

**Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on
13 December 2023 at 7.30 pm in the Village
Hall**



Present.

Councillors P Smith (Chairman), M Carberry, J. Hailey, M. Kasasian, C. McGarvey, W.Scott, C. Wade and the Clerk, Roger Coleman.

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

There was one member of the public present.

1. Apologies.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs. R Bruges, S. Chown.

2. Declaration of Interests.

There were no interests declared.

3. Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 15 November 2023.

The Council **resolved** that the minutes were a true and accurate record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

4. Wiltshire Council Report.

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

Wiltshire Council Children's Services – This service, provided by Wiltshire Council, recently obtained an 'Outstanding' OFSTED Report which reflects the hard and compassionate work undertaken by the Council team. There are real benefits being evidenced among some of the youngsters involved.

Wiltshire Council Budget FY2024/25 – This is currently being discussed and agreed but despite many financial pressures, the Council remains financially stable. The effect of the increase in the 'Minimum Wage' has added additional challenges to the budget.

Area Board Grants – Non-precepted local organisations should be encouraged to apply for an Area Board Grant. The limit is £5000 (matched funding) and the closing date is 7 February 2024.

Melksham Area Board Meeting held at Semington Village Hall on 7 December 2023 – This meeting was designed to concentrate on 'highway issues' and despite the Parish Council advancing key areas of local concern prior to the meeting, as requested, the Area Board totally ignored these concerns, failed to address the issues raised by the Parish Council and, instead, adopted a patronising and evasive approach. Cllr. Seed expressed his utter disappointment at the behaviour of the Area Board.

5. Community and Communication.

a. The Chairman reported that there had been no further information relating to the Post Office since the last Parish Council meeting, although he commented that the Post Office had been open on Mondays from 11am to 12 Noon. However, given the current low level of usage, the continued provision of any postal service in Semington is now in serious doubt.

b. There were no other issues raised.

6. Recreation and Wellbeing.

a. The Chairman reported that a recent meeting with Newland Homes had satisfactorily clarified a number of outstanding issues and that he and other councillors who had been directly involved in the transfer negotiations were satisfied that Newland Homes had undertaken all the necessary tasks at the allotments for the Council to agree that the transfer should proceed forthwith.

The Parish Council **resolved** to accept the site as now agreed.

The only remaining matter was for Wiltshire Council to issue the 'Practical Completion Certificate' that was related to the discharge of the s106 Agreement.

The Clerk was asked to write formally to Newland Homes and to Wiltshire Council to confirm the Parish Council's satisfaction with the transfer and to propose a date of 1 February or later for the Completion Certificate.

The Clerk was also asked to contact FSM Solicitors to confirm that there were no matters outstanding and to seek clarification on the payment of the incurred legal costs – previously understood that Newland Homes was meeting these costs in full.

Cllr. Wade confirmed that he would soon be issuing Tenancy Agreements for signature by the prospective tenants with a view to the tenancy commencing 1 March 2024. Following a lengthy discussion it was agreed that the initial Annual Rental for a plot would be £35 – subject to subsequent review.

The Clerk stressed the importance of extending the current Parish Council Insurance Policy with Zurich Insurance to cover the newly acquired allotment area which is to include the land, fence and gate. The Council **resolved** that the decision whether to accept the additional premium would be made by the Chairman and the Clerk ex-Committee.

b. The Chairman confirmed that the outstanding queries relating to the formal transfer of the Wessex Close Play Area had been satisfactorily resolved with Wiltshire Council (Craig Campbell and Fiona Waind). The Parish Council **resolved** to accept the transfer of the Wessex Close Play Area to the Parish Council.

The Clerk was asked to write to Wiltshire Council accordingly and to propose 31 March 2024 as the date of the transfer – a date chosen to ensure that all appropriate training and allocation of roles had been completed.

It was noted that insurance for the Play Area would be required.

c. Cllrs. Hailey and McGarvey agreed to investigate suitable 'Safety Inspection training and the required training regime. Cllr. Scott emphasized the need that any training must be specific to the equipment within the Play Area and that 'on-site' training is to be preferred.

7. Environment and Streetscene.

Rights of Way.

a. Cllr. Scott stated that there was nothing further to report on the impending Safety Audit (SEMI9A/10 and HILP22/10). He added that a request for a copy of the report into the accident on the Byway to be sent to the Parish Council had been refused by Wiltshire Police on specious grounds. The Clerk was asked to write to Chief Constable (Wiltshire Police), copy to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the MP for an explanation of this refusal and to request that a copy be sent forthwith.

b. Cllr. Carberry reported that he is continuing his comprehensive survey of existing village litter bins and their respective location within the village and possible changes to their 'volume' or location. He added that he will present his conclusions at the next meeting.

c. Cllr. Hailey reported the Canal and River Trust had trimmed back of some of the overgrown vegetation on Path SEMI38. The Chairman stated that Newland Homes Ltd and the Parish Steward had cleared St George's Road of unwanted vegetation.

