

SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6 January 2021 at 7.30pm – Virtual/Remote Zoom Meeting (as a result of COVID-19 ‘Lockdown’ restrictions).

Present.

Councillors P Smith (Vice-Chairman and Acting Chairman for the meeting), V Bodman, M Kasasian, R Oglesby, W Scott, C Wade, R Bruges, S Chown and the Clerk Roger Coleman.

There were no members of the public present.

1. Apologies.

There were no apologies. All councillors were present.

2. Declaration of Interests.

No interests were declared by councillors.

3. Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 25 November 2020 and Decisions taken remotely (post-Lockdown).

a. The Council **resolved** that the minutes were a true and accurate record. The Chairman agreed to sign the minutes.

b. The Council **resolved** to endorse the decisions made following email consent from councillors and those decisions are shown appended to these minutes.

4. Wiltshire Council Report.

In the absence of Wiltshire Council, Cllr. J Seed there was no report.

5. Chairman’s Report.

The Chairman stated that a new national Lockdown with effect from 5 January 2021 had been implemented and that this would have implications for the Parish Council in respect of the planned programme of work. He anticipated that the Village Support Group that was so active and appreciated during the previous Lockdown would be very busy with, as before, the support of the Parish Council.

6. Planning and Development

a. The Clerk reported that there were no planning applications received after 30 December 2020.

b. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Scott for drafting a possible response to the Melksham Joint Local Plan consultation – a Neighbourhood Plan developed jointly by Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council. Cllr. Scott explained the details of the proposed response and following a short discussion, the Parish Council **resolved** that the response represented the views of the Parish Council and Cllr. Scott agreed to send the agreed response to Wiltshire Council, as required. The response is attached to these minutes.

c. The Council previously noted the result of Planning Appeal PP/Y3940/W/20/3253180 – Land North of St Georges Road - and a summary of the resulting s106 Agreement and a proposed way forward for the Parish Council to influence the detail of the development was prepared by Cllr.

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Scott and sent to all councillors. Cllr. Bruges commented that the Parish Council must engage in a dialogue with Wiltshire Council regarding the details of the development (especially the 'reserved matters' and the details of the s106 Agreement) and Cllr. Scott favoured engaging with both Wiltshire Council and the Developer (Pegasus/Greystoke). Cllr. Oglesby asserted that Wiltshire Council was the key party and councillors commented that it was important to establish how best to initiate this discussion. Cllr. Bodman agreed to investigate how, and with whom, the Parish Council could initiate this discussion. The councillors were of the view that the Parish Council could be influential in identifying local needs and facilities to be financed by the s106 Agreement. The report by Cllr Scott is attached to these minutes.

d. The Council noted that the Wiltshire Council Local Plan Review (Draft) is to be issued very soon and the formal consultation period will be 13 January 2021 to 9 March 2021. Cllr. Scott added that he is to attend the 'Live Consultation Event' on 28 January 2021 that will concentrate on the implications for the Melksham Area. Cllr. Scott agreed to send details of registering attendance at the event to all councillors.

e. Cllr. Bruges enquired whether the Parish Council should develop its own local or 'Neighbourhood Plan' in order to influence the future development of the village. There ensued a lengthy discussion on the difficulties and protracted nature and high cost of developing such a plan with Cllr. Oglesby giving practical examples of the experiences of other villages that chose to develop such a plan. Cllr. Bodman also offered Cllr. Bruges some points of contact for him to obtain further information.

Cllr. Bruges commented that individuals had recently been visiting and taking a keen interest in land that had recently been cleared close to the canal. The Chairman stated that he would contact the landowner.

7. Environment and Streetscene.

Cllr. Bruges stated that recent Litter Pick just before Christmas was successful and that it was very well attended. He suggested that a log or record should be made of those places where litter accumulated in order to better direct Litter Pick operations in the future. The Chairman added that he had information that would assist future Litter Picks and Cllr. Bruges stated that he would set up a meeting with Cllr. Smith to discuss the matter.

