

AVEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of Avebury Parish Council held online on Tuesday 7 July 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, Mr Mike Daniel, Mrs Maggie Lewis (Vice-Chair), Mr Terence O'Connor and Mrs Lynzey Paradise; and by invitation Jane Davies (Wiltshire Council) and Jan Tomlin (General Manager, National Trust Wiltshire Landscape).

Time started: 19:34

1. **Public question time:** four members of the public present were present for all or part of the meeting. No question was asked under this item. The Chair said that he would take questions and invite comment at appropriate moments during the course of the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** Ms Zandria Service, Mrs Donna Byatt, and Miss Liz Moore (Parish Clerk).
3. **Declarations of interest:** none was declared.
4. **Minutes of an ordinary meeting held on 2 June 2020: it was resolved** to accept the minutes as a proper record. **Proposed by** Cllr Lewis, **seconded by** Cllr Bedford, 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. *Pumping station:* Cllr Lewis reported recent interactions with Thames Water on her own account and through Wiltshire Council, which had not yet produced a satisfactory outcome and which she would continue. After discussion we agreed that it was important to do so.
 - ii. *Re-painting of West Kennett telephone box:* the Chair reported that at his request the Clerk had written again to BT since the company has not yet been able to provide a date for work to honour its commitment to repair and repaint the box during the period April-September.

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6. Planning applications:

- a) **18/09889/FUL Land at South Street, Avebury:** *erection of dwelling house with garaging and access (WC decision due 8 July)*

The Chair invited Dave Scattergood to speak. Mr Scattergood explained that in his view neither mass nor scale of the proposed house were acceptable. The house if built would overshadow and dominate September Cottage opposite. He drew attention to the planned partial destruction of South Street's continuous sarsen wall, surely a heritage asset. Mrs Lomas spoke in support, re-emphasising the exaggerated mass and scale of the proposed house if built and deeply regretting the damage that would be done to the rare sarsen wall. Mrs Tomlin asked whether the WHS Coordination Unit had been consulted. Mr Scattergood explained that the Unit had given advice formally and this advice was on WC's website. He had emailed the Unit's Sarah Askham to invite her to an onsite meeting. Mrs Tomlin's offer to engage with Sarah and her manager Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger (Wiltshire County Archaeologist) was warmly accepted.

The Chair said that he had had contact with Nick Clark, the planning officer responsible, who had agreed that any comment submitted by APC before 09h on 8 July (the date on which a decision is due) would be properly considered. Following discussion, it was agreed that a text previously circulated by the Chair should be submitted to Mr Clark and the Chair undertook to do so immediately after the meeting. He added that he had heard from Wiltshire Cllr Jane Davies that she had called in the application and so it would now be decided by county's planning committee at a future meeting and not by the planning officer.

- b) **20/04347/FUL Galteemore Farm, Beckhampton:** *conversion of redundant agricultural outbuildings: (Building J) to 4 No. bedroom holiday-let suites with associated communal facilities and 1 No. self-contained holiday-let unit; (Building N) to farm office; and associated landscaping works (WC decision due 18 August)*

The Chair invited Mr Rob Hues, the applicant, to speak. Mr Hues explained that the proposal was to convert a redundant single-storey L-shaped building adjacent to the farmhouse into bedroom holiday-let suites. Cllr Lewis added that she had visited the site with the Chair and in her view the proposal should be supported as being a reasonable new use for old buildings, especially bearing in mind the fact that there were not many beds for tourists locally. Mrs Tomlin agreed that there was a shortage of accommodation locally for visitors to the World Heritage Site. Cllr Butler said that he thought the proposal was a good one and he would give it his support. Members indicated their agreement.

Proposed by Cllr O'Connor, **seconded by** Cllr Butler, and carried unanimously.

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The Chair said that two planning applications had arrived too late to be included in the agenda for the present meeting. The first concerned a tree at Bannings and the second building work to a property in Trusloe. He suggested (and it was agreed) that APC's planning committee should meet onsite on Tuesday 14 July at 19h. He would ask the applicants whether they could host the committee's visit and advise.

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

All our visitor facilities were closed on 18 March, although a small team has remained on-site throughout lockdown to complete essential compliance and maintenance tasks. Nearly four months later, we're delighted that we're able to start the lengthy process of re-opening, although it will be some time before we're able to return to normal operations.

