

Poulshot Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting Held at Poulshot Village Hall
At 19:30 on Tuesday 6th November 2007.

Parish Council Meeting

1. Attendance

Attending -

Mr Michael Hues (MH) Chairman
Mrs Sue Aldridge (SA) Councillor
Mr Geoffrey Collett (GC) Councillor
Mr Steve Housby (SH) Councillor
Mr Malcolm Nixon (MN) Vice Chairman

Mrs P Rugg (PR) (Wiltshire County Council)

Mr Michael Wilson (MW) Parish Clerk

Apologies -

Anthony Lake (AL) (Kennet District Councillor)
Mr Nicky Hunloke (NH) Councillor
Mr Joe Baber (JB) Councillor

Absent -

Visitors -

There were 7 members of the public in attendance.

2. Public meeting

The Chairman welcomed the public and introduced Inspector Dean Knight from Wiltshire Police who is based at Devizes.

Inspector Knight outlined his responsibility as being that of Devizes and surrounding area, that responsibility started in April 2007. It has been a period of change, involving the introduction of neighbourhood or community policing, as laid out in section 17 of the PACE act. However in reality it divides the policing function into two parts, Rapid response and Neighbourhood policing. Wiltshire is the third safest county in the UK; and Poulshot is in the Northern area of the county. During this transition no more police officers have been allocated, although community support officers have been introduced. Policing levels are governed by a home office formula, and our area does not have a good deal. Seven villages have 1 police officer and 1 PCSO allocated at any one time. He would like more officers and No crime ever goes without being investigated. All crimes are investigated at the the first point of contact in the Force Contact Centre.

. Having said that since the change, crime in the Devizes area has dropped by over 20%; he was aware of the burst of crime during the summer and had plans to redirect some effort into visible policing in Poulshot.

He then asked for questions from the floor.

Q. How many traffic officers are in the area? A. He did not comment as it is not his area of responsibility and did not know. However he was aware of the concern over speeding in the village and would pass that concern onto traffic division.

Q. Can we get more visible policing? A. He only has 2 police officers for 7 villages in a non rapid response role. So it is very difficult, and he hoped that he could increase visibility by using PCSO's.

Q. What do you want the villagers to do? A. Be observant, do not take the law into your own hands, give the police intelligence. Tell them about village activities so that the police can attend and show themselves.

Q. What about metal thefts? A. Copper and Lead thefts are a real problem at the moment, please be observant.

Q. What about the non 999 telephone number? A. when the number was first issued the line was understaffed and telephone numbers went unanswered. This has now been addressed, in January 20% were answered that is now 80% and soon to be 99%.

Q. There has been a spate of small crimes in the village? A. There is an 80 % detection rate in Poulshot; there have been 11 incidents of various kinds since April.

Q. PCSO's are seen as "rubber" policemen is this true? A. Amanda Parks is our PCSO and is there to provide visibility, she does not have the same powers as a Police Officer and cannot arrest. However this relieves her of the lengthy paperwork and allows her more time to spend on community work.

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MH reporting on Neighbour hood watch stated that most of his items had just been covered, but he wished to thank the police for their quick response to the theft at Planks dairy. He also pointed out that there had been a number of opportunist thefts from sheds.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Knight.

The chairman thanked those participating and closed the public meeting.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes of last meeting 4/09/07, were reviewed and no comments were received. The minutes were then approved by the council and signed by MH in the presence of the council. After which Councillor Rugg asked that a comment regarding WCC finances made by councillor Lake be removed. He stated at the last meeting that WCC were in debt, this was not true. The Clerk pointed out that the minutes had been accepted by the council and were a true reflection of what had been said.

4. Matters arising

4.1. Playground safety

SA reported all is well. The Clerk reported that Tim Nixon had again tendered for the work.

4.2. Quality Parish Councils

The Clerk reported that no further action had been taken and he was waiting upon Community First.

4.3. Lengths Man report

GC reported that a list of work had been given to Highways, but that little progress had been made. He was a little disappointed.

4.4. Village Green

MH reported that the final cut of the year had taken place and that the football pitch was being tended by Jan Winters. SH stated that he was still receiving a lot of comments regarding the untidy state of the green and it should be cut more often. MH suggested that if extra cuts were necessary next year decisions could be taken at that point. SH pointed out that the verge and hedge in Barleyfield lane / Corn close was overgrown. The Clerk was asked to contact highways to ask Renelec (the owner) to attend to the matter.

4.5. Village Design Guide

NH was absent therefore no progress was reported.

4.6. Guest speakers

MH asked all for any suggestions for speakers in the future. It was suggested that a representative of Traffic Policing could be asked to attend. The Clerk will enquire.

4.7. Broadway lane

The Clerk reported that he had been in touch with highways and could confirm that they had been clearing the lane and that where required and when materials were available, scalping would be spread on the surface. A member of the public commented that the work was done well, but one area of the lane had become impassable just at the point where it narrows. The Clerk was asked to contact Highways again.

4.8. Reorganisation of local government

The Clerk reported that he had provided Councillor Rugg with a written set of questions regarding this matter and stated that he was disturbed at the content of an email received from WCC regarding the make up of the forums. At the beginning parish council involvement had been promised, yet this email showed no membership status for the parish.

4.9. Footpath by Lodge Farm

MH stated that the work was complete and had taken two and a half weeks in contrast to the one week allocated. He had met with the engineer and discussed the matter and had also asked for costing and competitive quotations. He felt the work was well done but at what cost, for example, plastic curbs had been used at 4 times the cost of concrete curbs because of health and safety issues regarding lifting. The situation regarding quotations was decided 6 years ago when Ringway Parkman won the contract at which point they automatically get all work and do not have to quote for any job under one hundred thousand pounds. Any job under twenty thousand pounds can be done by WCC itself but again no tendering is required. He felt that this was a "gravy train" and should be challenged. He had been refused access to the figures. PR pointed out the ridiculous cost of the Devizes super toilet, sponsored by KDC. And she agreed that health and safety rules were out of control. SH suggested that Poulshot write to other parish councils. MH stated that this was

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coming from central government. SH asked that we get WALC involved, and that transparency was needed. The clerk was asked to take the matter further and obtain the figures.

