

**Minutes of the Annual Village meeting of Avebury Parish Council held
in the Avebury Sports and Social Club, Beckhampton Road, Avebury on Tuesday 24 May 2022**

In these minutes APC stands for Avebury Parish Council, NT for National Trust, WC for Wiltshire Council, CATG for Community Area Transport Group, LHFIG for Local Highways and Footpaths Improvement Group, and TTRO for Temporary Traffic Regulation Order

Present: Councillors Stephen Stacey (Chairman), Maggie Lewis (Vice-chairman), Donna Byatt, Bob Parker, Lynzey Paradise and Ben Butler.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mike Bedford, Mike Daniel and Zandria Service and from Liz Moore (Clerk).

There were 14 members of the public and by invitation Debbie Bourne (County Officer, Wiltshire Association of Local Councils) in attendance.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7 pm by welcoming those attending and introducing the members of the Parish Council who were present.

Minutes of the last Annual meeting which had been circulated, were accepted as a true record. Proposed by Cllr. Paradise and seconded by Cllr. Butler.

Thanks were given to Jan Tomlin and Eva Stützenberger of the National Trust for their support, to David Throup, editor of the Upper Kennet News, for publishing headlines from our meetings, and Wiltshire Councillor Jane Davies, who supports and helps us in so many ways.

The Chairman then read out the report sent by Cllr. Davies, who was unable to attend having just tested positive for Covid-19. Cllr. Davies's report was as follows:

Over the last few weeks, I have joined Annual Parish Meetings across Marlborough West, and I am very sorry I cannot attend yours tonight.

I have written up a few key points for you from Wiltshire Council:

Wiltshire Council set a 2022/23 budget and 10-year Business Plan to focus on the future, while maintaining a long-term strong financial footing. The council's budget for the next financial year is just over £417m and with more than half (£235m) on support and social care for adults and children.

I have the privilege of holding the Cabinet responsibility for Adult Social Care, Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities, Transition and Inclusions.

Around £92m will be spent on day-to-day services such as waste management, road maintenance, leisure, and library services, as well as the council's carbon management and climate change work - which recently saw the council ranked as the fifth best unitary authority in the UK for its response to the global challenge.

Alongside this, the council's capital programme is £307m for projects to improve and maintain the county's infrastructure - including leisure services, council house building, schools' maintenance, footpath and highway improvements and high streets in Salisbury and Trowbridge. We are building a new state of the art Special School building at Silverwood, Rowde, and working with national government to build a new school in Salisbury for those with Autism or Social, emotional, mental health issues.

The 10-year Business Plan outlines the council's guiding themes, which are prevention and early intervention; improving social mobility and tackling inequalities; understanding communities; and working together.

The Marlborough community has responded very generously to the war in Ukraine and more than one hundred people have, or about to be, rehomed in the area.

Locally I am very aware that traffic and road safety issues are critical in many local villages, and I am working with my Parish Councils to secure further improvements, and we have a joint group named the 'West of Marlborough Traffic Group' and we are campaigning to reduce speeds along the A4. The Community Area Transport Groups (CATGs) have been replaced by Local Highways and Footpaths Improvement Groups (LHFIGs) and their budgets have been doubled and the remit extended to include byways. I am aware of significant concerns regarding the Ridgeway and solstice celebrations. You have my assurance that this is one of my key priorities and I am working with all stakeholders to reduce the nuisance and damage caused to the priceless archaeology on the byways.

Thank you for your support over the past year. It has been a pleasure to represent you at Wiltshire Council and to play a small part in your vibrant community. If you have any concerns or issues, please do not hesitate to contact me. My details are available online.

The Chairman and colleagues spoke to a summary report, copies of which had been provided. The report is attached to these minutes as an appendix.

Budget

The Chairman pointed out that APC had not increased its precept this year and went on to outline what the precept is spent on, which includes the maintenance of street furniture such as benches, donations to support local organisations and the three community defibrillators as well as paying the Parish Clerk for all her work.