In line with government guidance, the National Trust has started to re-open car parks and limited visitor offers across England; many of these must be booked in advance. At all times, this is being done only as and when it is safe to do so. At Avebury, our re-opening ambitions were delayed slightly until after the Solstice weekend.

We re-opened the main visitor car park, some toilets and a simple take-away food and beverage offer on 6 July. These facilities will remain open every day, unless government advice changes. Looking further ahead, we hope to open our shop in the Farmyard 5-days a week from Wednesday to Sunday, starting on 22 July.

We don't yet have firm dates for when the Alexander Keiller Museum, the Manor and Gardens, the Chapel or Cobblestones second-hand bookshop will be able to welcome back visitors. We hope to start bringing back some of our volunteers from August, subject of course to both task requirements and personal circumstances.

Finally, although we've started to welcome back visitors, the majority of staff remains on furlough leave, so please continue to use email as the best way to reach us or provide feedback.

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 1 July and ASOPM on 6 July*

The Chair and Cllr Lewis reported on these meetings, which they had attended. In summary it was agreed at them that solstice had passed off quietly for the villages though the Ridgeway had had over 100 vans on it. The police and the security guards were thanked by all for their model performance. It was noted that WC's proactive approach with visible

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signage and cones had been effective. Strongly coordinated media messaging beforehand had played its part in dissuading people from attending.

Cllr Butler noted that 10-12 vans had been on or near Windmill Hill but most seemed to have dispersed. Cllr Paradise and the Chair hoped that it might be possible to find another way of delivering car parking permits next year. Jan Tomlin asked whether it might be feasible to have permanent permits for Avebury residents. It was agreed that we needed to start preparations for summer solstice 2021 as early as possible.

WC was promoting its Event Safety Advisory Group (see <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/licences-permits-esag>) as the way it would like to use to manage future summer solstices. After discussion it was felt that other stakeholders would need to be persuaded that ESAG could add value to practices that were well-established and as effective as possible given the circumstances.

b. Street lamp towards the bottom end of the High Street

Cllr Paradise said that she had used WC's portal to report the fact that this lamp (#3) shone not only at night but also during the day.

c. A4361 permissive pathway

Cllr Daniel reported that he was restarting efforts to bring relevant representatives together following the interruption caused by his own hospitalization and COVID-19. He hoped to have a meeting of his project group later in the month.

d. Play Area

The Chair reported that, in line with government guidance, Cllr Butler had re-opened the play area on 4 July, laminated the required sign, and fixed it securely to the fence by the entrance. The Chair noted that the grass had recently been cut and that he had carried out an inspection, completing a check list which he had sent to the Clerk.

9. **Parish Steward Priority Sheet:** Cllr Paradise reported that the parish steward had recently strimmed the footpath leading from the Trusloe bus stop into Trusloe and suggested that he be asked to keep an eye on grass length on other Trusloe pathways. There was a discussion about Cow Drove. It was agreed that the Chair should write to Stephen Leonard (Senior Rights of Way Warden, Wiltshire Council) to invite him to make a recommendation about the best way to improve the deeply rutted surface. Cllr Lewis volunteered to speak to Roger Charlton about trees overhanging from his land.
10. **Communications:** the Chair reported that PC Headlines had been submitted to UKN.

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11. **Correspondence:** the Chair said that there was none that had not been circulated to members.
12. **Finance and admin:** the Chair noted that copies of the following documents had been circulated by the Clerk:
- a) *The annual internal audit report*
 - b) *The Certificate of Exemption (to certify on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return that the Parish Council is exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015)*
 - c) *Section 1 Annual Governance Statement*
 - d) *Section 2 Accounting Statements.*

The Chair asked that (a) be formally received and noted and (b)-(d) inclusive be formally approved. **Proposed by** Cllr Daniel, **seconded by** Cllr Butler, and carried unanimously.

13. **Date of next meeting:** 7:30pm on Tuesday 1 September 2020. The Chair said that he very much hoped this would be a F2F meeting and he had asked the Clerk, responding to a request from Di Gater, to confirm the Council's interest in meeting in the Social Centre on that date. Cllr Paradise suggested that we ought to consider meeting in the Social Club should it turn out that the Centre was not yet open. This was agreed.
14. **Any other business:** there being none, the Chair thanked all for attending and patience with a virtual meeting.

The meeting closed at 21:02.