

**Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on
15 May 2024 at 8.00 pm in the Village Hall**



Present.

Councillors P Smith (Chairman), W Scott, S Chown, J Hailey, C McGarvey, C Wade, R Bruges and the Clerk, Roger Coleman.

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

There were four members of the public present.

1. Apologies.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. M Carberry.

2. Declaration of Interests.

There were no interests declared.

3. Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 17 April 2024.

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

4. Wiltshire Council Report.

Cllr. Seed reported that he will continue to pursue a reply from Wiltshire Council officers to the matters raised by the Parish Council at the Area Board meeting that was held at the Village Hall on 6 December 2023.

Cllr. Wade advised Cllr. Seed that a Report arising from the joint review of proposed parking restrictions on the (old) A350 road either side of the canal bridge had been issued and had been discussed at the recent LHFIG Meeting although, as a member of the LHFIG, he had not had sight of the report and that the deadline date for comments on it had now passed. He requested Cllr. Seed to obtain an extension to this date and for Cllr. Wade to be sent a copy of the Report. Cllr. Wade added that it was very likely that Semington Parish Council would have some significant comments in relation to the proposed parking restrictions and that consultation with local residents was essential.

Cllr. Seed stated that there had been significant progress with the Bus Gate ANPR Camera project and that it was now the responsibility of Wiltshire Council Parking Services. He advised that the Parish Council remains vigilant regarding the disbursement of financial income arising from the penalty notices issued.

Cllr. Seed commented that Grant Funding applications are now being considered by the Melksham Area Board and he encouraged the Parish Council to consider grant funding opportunities. He suggested that an application in relation to the allotments would be a realistic possibility.

Cllr. Scott thanked Cllr. Seed for intervening to ensure that the Melksham News publication was now being delivered along Pound Lane.

Following the recent cutting down of wild flowers in the village by IdVerde, Cllr. Scott questioned the grass-cutting policy of Wiltshire Council and its sub-contractors during the 'No Mow May' initiative. Cllr. Seed explained the difficulties of implementing this policy but said that he would raise the issue with Highways.

5. Community and Communication.

- a. Councillors confirmed that arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on 23 May 2024 were well in hand with a number of local groups and organisations prepared to give short presentations. The Chairman reminded 'Theme Leads' to be prepared to give a brief report on their work over the last year.
- b. Cllr. Bruges stated that he had spoken to Criterian regarding the fallen tiles and missing lead flashing at The Somerset Arms and Criterian had confirmed that they would visit the Public House soon and undertake a full inspection.
- c. There were no other matters raised.

6. Recreation and Wellbeing.

- a. The Council noted the Freedom of Information (Fol) request dated 29 April 2024 and the Chairman confirmed that the information requested had been provided. He added that a second request dated 10 May had now been received. The Chairman and the Clerk explained the nature of this further request. The Parish Council **resolved** that it represented a clarification of the earlier request and, as such, it was a new Fol request and would be treated as such.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow members of the public to participate in a discussion on the nature and purpose of the four allotment car parking spaces that are owned by the Parish Council but for which rights of access has been granted by Newland Homes in the title deeds for the Kendall Lane residents.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

The Chairman invited the Council to agree that the parking spaces could be used by allotment holders and Kendall Lane residents.

The following **resolution** received unanimous support:

'Subject to consultation with the allotment holders, the Parish Council which owns the four parking spaces abutting the allotments at Kendall Lane, **resolves** to make these available both to allotment holders and Kendall Lane visitors. In so doing, it asks all users to respect the occasional need for spaces in front of the allotment gates to be reserved for access purposes when bulk deliveries (compost, sheds or similar) are due'.

- b. Cllr. Wade stated that he is still investigating a possible 'Allotment Community Shed' and any restrictions imposed by adopting 'Permitted Rights' planning rules.
- c. Cllr. Chown stated that the transfer of the Wessex Close Play Area had stalled because Wiltshire Council has decided to embark upon a 'new' County-wide survey to determine interest in Parish Councils adopting Play Areas as 'asset transfers' even though that relating to Semington Parish Council and Wessex Close Play Area had already been agreed with Wiltshire Council and was in the process of being finalised. Cllr. Chown stressed that it was essential to impress upon Wiltshire Council that the Wessex Close Asset Transfer is ready to be implemented subject to the clarification of a couple of issues.
- d. Cllr. Chown reported that in view of this new survey by Wiltshire Council and the time this is likely to take it will be a challenge to maintain the membership and interest of the newly formed Friends of Wessex Close Play Area group. This delay is particularly irksome bearing in mind the recently completed Safety Inspection Training.
- e. There were no other matters raised.

7. Environment and Streetscene.

a. In the absence of Cllr. Carberry no report regarding the Litter Bins was given.

b. Rights of Way.

Cllr. Hailey gave the following report (shown in italics) which was sent to all councillors prior to the Parish Council meeting:

I have reported two possibly dangerous stiles on our patch to Wiltshire Council. One is on SEMI28 as you approach Littleton (last stile before the wooden bridge with the broken footboard). The second is on SEMI45 as you head up the field from the brook towards the canal, it's the stile that allows access into the fenced off stretch.

I've cleared some nettles on various stiles on SEMI28. I have some concerns over a low tree as you head in a Southerly direction away from the brook at Mill Leat (Littleton end of SEMI28 rather than Semington end). It's passable, but even I have to duck slightly. To me it looks like the tree might be dead and it's slowly collapsing onto the RoW.

