

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2017 at 8.00pm in the Village Hall

Present.

Councillor Robert Oglesby (Chairman) and Councillors P Bowyer, K Lockwood, W Scott, P Smith, B Smyth, C Wade and the Clerk, Roger Coleman.

Wiltshire Council, Cllr. J Seed attended (Part-time).

There were two members of the public present initially.

1. Apologies.

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Cllrs. S Rimmer, R Robinson and PCSO Simon Partington of the Community Policing Team.

2. Declaration of Interests.

Cllr. Lockwood declared an interest in planning application 16/06564/OUT. There were no other interests declared.

3. Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 23 November 2016.

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

4. Community Policing.

The Clerk stated that PCSO Simon Partington had now replaced PCSO Helen Wilson in the Melksham Rural Community Policing Team.

PCSO Simon Partington had sent a written report to the Clerk prior to the meeting that the Clerk had sent to all councillors. The Clerk summarised the main points in the report relating to local incidents for the benefit of the meeting.

This report relating to 'Local Crimes' is reproduced in full below, shown in italics:

LOCAL CRIMES

11/12/2016 02:38; Violence against the person in High Street Semington. Victim has been assaulted by suspect causing injuries consistent with ABH.

11/12/2016 02:38; Violence against the person in High Street Semington. Suspect has punched Police Officer in the face whilst being arrested.

11/12/2016 02:38; Criminal Damage in High Street Semington. Suspect has caused damage to door by unknown means.

For a detailed breakdown of the crime in your area visit...

<https://www.police.uk/wiltshire/>

Community Coordinator PC Mark Hough : mark.hough@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

Deputy Sector Head Ps 1801 Louis McCoy : louis.mccoy@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

Sector Head Insp 2517 James Brain : james.brain@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

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Cllr. Oglesby stated that there had been an additional incident not shown on the above report namely Criminal Damage on 21 December when blue spray paint was used to deface an advertising sign at the roundabout.

5. Adjournment.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

The Chairman invited members of the public present to raise any points of interest and concern.

The Chairman then reconvened the Parish Council meeting.

6. Wiltshire Council Report.

Cllr. Seed gave a brief report on the following topics:

- Wiltshire Council Budget – Setting a balanced budget for FY2017/18.
- The Great Lees Village Green application.
- Possible safety improvements on the A361 near to The Turnpike and the need to discuss the detail with Cllr. Robinson.
- Current planning appeals by Richborough Estates and Framptons.
- Local Elections to be held on 4 May 2017.

7. Planning.

a. The Council noted the status of extant planning applications thus:

16/09699/FUL	Land opposite Outmarsh Farm, Semington Road	New home for the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Charitable Trust including administrative office space, operational offices, multifunctional training facilities and associated ancillary spaces. Operational uses to include hangar, secure medical storage, helipad, approach strip, fuelling and vehicle wash facilities.	Pending
16/10848/FUL	Plot 3, Lansdowne, Littleton	Erection of Day Room	Pending

b. The Parish Council **resolved** to send comments to Wiltshire in respect of the following planning application as shown (in italics):

16/11634/FUL	Land Adjoining 14 The Knapps	Construction of a 4 Bed Bungalow with Attached Garage (Resubmission of 15/01251/FUL)	NEW
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The Parish Council has no objection to this proposed development.

c. There were no planning applications relating to Semington received after 28 December 2016.

d. The Council noted the following planning applications and decided on the actions shown:

16/05783/OUT – Land to the North of Pound Lane.

The Council noted that Richborough Estates had lodged an appeal (Appeal Reference: APP/Y3940/W/16/3162997) against the decision of Wiltshire Council to refuse this planning application.

Cllr. Scott explained that following consultation with councillors he had prepared a written statement supporting the decision of Wiltshire Council that detailed the arguments why the appeal should be dismissed and he proposed that the Parish Council should consider sending this statement to the Planning Inspectorate. There ensued a discussion on the contents of this

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statement and following a minor amendment to the wording the Council **resolved** that this statement be sent to the Planning Inspectorate forthwith. This statement is shown as Appendix A to these minutes.

16/06564/OUT – Land North of 554 Canal Bridge.

This planning application is to be determined by the Western Area Planning Committee on 11 January 2016.

16/06956/OUT – Land North of St George’s Road.

It is understood that Framptons had notified the Planning Inspectorate of an intended appeal against the decision of Wiltshire Council to refuse this application but no related correspondence has yet been received by Wiltshire Council or the Parish Council.

e. Tetlow King held an open evening at Melksham Town Hall in December to explain their proposed development at Melksham.

