

AVEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of Avebury Parish Council held online on Tuesday 2 June 2020.

In these minutes APC stands for Avebury Parish Council, ASSC for Avebury Sports and Social Club, ASSF for Avebury Sacred Sites Forum, 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, 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, SWAST for South Western Ambulance Service Trust, WC for Wiltshire Council and WHS for World Heritage Site.

Present: Mr Stephen Stacey (Chair), Dr Mike Bedford (Vice-Chair), Mr Ben Butler, Mrs Donna Byatt, Mr Mike Daniel, Mrs Maggie Lewis (Vice-Chair), Mr Terence O'Connor and Mrs Lynzey Paradise; Jane Davies (Wiltshire Council), Jan Tomlin (General Manager, National Trust Wiltshire Landscape).

Time Started: 19:37

1. **Public question time:** seven members of the public present were present for all or part of the meeting. Cllr Paradise asked, on behalf of Jan Rendle, that APC help to prevent parking in the West Kennett lay-by over the summer solstice. The Chair responded that this issue would be covered under item 8 (b) and the he would also mention it to Wiltshire Highways.
2. **Apologies:** Ms Zandria Service and Miss Liz Moore (Parish Clerk).
3. **Declarations of interest:** none was declared.
4. **Minutes of an ordinary meeting held on 5 May 2020: it was resolved** to accept the minutes as a proper record subject to amendments noting that Cllrs Butler, Daniel, and Lewis had been present and correcting a date from 2 May to 5 May. **Proposed by** Cllr Lewis, **seconded by** Cllr Daniel, and carried unanimously.
5. **Matters arising from the minutes:** reports were made on the following matters arising from the minutes not already part of the agenda for the current meeting:
 - i. *A4 Traffic Calming Project:* Cllr Bedford said that he would get in touch with Steve Hind (Wiltshire Highways) to find out whether the safety audit due to have been reported by Atkins in time for our last meeting had in fact come in and, if so, whether we could see a copy.
 - ii. *CATG meeting 12 March:* the Chair reported that Wiltshire Highways staff working on CATG projects had been redeployed in response to the government's recent decision to make roads more accessible for use by bicyclists and pedestrians. (*Stop Press:* by email on 3 June, Wiltshire Council cancelled the CATG meeting due 18 June, adding that "the

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decision has been taken to suspend all CATG projects until it is practical to recommence.”).

- iii. *Pumping station:* Cllr Lewis confirmed that she had written to Thames Water.
- iv. *Re-painting of West Kennett telephone box:* the Chair reported that the Clerk had been in contact with BT who, in acknowledging a commitment to repair and repaint the box during the period April-September, had said that due to COVID-19 they were not able to provide a date for the work.

6. **Planning applications:** there was none.

7. **Update from the National Trust:** Jan Tomlin spoke to the following update:

In response to Coronavirus, and in line with government advice, the National Trust’s historic houses, museums and facilities have been closed since the end of March. Despite the lock-down being eased, many of our properties remain closed, including at Avebury, and this leaves the Trust facing a loss of some £200 million this year. It is now inevitable that there will be a review of our structure, and that this will result in redundancies this year among the Trust’s 15,000 permanent and temporary staff.

Throughout the lock-down, a small team has continued to maintain a visible presence across all sites in the Wiltshire Landscape portfolio, and particularly in the Avebury and Stonehenge Landscapes. We have dealt with and reported a number of serious incidents including fires, digging, metal-detecting, fly-tipping, graffiti and anti-social behaviour.

Conservation and the protection of our sites remain core to our work. We also know that it is important for the mental wellbeing of the nation that people are able to access our sites. To this end, we’re keen to welcome people back to our landscapes as soon as we can do so safely.

We are now looking at how best to welcome visitors back to Avebury, within government guidance, and will be considering options in consultation with residents and local businesses. That said, we will not open any facilities until after the Solstice weekend at the very earliest. When we do, we’re expecting to open the main visitor carpark and some toilets as a first step.

Finally, our Estate Manager, Catherine Hosie, will be moving on shortly. Her role will be picked up by our Rural Surveyor Rupert Arvidsson, who knows the portfolio well.

