

AVEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of Avebury Parish Council held online on Tuesday 2 March 2021.

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, CATG for Community Area Transport Group, FB for Facebook, MAB for Marlborough Area Board, NALC for National Association of Local Councils, NT for the National Trust, PC for Parish Council, RoW for Rights of Way, SID for Speed Indicator Device, UKN for Upper Kennet News, WALC for Wiltshire Association of Local Councils, WC for Wiltshire Council and WHS for World Heritage Site.

Present: Mr Stephen Stacey (Chair), Dr Mike Bedford (Vice-Chair), Mrs Maggie Lewis (Vice-Chair), Mr Ben Butler, Mrs Lynzey Paradise, and Ms Zandria Service.

In attendance: Mrs Jan Tomlin (General Manager, Wiltshire Landscape), Mr Adam Seccombe (The Old Vicarage, Avebury), Mr Tim Lewis (from about 20:00), and Cllr Jane Davies (Wiltshire Councillor for West Selkley), who regretted that she would have to leave at about 20:00 to join another meeting.

Time started: 19:30

Welcome by the Chairman: The Chair warmly welcomed Mr Adam Seccombe and Mrs Jan Tomlin, who were invited guests, and Cllr Jane Davies.

1. **Public question time:** no members of the public were present online.
2. **Apologies:** Cllrs Donna Byatt, Mike Daniel, and Terence O'Connor.
3. **Declarations of interest:** there was none reported.
4. **Minutes of an ordinary meeting held on 2 February 2021:** It was **resolved** to accept the minutes as a proper record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Service, seconded by Cllr Lewis, and carried unanimously.
5. **Matters arising from the minutes:** there was none not forming part of the current agenda.

The Chair adjusted the order of business to allow Cllr Davies to attend another meeting.

6. Mobility:

- a) **Petition for a 40mph speed limit on the A4361: progress report (Cllr Daniel)**
- b) **Application to MAB for SID part-funding (Chair)**

In Cllr Daniel's absence, the Chair reported that the petition had closed at the end of February with well over 200 signatures. He would discuss the timing of next

AVEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

steps with Cllr Daniel but the idea had been to report the petition to Wiltshire Council using the formal procedure devised for the purpose before the end of March.

The Chair reported that he had submitted an application to MAB for 50% funding for two SIDs. A decision would be taken by the Board at its meeting on 16 March. Cllr Davies noted that there were many good applications. Since this would be the last meeting of the financial year, there would be strong competition. However she strongly supported the application and hoped it would be successful.

7. Local issues:

c) **To take note of correspondence with Wiltshire Council about AVE14 and the Ridgeway (Chair)**

The Chair reported that Cllr Richard Clewer (Deputy Leader, Wiltshire Council) had replied to our letter about the poor condition of AVE14 asking Richard Broadhead (Head of Rights of Way, Countryside, Technical, and Streetscene) to respond. He had done so, advising that Stephen Leonard (Countryside Access Officer) would get in touch. Cllr Davies said that Richard Broadhead's team is very under-resourced given its wide range of responsibilities (note Richard's job title) and hoped that this situation would improve following the local elections in May.

The Chair reported that Richard Broadhead had written to him about managing access to the Ridgeway. It seems that Wiltshire Council is planning to extend the temporary closure northwards from Overton Hill from April until October. Mr Broadhead had taken note of APC's interest in a permanent countermeasure by combining a restriction at Overton Hill with a lockable gate across Green Street but noted that access would have to be assured at all times since Green Street is a right of way (as is the Ridgeway). The Chair noted that unenforced closure was unlikely to be effective.

Cllr Davies left the meeting.

AVEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

8. **National Trust Update:** The Chair introduced Mrs Tomlin and thanked her for attending. Mrs Tomlin spoke to the following text:

Site re-opening plans:

We will re-open some of our facilities at Avebury from 8 March, marking the first step in gradually re-opening the site in line with both Government and National Trust guidelines. The following indicative dates are subject to ongoing reviews, with people's safety paramount in all our decisions.

From Monday 8 March:

We'll be welcoming back visitors to the outdoors by re-opening our main visitor car park, the toilets in the farmyard and a simple take-away offer from Circles Restaurant. We'll be using the public footpath from the car park as a two-way visitor route under current Government guidance (1m social distance plus additional measures), with signage asking visitors to wear face coverings as an additional safety measure. We'll also be improving the condition of Kyter's Way with woodchips to give a safer walking surface. This will ensure we'll be able to use this path as part of a one-way circular system should restrictions change. Relevant permission from Wiltshire Council has been obtained.