Play area: The main project for the coming year is renewing the play area at Avebury Trusloe and he called on Cllr. Paradise to give an update. She outlined how the project had developed and the costs involved. She also drew attention to the questionnaire that has been distributed to residents. Responses to it will help inform our decisions and ensure that the community gets what it wants. She said that she hoped that the project could be completed in this, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee year.

Defibrillators: Cllr. Lewis was asked to update the meeting on the community defibrillators. She outlined the scheme and noted that there was also a defibrillator available at the NT office by the museum. Residents of Beckhampton have raised three-quarters of the sum needed to add one to our lease to be sited there. Members of the public from Rawlins Park expressed interest in having a defibrillator and it was agreed that APC should explore the modalities for this, subject to funds being available.

Community exhibition space: Funds have been allocated to develop the URC Chapel into an exhibition space for local organisations to exhibit under the theme 'The Living Landscape' and it was noted that several exhibitors had taken up this opportunity.

Road Safety

APC has ring-fenced funding for road safety work. This is because parishes are required to contribute 25% of the cost of any project undertaken by WC. Following a lengthy campaign by APC, the speed limit on the A4361 was reduced earlier this year from 60 mph to 50 mph.

APC has bought a Speed Indicator Devices (SID), which is being moved between locations at either end of the village, to remind drivers of the 30 mph speed restriction and to gather data on speeds and the number of vehicles. Cllrs. Paradise and Parker both contributed to the discussion with Cllr. Paradise noting that some 100,000 south-bound vehicles were counted in

the first month of operation with an average speed of 38 mph, somewhat higher than the speed of 30 mph limit, and with one in excess of 80 mph (perhaps an emergency services vehicle).

There was a question from the floor about physical traffic calming measures. The Chairman said that these have been considered but, as a WHS and with restricted sight lines, there are some challenges to overcome. An alternative approach could be reduction of the speed limit to 20 mph. The Chairman referenced the 2015 Transport Strategy but pointed out that such overarching schemes are expensive. Campaigning for elements of the strategy - for example, for crossing points and stone sets at key points on the A4361 - might be a more promising approach. He suggested that, in the short term, APC should seek a reduction in the speed limit in Avebury Trusloe, which is currently set to the national limit of 60 mph, which is patently dangerous. It was suggested from the floor that a second SID be bought rather than move the existing one and the Chairman said that APC will consider this suggestion.

A member of the public asked about the spreading of mud onto roads from byways and asked who was responsible for clearing this as it presented a hazard. Cllr. Butler stated that, if a farm vehicle was responsible, it was up to the farmer to clear the mud but it was thought that the particular area in question was due to 4x4 vehicles using the byway that gives onto the A361. The Chairman said that APC was considering asking a representative from the Green Lanes Association (GLASS) to come to a meeting to put their point of view and to listen to the problems we encounter.

The Chairman mentioned the rewilding scheme and its application to the Beckhampton roundabout where only a broad strip has been mown around the perimeter. This should help reduce speeds of vehicles approaching the roundabout by limiting the sight lines across the roundabout.

The state of the A4361 was mentioned with reference to the severe delamination on the section between Avebury Trusloe and the Beckhampton roundabout. Wiltshire Highways has been notified that it is becoming dangerous and APC has been informed that it is on the list to be resurfaced but no date has been given.

Planning applications

APC is a consultee on all planning applications from residents and there are about 12 a year ranging from large projects such as building a new property to small ones like the pollarding or removal of trees. The Chairman pointed out that the decision on all planning applications lies with WC and not with APC.

Community Shop

The Chairman invited Michèle Lomas, chair of the community shop committee to say a few words. She thanked the community for its support during the two years of pandemic lockdowns and restrictions and praised the volunteers who had helped keep the shop open during this time. She asked the meeting if the current hours of 10 am to 4 pm were acceptable, which in general they were although Cllr. Byatt commented that visitors to her business often wanted to find some refreshments after 4 p.m. and Cllr. Lewis commented that she felt, as a volunteer, that the hours could be extended in the summer months. The Chairman offered thanks to Mrs. Lomas, the committee, staff and volunteers.

