



Atworth Parish Council

Minutes of a CONFERENCE Meeting of Atworth Parish Council held on 15th July 2020

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Invited:

Cllrs. Effie Gale-Sides (EGS) (Chairman), Richard Clark (RC) (vice-chair) and Cllrs. Heather Chaplin (HC), Andrew Gooding (AG), K. Hartley (KH)

Clerk: Philip McMullen

Ref. Agenda items

163/20 1. **Declarations of Interest**

RC is a trustee of the Village Hall committee.

164/20 2. **Notes from previous meeting**

EGS proposed that the notes of the June meeting be accepted as a true record. AG was in favour. There were no objections.

165/20 3. **Receive Reports from External Agencies**

3.1 **Police Report**

The Clerk reported that he was aware of no community impactful crimes in the Atworth Parish Council area reported in the June/July Melksham Area Community Policing Team Area Briefing.

3.2 **Report from Wiltshire Councillor**

No report was received from this occasion from Cllr Phil Alford

166/20 4. **Planning Applications**

4.1 **Application Ref: 20/04805/TCA**

Application for **Work to Trees in a Cons Area**

Proposal:- T1 - Crown reduce Weeping Willow tree by approximately 2m
T2 - Re-shape Pear tree by reducing selected branches by approximately 1.5 m
T3 - Re-shape magnolia tree by reducing selected branches by approx. 1.5 m

At: 84 Bradford Road, Atworth, SN12 8HY

Councillors considered the proposal and resolved to submit a response of “**No Comment**”

4.2 **Application Ref: 20/04789/FUL**

Application for **Full Planning**

Proposal:- Single storey side extension

5.3 Approval to accept Budget Monitoring Statement to end of June 2020

Atworth Parish Budget Monitoring 2020/21				
July 2020				
	Annual Budget	Spend to date	Balance Remaining	CODE
Expenditure	£	£	£	
CLERKS SALARY	5,600	1,591	4,009	4000
CLERK'S OFFICE EXPENSES	560	159	401	4005
WI VILLAGE CLEAN & TIDY	580	-	580	4010
GENERAL ADMIN	500	43	457	4020
INSURANCE	4,300	3,257	1,043	4030
WALC	500	408	92	4050
SLCC	50	-	50	4052
BENCHES	3,800	1,062	2,738	4065
SID DEPLOYMENT	400	-	400	4070
VILLAGE MAINTENANCE	1,700	-	1,700	4100
AUDIT FEES	300	-	300	4157
VILLAGE HALL RATES	135	157	(22)	4200
REC RATES	170	174	(4)	4201
VILLAGE HALL	6,000	-	6,000	4203
WATER RATES	145	146	(1)	4205
GRASS CUTTING	4,500	931	3,569	4215
ARMISTICE WREATH (S.137*)	20	-	20	4250
YOUTH CLUB RENT	30	-	30	4261
PRESENTATIONS	100	-	100	4265
HIGHWAYS WORK	5,000	-	5,000	4300
COMMUNITY RESILIENCE EQUIPMENT	450	-	450	4320
INFORMATION BOARDS	3,000	-	3,000	4331
TREE PLANTING AND WILDINGS	2,000	-	2,000	4332
NOTICE BOARDS	0	-	0	4335
VILLAGE ENHANCEMENTS	1,250	146	1,104	4336
CLOCK TOWER	0	-	0	4337
VAT ON PAYMENTS	0	505	(505)	515
HMRC	-	-	0	120
Total Expenditure	41,090	8,579	32,511	
Income	£	£	£	
PRECEPT	28,521	14,164	14,261	1176
B/F from existing balances	-	-	-	1180
HMRC	-	-	0	120
Interest	-	-	-	1190
VAT refund	-	-	0	115
Total Income	28,521	14,164	14,261	
Net Expenditure	-	(5,585)	18,250	
Balance Brought Forward	24,378			
Current Balance (Cashbook)	29,963			
Current Balance (Deposit A/c)	-			
-Current Balance (Bank)	29,964			
<i>=Unpresented cheques</i>	<i>£1</i>			

[Link to file](#)

Acceptance of the Budget Monitoring Statement was Proposed by AG and seconded by EGS and approved by consent.