From Monday 29 March:

We should be in a position to extend our offer. After a year of closure, we hope to be able to welcome visitors back to the Manor Garden. Admission will be by booked tickets with the possibility of walk-up admission if there is capacity; tickets will be £5. We aim to re-open the High Street toilets to allow for increasing visitor numbers. The Coach House Café will hopefully open from 1 April (11am-4pm initially) and be open during school holidays and weekends only, to support our busiest times of year (subject to continuous review). We'll also have a 'Welcome trailer' and staff presence in the main visitor car park, to welcome and direct visitors appropriately.

Easter holidays (2 -18 April):

In line with Government guidance, the Trust will be providing an outdoors only offer over Easter. At Avebury we will participate in a national Easter trail from Friday 2 to Sunday 18 April. The trail will take place in the farmyard for a small charge of £3 per person. We expect Easter to be a busy period across most Trust places and we will therefore promote very carefully to manage capacity.

AVEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

No earlier than Monday 12 April:

We hope to be able to open our NT Shop and Cobblestones second-hand bookshop by mid-April.

No earlier than Monday 17 May:

We hope to be able to open Avebury Manor and the Museum by mid-May, almost certainly with a slightly different operating model initially. To support re-opening, all remaining staff on furlough will return in line with the above opening plans. We also hope to start bringing back some volunteer teams in the next few weeks, ready for our Easter operations.

Spring Equinox:

In line with current Government guidance, the Trust is actively discouraging attendance at Spring Equinox this year. As a result, we will not be offering camping, or any other special provision, over the weekend 21/22 March.

Great Barn thatch repair:

Scaffolding has recently gone up around the Great Threshing Barn in the farmyard, ready to carry out some repair works to the thatch (resulting from damage caused by jackdaws). We hope this will be completed in time for re-opening.

In discussion Cllr Butler asked about deep ruts in the gateway to Windmill Hill, and an apparent increase in mole damage on the site. This will be picked-up outside the meeting.

9. Planning applications:

- a) **Application to alter the existing garden wall to improve access (ref: 20/11624/FUL):** *consultation expires 02/03/2021.* The Chair welcomed Mr Seccombe to the meeting and invited him to present the application. After discussion, members indicated their approval and it was **resolved** to support the application. Proposed by Cllr Service, seconded by Cllr Paradise, and carried unanimously. The Chair thanked Mr Seccombe and welcomed him to the village. Mr Seccombe left the meeting noting that removers were due to arrive at 07h30 the following morning.

AVEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

10. Local issues:

- a) **To consider next steps in the plan to replace the High Street planters (Cllr Paradise)**

Cllr Paradise said that, although the pandemic had slightly delayed work on the planters, the project was broadly on track to deliver the new planters later in the summer. She added that it was not yet possible to be precise on timing as the planters, once made, would need to be pressure-treated elsewhere.

However she hoped to be able to update colleagues soon. She also explained that she would get in touch with the planters' 'gardeners' to find out whether they wished to continue in that role. The Chair thanked her for her work.

- b) **To receive and discuss a report auditing rights of way in the parish (Tim Lewis)**

The Chair welcomed Tim Lewis to the meeting and explained that he had been instrumental in a broad-based effort to audit the condition of rights of way and their signage in this parish and elsewhere. Mr Lewis commented that Anne Henshall (Chairman, CPRE Wiltshire) had brought together representatives of eight or nine adjoining parishes in the area, Avebury amongst them, and of relevant organisations such as the Ramblers. They had been discussing how to survey, repair, maintain, and sustain rights of way under a prospective new entity modelled on the Cotswolds AONB, which has long experience in managing volunteer effort to enhance countryside access. He presented his report (attached) and said that, speaking generally, rights of way in our parish were in fair condition (AVE14 being a marked exception). After discussion, it was agreed that the report was an extraordinarily impressive piece of work and the Chair thanked him warmly for it.

11. **Parish Steward Priority Sheet:** Members asked for potholes to be attended to in Bray Street, outside the Sports and Social Club on the A4361, and at the bottom end of the B4003.

12. **Communications:** the Chair reported that he had submitted headlines to the UKN.

13. **Correspondence:** the Chair reported that he had had an email from a resident living in a tenanted property on the right of way leading up to Tan Hill asking for potholes to be filled. He said that he would raise this with the Parish Steward.

14. **Finance and admin:**

AVEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

a) **Cheques for ratification and payment:** it was resolved to ratify and pay the following cheque. Proposed by Cllr Service, seconded by Cllr Lewis, and carried unanimously.

i. Miss E. Moore: lockdown pay and expenses for February 2021 £155.62

15. **Date of next meeting:** 19:30 on Tuesday 6 April 2021.

16. **Any other business:** there being none, the Chair expressed thanks to all for attending the meeting that night, and especially to our guests.

The meeting closed at 20:56.