Cllr. Scott reported that the Rights of Way (RoW) Group had been very active and had undertaken a survey of many public paths in the village and noting stiles that needed replacing or repairing. He commented that there were at least six stiles that needed attention and that Wiltshire Council had been informed. He commented that two of the paths had been deliberately blocked by land owners. Cllr. Scott added that Keevil Parish Council councillors were keen to form a Village RoW Liaison Group to address those 'cross-boundary' Rights of Way and that Brian Smyth was taking the lead on this matter. He stated that there is a national 'lost path' initiative in which those paths that exist and are believed to be public Rights of Way but fail to appear as such on maps or in the Definitive Statements are being identified and referred to Local Authorities, for example Wiltshire Council, for appropriate action to be taken. He added that there is one such path in Semington.

8. Transport and Traffic.

a. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Wade for his report and proposed response to the Melksham A350 Bypass Consultation that he had sent to all councillors. Councillors commented that it was a well-considered and comprehensive report. Cllr. Wade gave a brief review of his report and commented that there was a possible conflict between the A350 Bypass proposals and the Melksham Local Plan for additional housing and the possible effects it may have close to the canal and Semington Brook.

There ensued a lengthy discussion on his report and the proposed response by Semington Parish Council to the consultation. Cllr. Chown argued that the Parish Council should not, at this stage,

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indicate a preference for any of the possible routes because she considered that the case had not been made for a new A350 Bypass road – a view supported by other councillors. Councillors were also concerned that traffic flow figures and methodology employed by DfT when calculating the figures currently adopted by Wiltshire Council were historical and failed to address current or future trends. Cllr. Wade offered to reshape his report to reflect these comments and to circulate it to councillors for approval via email. This was agreed.

b. Cllr. Scott observed that he had learned that Wiltshire Council had obtained funding for a 'North Relief Road' at Chippenham from Homes England that would also result in some 7000 properties being built.

9. Recreation and Wellbeing.

Cllr. Chown stated that there was very little to report. The current situation with COVID-19 restrictions, including the recently announced Lockdown, has curtailed most, if not all, recreational activities. She added that the 'Village Support Group' is very active again supporting those in need and that the 'Wellbeing' issues are being addressed.

10. Community and Communication.

Cllr. Bodman stated that she had little to report as she had been very busy with the development of the new Semington website. She commented that all the 'road leads' are in place.

11. Finance.

a. The Clerk reported that the current financial position at 6 January 2021 was as follows:

Lloyds A/C 2149025

Bank Statement	£	32,906.96
30 November 2020		
(Clerk's Expenses (Sept) Not paid - £5.86	Total:	£ 32,906.96

Credits (1 December 2020 to 31 December 2020):

None	£	-
	Total:	£ -

Debits (1 December 2020 to 31 December 2020):

Clerk's Salary (November) (Paid 1 December 2020)	£	374.92
Southdownview Nurseries (Christmas Tree)	£	185.00
	Total:	£ 559.92

Balance at 31 December 2020:

£ 32,347.04

Credits (1 January 2021 to 6 January 2021):

None	£	-
	Total:	£ -

Debits (1 January 2021 to 6 January 2021):

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Clerk's Salary (December) (Paid 1 January 2021)	£	374.92
Total:	£	374.92

Balance at 6 January 2020:		£ 31,972.12
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Lloyds A/C 7754288

Bank Statement 31-May-20	£	7,650.08
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Credits

09-Jun-20	Interest (Approx)	£	0.32
09-Jul-20	Interest (Approx)	£	0.30
09-Aug-20	Interest (Approx)	£	0.28
09-Sep-20	Interest (Approx)	£	0.26
09-Oct-20	Interest (Approx)	£	0.28
09-Nov-20	Interest (Approx)	£	0.15
09-Dec-20	Interest (Approx)	£	0.05
		£	1.64

Debits

None	£	-
	£	-

Balance at 6 January 2021:		£ 7,651.72
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Total Balance in Hand at 6 January 2021:		£ 39,623.84
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Payments to be authorised (6 January 2021).

