

## AVEBURY PARISH COUNCIL

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

*In these minutes AGM stands for Annual General Meeting, 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, NT for the National Trust, PC for Parish Council, RoW for Rights of Way, TTRO for Temporary Traffic Regulation Order, 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), Mr Ben Butler, Mrs Donna Byatt and Mrs Lynzey Paradise (who was absent for item 8a).

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

Time started: 19:33

1. **Public question time:** Jane Davies (Wiltshire Councillor): up to and including item 10 and Eva Stützenberger (Visitor Operations and Experience Manager, NT): up to and including item 8b. The Chairman welcomed both guests to the meeting.
2. **Apologies:** Councillors Maggie Lewis (Vice-Chair), Mike Daniel and Zandria Service. It was noted that Terence O'Connor was not present at the meeting that night because he had had to resign from the Parish Council due to increasing work commitments.
3. **Declarations of interest:** Cllr Paradise declared an interest in respect of item 8a because she is an employee of one of the companies providing a quotation for security services.
4. **Minutes of an ordinary meeting held on 18 May 2021: it was resolved** to accept the minutes as a proper record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Paradise, seconded by Cllr Butler and carried unanimously.
5. **Matters arising from the minutes:**
  - a. **Min ref. 12e Sarsen stones:** Cllr Byatt reported that another resident had also noticed that two very large stones had been removed from a gate entrance on Fyfield Down and she intended to contact Natural England for advice.
6. **Planning applications:**
  - a. Full planning permission for temporary rural worker dwelling and replacement stabling at **land south of West Kennett Farm**. Ref: PL/2021/04650. The Chairman invited Jane Davies (Wiltshire Councillor) to speak. Jane said that WC enforcement had confirmed that planning permission was required for the wooden cabin and that should retrospective permission be granted, it was likely to be for three years. Members discussed the application and **it was resolved** to

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object for the following reasons:

Whilst the Parish Council has no objection to the replacement stabling, it does object to the erection of a new dwelling designed for accommodation because it would represent a significant increase in adverse environmental impact.

The Parish Council was dismayed that approval was not sought from the planning authority before going ahead with the work.

The Parish Council understands that the dwelling is fully sustainable i.e. off-grid but draws attention to the fact that the only access is from a byway open to all traffic that is in a poor state of repair and likely to degrade further during winter months, limiting access by other users.

The Parish Council further notes that:

1. This is a retrospective application for a dwelling in a rural setting within a highly sensitive area, namely the UNESCO-inscribed Avebury and Stonehenge WHS and the North Wessex AONB.
2. There would be an adverse effect on the setting of nearby heritage assets including the West Kennet palisaded enclosures and long barrow.
3. Granting even temporary permission could set a precedent for future illicit developments in the WHS.

Proposed by Cllr Byatt, seconded by Cllr Paradise and carried unanimously.

7. **National Trust Update:** Eva explained the re-opening plans and members noted that most elements of the visitor offer were open, albeit with different operating models and opening times: see appendix 1 for NT update. The NT was enhancing accessibility across the estate including the installation of hearing loops in buildings and considering how to improve the Barn Gallery. Eva welcomed feedback from the community on the work in hand. It was additionally noted that the NT was working with Historic England and had applied for Scheduled Monument Consent to cover the ongoing maintenance, repairs, conservation and protection of the Scheduled Monuments. The notice of application for Scheduled Monument Consent was tabled.

A member of APC asked when the layby on the Avenue might be repaired. Jane Davies stated that the extension of the primrose yellow lining was now on the CATG priority list. She explained that WC had been reticent about carrying out repairs to the layby using sandbags that had to be manually filled as they felt that it would be too labour intensive and costly. At the previous CATG meeting (27 May) it had been agreed to request another meeting between WC and the NT to look at a different methodology for the repair work. The Chairman additionally reported that he would be attending a meeting on the 10 June with the NT, the new leader of WC, Richard Clewer, and his colleagues, to discuss a strategic approach for sustainable access to the Ridgeway and no doubt the B4003 would be mentioned.

