

ENFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of 23rd October 2013

Present:	Mr Ken Monk	Chairman
	Mr Adrian Orr	Vice Chairman
	Mr Michael Fay	Parish Councillor
	Mr Bruce Waight, Mr David Harbottle	Parish Councillors
	Mrs Jane Young, Mr A D'Arcy-Irvine	Parish Councillors
	Mr Richard Petitt, Mr Norman Beardsley	Parish Councillors
	Mrs Elizabeth Harrison	Clerk to the Council
	Cllr Charles Howard	Wiltshire Unitary Council
	Steve Becker	Neighbourhood Watch

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30 p.m. and welcomed everyone present

13/110 **Apologies.**

Were received from - Cllr Tessa Manser and Cllr Gareth Holden
Cllr Petitt would be arriving late due to previous commitments

13/111 **Public Questions**

No members of the public attended

13/112 **Verification of Minutes from 11th September 2013**

The Minutes from 11th September were proposed as an accurate record by Cllr D'Arcy-Irvine and seconded by Cllr Harbottle.

13/113 **Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

13/114 **Matters Arising.**

- i. Appointment of new Vice Chairman

No nominations were put forward and the position remains open.

- ii. Playpark Inspection report

This was available for all to read. It highlights some damage to the equipment which used to be fixed by ex-Cllr Martin Webb. The Chairman asked for volunteers and offered to assist, Cllr Fay also offered to assist. A working party of Cllr Monk, Cllr Beardsley, Cllr Young, supervised by Cllr Fay would attend to matters.

It had been hoped that Mrs Patricia Holdway (who attended the last meeting, was considering joining the Council and lives in Water Lane) would be present and voted on to the Council. As she lives close to the Playpark, she would be an ideal person to keep an eye on it. Unfortunately she was not present.

- iii. It was noted that Mr Steve Brown was no longer available to join the Council.

- iv. Parish Hall Governance/Audit.

Cllr Petitt who is the Chairman of the Parish Hall Management Committee was not yet present to discuss this.

13/115 **Finance**

The Clerk read out the Council's current financial situation from the bank reconciliation. At the end of October there was £3,918.60 in the account. Anyone wishing to have a copy of the reconciliation for their records, please contact the Clerk who apologised for forgetting to bring them with her!

Council Tax Support – This was discussed during Unitary Matters.

13/116 **Police Matters**

There was no representative from the Constabulary however Michael Bayliss had sent in a brief report which was read out by Cllr Monk. This was focussed on the noticeable increase in break-ins and thefts from farms,

barns and out buildings. Even when nothing is stolen the cost of the damage is considerable... "The Police intend to work with farmers to improve preventative measures and there will be frequent patrols by the Rural Crime Team, response officers and neighbourhood Police."

Occurrences:

In Enford between 10 and 11.00pm on Sat 26th Sept – there was criminal damage (driving through crops) and possible coursing by 4 men in an S registered, red, Vauxhall Monterey. When confronted by the farmer, they rammed his vehicle in order to make their escape, also throwing stones at him.

On 14th/15th October there was an attempted burglary in Longstreet. Fencing was broken and the break-in was unsuccessful.

In East Chisenbury between 13th/14th October in a non-dwelling burglary, offenders drove through a gate, across fields and broke into a barn stealing a quantity of alcohol.

Cllr Waight reported that in Everleigh a straw stack had been set alight. The suspects are French gypsies from Amesbury. Steve Becker (Neighbourhood Watch) was aware of this. He suggested surveillance cameras and sensors. Cllr Waight already has this. Steve Becker suggested a meeting between farmers and the Police with a 'talk' on surveillance equipment, might be a possible way forward to help everyone.

13/117 **Army Matters**

Lt Col Nigel Lingewas unable to attend the meeting. He is always happy to answer any questions the Council might raise. No report was emailed to the Clerk and no questions were raised.

13/118 **Unitary Council Matters**

Wiltshire Cllr Charles Howard informed us that it had just been agreed to increase the road repair budget from £12.6 million to £21 million for the next 6 years. The one caveat being that if the Central Government Road Maintenance block capital grant is reduced in future years, it may be necessary to re-consider this when setting the County budget. The overall cost will be covered by Maintenance Grants from the Dept of Transport and by bank loans over an extended period, taking account of the current low rates of interest.