SEMI10 just north of A361 is getting pretty overgrown and in a couple of weeks will be difficult to pass.

SEMI39 just south of A361 is in the same situation, but with slightly more advanced vegetation.

The nettles along SEMI26 from High Street heading east are also growing well, but at the moment are just passable. Is this something we could ask the Parish Steward to trim for us?

SEMI9 by the tennis courts is surprisingly without issue.

SEMI41 by the village hall is getting a little narrow in places due to weeds (now the hedge has been cut there is more light).

SEMI6 from Pound Lane towards the swing bridge appears to have been planted again, with walkers using the edge of the field as an alternative route.

SEMI13 from Little Marsh towards the A350 has also been planted and when I checked 10 days again hadn't been walked on, so this might need a group of volunteers to "walk the route" to establish the RoW?

c. There was no report in respect of the Pill Box.

8. Transport and Traffic.

a. The Council noted the latest correspondence regarding the provision, installation, and use of an ANPR Camera at the Bus Gate and expressed the view that it was likely to be in place in a few week's time.

b. Cllr. Wade stated that the Paths SEMI9A/10 and HILP22/10 / HILP21/10 Experimental Road Traffic Order (ERTO) was likely to take effect next week.

The proposed parking restrictions on the (old) A350 road – either side of the Canal Bridge – was addressed at Para 4 above.

9. Planning and Development.

a. There were no planning applications received after 8 May 2024 for consideration by the Parish Council.

b. Cllr. Scott reported that he understood that Green Square Accord/Black Box Planning had submitted new proposals for development on the field west of the Tennis Court but these new plans had not been formally published yet.

10. Finance.

a. The Clerk's report on the current financial position was received as shown below:

Lloyds A/C 2149025

Bank Statement	£	6,700.92
31 March 2024		

Total:	£	6,700.92
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Credits (1 April 2024 to 30 April 2024):

Wiltshire Council FY2024/25 Precept (Part)	£	7,250.00
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Total:	£	7,250.00
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Debits (1 April 2024 to 30 April 2024):

Clerk's Salary (April)	£	347.05
HMRC PAYE Month 1	£	230.80
Clerk's Expenses (March)	£	14.70
Zurich Municipal Insurance	£	1,022.21
HP953 Ink Cartridge	£	24.53

£	1,639.29
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Credits (1 May 2024 to 15 May 2024):

None	£	-
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Total:	£	-
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Debits (1 May 2024 to 15 May 2024):

None	£	-
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Total:	£	-
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Balance at 15 May 2024 (A/C 2149025):

£	12,311.63
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Lloyds A/C 7754288

Bank Statement	£	70,288.52
31-Mar-24		

Credits (1 April 2024 to 15 May 2024)

09-Apr-24	Interest	£	72.60
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1519

04-Apr-24	HMCTS	£	1.28
09-May-24	Interest (Approx)	£	73.00

Total:

£	146.88
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Debits

None

£ -

£	-
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Balance at 15 May 2024 (A/C 7754288):

£	70,435.40
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Total Balance in Hand at 15 May 2024:

£	82,747.03
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Payments to be authorised (15 May 2024)

Clerk's Salary (May) Net	£	347.05
HMRC PAYE Month 2	£	230.80
Clerk's Expenses (April)	£	14.35
R Simmons (Internal Audit Fee)	£	120.00
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	£	36.00
Flower Tub Plants (P Smith)	£	22.56
ATF Solutions (Play Area Safety Inspection Courses) (P Smith)	£	162.00

The Clerk confirmed that he had completed the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) FY2023/24 and associated documentation and that all matters were in order with no outstanding issues. He added that the Internal Audit had also been completed with no outstanding issues. AGAR had been approved by the Parish Council at the earlier Annual Parish Council Meeting.

The Clerk added that he had just received confirmation that the recent VAT Refund claim from the Parish Council of £1081.50 has just been paid into the Council's Bank Account.

b. Cllr. Hailey reported that there had not been any formal requests for Community Development Funding.

c. The Council **resolved** to make the payments shown under 'Payments to be authorised' above at Agenda item 10a.

d. There were no additional payments.

11. Neighbourhood Plan.

a. The Chairman reported that Regulation 14 public consultation had been completed and that the Neighbourhood Plan had been amended in line with the comments received.

b. The Chairman added that final comments are awaited from AECOM. Once those comments have been received and any further changes to the Neighbourhood Plan undertaken it will be passed to Wiltshire Council under Regulation 15.

12. Date of the next meeting.

The Chairman explained that the Clerk had offered his resignation with effect from the end of September following some twenty-two years as Clerk to the Parish Council.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Parish Council, thanked the Clerk for his loyal and conscientious service over that period and for the experience and knowledge he brought to that post. Individual councillors added their own valedictory and appreciation of his support and service.

The Clerk responded by thanking the Chairman and all those present for their comments and good wishes and added that it has been a pleasure and privilege to serve such a committed and dedicated Parish Council and councillors that have always prioritised the well-being and interests of the Semington community that they serve.

The Parish Council noted the next Parish Council meeting:

- Ordinary Parish Council meeting – 12 June 2024 commencing at 7.30pm.

The meeting ended at 10.05pm.

Chairman, Semington Parish Council

12 June 2024