently Cllr Brenninkmeijer is looking at the clerk's role and how it can be distributed amongst Cllrs

Action 8 24/07/2024 Cllr Lowe was interested in taking on the role of Councillor responsible for environmental matters, this will consider issues on behalf of the Parish Council. Cllr Craig asked her to think about how the role will be defined and what that role will include.

14. Village Wall repair (Pulhams)

A small section of the wall has been demolished by Pulham's – it was agreed to contact them and agree to them repairing it. The Clerk will respond back to them. Agreed that when it is repaired they will be asked to contact a Cllr Barrell to oversee it so that the Parish Council is happy with the repair.

Action 9 24/07/2024 for the Clerk to contact Pulham's and ask them to repair the wall.

15. Ownership of the Village Green – Cllr Craig updated that this is not far off being resolved. The Old Maypole house inserted in its deeds a clause that should the Parish Council require a transfer of ownership it will be granted. So, he updated that we only need to ask them.

Action 10 24/07/2024 for Cllr Craig to write to the owners of Maypole and ask them to transfer the ownership to the Parish council of the village green. It was agreed the Parish council will cover the costs.

16. Bin Collections, Concern from Foxcote that missed collections are reported on the CDC website, general issues with collections.

Cllr Boyce raised an issue in Foxcote as at the minute there is a lot of concern amongst resident that recycling collections is unreliable, especially since the day was changed. Some parts of the village are completely left out of the recycling collection run. Also, Foxcote does not appear on the CDC website on the list for missed collection notifications. Therefore, there is no way for them to be reported. This is also happening in other villages. Cllr Theyer will raise this with CDC.

Action 11 24/07/2024 for Cllr Theyer to raise this with CDC.

17. Clerks update – Discuss action table, (Check drop box before the meeting)

The Clerk is still chasing the kings head stables enforcement notice, 2 letters have now been sent. Short staffed in planning. So still outstanding. Cllr Theyer will try to chase up with them as well.

18. Finance – Clerks Salary, HMRC, Village Hall, Wickmedia

The Parish Council were updated on the Wickmedia issue where the cheques have not been banked. This has been going on since 2021. The company has now issued a spreadsheet of all outstanding payments including the work on the new website. A statement has been received and reviewed. Some of the old cheques can no longer be banked so the outstanding amount was agreed to be £1991.76. It was suggested that 4 invoices are not paid as they are so old we can no longer reclaim VAT as there is a time limit to do that. On that basis, it was requested that we ask Wickmedia to issue a credit note for those cheques and we will then be able to claim the VAT on them. This will be for about £144.00. A cheque for £1847.76, will be raised which includes the website and was in last years budget. This was agreed.

Andrew Cox - £160.00
Clerk £475.00

19. Update from County Councillor Paul Hodgkinson County Council Update:

Ambulance response times - Cllr Hodgkinson has been reacting publicly to the latest ambulance response times for the area. Despite all the great work of the paramedics and first responders he said he will need to see these figures getting much better so that we can all be reassured that if we fall badly ill a crew will be with us quickly:

Category 1 (emergencies): average target time to get to the patient is 8 minutes. The worst two areas in Gloucestershire are Bourton Vale and Northleach - both at 22 minutes.

Category 2 (very serious cases like strokes); average target time is 18 minutes. The worst times in Gloucestershire are Chedworth and Churn Valley and Bisley - both at 1 hour, 2 minutes.

He updated that currently this area is the worst in the county for category 2 response times. He has raised this again with the ambulance bosses for some answers and solutions, but they acknowledged that without more resources this won't change.

Planning application nearby – Cllr Hodgkinson updated on one application locally - Rendcomb Airfield: This issue has rumbled on for years and has now been decided by CDC's Planning Committee. The airfield's owner applied for a variation to the original Section 106 agreement from the 1990's, asking for the regularisation of and an increase in the maximum flying hours of aircraft for commercial purposes (including wing walking). The Committee decided unanimously to agree with the planning officer's recommendation that the request be declined.

Road signs - A number of road signs covered by vegetation has been raised again. They are illegible or completely invisible.

To report anything the community is urged to go to www.fixmystreet.co.uk online at Gloucestershire County Council. The only way forward is to keep the pressure on Highways and collectively get some action on this.

Village Hall - The grant money has been approved for upgrades to the Hall via GCC's "Build Back Better Fund".

20. Update from District Councillor Jeremy Theyer

The CDC audit is now complete. There has been a small windfall of 900k of monies due back to the council.

There will be issues over the next 12 months as there is a short fall of 4m which is needed to replace aging Rubbish and collection fleet which needs to be revamped.

Cllr Theyer passed on the Ermin ward report as below, he was asked if he is a member of the Withington Village WhatsApp group as he could post it directly onto that.

Action 12 24/07/2024 for Cllr Craig to send Cllr Theyer the link to the village WhatsApp group.

A new Interim Enforcement Team Leader started mid-June.

Report a fly tip here: [REPORT FLY-TIPPING](#).

CDC are asking if anyone would like to be a fly tipping guardian? Kev Lea, Enviro-Crimes Programmes Officer, says, "The role of a Guardian is to support our work in fly-tipping hotspots. Being a Guardian can take as much or as little of your time as suits you!

If you are interested in becoming a 'Fly-tipping Guardian', please email Kev at ERS@cotswold.gov.uk

FREE CAR PARKING IN CIRENCESTER - Weekends and Bank Holidays, free parking is available at St James Place Headquarters on Old Tetbury Road (GL7 1FP)? This is the open-air carpark on the Old Tetbury Road, on the left just before the Leisure Centre. Also at weekends and Bank Holidays, there is free parking at the CDC offices in Trinity Road, and at Queen Street (just off Victoria Road).

21. Correspondence (received outside of the meeting)

David Broad is our rep on the Cotswold National Landscape formerly the AONB Board. He has decided to try to resurrect his CNL group 4 Parishes Facebook Page. It did not do well last time he tried to form the page but is hoping for a better response this time. It now seems the AONB is to remain and AONB albeit renamed Cotswold National Landscape and not become a National Park so he thought it would be a good time to try again. It might be interesting to link in with the village hall.

Action 13 24/07/2024 for the clerk to pass onto the village hall.

22. Date and time of the next meeting – 18th September 2024, 20th November

Meeting Closed at 21.15