The Council **resolved** that it had ‘No Comment’ in respect of planning application 16/07683/CLE.

8. Finance.

a. The Clerk reported that the current financial position at 4 January 2017 was as follows:

Lloyds A/C 2149025

Bank Statement 31 October 2016	£ 15,894.18
Total:	£ 15,894.18

Credits (1 November 2016 to 30 November 2016):

HMRC PAYE Month 7	£ 116.40
Total:	£ 116.40

Debits (1 November 2016 to 30 November 2016):

Clerk's Salary (October)	£ 290.94
Clerk's Expenses (October)	£ 20.81
Grant Thornton (Audit)	£ 120.00
Total:	£ 431.75

Balance at 30 November 2016:

£ 15,578.83

Credits (1 December 2016 to 31 December 2016):

HMRC PAYE Month 8	£ 116.40
Total:	£ 116.40

Debits (1 December 2016 to 31 December 2016):

Clerk's Salary (November)	£ 290.94
HMRC PAYE Month 7	£ 116.40
HMRC PAYE Month 8	£ 116.40

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Southview Nurseries	£	196.00
Total:	£	290.94

Balance at 31 December 2016: £ 15,404.29

Credits (1 January 2017 to 4 January 2017):

None	£	-
Total:	£	-

Debits (1 January 2017 to 4 January 2017):

Clerk's Salary (December)	£	290.94
Total:	£	290.94

Balance at 4 January 2017: £ 15,113.35

Minus Semington War Memorial Monies Remaining: £ 375.99

Parish Council Balance at 4 January 2017 2016: £ 15,028.30

Lloyds A/C 7754288

Bank Statement 30-Jun-16	£	7,601.53
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Credits

Interest	£	0.33
Interest	£	0.30
Interest	£	0.32
Interest (Approx)	£	0.30
Interest (Approx)	£	0.30
Interest (Approx)	£	0.30
	£	1.85

Debits

None	£	-
	£	-

Balance at 4 January 2017: £ 7,603.38

Total Balance in Hand on 4 January 2017 £ 22,631.68

Payments to be authorised (4 January 2017).

Clerk's Salary (December)	£	290.94
Office Expenses (November)	£	8.55

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Office Expenses (December) Approx	£	19.65
R P Coleman HMRC/PAYE (Month 9)	£	116.40
TOTAL:	£	435.54

Donations/Subscriptions to be considered (4 January 2017).

None

£ -

TOTAL: £ -

b. The Clerk presented the Council with a Proposed Budget for FY2017/18 thus:

Semington Proposed Budget FY2017/2018

ITEM (Description)	Budget FY16/17 Agreed	Estimated FY16/17 31-Mar-17	Budget FY17/18 Proposed
<u>Income:</u>			
Precept	12000	12000	12500
WC Grant (Information Boards)	0	530	0
Lloyds A/C 7754288 (Ex. St Georges Fund)	5	5	5
Lloyds A/C 2149025	0	0	0
Tennis Court Insurance	0	0	0
VAT Reclaim	386	386	251
Donations (War Memorial)	0	0	0
Tennis Court Maintenance Fund	0	0	0
Total Income	12391	12921	12756
<u>Expenditure:</u>			
Clerk Salary	3491	3491	3561
Expenses	250	250	250
Office Allowance	150	125	150
Tennis Court Insurance	0	0	0
Chairman	0	0	0
Hire Hall	500	464	550
Audit	230	230	230
Subscriptions	36	36	36
Insurance	800	706	800
Community (Section 137)	2250	1250	2250
Projects (e.g. Tree/Bulb planting/Information Boards)	500	1000	500
War Memorial Project	376	0	376
Neighbourhood Plan	0	0	0
Training	0	0	0
Elections	1000	0	2500
Tennis Court	1000	0	1000
Ex-WC Functions	2500	0	0
Net Income	12391	12921	12756

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Net Expenditure	13083	7552	12203
Surplus	-692	5369	553

Balance Carried Forward at 31

March 2016: £16,527.74
(as per Annual Return
FY2015/16)

Forecast Balance Carried Forward at 31 March

2018: £17,080.74

NOTE

Tennis Court Fund = £5400 approx (included in Forecast Balance)

The Council **resolved** to adopt the proposed budget as presented subject to maintaining the Precept at £12,000 – the same as for FY2016/17.