Clerk's Salary (January) To be paid 1 February 2021	£	374.92
Clerk's Expenses (September) (Already authorised)	£	5.86
Clerk's Expenses (October)	£	7.71
Clerks Expenses (November)	£	17.56
Clerks Expenses (December)	£	50.72
Semington Website	£	1,240.00
SLCC Membership (Shared)	£	62.00
C Wade (Tacklestore Ltd) - Eyebolt for Christmas Tree	£	9.94
P Smith (Dorothy House Donation) - Christmas Tree Collection	£	50.00
		£ 1,818.71

Clerk's Additional Payment (if authorised) 1/10/20 to 31/1/21 (17 weeks) 17 weeks x 1 x £14.42 = £245.14	£	245.14
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HMRC PAYE Month 9 - To be paid to HMRC Directly
(HMRC Month 10 Payment will include PAYE on £245.14)

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b. Councillors expressed their concern that discussions on a possible Budget for FY2021/22 had not taken place at a previous meeting and that the sums allocated for various items in the proposed Budget were unrelated to the specific 'themes' now adopted by the Parish Council. The Clerk commented that the sums shown were his best estimates of possible expenditure under those items shown and it was for councillors to decide on the actual expenditure for the various themes. There ensued a discussion on the manner in which the Budget should be presented and agreed in future and it was **resolved** that Budget discussions will commence at the October Parish Council meeting and it would concentrate more on likely expenditure in relation to the various 'themes' and that 'Theme Leaders' would be expected to propose realistic likely expenditures in their respective areas. Notwithstanding the shortcomings in relation to the proposed Budget there were the following resolutions:

The Council **resolved** to adopt the Proposed Budget for FY2021/22 as shown below.
The Council **resolved** unanimously to request a Precept of £13,500 for FY2021/22

ITEM (Description)	Budget FY20/21 Agreed	Estimated FY20/21 31-Mar-21	Budget FY21/22 Proposed
<u>Income:</u>			
Precept	13500	13500	13500
Grants	0	0	0
Lloyds A/C 7754288 (Ex. St Georges Fund)	5	2	2
Lloyds A/C 2149025	0	0	0
VAT Reclaim	450	412	100
Donations	0	0	0
Tennis Court Maintenance Fund	0	0	0
Total Income	13955	13914	13602
<u>Expenditure:</u>			
Clerk Salary	4509	4745	5250
Expenses	250	250	250
Office Allowance	175	175	175
Chairman	0	0	0
Hire Hall	525	150	525
Audit	120	120	125
Subscriptions	140	110	120
Insurance	840	840	900
Community (Section 137)	4000	1250	5000
Projects (e.g. Tree/Bulb planting/Christmas Tree)	3000	250	3000
Road Safety Improvements	0	0	0
War Memorial Project	0	0	0
Wessex Close Play Area	0	450	3000
Training	0	0	0
Elections	2750	0	1000
Tennis Court	500	0	500
Website	0	1360	400

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	16809	9700	20245
Net Income	13955	13914	13602
Net Expenditure	16809	9700	20245
Surplus	-2854	4214	-6643

Forecast Balance Carried Forward at 31 March 2021: £36,027.00

Annual Return (31/3/20) + Income (FY2020/21) - Expend (FY2020/21)

Forecast Balance Carried Forward at 31 March 2022: £29,384.00

Forecast Balance (31/3/21) + Income (FY2021/22) - Expend (FY2021/22)

AVAILABLE BALANCE at 31/3/21 (Minus Tennis Court Fund) = £29,709.00

NOTE

Tennis Court Fund at 31/3/11= £5295	£	5,295.00
Tennis Court Fund at 31/3/21 (includes Interest and 2 x £500 Transfers) =	£	6,318.00

c. The Council **resolved** to increase the Clerk's hours from 6 to 7 hours per week w.e.f. 1st October 2020, at a half year cost of £375 (full year £750) and to continue monitoring his working hours; and to review his working hours again as part of the 2021 pay review, and annually thereafter.

d. The Council **resolved** to make the payments shown under 'Payments to be authorised' above at Agenda item 11a.

