



West Winch Parish Council

The Annual Residents Meeting Minutes held on Tuesday 23rd March 2021 at 7:30 in a virtual meeting room

Present

Cllr T Gibson (Chairman), Cllr Mrs J Jackson (Vice Chair), Cllr D Skerritt, Cllr B Thrower, Cllr R Shearn, Cllr Mrs M Summers, Cllr P Jackson, Cllr Mrs T Pratt, Mrs S Watts (Clerk/RFO), Borough Councillor S Nash, Borough Councillor P Gidney, County Councillor Ms A Kemp and 7 members of the public.

1. The Chairman to welcome residents to the meeting.
Cllr Gibson Welcomes everyone to the Annual Residents Meeting
2. To Present the Stephen Walker Cup
The Stephen Walker cup is awarded annually for services to the village. This year the Stephen Walker cup is being awarded to Toni Pratt. Toni runs the Village food bank. Toni is also lending part of her garden to create a community garden with the help of the Parish Council.
3. To Accept Apologies for Absence
Apologies has been received from Cllr Dutton and Cllr Lamb
4. Chairman of the Parish Council's annual report
Since the last residents meeting was last held Cllr Foster, Cllr Burt, Cllr Mrs J Leamon and Cllr Everitt have all left the Parish Council. New members of the Parish Council include Cllr Dutton, Cllr Miss K Jackman, and Cllr Mrs t Pratt. There is currently one vacancy on the Parish Council. This year the Parish Council have refurbished the brick compound beside the Social Club and turned it into a memorial peace garden to commemorative the 75th Anniversary of VE/VJ day. Also The Pound which has been derelict for several years has been restored with the permission of the commoners and with a grant from Zurich the work is now almost complete. New signs have been erected at the top of Watering Lane warning HGV drivers not to follow their Sat Nav and at the top of Gravel Hill Lane banning car sales on the grass verges. A new kick wall has been installed on the playing field which is being well used and CCTV has been installed at the Village Hall Car park. There are plans to plant wildflowers around the playing field.
5. Clerk to report on the Parish Council Finances
The precept for 20/21 was £29,786 it has had a slight increase this year to £31,052. The current bank balance is £74,614. We have earmarked some for these funds for our planned projects. There is £15,000 for play area £12,000 for changing rooms and £30,000 for resurfacing to the car park.
6. Cllr Mrs J Jackson to report on planning and the WWHAR
Please see attached report
7. Cllr Mrs M Summers to report on improvements to the play area
Please see attached report

8. Cllr Lamb to report on improvements to the Changing room
Cllr Thrower gives a short report as Cllr Lamb was unable to attend.
The plans are to extend the changing rooms to meet current FA standards. As there are more mixed and ladies' teams now using the changing rooms, we would like to allow the changing rooms to work better for everybody including better officials changing rooms. We would like to be able to offer walking football.
9. Cllr Mrs T Pratt to report on the Village Food Bank
The food bank has been running since lockdown last year. There is a food parcel delivery every couple of weeks. The food parcels are being filled with the help of the Parish Council, donations from the Village and from the shop. Toni would like to use the community garden to add fresh vegetables to the food parcels. The food parcels are available to anyone who need them.
10. Reports from County and Borough Councillors
County Councillor Ms A Kemp – The development needs the road to be built before any houses are built. However, this has not yet been agreed. The location of the Setchey speed camera was not correct when it was placed at Garage Lane so there are two other location being looked at. There have been three new drainage schemes put in in the village these are at Watering Lane, Chapel Lane and Back Lane.
Borough Councillor S Nash – This is Cllr Nash's first residents meeting. Cllr Nash gave a report on his experiences and troubles with the Borough Council.
Borough Councillor P Gidney – Please see attached report.
11. Reports from Village Organisations
Bowls Club – Please see attached report
St Mary's Church and the Parish Magazine – please see attached report
12. Question and Answer Session
A resident from Setchey would like to get more people engaged in the community. She feels that Setchey is sometime forgotten about but thanks the Parish Council for holding this event. Cllr Gibson encourages her to come to our Parish Council meetings.
Mr D Garford asks Cllr Gidney if he supports the road being built before the houses. Cllr Gidney assures the Parish Council that the Borough Council are doing the best they can with the resources they have although Cllr Gidney will pass any comments on to the Borough Council.
13. Close of Meeting – 20:30

Signed _____

Dated _____

Transport and Housing issues

Back in about 2010 the Parish Council met with the Borough Council and North Runcton Parish Council and told them all that unless a bypass was built then this parish council would strongly object to any housing proposals.

“No bypass, no Housing” became the saying back then and is still used today.

Despite our constant objections we are still faced with massive housing developments appearing either side of the A10. This is now called Allocated Land in the Borough Council’s long term Housing Plan.

A lot of vehicles have driven down the A10 since that meeting all those years ago, and a lot of additional meetings and open sessions have been held with parish councillors, professionals and local residents as we all fight to get a new road and a reduction in traffic through the centre of the village.

The Parish Church has cracks in the walls due to HGV vibrations and the Church Rooms had a ceiling collapse a few years ago. We really do need to stop heavy vehicles from driving through our village centre.

The Parish Council has been fighting all the way for a bypass and was heavily involved with creating the North Runcton and West Winch Neighbourhood Plan, another massive piece of work carried out by some of your parish councillors. This was adopted in 2017 and contains policies which must be followed by developers when submitting planning applications.