The Council **resolved** to request a precept of £12,000 for FY2017/18.

c. The Council **resolved** to make all the payments under 'Payments to be authorised' above including a payment of £25.20 to Cllr. Scott for the photocopying of the Appeal Notification circulars.

9. Highways/Environment.

a. Councillors requested that photographs are taken of traffic problems, including accidents, at Pound Lane to add to the portfolio of evidence showing the unsuitability of that road to support further residential development.

There were no other highway/environmental issues reported.

b. Cllr. Robinson had provided the Clerk and councillors with a written report of his meeting with Wiltshire Council (Mark Stansby) that was held to investigate possible safety improvements on the A361 near to The Turnpike. His report is shown below (in italics):

On Friday I attended a meeting with Mark Stansby and Jack Francis both from Wiltshire Council to discuss the problem of pedestrians crossing the A361 at the Semington roundabout.

The following problems were identified.

Approaching the road from the Little Marsh side of road, vision towards the Crematorium is impaired by,

- a. Trees on the grass verge*
- b. Two metal barriers, that seem to have no purpose or value to protecting anyone.*
- c. Small trees and shrubs on the roundabout that obstruct the view of traffic coming round the roundabout heading towards Trowbridge.*

These will be considered for removal.

The width of the road at this point seems to be excessive and could be reduced by at least a metre from the pavement side, thus extending the pavement out further. This will increase the view of the road and would reduce the amount of time pedestrians are on the road. At this point dropped kerbs will be introduced to improve access for pushchairs, disabled vehicles and invalid carriages. The triangular central island on the approach to the roundabout from Trowbridge also requires attention, the following will be considered.

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- a Dropped kerbs on both sides.
- b Relocation of the Keep Left sign, which at present obstructs the view of traffic.
- c Resurfacing the island.

On the village side of the road, vision is impaired by the trees and shrubs in the Turnpike grounds. At present these have been pruned to the maximum and the view can not be improved by further pruning. To improve the view and access the following will be considered.

- a Move the pavement out a metre.
- b. Introduce dropped kerbs
- c Improve the surface.

At the point where pedestrians would egress from the roundabout on the village side of the road, the path leading to the old road, by Toll House, requires attention and the following will be considered.

- a Dropped kerb at both ends.
- b The path widened to give pedestrians room to avoid the foliage of the trees and shrubs.
- c Resurfacing the path.

At the next meeting of the Melksham CATG 18th January 2017, these improvements will be introduced but no formal proposals can be made as the technical information and pricings will not have been formulated. This project will be considered as one of the top five for attention.

The usual one third price passed over to the Parish Council will have to be reconsidered as the cost is way above the amount that the Council can afford. CATG will consider other avenues to acquire the money needed.

- c. There were no other matters reported.

10. Melksham Community Area Board/Community Area Transport Group Meetings.

The next CATG meeting is to be held on 18 January 2017 at which the A361 safety improvements will be further discussed. And the next Area Board meeting is to be held on 8 February 2017.

11. Wilts & Berks Canal.

There was nothing further reported.

12. Tennis Court.

The Council **resolved** that the Healthcare 2000 Chiropractor Surgery located at the Independent Living Centre can have permission to erect an advertising sign on the Tennis Court fence. Such sign is to be permitted until 31 March 2017.

Cllrs. Smyth, Lockwood and Robinson were requested to investigate possible solutions to address the overgrown hedge at the Tennis Court.

13. Any Other Business.

Cllr. Lockwood stated that he would be keen to organise volunteer support to improve and to regularly maintain the Play Area at Wessex Close and that he would table proposals at the next meeting. The Clerk asked him to inform him of the intended programme of work so that Wiltshire Council could be informed and consulted noting that this area was currently owned and managed by Wiltshire Council

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Cllr. Scott commented that Pound Lane was in a filthy state with surface mud and other detritus. He added that the footpath next to the church field was impassable because of the brambles. The Council **resolved** that councillors contact the tenant and request that action is taken.

Cllr. Smyth reported that 'No Entry Watch' has restarted.

Volunteers were sought for taking down the Christmas tree – 10am on 5 January 2017.

Cllr. Smith stated that parishioners must be encouraged to write to the Planning Inspectorate restating their objections to the proposed development by Richborough Estates.

14. Date of Next Meeting.

The Council noted the dates of the following meetings thus:

- 8 February 2017, commencing at 8pm – Ordinary PC Meeting.
- 8 March 2017, commencing at 8pm – Ordinary PC Meeting.
- 12 April 2017, commencing at 8pm – Ordinary PC Meeting.

