

Avebury Parish Council

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of Avebury Parish Council held on Tuesday 2 November 2021 at the Social Centre, Avebury SN8 1RF.

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 Boards, NNR for National Nature Reserve, NT for the National Trust, PC for Parish Council, RoSPA for The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, 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 Donna Byatt, Mrs Lynzey Paradise and Ms Zandria Service: online.

In attendance: Miss Liz Moore (Clerk): online.

Time started: 19:31

1. **Public question time:** there was one member of the public present and he advised APC that there had been recent motor cross activity at night on the Ridgeway and along Green Street. The Chair explained that access was prohibited from 1 November each year and added that he understood that the gate next to the NT managed car park on Overton Hill had been closed and locked by WC. He stressed that APC along with Kennet Valley Parish Council would continue to put pressure on WC to improve the management of the Ridgeway.
2. **Apologies:** Councillor Mike Daniel.
3. **Declarations of interest:** Cllr Byatt declared an interest under item 7c as the tenant of NT property where work to trees was planned.
4. **Minutes of meeting held on 5 October 2021:** it was noted that several corrections to the draft minutes had been requested by the NT. **Item 8.** in the section dealing with overnight parking, to amend the text “Also, the NT could lose their licence should WC find campervans overnight in either the main car park or the high street car park” to read “Also, the NT would be in breach of a planning condition were campervans to remain in its car parks overnight.” In the section dealing with the NT’s High Street car park, to amend the text to read “Also, the NT would be in breach of a planning condition were campervans to remain in its car parks overnight.” In the section dealing with the NT’s High Street car park, to delete the text “or attending a Church service” and replace it with “and NT staff & volunteers”. **Item 10.c.** to correct the camping dates to: “Two nights camping for Samhain from 10:00am on Saturday 30th October 2021 to 2:00pm on Monday 1st November”. Proposed by Cllr Lewis, seconded by Cllr Bedford and all agreed. **It was resolved** to accept the minutes as a proper record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Paradise, seconded by Cllr Butler and all agreed.
5. Matters arising from the minutes:
 - a. **Min. ref. 11a road traffic accidents at Beckhampton:** the PC had yet to write to WC to request double white lines either side of the ghost turning on the A4 into Grange Barrow. **Action:** it was agreed the Chair and Cllr Lewis to action this.
 - b. **Min. ref. 11d degraded road surface on A4361 south of Nash Lane:** the Chair confirmed that he had written to Martin Cook about the delamination close to

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Beckhampton roundabout, who had replied that he would put the work on WC's job list for early next year.

- c. **Min. ref. 13b Annual Village Meeting:** it was agreed to hold an additional meeting in the second half of January 2022 at ASSC in order to present the plans for the Play Area to the community and gather feedback. Cllr Paradise was leading the project.

6. Membership:

- a. **It was resolved** to allow Cllr Service to attend PC's meetings online as she had informed the PC that she was shielding and also that she remain a member as she has missed six consecutive meetings. It was noted that whilst she would be able to take part in PC discussion, she was not allowed by law to take part in any decisions / resolutions as she was not physically present at the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Lewis, seconded by Cllr Stacey and all agreed.
- b. **To co-opt a new member to the Parish Council:** The Chair stated that there was currently one expression of interest received from Mike Pinch (Beckhampton resident). Cllr Byatt said that she was currently talking to a potential applicant. It was agreed that additional time was needed to interest more people in the role. Also, the advert for the vacancy had only just been published in UKN which meant that not many people would have had the chance to respond. **Action:** Clerk to send vacancy advert to Cllr Paradise for publication on the FB page. **Decision deferred to next meeting on 7 December.**