4.10. Moles on the Green

MH reported that nothing further had been heard.

4.11. Grants

The Clerk reported that he had asked for a grant to be considered for footpath works by KDC, this had been refused. However he hoped that the Village Hall committee were more successful.

5. Plans

There had been various plans presented in the interim, the status of which was reported in the agenda to the meeting.

- Chestnut trees, the green – Approved
- 17 Poulshot Rd – driveway, Approved
- Extension at 29 Townsend, Pending
- Car Parking at Higher Green farm, Pending

MN pointed out that the goal posts at Higher Green Farm keep moving and that the original plan seemed to have enough room for cars. MH stated that he could not understand why the architect had not considered this matter fully at the concept stage, and that he noted that an entrance to the property had been made in Hay Lane and was also being used. The Clerk took this opportunity to state that had been given further cause to complain to the owner regarding abuse of the Parish Land. This resulted after a complaint from a parishioner, and after three previous problems the Clerk felt that the owners should be sent a letter reminding them of the rules governing the use of Parish land. SH felt that a nice letter should be sent, the clerk pointed out that this was the forth occasion of complaint. MH agreed that the building materials must be removed immediately but he had agreed with the owners that the middle of December would be suitable for making good the damage. A member of the public pointed out that it was the council's responsibility to take complaints seriously and act accordingly.

No further discussion of plans took place at the meeting.

6. Accounts

- 6.1. The Clerk presented the current financial position, which showed a balance of over six thousand pounds in the account.
- 6.2. The Clerk Then introduced the matter of the 2008/9 budget and precept. He explained that the current precept of five thousand pounds could be maintained and this would result in a deficit over the next three years of one thousand pounds, however the good balance in the bank would be more than sufficient. SH felt that the budget for the clerks salary should be increased annually by 3%, all agreed. MH pointed out that support for the village hall was going to be an issue. The Clerk again explained the limitation on spending that the council has regarding S137 items, and that this would be a serious limitation towards grants for the village hall. MN proposed that the precept be increased to six thousand pounds, SA seconded and a unanimous vote ensued.
- 6.3. Tenders
Only two tender had been received. And as one concerned a tender by his son; Councillor Nixon declared his interest and left the meeting for the duration.
The Green Grass cutting – SJ Franklin £170/cut, this was an increase from £110/cut but that price had been held for 5 years. It was suggested that we advertise for more bidders, MH supported this. The clerk pointed out that we had completed the tendering process and we had valid tenders, it would be unfair to ask for further tenders after. MH agreed.
The Playground cleaning – T Nixon £250/year
MH proposed acceptance of both, and GC seconded. All voted in favour. The Clerk will confirm acceptance. Councillor Nixon rejoined the meeting.
- 6.4. Payable.
 1. Several accounts were payable; but no cheques were signed at the meeting;
 2. In the interim between meetings several cheques had been signed by Councillors.
 - a. SJ Franklin – Grass cutting, £258.50
 - b. Mazars – accounts, £141.00
 - c. Hawes Mcleod – Trees, £160.00
 - d. M Wilson – expenses, £41.27

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7. Any Other Business.

7.1. A Presentation regarding the village Hall.

Chris Saunders was asked to take the floor as chairman of the village hall committee. He outlined the project which had stated at the beginning of the year as a study of proposed building and maintenance works. The project had been planned in short / medium/ and long terms, however the plans were now being reviewed based upon the needs to conform with the disabilities act and the availability of monies from KDC. There are several priorities; Access via steps, a ramp is required, leaking flat roofs, an inefficient heating system, and a divided main room.

The main access to the building should be via a ramp, the toilet block should be demolished brought up to the same floor level and equipped with a disabled toilet. The roof should be pitched, an economic heating system should be installed and storage provided so that all of the main room can be used. The windows should be double glazes and the main roof should be re-laid and insulated.

The costing indicates that the project would cost around one hundred thousand pounds of which fourth thousand pounds would be available from KFC. The rest would have to be found from subscription, fund raising, the parish council and other grants. Ten thousand pounds might be available from the lotteries commission. They would like a contribution from the parish council towards a feasibility study with no guarantee that the project would proceed. They were in need of technical help, but recognised the vast experience of individuals within the village and therefore intend to utilise this resource. He asked that the parish council support the project in principal. MH proposed, SH seconded and all voted in favour.

7.2. The formal adoption of paragraph 12 of the model code of conduct.

The Clerk pointed out that this formality would allow all concerned parties including those with a vested interest on the council to make a presentation after declaring an interest. However as normal they would still have to leave the meeting during discussions and voting. This was an improvement upon the current state. The vote was proposed by SA, seconded by MN the majority agreed with SH abstaining.

7.3. Willows in the south west corner of the green.

The clerk stated that he had received a complaint regarding overhanging boughs from these willows and had asked Hawes Mcleod to inspect and quote, they had come to the conclusion that they needed pollarding, however the owner of the adjoining property had not been happy with this and had employed his own expert, who had contacted KDC council with a different plan. MH suggested that as the trees were the responsibility of the council they would follow the recommendation of Hawes Mcleod.

7.4. Rowde School.

MH stated that the council had received a letter asking for donations for Rowde School and that this would be circulated for approval in the usual manner.

8. Next Meeting

Tuesday 8/01/08 at 18:30 Poulshot village hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting and thanked those attending.

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