Parish Steward

The Chairman explained that the Parish Steward visits once a month ten times a year for 4 hours but, thanks to his commitment to Avebury (for which we are very grateful), tries to call in at other times if there is need. His duties include clearing ditches, strimming verges, and cleaning road signs. Any issue that might be in his remit should be notified to the Parish Clerk.

Future issues

Rights of way were mentioned. There is considerable unhappiness about the state of several local rights of way and the damage to them by vehicular use. Some are now not accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, or riders. Vehicle access to the Ridgeway was raised from the floor, particularly over Solstice, and the Chairman stated that consideration was being given to closing the Ridgeway during that period. Any closure raises other issues and all stakeholders are working together to resolve them.

Solstice

The Chairman asked Cllr. Paradise to explain about the parking permit scheme for this year. She stated that there will be a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) covering much of the Parish and neighbouring roads and that any vehicle parked without a valid permit will be ticketed and, if parked illegally or dangerously, risked being towed away. All residents will need a WC parking permit to park on roads covered by the TTRO and these will be issued over the next couple of weeks at times to be advertised. Proof of residence will be required to obtain one.

A general discussion about issues around Solstice took place and whether or not the Ridgeway would be closed. It was noted that the parking area on Overton Hill is managed by the NT. The gate onto the Ridgeway from Overton Hill should be closed if the TTRO for the Ridgeway is confirmed (i.e. covering the section from Overton Hill rather than, as before, just the section close to the junction with AVE5) but this could not yet be guaranteed. Concerns were raised about vehicles being parked anywhere. CSAS officers should be able to prevent this in the High Street as they will restrict access to permit holders; the Nursery site in Avebury Trusloe will be fenced. NT is providing security and there will be patrols to help control 'feral' parking. WC's intentions should be disclosed at the ASOPM due on 1 June. It is hoped that there will be a larger police presence and that more people will go to Stonehenge. The Glastonbury Festival is just after Solstice.

A question was asked about the informal lay-by on the Avenue. The Chairman stated that the action had been agreed in 2019 ought to take place this year. The double yellow lines are to be extended, the lay by is to be reshaped to reduce the space to allow only 3 cars, and in due course the verges will be rebuilt to prevent parking. LHFIFG meets on 26 May when APC's representative (Cllr. Parker) will press for a date for action.

The Chairman thanked all for their active participation and the meeting concluded at 8 pm.

Appendix

AVEBURY PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING 24 MAY 2022 WHAT YOUR PARISH COUNCIL HAS DONE RECENTLY

Avebury has a council of nine members, who happen to be drawn from different parts of the parish: Beckhampton (Mike Bedford and Maggie Lewis), Bray Street (Zandria Service), Green Street (Donna Byatt and Stephen Stacey), High Street (Lynzey Paradise), Swindon Road (Bob Parker and Mike Daniel), and Trusloe (Ben Butler). Our clerk is Liz Moore. All councillors are volunteers and give their time without payment. Their contact details are available on parish noticeboards.

We meet in the Social Centre at 19h30 on the first Tuesday of each month except January and August. Come and join us for a meeting!

We want to thank our Wiltshire Councillor Jane Davies, who helps us in so many ways, Jan Tomlin and Eva Stützenberger of the National Trust, David Throup, who makes sure that monthly ‘headlines’ from our meetings go into the Upper Kennet News - and you for being here this evening!

Budget

- This year we decided not to increase the precept (the proportion of council tax given to us by Wiltshire Council). That means that the amount you pay to the parish this year will be the same as it was last year.

What will we spend your money on?

- The major project this year is the play area on the Nursery Site in Trusloe
- We will also spend money on meeting the leases for our defibrillators, maintaining six public benches and four noticeboards, and paying our clerk, who manages our meetings (all of which you may attend and, if you wish, contribute to)
- We contribute financially to a number of organisations with local impact (for example, Wiltshire’s Bobby Box providers and Citizens Advice)

- We have allocated funds for the community exhibition space in the Chapel, which is being made available to us by the National Trust. Ten organisations have expressed interest in exhibiting under the theme ‘A Living Landscape’¹
- We have assigned funding for road safety work. Parishes are required to contribute 25% of the cost of projects undertaken by Wiltshire Council and agreed at the Community Action Transport Group or CATG, now renamed Local Highway and Footpath Improvement Group or LHFIG.