5.4 Rates rebate. The Clerk confirmed that he had now heard back from Wiltshire Council via his personal email address and that we will be receiving a bank credit on both the Village Hall annual rates account and the Recreation ground account of £157.10 and £174.08 respectively.

This will be reflected in next month's budget monitor.

6.1 Covid-19 update

6.1.1 The Clerk explained that effective 4th July the UK government announced the further easing of lockdown restrictions.

Social distancing has been reduced to 1 metre.

Groups of up to six people can now meet outside in England as long as they maintain social distancing.

Play Areas can now reopen but our insurers require a risk assessment for each Play Area. A pro-forma risk assessment had been passed to Cllr. Clarke for consideration. This can be revised and edited as the ongoing situation changes.

The new guidance gives specific guidance for village halls. "From 4 July, users of community facilities should limit their social interactions to 2 households (including support bubbles) in any location; or, if outdoors, potentially up to 6 people from different households."

The Clerk therefore recommends that the Village Hall remains closed for the time being.

[Link to further guidance](#)

6.1.2 Meetings of Parish Council:

The Clerk reported that the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) announced on 25th June that it should be noted that, notwithstanding the recent partial relaxation of 'lockdown' restrictions, NALC's current advice remains that parish councils should not meet other than by the use of 'remote' means, as made possible by the Flexibility Regulations implemented on 4th April. The point has been made that, with the facility to hold meetings by remote means being available, there is no reason why parish councils should be considering holding 'face to face' meetings, whatever the arguments about the risks associated with face-to-face contact and 'physical' gatherings having lessened. The advice is unequivocal: until further notice, parish councils should hold remote meetings only.

6.2 End of Year audit. The Clerk reported the completed AGAR (annual accounting return) and supporting documents had been sent to the auditors on 24th June

The Internal Audit Report had now been completed and signed off by the internal auditor. A bill for this work was included in this month's Approvals.

6.2.1 The Clerk explained that the Period of Exercise of Public Rights, during which parishioners are entitled to view the accounts by appointment, had been set between 15th June 2020 and 24th July 2020.

6.3 Casual Vacancy

The Clerk previously reported that he had written to Wiltshire Council notifying them of the resignation of Cllr. Snowball at the May meeting. The Notice of Election was advertised on noticeboards and the website. The closing date for parishioners to call an election was 25th June. Wiltshire Council have now written to confirm that there were no applications and that the Parish Council will be able to co-opt at such time as Covid-19 restrictions are fully lifted and they are able to meet in person once again.

One person has indicated that they wish to apply for co-option. The application is in the post and Councillors will be given details at the next meeting.

6.4 GDPR

The Clerk confirmed that we have now been registered for the year with the Information Commissioner's Office [copy of certificate](#)

169/20 7. Agenda items

7.1 Flags. EGS explained that the new flags had now been received, but as two people are needed to raise them, social distancing prevents progress. The flag at Shell Court had a broken lanyard. EGS is hoping to erect repair the rope and erect the flag at Shell Court in September.

7.2 Bath Road eastern bus shelter ivy cut-back, roof repairs and new window. The Clerk reported that a letter was posted to residents on 4th May asking them to cut back branches. EGS observed that the branches were still resting on the roof. The work had also been notified to the Parish Steward. The noticeboard contractor would be asked to provide an estimate of the cost for the new window.

7.3 Benches and noticeboards. EGS explained that there are now four benches and a noticeboard, all ready to be erected.

The Clerk explained that a meeting had been held with a potential contractor on 7th July and an estimate for the work received today, 15th July. Councillors were asked to consider approving the estimate that was placed before them in order that the works could proceed.

EGS proposed, AG seconded and a consensus of Councillors was assumed. Clerk to notify the contractor and arrange for the work to be completed.