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### 8. Summer Solstice 2021:

a. **To consider paying for extra security / community patrols:** Cllr Paradise temporarily left the room for item 8.a. The Chairman said that the key issue for him was whether the risk to residents over Solstice was significantly greater than in earlier years. Eva said that the NT would be having ten guards on site from Friday to Tuesday. They would be based in the Chapel and patrolling all NT areas. Members noted that the same number of guards was going to be used as in previous years; they had no enforcement powers but would be working closely with the police. The Chairman reported that three quotations had been received for four Security Officers and the lowest price had been £2,400 (quotations previously circulated). In discussion the following points were raised:

- **There will be managed and limited access at Stonehenge.** In discussion it was agreed that this significantly reduced the risk of Avebury being flooded with people, which was APC's concern. Cllr Byatt said that she had noticed from an on-line forum that members of the public were sensitive to the fact that a community lives within the stones and that many were now actively choosing to go to Stonehenge which was bigger and with more facilities.
- **The importance of fencing off the nursery site in Avebury Trusloe.** Cllr Butler said that, although Jeremy Sumbler had kindly provided Heras fencing without charge in previous years, we ought to consider allocating a budget. He added that he was willing to collect the fencing and erect, dismantle, and return it free of charge. The Chairman thanked him for this very generous offer.
- **Value for taxpayers' money.** It was noted that, given the quotations obtained, spending on security would represent a large percentage of the precept (18%). In addition members were wary of setting a precedent.
- **Community Demand.** Members did not know of any resident specifically requesting APC to provide security over Solstice.
- **The main NT car park would be closed.** It was hoped that this would reduce the number of visitors staying in the village overnight.

On balance, members felt it was unnecessary to spend a large percentage of taxpayers' money on security officers. Instead, **it was resolved** to allocate <£500 for hire of Heras fencing from Jeremy Sumbler [using section 137 funds from the budget] and to accept Cllr Butler's kind offer. Proposed by Cllr Byatt, seconded by Cllr Bedford and all agreed.

b. **Permit scheme and arrangements:** Cllr Paradise explained that there was going to be a TTRO from 06.00 Saturday 19 June to 12 noon Tuesday 22 June 2021 and that **parking permits** granting vehicle access to Avebury High Street and Church Walk and permitting parking in other defined areas would be

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delivered to residents and others on the list from last year. **Action:** information on the residents' permit scheme to be posted on all notice boards and FB.

- c. Eva confirmed that the High Street car park would be useable for people with permits. Portable toilets would be installed in the car park. The Chairman said that APC had received an email complaint from a resident about a group of up to 20 paying to drum in the Circle and asking what arrangements were in place for this as it was a significant noise disturbance. Eva said that she was not aware of any drumming group and the organizer would require a licence from the NT if, as suggested, it was a commercial activity. **Action:** Eva agreed to look in to the resident's complaint and respond.

### 9. Project updates:

- a. **Petition to Wiltshire Council (to reduce the speed limit to 40mph on the A4361 between Beckhampton and Avebury and northwards along the Swindon road):** the Chairman read out WC's response to APC's petition (see appendix 2). Having received an impressive 264 signatures from members of the public during lockdown, he was disappointed that a junior officer in WC's democratic services unit had responded only with the standard Highways explanation. He said that he thought a petition of this size deserved a substantive reply from a senior officer that recognized and appreciated the community's request. Jane Davies replied that the correct process had been followed. The petition had been considered in Council on 18 May. Members had thought that no further action was needed because the speed limit was due to be lowered to 50mph. She felt that this outcome was unfortunate and said that APC should keep trying to find a way to fund the changes as prescribed in the Atkins report of 2015. She said that incremental change was possible and undertook to report the Chairman's comments to the relevant people in WC. The Chairman expressed his thanks to Jane for her advice and said that he would continue to push through CATG for the changes sought by the community.
- b. **Avebury Chapel: proposed community use and report by working group:** the Chairman reported that the working group had put together a list of 26 potential exhibitors. He had written a letter to them to see what the interest might be. He reiterated that the proposed community space was a great opportunity for non-commercial groups to showcase their work and engage with visitors. See appendix 3 for Chapel Vision, List of Potential Chapel Exhibitors, and Chapel Invitation.
- c. **Slow moving vehicles exiting and entering Nash Lane: it was resolved to** purchase two Junction CE Certified RA2 750mm Triangle Signs from Safety Signs & Notices for £205.18 (including VAT) whilst noting that APC was being reimbursed for half the cost by Beckhampton Stables. Proposed by Cllr Paradise, seconded by Cllr Bedford and carried unanimously.