Council Tax Support (formerly, Council Tax Benefit)

Cllr Howard then went into detail about the changes coming in Council Tax for the next few years and how this will affect everyone. This is a nationwide problem, not just at county level, due to plans to cap the funding available to all counties, linked with the effect of the changes in Council Tax Support (formerly, Council Tax Benefit) and the impact this will/could have. Wiltshire Council spent £300,000 in Council Tax Benefits last year but it cannot continue to fund this. Over the next 3 years the funding will go from £78,000 to £62,000 to £45,000. Cllr Howard said that for Enford, this should not have too great an effect. In the last financial year Enford had a grant/benefit from the county of £605. It is up to the Parish Councils to agree when setting the Precept on how to make up the difference of the now lost 'top-up grant' from the Unitary Council. In adding £10 to each household, Enford Parish Council could approximately maintain its current level of funding. It was generally agreed by the Councillors that one increase now would be a better way to deal with this. The other option would be to reduce the grant given by Wiltshire Council in progressively decreasing amounts. Cllr Howard recommended that the Parish Council keep an emergency fund/minimum in the bank rather use up every penny. This is the case as it stands.

Cllr Howard then went through the questionnaire sent out by Wiltshire Council to gauge the Parish Council's view on how best to deal with the reduction in funding. This needs to be returned to Wiltshire Council by 4th November.

Cllr Harbottleraised the matter of the amount of 'useless' emails being sent out by Wiltshire Council departments, committees, voluntary groups etc. They have proliferated in the last few months. Cllr Howard was surprised at the amount and was unaware of it this is despite the 271 voluntary redundancies from the Council so far and 400 more to come. With reduced staffing for efficiency etc, where are all the emails coming from and why? Cllr Howard then left the meeting.

13/119 **Neighbourhood Watch**

This was covered earlier in Police Matters (13/116). Steve Becker had nothing new to report.

13/120 **Tidworth Community Area Partnership**

Tony Pickernell was unable to attend the meeting.

13/121 **Planning**

There were no applications outstanding.

13/122 **Roads/ Highways**

Cllr Harbottle stated he was concerned by his emails not being answered by the Council departments he is dealing with, he finds it most frustrating.

He attended the Flood and Winter Roads seminar whose content was disappointing however he managed to collect two large bottles of salt for paths in Enford. He will cover Enford Hill and Cllr Petitt offered to cover the path by the bridge.

Most of the potholes have now been filled.

The drain at East Chisenbury seems to have been cleared and is working properly.

Unfortunately no further work has taken place in Fyfield apart from a second grass cut.

The MOD have cut back the greenery/vegetation along the C32 from Littlecot House to Littlecot Mill. They say they will complete the job once the scaffolding at Glebe Farm comes down. They also hope to do Coombe Lane shortly or keep it until they return to complete the C32.

The street light by the bridge is reported to have been re-installed however this is so recent that it has not yet been checked to be in working order.

Cllr Harbottle is pushing to have the temporary barriers on the A345 at Long Acre removed and the proper ones re-instated but there is still no news on the progress.

13/123 **Rights of Way**

Cllr Beardsley has received an application under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for a modification to the definitive map and statement to upgrade three Bridleways (two in Everleigh and one in Enford) to Byways. In order to understand more about this, he gave the Council a little bit of background....

[The following terms/definitions maybe helpful:

Bridleway:- open to walkers, horse riders and cyclists.

Restricted Byway:- As above, plus horse drawn carriages.

Byway:- As Restricted Byway, but also open to all motorised vehicles. Often referred to as Byway Open to All Traffic. (BOAT).]

In 2007 he received a list from Wiltshire Council of all similar outstanding applications throughout Wiltshire. That list contained 183 applications affecting something over two hundred Public Rights of Way - (PROW). A very small number were for the establishment of new PROW's but the vast majority were for upgrades, as is the case here. Three of those on the list dated from 1987, 1995 and 1998, he had previously been informed that Wilts Council generally process 10 - 12 applications per year. He knows of seventeen new applications which have been submitted during the last four months so the list continues to grow.

Having received the list, he plotted the changes on a map and it became evident that if accepted, the vast majority of Bridleways would disappear, be upgraded to Byways, thus linking with other roads and Byways and legally opening whole areas to 'off road' vehicles.

This particular notification relates to three applications, Everleigh Bridleways 6 & 16, and Enford Bridleway 9. He believes the situation should be looked at as a whole. If upgraded to Byways, Everleigh Bridleway 6 which extends in a south-westerly direction from the southern end of Everleigh, would connect with two other existing Byways.

