

AVEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of Avebury Parish Council held on Tuesday 1 September 2020 at the Social Centre, Avebury SN8 1RF.

In these minutes APC stands for Avebury Parish Council, ASSC for Avebury Sports and Social Club, AWHS for Avebury World Heritage Site, BB & WM PC for Berwick Bassett and Winterbourne Monkton Parish Council, CATG for Community Area Transport Group, FB for Facebook, FWOPC for Fyfield and West Overton Parish Council, MAB for Marlborough Area Boards, MDNEP for Marlborough Downs 'Space for Nature' Nature Enhancement Partnership, NALC for National Association of Local Councils, NT for the National Trust, PC for Parish Council, RoW for Rights of Way, UKN for Upper Kennet News, WC for Wiltshire Council and WHS for World Heritage Site.

Present: Mr Stephen Stacey (Chair), Mr Ben Butler, Mrs Donna Byatt, Mrs Maggie Lewis (Vice-Chair), Mrs Lynzey Paradise, Ms Zandria Service; and by invitation Jane Davies (Wiltshire Councillor).

In attendance: Miss Liz Moore (Clerk).

Time started: 19:31

1. **Public question time:** no members of the public were present; Jane Davies attended up to and including item 7.d. The Chairman thanked and warmly welcomed everyone back to their first face to face meeting since lock down began at the end of March 2020. **The Chairman proposed to alter the order of business and bring forward item 9 Local issues to item 6.** Proposed by Cllr Lewis, seconded by Cllr Paradise and carried unanimously.
2. **Apologies:** Dr Mike Bedford (Vice-Chair), Mr Mike Daniel and Mr Terence O'Connor.
3. **Declarations of interest:** Mr Stacey (Chairman), Mrs Lewis (Vice-Chair), Mr Butler, Mrs Byatt and Mrs Paradise all declared interests in respect of item 9 as they were all members of ASSC.
4. **Minutes of an ordinary meeting held on 7 July 2020:** there was one request for an amendment to the draft minutes: to correct the sub-heading at item 8.d. to 'Play Area'. Proposed by Cllr Paradise, seconded by Cllr Byatt and all agreed. **It was resolved** to accept the minutes as a proper record. Proposed by Cllr Paradise, seconded by Cllr Lewis, and carried unanimously.
5. **Matters arising from the minutes:** there were none.

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6. Local Issues:

a. Overnight camping on the Ridgeway beyond Overton Hill

The Chairman explained that vehicles had the right to “pass and repass” over the Ridgeway and even to pause but they did not have the right to camp. However the police did not want to move vehicles on if their drivers were not in a fit state to drive. He said that steps needed to be taken to address the challenge and that all stakeholders would be making an effort to control the behavior of people on that part of the Ridgeway. Jane Davies outlined the reasons why it was too complicated to close the byway and questioned why farmers and NT were allowing access to land when there was a temporary closure further along the Ridgeway. The Chairman said that he had a meeting with the NT the next day to discuss these issues and a meeting on Friday with Sarah Nichols (Chair, FWOPC). In discussion the following points were raised:

- (i) Closing the Ridgeway might move vehicles elsewhere in the Parish though it was recognized that the prospect of this happening did not justify leaving things as they are.
- (ii) Additional fencing strong enough to prevent access to land would be expensive.
- (iii) All stakeholders needed to take responsibility.
- (iv) Preserving the buried archaeology was important.
- (v) Anti-social behavior during the pandemic was a national problem.
- (vi) Residents and walkers had reported that they felt intimidated by some campers
- (vii) There was a public health issue as there were no toilets on the Ridgeway and there were also legitimate concerns about inadequate social distancing.

Thanks were expressed to Jane Davies and the Chairman said that the PC would continue actively to engage with Richard Broadhead (Head of RoW, Wiltshire Council) and Jane who had both been very helpful.

b. Excessive motorcycle noise along the A4

Cllr Lewis reported that residents had noticed an increase in excessive motorcycle noise along the A4 and also on the A361 from Beckhampton to Devizes. She explained that Danny Kruger (Devizes constituency MP) had written to Angus Macpherson (Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioner) and Bridget Wayman (Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport, Waste and A303). It was noted that the police had recently carried out speed checks on the A4.

c. South Street: planning application

Members noted that the application had been called in by Jane Davies and would now be decided by county’s Eastern Area Planning

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Committee at 2pm on Thursday 10 September 2020. WC Committee members had been invited by the Chairman to view the site prior to the meeting. The Chairman and Jane Davies agreed to speak at the meeting and Jane Davies advised that a third speaker would also be required.