12. Website.

a. Councillors expressed the view that the new website was very good and that it met the expectations of the Parish Council. Cllr. Scott explained that it is currently being tested to eliminate any identified faults and that it should be ready to 'launch' by the end of the month. He added that the training of those intending to manage the website is still outstanding and that some content is still awaited. The Council **resolved** that Cllr Scott had the authority of the Parish Council to 'sign off' the project when satisfactorily completed and the subsequent payment of the invoice.

b. Councillors agreed that the "Meet the Council" page would have individual pictures of councillors and the Clerk and a brief (30 word) biography. Phone numbers would not be included except for the Parish Council Chairman and that the 'Contact Form' would be the main means for the public to communicate with the Parish Council.

c. The Council decided to hold a village-wide competition for a logo to be chosen and to ensure that the competition was well advertised locally. The end of February was suggested as the Competition end-date.

d. Councillors considered that the choice of a Home Page photograph could also be the subject of a competition and that it may be preferred for the photo to be changed regularly to avoid the website looking 'stale'.

13. Standing Orders.

The Council examined the proposed Standing Orders for Semington Parish Council Meetings, Issue 1, 6 January 2021 and subject to amending the first paragraph under 'Meetings' to read:

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'Proceedings shall commence at 1930hrs and be held in the Village Hall, Semington or by electronic means depending on the circumstances' resolved that the Standing Orders be adopted forthwith.

14. Date of the next meeting.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting was agreed to be Wednesday 10 February 2021 and that it would be a remote/virtual (Zoom) meeting and would commence at 7.30pm.

The Meeting ended at 9.40pm.

Acting Chairman
Semington Parish Council

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**Decisions taken remotely by Semington Parish Council – Subsequent to Contingency Plan
17 March 2020 and Post Parish Council Meeting held on 25 November 2020.**

1. Payment of £185 to Southview Nurseries (Christmas Tree).
2. Payment of £9.94 to C Wade (Tacklestore Ltd – Eyebolt for Christmas Tree)
3. Payment of £50 to P Smith (Donation to Dorothy House – Christmas Tree collection)

R P Coleman
30 December 2020

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The Melksham Joint Local Plan – report for Semington Parish Council

I've read the various documents associated with the Melksham Joint Local Plan with a view to how it might affect us, and in relation to how we might comment as a Parish Council.

What is envisaged in the plan does not affect us now, but three aspects, if developed, would likely do so:

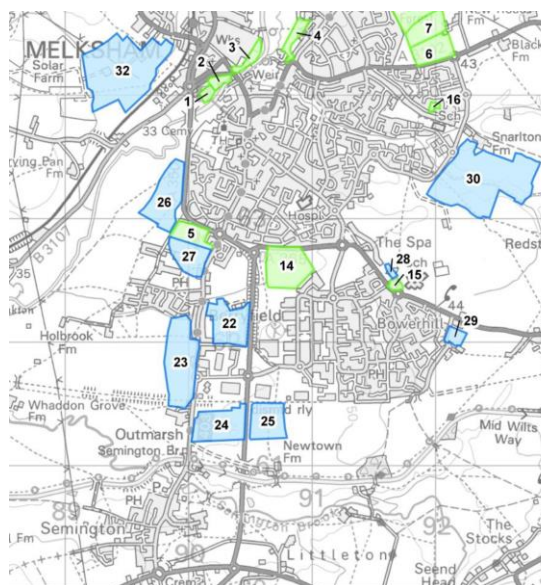
1. By-pass routes 10c and 10d to the east of the town, would likely open land up for development and possibly bring building much closer to the parish boundary along the towing path east of the A350 up to Giles Wood and the Seend parish boundary. Wiltshire Council is driving this development.
2. The construction of the Melksham Link canal to the west of the old A350 from the K&A canal to the River Avon would have a marked impact because of the development of much of the land between Berryfields and the K&A, and most particularly through the development of land immediately adjacent to the canal between the canal bridge and the aqueduct.
3. The construction of housing on land on either side of the old A350 south of the old railway line has been identified as suitable for housing. A site assessment report says:

Site 24

Landscape sensitivities, heritage issues and access concerns provide constraints to what is otherwise a relatively unconstrained site. Providing the constraints can be overcome, the site is considered suitable for small scale mixed-use development of high quality design. 202 houses.