### 10. Local Issues:

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- a. The Chairman said that he was delighted to report that **the red 'phone box at West Kennett** had been repainted by BT even including the crown emblem in gold with a new LED light inside. This had taken several years of APC requests to BT and responses on behalf of the community to two consultations run by WC over proposals to remove the facility. The 'phone kiosk was important because it was part of the street furniture at West Kennett and acted as a visual reminder to drivers that they were passing through a hamlet. An emergency landline was critical at West Kennett due to its proximity to the A4, the frequency of accidents and because the area was in a mobile 'phone blackspot.
  - b. **Fitting of new cabinet for defibrillator in the adopted 'phone kiosk in Avebury Trusloe:** Cllr Paradise reported on behalf of Cllr Lewis that the new cabinet was going to be fitted in the next couple of days.
11. **Parish Steward Priority Sheet:** general strimming of footpaths was requested; specifically the footpath opposite Rawlins Park and footpath 21 from Avebury to Bray Street. The Chairman said that he would also ask Will to strim the grass around the BT 'phone box at West Kennett.
12. **Communications and Correspondence:**
- a. **WC's Climate and Engagement Event, 20 May:** Cllr Byatt said that unfortunately she had not been able to attend the event due to timing. It was noted that another event was being run by WC in the autumn.
13. **Finance and admin:**
- a. **It was resolved** that Cllr Lewis (Vice-Chair) sign the new agreement for rental of the PC's three defibrillators to align the expiry dates to 1 July 2022. Proposed by Cllr Paradise, seconded by Cllr Byatt and carried unanimously.
  - b. **Certificate of Exemption: it was resolved** to certify on the AGAR that the Parish Council is exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015. Proposed by Cllr Paradise, seconded by Cllr Butler and carried unanimously. (Previously circulated and see appendix 4).
  - c. **Internal Audit Report:** the Clerk tabled the internal audit report and members noted that the internal audit for the full year 2020/2021 accounts had been carried out on the 24 May 2021 and a clean audit report given. (Previously circulated and see appendix 5).
  - d. **It was resolved** to approve section 1 Annual Governance Statement. Proposed by Cllr Byatt, seconded by Cllr Paradise and carried unanimously. (Previously circulated and see appendix 6).

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- e. **It was resolved** to approve section 2 Accounting Statements. Proposed by Cllr Bedford, seconded by Cllr Paradise and carried unanimously. (Previously circulated and see appendix 7). The Chairman thanked the clerk for handling the audit and related matters so efficiently.
- f. **Cheques for payment: it was resolved** to approve the following cheque payments. Proposed by Cllr Paradise, seconded by Cllr Byatt and carried unanimously.
  - i. Community First: membership renewal 2021-2022 £40.00
  - ii. Mr Jamie Guy: internal audit for the full year 2020/2021 accounts £75.00
  - iii. Miss E. Moore: overtime and expenses 22 April - 21 May 2021 £656.19

14. **Date of next meeting:** 7:30pm on Tuesday 6 July 2021.

### 15. **Any other business:**

- a. It was noted that Beckhampton residents would like APC to consider acquiring a defibrillator. **Action:** Clerk to put item on next meeting agenda.
- b. A double mattress had been dumped on the highway verge adjacent to the A4; directly opposite the layby at West Kennett. **Action:** Clerk to report fly tipping via the WC on-line reporting tool.
- c. The Chairman and the Clerk to consider a request by a member for APC to use on-line banking as opposed to writing cheques.

The meeting closed at 21:04

### **Appendices:**

1. National Trust Update – June 2021
2. Email response from WC to APC's petition
3. Chapel Vision, List of Potential Chapel Exhibitors and Chapel Invitation
4. Certificate of Exemption
5. Internal Auditor's report
6. Section 1 Annual Governance Statement
7. Section 2 Accounting Statements