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The Chair thanked Mrs Tomlin for attending and for providing the National Trust's update.

8. Local Issues:

a. Solstice: reports back from the meetings of ASSF on 26 May and ASOPM on 27 May

Cllr Lewis reported that she had attended the Avebury Sacred Sites Forum, which confirmed that local faith groups would not formally be celebrating the summer solstice at Avebury this year.

The Chair said that he had attended the planning meeting on 27 May. Wiltshire Highways had disclosed that, following intelligence received from the police that fewer people than usual were expected to attend, it had decided to operate reactively this year. Hence they had not planned to distribute cones, provide security staff at the entrance to the High Street, and so on. Resources would be kept in reserve and deployed only should they be needed. Representatives of the local community present at the meeting had been very strongly critical of this approach.

b. Solstice: arrangements for 20-21 June

The Chair reported that, following further representations made jointly with the National Trust, he had heard within the last 24 hours that Highways had decided to revert to practice of earlier years. This means that there will be visible management in place before the solstice weekend. APC will set up the usual scheme for residents' parking permits.

Dominic Fry asked for APC's view on opening the Sports and Social Club's car park should the number of visitors require it. The Chair replied that it was important to be consistent in our approach. Since the National Trust car park would remain closed, the Club's car park ought not to be open.

c. Website design

Cllr Paradise offered to work with Kate Fry to redesign APC's website with a view to enhancing its attractiveness and accessibility. We could also take the opportunity to retire redundant materials. Cllr Paradise's kind offer was warmly welcomed. She said that she would be happy to work with other councilors and asked that they make themselves known to her by the end of the week.

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d. A4361 surface

Cllr Daniel reported that recent work on the road had resulted in a surface that was poorly edged, indifferently yellow lined, and covered with a rougher and more friable material that generated significantly more noise from passing vehicles. Cllr Lewis added that the yellow lining seemed inconsistent with WHS good practice, which mandated a sensitive 'primrose' not a startling egg yolk 'yellow'. Cllr Butler said that heavy vehicles turning into and out of East Farm would probably quickly damage the new surface at that point. The Chair offered to circulate a draft letter drawing Wiltshire Councillor Wayman's attention to these points (Mrs Wayman is the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste). This was accepted.

9. **Parish Steward Priority Sheet:** The Chair reported that the parish steward had strimmed the verges up to and over Big Arch Bridge and on the footpath to the bus shelter opposite Rawlins Park. It was noted that Kyte's Walk and Cow Drove require remedial work. Cllr Butler said that Cow Drove was very badly rutted in places and offered to do what he could to improve accessibility, for which members expressed their thanks. He pointed out that the salt bin on Frog Lane seemed to have been moved and ought to be restored to its original position. The Chair undertook to write to Stephen Leonard (Countryside Access Officer, Wiltshire Council) about Cow Drove. He would add Kyte's Walk and the Frog Lane salt bin to the monthly list for the parish steward.
10. **Communications:** the Chair reported that PC Headlines had been submitted to UKN.
11. **Correspondence:** the Chair reported that he had received an anonymous letter alleging encroachment on a by-way in Beckhampton. He had discussed the issue with Cllrs Bedford and Lewis and could see no further course of action for the parish council.
12. **Finance and admin:** the Chair reported that the statutory audit had been completed successfully and expressed the parish council's thanks to Liz Moore for the very efficient way in which she kept our financial records and to Jamie Guy for auditing the books whilst adhering to guidance on social distancing by sitting in his car in Liz Moore's drive.

The following invoices being due, members were invited formally to approve that payment be made:

a. Jamie Guy (for the audit)	£75.00
b. WALC/NALC (annual subscription)	£202.56
c. Community First (annual subscription)	£40.00
d. Liz Moore (May invoice)	£165.00.

Proposed by Cllr Butler, **seconded by** Cllr Daniel, and carried unanimously.

13. **Date of next meeting:** 7:30pm on Tuesday 7 July 2020.

14. **Any other business:** there was none.

The meeting closed at 20:45.