Site 25

The main constraints to development include the access concerns, the potential impacts to landscape and townscape character, and the locally important priority habitats. Providing the constraints can be overcome, the site is considered suitable for small scale mixed-use development of high quality design. 185 houses.



Site 24 is likely to be part of the land identified by the Melksham Link developers for the new canal which is a key priority for the Plan. The current Wiltshire Core Strategy safeguards the route of the Link in Core Policy 16. The Local Plan says: "The project is an opportunity to improve the Green Infrastructure network both within the Plan area and the wider Melksham Community Area with associated benefits such as increased walking and cycling routes and linked to this is the opportunity to promote tourism within the town, and to generate renewable energy harnessing energy from the river." What it doesn't say is that none of this will happen unless there is significant housing and other development along the Link route, because that is the only way in which the construction can be afforded.

A planning application for the Melksham Link was submitted in 2012, but this has not yet been determined, owing to unresolved environmental concerns raised by the Environment Agency. New housing does not form part of that application.

The irony of the Melksham Local Plan is that there are two very large infrastructure developments in the offing, to the east and to the west of the town. These will significantly extend the town boundaries and hence the size of the community in ways that the Plan cannot yet identify. These are both being driven by Wiltshire Council policies which will impose development on Melksham whatever the local plan has to say.

My recommendation is that our response to the local plan ought to stress that the priority for Semington Parish Council is to maintain as much undeveloped land as possible between the Kennet and Avon Canal and the settlements of Melksham, Bowerhill and Berryfields in order to protect the canal and its immediate surroundings from the adverse effects of development.

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Land North of St George's Road
20/01306/OUT¹ APP/Y3940/W/19/3236860

After a successful appeal, outline planning permission has been granted for “residential development of up to 20 entry-level affordable dwellings with associated car parking, access, internal roads, public open space, landscaping, drainage and other associated infrastructure”.

The Section 106 agreement² between Greystoke, the developer, and Wiltshire Council provides details of the financial contributions that will be made to the community.³ These include:

- Education: £75,302 to go to Wiltshire Council for St George's school.
- Leisure: £4720, for the upgrading of the tennis court which presumably will come to the parish council.
- Open Space: £1200 per unit (£24,000) to provide or upgrade open space provision, location to be agreed. It is not clear which space is referred to here, or where the money goes.
- Wessex Close Play Area, £258.42 per unit (~£5180) which presumably will come to the parish council to assist in running costs.
- New Play Area: 1.77 m² per unit (35 m²) within the new development. It is not clear who will have responsibility for this.



The PC will be consulted, along with parishioners, when the developer submits the full (detailed rather than outline) application. But by then, conversations with Wiltshire Council officers on conditions and reserved matters will have happened and, we can assume, largely been resolved, as we are not statutory consultees for this process. The only way we might hope to influence the development is to seek constructive engagement with Wiltshire Council and Greystoke.

Proposal: In order to optimise benefits to the village community, and to advance the opportunities for members of existing Semington families to live in the development, the parish council approaches Wiltshire Council seeking [i] to clarify any ambiguities in the planning permission and the S106 agreement. and [ii] to participate in the full planning permission process.

Immediate actions: Consult Councillor Seed and following this, the planning officer responsible for the development.

¹ unidoc.wiltshire.gov.uk/UniDoc/Document/Search/DSA,908288

² unidoc.wiltshire.gov.uk/UniDoc/Document/File/MjAvMDEzMDYvT1VULDE0NDIOMzc=

³ There is a lot of other detail in the S106 which needs careful scrutiny.