7. Planning applications:

- a. **Draft minute of the inquorate Planning Committee meeting** held on 15 October 2021 (previously circulated to members and see appendix 1): **it was resolved** to accept the meeting notes and decision as outlined in the paper. Proposed by Cllr Byatt, seconded by Cllr Bedford and all agreed.
- b. Work to trees in a Conservation Area at **land adjacent to A4 at West Kennett** between Honeysuckle Cottage, and Silbury Cottage, West Kennett, Marlborough, SN8 1QF. Proposal: A4 Roadside - Fell 42 Ash trees due to Ash Die Back East Kennett Roadside - Fell 17 Ash trees due to Ash Die Back West Kennett Farmhouse - reduce overgrown Beech Hedge to 2m. Ref: PL/2021/09614
- c. Work to trees in a Conservation Area at **Avebury Manor**, High Street, Avebury SN8 1RF. Proposal: 1 Avebury High Street Car Park - 15 x Ash trees – reduce to hedge height & crown lift and cut back hedge 2 Avebury Farmyard Visitor Centre - 1 x Ash tree – fell 3 Avebury Farmyard Visitor Centre - 1 x Ash tree – fell 4 South Drive – 2 x Lime trees – fell 5 Silbury House Green Street – 1 x Cypressus tree – crown lift 6 Elements of Avebury Shop – 1 x Sycamore tree – fell 7 6/7 Green Street – 1 x Willow tree – pollard 1 x Prunus shrub – reduce 1 x Goat Willow tree stump – remove 1 x Weeping Beech tree – crown lift 1 x Ash tree – fell 1 x Sycamore tree – fell 8 Avebury Recreation Ground – 1 x Ash tree – pollard 1 x Ash tree – fell 9 National Trust Car Park – 3 x Ash trees – fell 10 Avebury Manor Garden – 1 x Ash tree – fell 1 x Sycamore tree – reduce & thin crown & thin crown to south side by 15%. Ref: PL/2021/09686

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Item 7b-c was discussed and it became clear that members were reticent about responding directly to WC due to the large numbers of trees that the NT was proposing to fell, and that it would be helpful to have information directly from the NT. Cllr Service emphasized that trees demonstrating resilience to Ash die back should not be cut down and that a discerning approach to tree management could be applied instead. Members also felt that it was important to draw the NT's attention to the PC's Tree Policy which recommended the planting of a new tree to replace a felled one. **It was agreed** that Cllr Stacey and Cllr Service would respond informally to the NT with the points as mentioned above.

- d. Notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area at **The Henge Shop**, High Street, Avebury SN8 1RF. Proposal: Apple Tree: pollard. Ref: PL/2021/10240. **It was resolved** to offer no objection to the pollarding of the apple tree at The Henge Shop. Proposed by Cllr Byatt, seconded by Cllr Paradise and all agreed.

8. **National Trust:** update received: see appendix 2.

9. Project Updates:

- a. **SID Project:** in Cllr Daniel's absence, the Chairman reiterated that the PC was obliged to use Ringway (WC's contractor) and was awaiting a date for the work to start.
- b. **Defibrillator for Beckhampton:** Dr Bedford reported that Abi Shrapnell (Beckhampton resident) had collected **community donations of £745** to go towards the loan of a defibrillator for Beckhampton. The initiative had been driven by a desire from the community to install a defibrillator following a fatality in the hamlet. Cllr Lewis said that she believed the cost to add a further defibrillator to the PC's contract would be about £1,000 but she would need to check the exact price with SW Ambulance Service, the PC's existing supplier. **It was agreed in principle** to purchase a defibrillator for Beckhampton and to accept the money raised by the community. In addition, it was recognised that the best location to install the defibrillator would be on an outside wall at Silbury Court as it was a central location. Permission would need to be sought from the property owner and the defibrillator would need to be connected to a power supply to keep the pads in optimum working order.
- c. **Avebury Chapel:** the Chair reported that a core group of potential exhibitors would be attending the meeting at the Chapel the following evening. The purpose of the meeting was to investigate ways in which the space might be used and David Dawson of the Wiltshire Museum was very kindly going to bring some props and displays along to demonstrate the style of exhibit that could be set up. It was noted that the NT had estimated the cost of the electricity to be £300-£500 per annum, but the Chair felt that this figure was probably underestimated. He added that The Wiltshire Museum had come up with the idea of having a projector set up with colour slides on a continuous roll to display pictures and the history of the Village. Members were enthusiastic about having the exhibition space as an educational resource for the community and for visitors to Avebury.