Other Matters.

d. The Chairman confirmed that a Working Party had cleared the vegetation in the immediate vicinity of the Pill Box on 18 November and that further work has been scheduled for 20 January (or a week later if necessary).

e. The Chairman requested that the subject of the War Memorial and the addition of names to it be placed on it is an Agenda item for the next meeting.

8. Transport and Traffic.

a. Cllrs. Scott and Wade reported that the Melksham Area Board meeting at the Village Hall that was designed to highlight 'highway matters' on 6 December was deeply unsatisfactory and that although Cllr. Scott, on behalf of the Council, had submitted a list of key topics and issues – previously requested by the Area Board (see Clerk's Note in italics below) – the response from the Area Board members was prevarication and obfuscation and failed to address any of the concerns raised. The Council noted that the view of the meeting expressed by Cllr. Seed previously, accorded with the experience of Cllrs. Scott and Wade. Notwithstanding this, a written response to the issues raised was promised – although the Parish Council is not hopeful of a satisfactory or timely response.

The Chairman thanked Cllrs. Scott and Wade for attending the meeting.

Clerk's Note.

The following list details the key topics and issues highlighted by the Parish Council:

- *The conversion of SEMI9A and HILP22/10 Byway into a Cyclepath which will also permit cars and vans to travel at 60 mph..*
- *The failure to prevent motor traffic from using the old A350 road as a short-cut.*
- *Parking along the old A350/Proposed Parking Restrictions at the Canal Bridge.*
- *The deteriorating state of the roads and pavements in the village.*
- *Development implications of the (new) proposed A350 Bypass.*
- *The suitability of narrow side roads within the village for carrying further housing development and WC Highways views regarding the consequential extra traffic.*

b. Cllr. Wade reported that a metrocount has been deployed at the Bus Gate to assist in identifying the number of vehicles ignoring the prohibition.

9. Planning and Development.

a. The Council examined the following planning applications and **resolved** to send comments to Wiltshire Council as shown (in italics):

PL/2023/10266 Listed Building Consent (Alt/Ext)	Littleton Mill House, Littleton, Semington, Trowbridge, BA14 6LQ	Replacement roof for conservatory, new doors to replace garage doors, new roof lights and internal changes	New
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The Council had no comment on this application and requested that it is forwarded to the Conservation Officer for comment.

PL/2023/09957 Householder planning permission	Littleton Mill House, Littleton, Semington, Trowbridge, BA14 6LQ	Replacement roof for conservatory, new doors to replace garage doors, new roof lights and internal changes	New
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The Council has no objections to this proposed development.

PL/2023/09956 Householder planning permission	17 Church Street, Semington, Trowbridge, BA14 6JS	Single storey front extension to match neighbouring property and replacement single storey rear extension.	New
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The Council has no objections to this proposed development.

b. Cllr. Scott reported that the plans for the proposed renovation of the Berks and Wilts Canal (the Melksham Link) were continuing to experience problems regarding its connection to the River Avon and Environmental Agency concerns.

10. Finance.

a. The Clerk gave a financial report, and the Council noted the following financial position:

Lloyds A/C 2149025

Bank Statement 31 October 2023	£ 29,568.97
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Total:	£ 26,626.50
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Credits (1 November 2023 to 30 November 2023):

HMRC VAT Refund	£ 2,015.73
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Total:	£ 2,015.73
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Debits (1 November 2023 to 30 November 2023):

Bobby Van Trust	1158	£	50.00
Clerk's Salary (November)	1167	£	320.06
HMRC PAYE Month 8	1168	£	213.20
Clerk's Expenses (October)	1169	£	35.90
Winter Fete (R Bruges)	1171	£	956.00
P Smith (Plants/Road Sign)	1172	£	219.50
L Callghan (Plants etc)	1174	£	24.94
HP953 Printer Cartridge	1175	£	33.14

Total:	£ 1,852.74
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1484

Balance at 30 November 2023 (A/C 2149025):

£ 26,789.49

Credits (1 December 2023 to 13 December 2023):

None

£ -

Total: £ -

Debits (1 December 2023 to 13 December 2023):

Place Studios

1170 £ 2,475.00

Total: £ 2,475.00

Balance at 13 December 2023 (A/C 2149025):

£ 24,314.49

Lloyds A/C 7754288

Bank Statement

£ 57,960.09

31-Oct-23

Credits

09-Nov-23

Interest

£ 63.99

21-Nov-23

HMCTS

£ 1.28

09-Dec-23

Interest (Approx)