The meeting concluded at 9.58pm.

R A Oglesby
Chairman, Semington Parish Council

8 February 2017

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Appendix A

Semington Parish Council response to the Planning Inspectorate Appeal: APP/Y3940/W/16/3162997

Land to the North of Pound Lane, Semington, Wiltshire BA14 6LP

This comment comes from Semington Parish Council. We ask you to reject the appeal by Richborough / Savills against Wiltshire Council's refusal of planning permission for the development of two fields in the village along Pound Close / Pound Lane. We ask you to do this broadly (though not exclusively) for the reasons given by Wiltshire Council.

Although the Parish Council has commented in depth on the original proposals, in what follows we take a broader view of the issues which are informed by our desire for Semington to retain the character of a small village community and to stay the sort of place where people like to live.

We wish to begin by reminding the Planning Inspectorate that, in 2016, Semington was the focus of three applications to build houses in the village. These were from Richborough / Savills [16/05783], Framptons / Oxford Law [16/06956] and Hannick Homes [16/01678]. In total these proposed to construct 171 new properties [72 + 75 + 24]. Had permission been granted by Wiltshire Council for all three, this would have increased the number of dwellings in the village by some 45%. The Parish Council takes the view that such an increase could not be considered as sustainable development, especially as village facilities are so few, the primary school is near capacity, public transport is limited, and there is, in effect, no employment that does not require a commute (sometimes a long one). Further to the unsustainable nature of what was proposed, Wiltshire Council says that only some 130 new houses are scheduled to be built in all of the villages in the Melksham housing district. As such, we see no good reason why 132% of that target figure should be built in one village.

Although what follows is a comment on the proposal and appeal by Richborough / Savills, we think that this cannot be properly understood unless all three proposals are taken into account. It is important to differentiate between the three proposals. The Hannick Homes proposal for 24 houses in a field along St George's Road was brought forward following extensive consultation with the Parish Council and village. This began in April 2011 with an initial approach from Hannick Homes to the Council to gauge opinion. As the village was at that time discussing an application by the Orders of St John Care Trust [09/03542] for a care home development in fields adjacent to the High Street (now approved but not yet built), the Council suggested that the developer postpone their plans. They did so and discussions resumed in October 2013 when Hannick Homes made an informal presentation to villagers attending a well-attended Parish Council meeting. Subsequent to this, in November 2014, there was a public exhibition to provide villagers with a better idea of what type and scale of scheme Hannick Homes was proposing. The 12-month delay between these meetings was to allow the Parish Council to work with Wiltshire Council on a village housing needs survey in order to get an accurate idea of the need for new housing in the village, and also to get a feel for the scale of development people wanted and their preferences for different types of housing. There was a very good response from villagers to this survey and the report is available here: ow.ly/7Lae307AFP1. Hannick Homes took the results of the housing needs survey (and village feedback) into account when developing their proposals. All this culminated in a proposal (now approved by Wiltshire Council) which not only completely meets the housing need in the village (as determined by the 2014 survey), but also provides long sought after allotments for the village.

We provide all this detail in order to provide evidence that neither the village nor the Parish Council are against appropriate development. Quite the reverse is the case as other successful planning proposals also illustrate; for example, the development of the old hospital along St George's Road, and the affordable housing development at the Turnpike. All these are examples of how the village

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has grown organically and steadily over time in appropriate ways in order to meet need. This is what we think of as sustainable development.

Our experience with the other two developers was quite different and much less positive. Neither proposal offered anything of value to the village, and each proposed building on fields that were regularly used by villagers, as other evidence to you illustrates. Framptons / Oxford Law did come to a meeting with villagers, although long after their proposal had been received by Wiltshire Council. Their proposal did not offer anything for the benefit of the village, and their main argument was that we should support their plans as this provided our best chance to defeat the proposals by Richborough / Savills. It was not an argument that we found appealing or convincing.