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- d. **Play Area:** Cllr Paradise reported on the progress of this project and noted that the PC had to be wary about the cost of some of the play equipment such as the clamber stack. Such items required bonded matting underneath by law, which was cost prohibitive compared to other items of equipment that simply required grass matting. For example, she had been quoted £5,000 for bonded matting and that was without the play equipment price added on top. It was noted that an invitation to tender would need to be produced in due course and up to four companies selected to provide quotations.

10. Reports by PC Representatives:

- a. **WHS Steering Committee:** Cllr Byatt provided an update on key points from the meeting that took place on-line on 17 September 2021, and see appendix 3 for her report.
- b. **North Wiltshire Path Wardens:** the Chair reported that there had been modest progress in auditing the rights of way but about one fifth of NWPW's area had been surveyed (the majority being in Avebury thanks to Tim Lewis). He explained that the idea was to produce the completed survey and then pass this to WC with suggestions on how to work together to improve RoW. The issue was finding the finances to employ an administrator to co-ordinate the groups as WC had estimated total employment costs for one person for one day per week would be about £25,000 per annum.

11. Local Issues:

- a. **Declassification of Fyfield Down NNR:** it was noted that no stakeholders had been notified of the proposed declassification of Fyfield Down and that the landowner was within their right to request the removal of NNR status as they had a private contract with Natural England that would have had a clause in it granting them that option. **Members expressed disquiet about the lack of communication from Natural England** and questioned how it was possible for the declassification of Fyfield Down without the engagement of the other groups that used the space. The Chair stated that Natural England had had an option to keep a certain level of designation but had chosen to completely remove the NNR status and thus take away the high level of protection and stewardship that the land had previously been afforded.
- b. **Village meeting:** see item 5c.
- c. **Signage:** it was agreed that the Chair and Clerk would draft a signage policy for review at the next meeting.
- d. **Re-instatement of white lines at the Avenue / A4361 junction:** A Highways Improvement Request form had been completed by WC following a report from a resident (Linda Jenkins) of a collision at that junction and the PC was required to add its comments to the form. Linda had reported that her car had been written off at the junction of A4361 & B4003 by a van coming down the avenue thinking he had right of way as markings on road had faded); she believed that the driver was unfamiliar with the area and was going at least 40 mph. The Chair reported that he had notified Martin Cook, who had added the job of repainting the white lines to the WC list for the following year when the weather was likely to be dry. In

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discussion, members strongly supported Linda's request for 60 mph limits in the Avebury WHS to be reduced to 40 mph. **The following feedback was sent to WC after the meeting:** *"Following discussion and decision at a meeting of APC on 2 November, we support this request very strongly. APC has campaigned for some time for a reduction in the speed limit from the current 60mph to 40mph on the A4361 as it approaches the 30mph zone. Earlier this year we submitted a public petition with that request, which was signed by over 260 residents and visitors - an impressive outcome considering the pandemic lock down. Actual and perceived excessive speed is a more or less constant feature of this stretch of the A4361. There has been one death and several crashes this year. The road surface is in places severely delaminated and unsafe. In addition we agree with Ms Jenkins that the speed limit on the B4003 should be reduced from 60mph to 40mph. It is time - more than time - for Highways to act!"*