d. Replacement planters for the High Street

Cllr Paradise proposed replacing the existing square planters with new wooden rectangular ones that were taller so that people could not sit on them, raised slightly off the ground so that they could be moved as required, drain easily, and last longer and be lined with plastic to help prevent the wood rotting, and thus last longer. A picture of the planter was displayed on a laptop for members to view. She explained that her husband and father-in-law had offered to make them at a cost not exceeding £50 per planter. It was agreed that members of the community would be likely to be willing to replant them at no cost. In discussion members were very pleased with the proposal because it was fantastic value for money and a project involving the community but noted that one of the planters on the end row was new and would need to be moved elsewhere. **It was resolved** to purchase nine new planters for < £350.00 and additionally agreed that the PC would provide the compost for each one. Proposed by Cllr Lewis, seconded by Cllr Byatt and agreed.

e. Re-painting of West Kennett telephone box

This was delayed as a further consultation had been initiated by BT and was now live. The Chairman had written to West Kennett residents to explain the situation and had received one reply indicating strong support for retention of the payphone. The PC's view remained the same as last year, namely that there was no mobile 'phone coverage at West Kennett and the kiosk was needed as an emergency 'phone.

f. Community Litter Pick

It was agreed that Cllr Lewis would organize the Community Litter Pick as in previous years, and a date was set for the morning of Saturday 10 October 2020. Further details would be published on the PC website and on Facebook.

7. Planning applications:

- a) **It was resolved** to approve and receive the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 14 July 2020 (see appendix 1). Proposed by Cllr Butler, seconded by Cllr Lewis and carried unanimously.

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- b) Application for work to trees in a Conservation Area at **2 Bray Street**, Avebury SN8 1RA. Proposal: Goat Willow 30% crown reduction and Sycamore 30% crown reduction. Ref: 20/06324/TCA. **It was resolved** to support the application with the qualification that it was for work to the two trees applied for and not the four trees identified on the plan. Proposed by Cllr Byatt, seconded by Cllr Service and carried unanimously.
- c) Application for Full Planning at **Galteemore Farm**, Beckhampton SN8 1QJ. Proposal: extension to the front of the existing grain store, and a lean-to extension to the side that will provide space for a workshop for the servicing and maintaining of agricultural machinery. Ref: 20/05446/FUL. In discussion it was noted that extending the commercial grain store would mean an increase in vehicle movements but there was separate access to and from the site and therefore the road through Beckhampton would not be adversely affected. Members felt that the proposal was a sensible use of space and that farmers should be allowed appropriate development of their businesses. **It was resolved** to support the application. Proposed by Cllr Lewis, seconded by Cllr Byatt and carried unanimously.
- d) Application for partial change of use from B8 Storage to farm shop and café at **East Farm**. Ref: 20/06817/FUL. The Chairman reported that he had met informally with Laura Corbett on 25 August 2020 at her request and that the application was for part of the existing space within a huge barn. There was some discussion about whether a shop and café might take business away from the village but on balance it was felt that this was unlikely given the size of the operation. The main concern expressed by members was from a highways perspective and included concern about signage and increased vehicle movements onto and off the A4361, which at that point was narrow and straight with vehicles often travelling at or above the national speed limit. **It was resolved** to offer no objection to the application but to include the two highway concerns in the PC's feedback to WC. Proposed by Cllr Byatt, seconded by Cllr Lewis and carried unanimously.
8. **National Trust update:** the Chairman said that Trust had provided an update (see below) and reported that he had received a number of complaints about campers on the Ridgeway at or close to Overton Hill and that the NT was also very concerned. He added that a metal detectorist had been re-caught for a second time that week by police. It was agreed that the PC would put advisory information on metal detecting on its web site and FB page.

Update from the National Trust – September 2020

Reset programme

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The National Trust has recently opened formal consultation on proposals that are likely to lead to some 1,200 salaried members of staff being put at risk of redundancy. We are currently in a 45-day consultation period on the proposals, ending on 11 September. Once the consultation input has been analysed and we are clear on the detailed impact on the Wiltshire Landscape portfolio, we will be able to update you further with what exactly this means for our team at Avebury.

Re-opening

Some elements of our offer have been open for about two months now and we have been surprisingly busy considering that the manor and museum are still closed.

Currently open:

- Visitor car park, including overflow, daily 11-5pm
- Toilets in farmyard, daily 11-5pm
- Circles Restaurant, daily 10.30-4pm
- NT Shop, Wednesday-Sunday, 11-4pm

Opening soon:

- Cobblestones second-hand bookshop

Remaining closed for now:

- Avebury Manor & Garden
- Alexander Keiller Museum
- Avebury Chapel
- Coach House Café and toilets

Audience

We've been noticing quite a change in audience compared to a 'normal' year. Very low numbers of overseas visitors, instead a big increase in first-time domestic visitors, many from within only a few miles away. This is a great opportunity for us to engage with people on our doorstep who traditionally haven't visited heritage sites like Avebury before. By and large visitors are grateful and appreciative that we are open, despite the limited offer available, and are understanding of the restrictions imposed to comply with the guidelines around Covid-19.

Volunteers

We have brought back our first group of volunteers in the Manor Garden; which felt like a really significant moment and step closer to normality. We are looking at gradually bringing back more volunteers in various areas of our operations.