Richborough / Savills did not, despite encouragement from the Parish Council present their case to villagers at a meeting. The developers did ask us for a meeting from which villagers would be excluded, but it is Parish Council policy not to hold these. Richborough's Robert Mitchell approached the Parish Council on April 15th 2016, writing: *"I wondered if it would be possible to discuss housing matters privately with the Members and in particular a land interest we have within the village?"* The Parish Council responded on April 19th inviting the developers to a meeting of the Council (in April or May at their convenience) where they might have outlined their proposals as part of our open agenda with villagers present at the meeting. In turning this invitation down, Mr Mitchell wrote *"In our experience meetings with Parish Councillors in public are counterproductive as they don't tend to be forums in which we are necessarily able to provide detailed information properly."* It was subsequent to this that an informal meeting took place on May 12th when three parish councillors went to listen to what Richborough / Savills had to say and to ask questions. Richborough / Savills did not provide documents and plans for the councillors to take away.

Subsequent to this informal meeting, the developers circulated a leaflet in early July, but only to those houses near to Pound Lane / Pound Close. This was (inadvertently, no doubt) misleading. It said that there were "informal discussions with parish councillors" which is not the case, as noted above, and that this meeting involved "consulting" the councillors. The Richborough / Savills team did ask the councillors present what the Parish Council might think of the proposals, but they declined to say, as they had no remit to do so. It also seems misleading for Richborough / Savills to say that the reasons that they could not hold a community engagement event were beyond their control. Their initial approach to the Council was on April 15th. This was after a considerable period of time had been spent by their agents in surveying the village and carrying out other preparatory work, and was two months before the submission of the planning application. We wonder whether there was no consultation with villagers because the developers were in a hurry to have the application considered by Wiltshire Council because of the five-year housing supply issue.

In the end, there were some 170 responses by villagers to the Richborough / Savills proposals (and 99 to the Frampton / Oxford Law one). Over 99% of these made cases against the proposals. We think it is significant that many of the arguments used by villagers were essentially those used by Wiltshire Council planners to refuse the applications. These were that the proposed development by Richborough / Savills is inappropriate because: [i] the site lies outside of the limits of development defined for the village in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and would extend housing into the countryside; [ii] the proposal, by reason of its scale and location, would be wholly out of scale and a disproportionate addition to the existing village; it would not be sustainable development and would be contrary to the Wiltshire Core Strategy; [iii] development would have a negative impact on the use of the Kennet & Avon canal – a national heritage asset that must be protected. These were also reasons cited in 1972 and in 1989 for refusing permission to develop this site.

You will see from the letters sent to Wiltshire Council that a number of other issues were raised by the Parish Council and villagers. We shall not repeat all these here, but should like to stress three of them: [i] the narrowness of Pound Lane, [ii] drainage and sewerage problems, and [iii] the historical use of fields.

[i] As we noted in our own submission to Wiltshire Council, St George's school governors approached the Parish Council in February 2016 saying that Pound Lane was a danger to children

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at the school because of its narrowness and because of the existing volumes of traffic, particularly at peak times. This is a concern that many villagers share, particularly those living in the west of the village who use Pound Lane regularly. Of relevance to this point is that there was a collision directly outside the school in November 2016. Fortunately no one was injured, although the car had to be written off. We are still surprised that this was not cited by Wiltshire Council as an additional reason for refusing permission. We, along with most of the village, simply do not understand how a road that was deemed unfit for additional traffic in 1972 and in 1989 can be fit now despite the huge increase in traffic that the intervening years have brought, especially given that the number of houses now proposed is greater than before. We think that, despite what Wiltshire Council planners' algorithms say, this defies common sense especially as this development would entail (according to Wiltshire Council figures) around 170,000 additional vehicle movements per year. Part of the problem, we suspect, is that highly questionable assumptions have been made about the use of public transport and cycling to get people to work.

[ii] In terms of drainage, we contend that the developers cannot show that what they propose is sustainable as they have not commissioned the required drainage survey from Wessex Water. Further to this, the problems in The Orchard with sewage coming up through manholes in gardens and in downstairs toilets are both long-standing and on-going. As such, this development would only make matters worse.

[iii] In their Statement of Case, the developers write: "The site is currently used for grazing horses". While this is true for the smaller of the two fields, it does not apply to the larger one (Great Lees Field) which has been used as grassland at least since the second world war and had not been ploughed in living memory until April 27th 2016. Following this, maize was planted, and there is now a crop of winter wheat. This field is the subject of a application for village green status which the Parish Council supports.

Finally, the Parish Council (and the village) hope that you will support Wiltshire Council's refusal of planning permission for this proposed development. We think that, on balance, the significant harm that will be done to the village community outweighs any marginal benefits which might count in support of development. As such the proposal cannot represent sustainable development, and a decision should be made in accordance with the development plan. We look forward to presenting and defending our arguments at the planning enquiry