Planning applications

- We are consulted on all planning applications submitted by residents of the parish
- About 12 applications are made every year for works that are both large and small
- The actual decision on them is taken by Wiltshire Council.

Defibrillators

- In recent years we have installed three defibrillators in the parish: on the High Street, the sports field, and in Trusloe. The parish council pays for the leases for two of them whilst the Sports and Social Club has taken on the third
- Next on the list is Beckhampton, which we hope to have in place very soon.

Planters

- We funded the new planters in the High Street.

Road safety

- For many years we have campaigned for a reduction in the speed limit on the A4361. In due course Wiltshire Council appointed consultants, who confirmed that a reduction was necessary. The limit was reduced to 50mph this year
- Aided by funds from Wiltshire Council, we bought and installed a speed indicator device (a SID). Every eight weeks or so we move it between two locations on the A4361. Along with other parishes in Wiltshire, we send the data generated by our SID to the Police and Crime Commissioner so that he can decide where to ask the police to set up speed checks
- Since at least 2017 we have campaigned with the National Trust to extend parking restrictions on the B4003. Wiltshire Council will soon paint more yellow lines, remodel the informal layby, and occasionally enforce parking restrictions there and elsewhere in the village
- Wiltshire Council has agreed to the re-wilding of Beckhampton roundabout, which we think may reduce the speed of vehicles and motorcycles using it

¹ Avebury Community Orchard, Avebury Society, Avebury and Stonehenge Archaeological and Historical Research Group, CPRE the Countryside Charity, Friends of the Ridgeway, Marlborough Downs Space for Nature, National Trust, North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Visit Wiltshire, and Wiltshire Museum.

- Co-financed by residents, last year we installed two 'T junction' warning signs on the A4361 close to Nash Lane
- We campaigned successfully to save the emergency call telephone box on the layby at West Kennett
- With colleagues from Kennet Valley and Preshute parish councils, we gave a presentation to Danny Kruger MP about the need to implement Avebury's 2015 transport strategy, which would improve road safety in and around the parish.

Verges, bus shelters, rights of way, and litter

- Wiltshire Council allocates a 'steward' to each parish. Ours spends four hours each month for ten months of the year in Avebury. Usually the rest of his working day is taken up by Winterbourne Monkton and Berwick Bassett
- He strims the verges to our paths, cleans road signs and bus shelters, and undertakes other maintenance tasks
- We organise a 'litter pick' each year, which collects impressive quantities of rubbish from our verges and public places
- We requested an additional litter bin for the High Street, which Wiltshire Council provided
- We replaced a mirror in Beckhampton to improve visibility for turning vehicles.

Future campaigns

In addition to those mentioned already, we will:

- Press Wiltshire Council to ensure that the only access permitted to rights of way in the parish is sustainable; in other words, that surfaces are not so deeply rutted by the vehicles using them as to prevent access for all except recreational 4x4s. This is a World Heritage Site UNESCO-inscribed for its Outstanding Universal Value. We owe it to future generations not to destroy buried archaeology
- Represent the community on Wiltshire Council's Marlborough Area Board, the Board's Community Action Transport Group (CATG), whose scope (and budget) has been enlarged and whose new name is LHFIG (Local Highway & Footway Improvement Group), and on the Avebury World Heritage Site Steering Committee
- Campaign for a 20mph speed restriction in Trusloe (parish councils must contribute 25% of the cost of action taken by Wiltshire Council)
- Request resurfacing of the severely delaminated part of the A4361 at the Beckhampton end of the Avebury to Beckhampton section

- Continue to seek implementation of key parts of the 2015 transport strategy, in particular pedestrian crossings on the A4361 in the centre of the village and road calming on the A4 at West Kennett and Beckhampton
- Work with adjoining parishes on road safety and rights of way
- Do our best to respond positively to the priorities that you identify!

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