Heritage crime

We have been supporting Wiltshire Police and Historic England in investigating a series of metal detecting incidents around the Waden Hill / Silbury Hill area. A suspect has been identified and metal detecting equipment seized by the police.

Ridgeway

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Following the events on the Ridgeway at Overton Hill over the bank holiday weekend, we will be working with all relevant stakeholders, including Avebury Parish Council, Wiltshire Council, the Police and the World Heritage Site Co-ordination Unit to find solutions to prevent similar events from happening in the future, and to address the ongoing issue of overnight camping in that area.

9. Project updates:

a. Transport Group:

- i. Cllr Lewis reported that she had attended a meeting of local PC chairs with Devizes constituency MP Danny Kruger on 14 August 2020 and that he was very supportive of their concerns about improving road safety and reducing vehicle speeds along the A4 and had undertaken to write to that effect to Wiltshire Council. There had been coverage in the Wiltshire Gazette and Herald. See item 6.b.
- ii. The Chairman reported that he would be unable to attend the next CATG meeting 10am-12pm on 17 September 2020. It was agreed that Cllr Lewis would represent the PC at the virtual meeting.

b. **Play Area refurbishment:** Cllr Paradise reported that no further work had been carried out due to lockdown. She confirmed that she would carry out the required checks from time to time and complete and return the relevant form to the clerk.

c. **Superfast fibre broadband project and 4/5G:** it was noted that BT Openreach had carried out a Parish Survey in the past few weeks and members were grateful to Cllr O'Connor for his work on progressing the project thus far. The project to ensure all households would have the option to connect to fibre was likely to take about two years.

d. **Proposed A4361 permissive pathway from Winterbourne Monkton to Avebury:** see appendix 2 for meeting minutes. The Chairman reported that Cllr Daniel had been very disappointed that the landowner had decided that he would not allow a permissive path across his land. It was hoped that the PC would be able to discuss the landowner's concerns in more detail and find a solution mutually acceptable and of benefit to all. Cllr Daniel had scheduled the next meeting of his working group on 22 September 2020.

10. **Grants:** the Chairman reported that the PC had received a request for financial assistance from ASSC for loss of income during lockdown and that his recommendation was that the PC considers making available a grant of £1,000. In discussion members felt that the PC should encourage the Club to re-emphasize that it is open to the public as a village facility and not just for cricket. A question was raised about publicity and whether a regular update on events called 'Village Field' could be placed in the UKN. Cllr Paradise agreed to explore the idea with the Club and the UKN. **It was resolved** to give

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a one-off non-repayable grant of £1,000 to ASSC and that the money would be taken from PC reserves. Proposed by Cllr Service, seconded by Cllr Byatt and agreed.

[Under s.19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, a council has the power to provide (and provide financial support by way of a grant of loan) for the provision of recreational facilities].

11. **Parish Steward Priority Sheet:** members requested footpath strimming along Kyters Walk and the footpath running adjacent to 1 Trusloe Cottages.
12. **Communications:** there had been no headlines submitted to UKN as there had been no meeting in August.
13. **Correspondence:** the Chair and the Clerk reported that they had received several complaints from residents about vehicles camping on the Ridgeway. Members supported the issue and the PC was working with other stakeholders to resolve the matter.
14. **Finance and admin:**
 - a. The Clerk reported that the **inspection of the Play Area** by RoSPA was booked and due to take place that month.
 - b. **It was resolved** to ratify payments to the Clerk during lockdown. It had been agreed at an earlier meeting that the Clerk's lockdown pay arrangements should be extended for a further three months (being June, July, and August 2020).
 - c. **Cheques for payment: it was resolved** to that the following cheque be paid and resolutions within item 12 b – c formally approved. Proposed by Cllr Service, seconded by Cllr Paradise, and carried unanimously.
 - i. Miss E. Moore: August invoice including expenses £181.55
 - d. **Accessibility Statement:** Cllr Paradise confirmed that she was working with Kate Fry to ensure that an accessibility statement was published on the PC web site by the statutory deadline of 23 September 2020.
15. **Date of next meeting:** 7:30pm on Tuesday 6 October 2020.
16. **To consider setting a date for the Annual Parish Meeting:** members felt that, given the current health pandemic, it was sensible to hold the meeting in March 2021. A formal date would be set in due course.
17. **Any other business:** the Chairman reported that he had requested an extra bin from Wiltshire Council for the car park opposite the Community Shop but it was not yet clear that it could be provided. Members noted that there was an increasing amount of rubbish being left in the centre of the village. This was likely to be due to the fair weather and to an increase in the sale of take-away food. It was noted that a large bag of rubbish had

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been off-loaded by a bin and that residents had picked up and disposed the litter when it had blown across the road.

The meeting closed at 21:20

Appendices:

1. Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 14 July 2020
2. Minutes from Permissive Pathway meetings held on 28 July 2020 and 27 August 2020