£ 60.00

Total: £ 125.27

Debits

None

£ -

£ -

Balance at 13 December 2023 (A/C 7754288):

£ 58,085.36

Total Balance in Hand at 13 December 2023:

£ 82,399.85

Payments to be authorised (13 December 2023)

Clerk's Salary (December) Gross

Clerk's Back Pay 1/4/23 to 30/11/23 (8 months) Gross

Clerk's Salary (December) Net

£ 483.83

HMRC PAYE Month 9

£ 322.40

Clerk's Expenses (November)

£ 24.60

SLCC Annual Subscription

£ 144.00

£ 974.83

- b. The Council **resolved** to adopt the NALC/SLCC Salary Award for Local Council Clerks FY2023/24 backdated to 1 April 2023.
- c. Cllr. Hailey, on behalf of the Community Development Fund Working Group (CDFWG) stated that no other qualifying applications for funding had been received.
- d. The Parish Council **resolved** that the Draft Budget proposal tabled, and agreed, at the last Parish Council meeting would be adopted for FY2024/25. This Budget is attached to these minutes.
The Parish Council **resolved** to request a Parish Precept of £14500 for FY2024/25.
- e. The Council **resolved** to make the payments shown under 'Payments to be authorised' above at Agenda item 10a.
- f. The Council **resolved** to make the following additional payments:
- Semington Village Hall Hire - £66.
Southview Nurseries (Christmas Tree) - £205.
C Wade – Christmas Tree Sundries - £67

11. Neighbourhood Plan.

a. The Chairman confirmed that AECOM was currently preparing the Sustainability and Environmental Assessment that would then enable Regulation 14 (Public Consultation) to be implemented and that a Draft Report would be produced by 12 January 2024.

b/ The Chairman stated that the next meeting of the Steering Group is to be held on 16 January 2024.

12. Date of the next meeting.

The Council noted that the next Ordinary Parish Council meeting would be held on Wednesday 17 January 2024 commencing at 7.30pm.

The meeting ended at 9.45pm.

ITEM (Description)	Budget FY23/24	Actual 31-Oct	Estimated FY2023/24	AGREED Budget FY2024/25	Future Budgets
<u>Income:</u>					
Precept	13500	13500	13500	14500	
Grants	4000	4465	??	0	
NHP					
CIL	0	0	0	?	
Other (Approx)					
HMCTS	15	7	15	15	
Wiltshire Council W. Close)	0	0	1000	0	
Lloyds A/C 7754288 (Interest)	2	207	400	350	
Lloyds A/C 2149025	0	0	0	0	
FSM Refund	0	0	500	0	
VAT Reclaim	450	0	2016	500	
Total Income	17967	18179	17431	15365	
<u>Expenditure:</u>					
Clerk Salary	6337	3733	6719	7108	
Expenses	150	238	400	400	
Office Allowance	250	0	250	250	
Chairman	0	0	0	0	
Hire Hall	700	600	600	750	
Audit	375	438	438	475	
Subscriptions	175	75	75	100	
Insurance	900	960	1100	1250	
Community (Section 137) (inc. Litter Bins, Parish Mag, CY)	2000	2034	3500	2500	
Website	300	184	300	300	
Training	150	0	0	0	
Elections	0	0	0	0	
Planning & Development					
Neighbourhood Plan	6500	5443	7900	3500	
Environment/Streetscene					
Kissing gates	1500	0	500	0	
Trees Bulbs	1500	57	150	250	
Transport & Traffic					
SLOW markings	0	0	250	0	
Recreation & Wellbeing					
Tennis Court	1000	0	0	0	8500
Wessex Close play area	6000	0	500	5000	10000
Allotments	7500	67	1000	2500	5000
Summer & Winter Fetes	0	1600	1600	2000	
Community & Communication					
Notice boards	0	598	598	0	
War Memorial	0	864	864	0	
Defibrillator	0	2160	2160	0	

Future Projects (CDF)	5000	0	0	0	
Future Projects (CIL)	5000	0	0	0	
Future Village Projects (CIL)				2000	29000
	45337	19051	28904	28383	52500
Net Income	17967	18179	17431	15365	
Net Expenditure	45337	19051	28904	28383	
Surplus	-27370	-872	-11473	-13018	

Balance C/F at 31 March 2023 =	£84,000
Anticipated C/F at 31 March 2024 =	£72,527
Anticipated C/F at 31 March 2025 =	£59,509

NOTES:

1. NH Plan: Spend to Date £19536. Groundwork UK Grant: £18126
2. CIL: Received to Date £40463 (Rounded up to £40,500 for Budget purposes)
3. The Draft Budget allocates £40,500 of the CIL Receipts.