

GREAT BEDWYN PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF 8 JUL 2021 AT 7.30pm IN THE VILLAGE HALL, GREAT BEDWYN

Present: Cllr Barry, Cllr Clack, Cllr Nicholson, Cllr Sheerin, Cllr Younger, Cllr Wyatt and 6 members of the public.

362.22 – 1. Welcome and public participation

Andrew Hutchison thanked the council for their response to Wiltshire Council's Local Plan from 16 Feb 2021 noting Wiltshire Council proposed building only 1.5 houses per year over the next 15 years and that the proposed development of circa 40 dwellings to be discussed in item nine was excessive.

Jacquie Hutchison spoke against item 9 and specifically against building outside of the current limits of development of the village.

Mick Goss spoke against limiting the housing to 1.5 houses per year as this would unlikely add any new affordable homes in the next 15 years and when combined with the reduction in social housing this would mean that younger people would have nowhere to live and that the village would ossify.

363.22 – 2. Apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

364.22 – 3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 19 May 2021 were signed as a true record.

365.22 – 4. Declarations of interest

There were none.

366.22 – 5. Co-option of Patrick Pease

Patrick Pease put himself forwards to re-join the Council. He spoke about what he would bring to the Council, his priorities for the parish and took questions.

Vote results: 1 in favour, 5 against. The motion was not passed.

367.22 – 6. Councillor responsibilities

- Village Hall Liaison – Cllr Nicholson was appointed.
- Playground – Cllr Nicholson was appointed.
- Open Spaces – No councillor was appointed with sole responsibility due to the breadth of the role. Instead it was agreed that the council would jointly define and map out the responsibilities of the council and request the new clerk to administer requests for open spaces maintenance.

368.22 – 7. Clerk & RFO recruitment

Cllrs Younger and Wyatt gave an update. A job description has been written and advert distributed. Two candidates have applied so far. It was agreed that Cllr Sheerin would place the advert on local

Facebook groups with a closing date set of 31 Jul 2021 and the staffing committee would aim to interview the existing candidates in July.

369.22 – 8. Internal audit

The Council reviewed the outcome of the internal audit from Auditing Solutions Ltd.

The auditor's conclusion was: "We are pleased to conclude that effective control systems have been maintained throughout the year. We have made two recommendations (one of which we made last year), and a number of comments on issues that the Clerk is aware of and is following up. On the basis of work undertaken on the Council's records this year, we have signed off the Internal Audit Certificate in the Annual Return assigning positive assurances to all the required assertions."

The auditor's recommendations were discussed and actions agreed as follows:

1. "(Accounting Records and Bank Reconciliation) Surplus funds should be regularly moved to the Business Instant Access account to optimise interest earnings. The Council should consider giving the Clerk delegated powers under Financial Regulation 5.5(c) to manage this process."

The council agreed to accept the recommendation and that it would task the new clerk with responsibility.

2. "(Asset Register) The original figure of £56,342 shown in the draft 2020-21 AGAR (Box 9) needs to be increased by £282.29 for the new notice board."

The council noted that this action has been completed.

370.22 – 9. Housing development on Bedwyn dyke field

The two motions were:

- a. Council to agree whether it supports a proposed development of circa 40 dwellings on this site at this time.
- b. Council to agree whether it will seek a boundary change to bring the site into the parish so as to better ensure any development meets the Parish's needs for affordable housing.

A Council debated the two motions at length. The arguments in favour of the motions were:

- Developing the site is the recommendation of the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- Developing the site is the only way to meet the wishes of the residents to prioritise housing for young locals (as requested by 78% of the respondents of the Great Bedwyn Neighbourhood Planning Survey, April 2016).
- Limiting development (to 1.5 houses p.a. over 15 years as recommended by the Wiltshire Council Local Plan) will not increase the percentage of affordable housing in the village as each development is typically too small to be mandated to provide affordable housing.
- Without development, and when combined with the reduction of social housing (due to the sales policies of Housing Associations), fewer younger people will be able to afford to live in the village which will allow the average age of village residents to continue to climb which will impact the character of the village.
- Significant development (beyond 1.5 houses p.a.) is required in order to sustain the village's key services (i.e. school, doctors' surgery, shops and pub) and in turn sustain the parish.
- Development of the site could allow improved station parking (and therefore reduce the parking issues in the village) and additional playing fields for the school.
- The sale of the land would benefit the church.

The arguments against the motions were:

- A development of this scale at this time is not believed to be in line with the wishes of the parish residents. Although the Neighbourhood Development Plan is based on survey data, its conclusions have not been voted upon by parishioners.
- A development of that scale would increase traffic, exacerbating parking and speeding issues.
- Development of that site is not guaranteed to lead to an increase in the percentage of truly affordable housing. Also, development at a more modest 1.5 houses p.a. can still bring additional affordable housing.
- A change of boundary is expressly against the wishes of Little Bedwyn Parish Council.
- There is significant archaeology in the area that could be damaged.

Vote results:

- a. 2 in favour, 3 against, 1 abstention. Motion not passed.
- b. 1 in favour, 4 against, 1 abstention. Motion not passed.

371.22 – 10. Noticeboards

It was agreed that Cllr Sheerin would obtain competitive quotes for replacement of the two decrepit noticeboards in the Great Bedwyn village square.

372.22 – 11. Benches

A request from a resident for a bench on the corner of Spains and Farm Lane (exact location TBC) was considered positively. Cllr Younger will determine the land owner, seek to gain their permission and get quotes for installation. The decision to proceed, or not, would be taken at a later Council meeting.

Cllr Sheerin will get quotes for the replacement or refurbishment of the decrepit bench at the top of Forest Hill. The decision to proceed, or not, would be taken at a later Council meeting.

Regarding a request from a resident for a bench mid-way up Forest Hill, it was agreed that there was insufficient demand for this and that there is no suitable site.

373.22 – 12. Planning Report

- PL/2021/04229, Tor Mead, 14 Forest Hill. No objection.
- PL/2021/05008, 2 Castle Road. No Objection.
- PL/2021/04749, 1 Bedwyn Common. No objection.
- PL/2021/03652, 3 Willis Close. No objection.

374.22 – 13. Finance Report

The following cheques were reviewed:

Date	#	Purpose	Net
27/05/2021	1596	Payroll May 2021	25.00
27/05/2021	1597	Jo Pike Salary May 2021	
27/05/2021	1598	Annual insurance from 1/6/21	662.98
27/05/2021	1599	Playing field grass cutting	1,091.00
27/05/2021	1600	Footpaths group grant	770.00

Date	#	Purpose	Net
11/06/2021	1601	Internal Audit 20/21	380.00
28/06/2021	1602	Jo Pike Salary June 2021	
28/06/2021	1603	Payroll June 2021	31.50
28/06/2021	1604	Jockey Green Maintenance	130.00
28/06/2021	1605	Allotment Flood Ditch Clearing	60.00
28/06/2021	1606	Plot 104A Refund	40.00
28/06/2021	1607	Clerk Expenses	231.40
08/07/2021	1608	Additional Annual Fidelity Insurance from 1/6/21	29.77
08/07/2021	1609	PO Box (Annual)	300.00
08/07/2021	1610	Email Accounts (Annual)	144.00
08/07/2021	1610	Website Secure Hosting (Annual)	125.00

The meeting closed at 10.00pm.