Everleigh 16 & Enford 9 extend south-west from the A342 at Lower Everleigh to Baden Down Farm.

These applications were supported by strong historical evidence which would allow the upgrade. However in 2006 the law was changed which prohibited the use of mechanically propelled vehicles on any route not already recorded as Byways, although the Act of 2006 did list a number of exceptions to this.

In this particular instance, Wiltshire Council is not aware of any evidence that these PROW's would be exempt under the 2006 Act, thus they can only be upgraded to the status of Restricted Byway. This would permit the public to walk, ride a horse, cycle or drive a horse drawn carriage.

After further short discussion it was agreed that Cllr Beardsley would respond on behalf of Enford Parish

Council accepting an upgrade to Restricted Byway, but vehemently oppose any suggestion of upgrade to Byway.

13/125 **Any Other Business**

Cllr Young has done some more research into acquiring a defibrillator (possibly two) for Enford Parish. She has been talking with Katie Bristow in Netheravon and the first step is to get registered. The Parish Council agreed to this move so Cllr Young can proceed. The South West Farmers Trust has agreed to fund up to £2,000 for this but fund raising would be required as there are on-going costs, not least the replacement of the pads after each use (£36) and the fact that it needs to be on a trickle charge, i.e. access to power. The Parish Hall appears to be the favoured location and Cllr Petitt says that there are sufficient funds. Cllr Harbottle suggested that there should be 2 if we can get the funding, one in East Chisenbury and one in Enford. Concerns were raised as to possible vandalism. Enford Parish Council would be responsible for the up-keep of the unit. Cllr Young will continue to investigate

The suggestion of digitally recording the Parish Council meetings was raised again as an aid to ensure the accuracy of recording the minutes. There was a short, general discussion and in principle the idea was thought to be good, though not well received by all councillors. When put to the vote it was 5-4 against a recorder. The Parochial Church Council use a recorder at their meetings throughout the year. The Village Hall Committee does not use a recorder.

Suggested meeting dates for 2014 were sent to all Councillors. The only point raised so far is that the AGM and the APM do not need to be on the same evening. The APM can be Chaired by anyone, not necessarily the Parish Council chairman who will have been elected a mere hour beforehand! Cllr Monk suggested the APM be moved to possibly the following meeting which is proposed for 14th May.

Cllr Harbottle wished to discuss the Parish Plan and how we move forward with it. Steve Becker spoke of how the points of the Parish Plan and the work of Parish Council could come together. He suggested that it could become a regular feature on the Agenda for Parish Council meetings, dealing with one particular aspect at a time. This was agreed though Cllr Monk pointed out that there are no funds available at present to support ideas put forward in the Plan.

Cllr. Monk is proposing an extra meeting between now and the end of the year to set the Precept for 2014/15. The deadline for doing this is January 14th but it is better to do it earlier, especially as Cllr Howard discussed this earlier in the meeting giving background information on the potential problems of cuts etc. This does not need to be on a Wednesday but if it were then October 30th, November 6th or 13th were put forward. The clerk was asked to organise a date suitable to everyone.

Cllr Beardsley has announced that he will be retiring from the Council in April 2014. This will be great loss of his detailed information and knowledge on the Paths, Byways, Rights of Way etc that affect the Parish. Whoever does this job needs to walk and check them fairly regularly to ensure they are not becoming over-grown/lost, being abused (scrambling bikes) etc. Cllr Petitt thought he may be able to do this although he is better qualified to take on Planning from Cllr Manser.

Cllr Orr, who has now retired as of this meeting, mentioned the need to hand over the Licence from Ordnance Survey for free downloading for the GIS system. This enables one to produce parish maps with overlays of highways, footpaths, rights of way etc that run through the area. Cllr Orr has the parish boundaries and rights of way. It would be logical that this should go to whoever takes over responsibility from Cllr Beardsley. It was suggested that Cllr Beardsley might consider retaining his 'Rights of Way' role for the Parish council but on a 'consultancy basis'. He does not need to be a Parish Councillor in order to oversee this responsibility.

The enquiry into the closing of the 'tails' has possibly been cancelled. Cllrs. Orr, Beardsley and Petitt to discuss.

Cllr Monk thanked Cllr Orr for all his hard work over the years and closed the meeting at 21.17hrs

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 20th November at 19.30hrs in the Parish Hall.

Ken Monk -Chairman,Enford Parish Council

Date Verified