7.4 Tree planting. The Clerk reported that he had applied to the Woodland Trust for up to 30 free trees (a coppice) which, if the application was approved, would be delivered in November. There would be no charge. AES Ltd will give a quote to plant 30 whips on the verge to the east of Neston Lane. They will also quote for planting seven saplings on the verge to the rear of the Chapel car park.

7.5 EGS asked the Clerk to investigate whether permission could be granted to move the yellow grit bin from its present location to the grass verge on the eastern side of the clock tower. The Clerk had contacted the Winter Services Team at Wiltshire Council who had written to say, "the Wiltshire winter team are happy for the bin to be moved onto the grassed area opposite its current location."

7.6 Footpaths noticeboard. EGS asked the Clerk to consider the proposed Atworth Footpaths signboard to be erected by the Clocktower. The Clerk is pursuing quotes for supply, design and production and installation. Action on EGS to contact the designer with an outline of the requirements.

170/20 8. Correspondence

8.1 Letter regarding problem with footpath through Godwins Close.

Councillors considered letters received from a resident who complained about young cyclists putting elderly residents at risk on the footpath through Godwins Close.

The Clerk had asked the Police to step up patrols in the area following concerns raised by the tone of the correspondence.

The Clerk reminded councillors that in order to comply with disability legislation, and accommodate the increasingly larger mobility scooters, any cycle barriers would need to be widely staggered, which largely negates their intended purpose. Satisfying the elderly who are reassured by barriers, the disabled who are frustrated by barriers, and the parents who, when this subject was previously raised in 2012, felt their children were being unfairly penalised, was, and may continue to be, no easy task.

If the Parish Council are resolved to install additional cycling barriers and/or additional No Cycling signage along this link path then the Clerk would complete and submit a [Highways Improvement form](#) to the CATG for debate and an estimate of costs. Note however that CATG will not be operational until after the Covid-19 restrictions had been completely lifted.

A senior Highways Officer at Wiltshire Council offered the following insight:

1. This is effectively two distinct link paths that meet in a cul-de-sac of Godwins Close and I'm certain that any NPT attempt to enforce would require four such signs and poles to be erected, the cost of which would not be insignificant.
2. Of all the Wiltshire Council warnings on budgets that I have heard over the years, the latest are clearly the most serious and potentially damaging to the organisation. As a local highway maintenance office, we need to focus on maintaining the existing infrastructure as best we can and this leaves little or no room for improvement projects.
3. 'neutral' observers will feel prompted to enquire why the public purse was used for this purpose.
4. It will weaken any argument from our respective Councils that this is the most challenging financial crisis to hit Local Government in decades.

The Clerk also spoke at length with the Rights of Way team at Wiltshire Council.

As the path is both a Public Right of Way (ATWO26) and adopted Highway, any signage can only be enforced if the path is subject to a Prohibition of Cycling Order, which could potentially incur even more cost. The Rights of Way team will get in touch with the Definitive Map team in County Hall and see if they can undertake a legal event modification order (LEMO) to remove the section of ATWO26 through the housing estate of Godwins Close. This will purely be an administration process, which should have been done in 1990 when the estate was adopted, and users of the path will not notice any changes.

The Clerk summarised that this was a challenging and difficult issue for the Parish Council to address, and that even going to the considerable expense of installing barriers or signage was no guarantee of changing the public's behaviour. He suggested that Councillors may (at a later date) wish to ask Churchfields School to run an awareness campaign - maybe the children could design their own signage to be erected along such paths?

There being a scheduled summer break in August, the next scheduled meeting will take place on 23rd September 2020

The Clerk will continue to maintain a documentary record of actions.

172/20 **10. Any Other Business**

10.1 The Clerk asked councillors to consider during the summer vacation period the fact that EGS would be retiring from the parish council after 25 years of service in April 2021 and how best to mark the occasion. There is a gavel board which was previously presented to Cllr. W. Greenland for 25 years' service which could have an additional inscription added, for example.

Signed.....

Date