- e. **Parking in Avebury Trusloe:** members expressed concern about the volumes of cars parking along the layby and entrance into the estate and that there was a potential accident waiting to happen. In discussion, it was felt that reducing the 60 mph speed limit through Avebury Trusloe to 30 or even 20mph was one of the solutions and that Jane Davies (Wiltshire Councillor) had previously advised that this should be requested as part of a step by step process; with the reduction in speed limit on the main A4361 being the first step. Cllr Bedford suggested including the speed reduction request in tandem with the play area project. **It was agreed** to raise the parking concerns with AHA and to take forward the idea of including a speed limit request at the same time as the play area refurbishment.
- 12. Play Area:** the RoSPA inspection report by Play Safety Ltd had been previously circulated to members, by email. In discussion, it was noted that the safety inspection had not picked up any serious risks or red warning flags. There were some yellow flags and it was agreed that these would be addressed soon by replacing the old equipment for new. As per item 5.c. a meeting to look at equipment options with the community was planned for the end of January 2022.
- 13. Parish Steward Priority Sheet:** the Chair requested members to email any job requests to the Clerk so that she could collate the information on the spreadsheet and then email it to Northern Highways. Members suggested that the Parish Steward should address any areas where leaves had accumulated on walkways.
- 14. Communications:** the Clerk reported that Headlines from the previous meeting and an advert detailing the vacancy on the Parish Council had been published in UKN.
- 15. Correspondence:** the Clerk reported that various correspondences had been received that month and anything not listed below had been published on the PC website, file size permitting.
 - a. **Email complaint** from resident in Avebury Trusloe about the state of the **playground surfacing** under the swings and climbing equipment. It was noted that the Clerk had responded to the resident to let her know that the PC had only just received the annual RoSPA inspection report and would be reviewing this as the meeting that night.

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- b. **Temporary Closure of: B4003 Stone Avenue**, Avebury (07/12/2021) for 3 days.
- c. **FoR** Autumn Newsletter.
- d. **NWDLT** Autumn Newsletter.
- e. **WALC** newsletter.

16. PC public survey and consultation for the Police and Crime Plan that comes into effect 1 April 2022. The Chair reported that a hard copy had been requested twice but nothing received to date.

17. Finance and admin including:

- a. **Training:** it was agreed that members needed more time to decide on their training needs.
- b. **Half year internal audit:** the Clerk reported that the internal audit would be booked in due course.
- c. **Draft budget for 2022/23** (previously circulated to members and see appendix 4). The following points were noted:
 - i. Estimated income was £14,750 and, with proposed expenditure at £29,045, we would be deploying some of our reserves.
 - ii. The budget line for play area expenditure had been increased to £15,000 as this was the lead project for the year.
 - iii. Renewal of the defibrillator package and a new MOU for four years was due in July 2022 at an estimated cost of £2,850 (Cllr Lewis to review the contract and confirm this amount).
 - iv. £1,000 had been proposed by the Chair as a donation towards the community exhibition space in the Chapel.
 - v. Proposed modest increase in precept from £14,200 to £14,350.

Members were encouraged to think about any other expenditure that the PC might need to budget for in the new financial year. A final draft budget would then be circulated for approval at the next meeting.

- d. **Donations to Charities:** it was noted that requests for funding had been received from The Bobby Van Trust, Wiltshire Citizens Advice Bureau and Town & Country Planning Association (TCPA) (An individual membership costs £56.00). **It was resolved** to donate £50.00 to Citizens Advice Bureau and £50.00 to The Bobby Van Trust. Proposed by Cllr Byatt, seconded by Cllr Lewis and all agreed.
- e. **Review of policies including public benches:** the policy had been reviewed and no changes proposed.
- f. **Cheques for payment or ratification: it was resolved** to ratify the following cheque payments. Proposed by Cllr Paradise, seconded by Cllr Byatt and all agreed.
 - i. Miss E. Moore: overtime and expenses for the period 22 September – 21 October 2021 £179.28
 - ii. Playsafety Ltd: Annual inspection of Avebury Trusloe Play Area £82.20

18. Date of next meeting: 7:30pm on Tuesday 7 December 2021

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19. Any other business:

- a. A member of the public expressed concern about the **safety of pedestrians** who had chosen to park in the ASSC car park and then walk along the verge to the Red Lion PH.

The meeting closed at 21:31

Appendices:

1. Draft minute of the inquorate Planning Committee meeting held on 15 October 2021
2. National Trust Update – November 2021
3. WHS Committee Meeting 17 September 2021 – report by Cllr Byatt dated 4 October 2021
4. Draft Budget 2022-2023 – first draft