Our main objectives now are to try and ensure the new road is built and brought into use before any new development starts on the Hopkins site or any other large housing site within the parish boundary, and to ensure that drainage requirements for any new development in the villages of West Winch and Setchey are dealt with properly as we are all aware of constant flooding issues.

The County Council is applying for grants to pay for some of the road funding, but needs to submit a planning application for the new road and will need agreement from about 11 landowners whose land is where the new road will be built.

The Borough Council needs to get Legal Agreements from the landowners who want houses built on their land to ensure they all contribute money towards the new road. There are about 21 different landowners.

The Parish Council asks that residents keep an eye on the Parish Council website and Facebook page to see if there are any new planning issues that we want to make you aware of. The Parish Council asks that you continue to write your letters of concern to the Borough Council when planning applications are submitted and let us try and get the village we all want, free of heavy goods vehicles and a big reduction in traffic numbers.

Finally, many of you may remember attending a drop in session in the Village Hall a couple of years ago regarding 500 proposed homes in the centre of West Winch. Thank you to everyone who wrote to the Borough Council expressing their concerns. That planning application was held up as some ecological surveys needed to be carried out but that application may well be back on the table in the next few months and again we will need you all to make your concerns known to the Borough Council again, either by writing letters or commenting online. If we are able to hold some more public drop in sessions we will do so.

Watch the Parish Council website and Facebook page and we will tell you when we know anything. We are most grateful for all your help and support with this.

Report on Playpark

The Play equipment and the skatepark on the playing field in the centre of the village have been enjoyed by many village children. We were aware that some things are becoming more difficult to repair and part of the equipment was removed on safety grounds.

The Parish Council got some quotes to renew the worn-out equipment while keeping some things that are still ok such as the swings.

We discovered that good quality play equipment comes at a price and we would need to raise at least £100,000 to replace the worn-out bits.

We have a project group made up of local people and parish councillors who have set to work to make it happen.

We ran an online survey to find out what people thought. In general, they agreed the equipment is worn out and needs replacing, and they wanted a play space with the emphasis on imaginative and adventurous play.

We have set about raising some funds.

The Parish Council has committed £15,000 to the project.

We have applied for an FCC community grant which we would be eligible for as we are within 10 miles of a landfill site. The application process is competitive so we may not get anything.

We are also applying to the borough council for a Community Infrastructure Levy grant. Other grants are proving more problematic due to various restrictions and a lot of grants have become Covid related.

We have Go fund Me page which has raised over £1000 so far.

Several village residents are joining in with fundraising including notably Aiva age 8 who is running 60 miles through March and Lola age 10 who is shooting basketball hoops every day in March.

Forms are available at the village shop to guess how many hoops Lola will shoot and also you can get the quiz forms there to enter the fundraising quiz.

We have some banners and posters donated which will be put up to inform people about the project.

We will also be approaching local businesses.

Once we have some substantial funding in place, we will be looking again to local people to let us know exactly what they want as although we have quotes there is some flexibility in the detail.

Finally, a big thank you to everyone who's helped so far and we would hope that you feel able to share the links to the fundraising page far and wide amongst your acquaintances and loved ones thank you.

All details are on the West Winch Parish Council website.

Peter Gidney Borough Councillor for West Winch

This has been a year of obvious struggle, and hopefully we will see an end to this

pandemic. So many people have suffered, and were it not for the vaccine being made available, here in the UK we could be facing a possible third wave. Of all the problems we have faced, this important priority we have got right.

I cannot comment on government policy, there are so many views on this, but overall, of the European effort we here in the UK seem to be taking back control.

I am optimistic that we can look forward to an enlightened period and that priorities are directed towards local community needs across the country.

Our local council has been really proactive in helping people at a community level. We have distributed grants to local businesses and helped people on all levels where we are able. Services like refuse collection, planning and Full Council have been running throughout, and I believe the service has been very, very good.

I look forward to the resumption of normal meetings, as Teams and Zoom seem to soak up many additional hours and are OK but no substitute for direct meetings. Today, I have three Teams and Zoom meetings, one is scheduled for seven hours, and I have to fit in my 'day job' as well which so often means until late at night. This has been the case for many council officers as well as some members, and many officers have been seconded to other COVID related duties which has reduced staffing levels in some departments.

I am pleased to say that we are getting back to 'normal' working. The scrutiny panels are back at work, so they are once again reviewing council decisions.

Another note is that our Borough Council has over the years been very careful with its financial management, investing in local projects as well as strategically managing expenditure making sure that services are effective and well managed. This has meant that whilst we are facing some shortfalls we are better placed than so many local authorities to recover our pre COVID position, and work for the prosperity of us all.

Finally, but no least, dear parishioners please keep your eye on what is happening in West Winch and around. Please keep your Parish Council, and Borough Councillors up to date with your views on things as we go forward into next year. And a big thankyou to all of you who have so far helped us through this pandemic.

Thanks, and Best wishes to you all.

Peter

The Bowls Club

In common with all organisations the Bowls Club have struggled to operate over the past year due to the COVID pandemic. The green needed to be maintained throughout the year and our wonderful band of volunteers ensured it was kept in a first class condition.

We did manage to open last year and successfully played a domestic pairs competition from June through to August and held the final in the early part of September coupled with a fish and chip supper.

With the help of our forever active committee we managed to provide all the necessary COVID secure measures which will of course remain in place for this season.

Our season this year will of course be affected by the regulations, but we do hope to open the green on Saturday 17th April. Play will be subject to restrictions until 17th May when we all hope to be able to play competitive bowls against other clubs.

Parish Church of St Mary's West Winch with Setchey

Like most organisations the Parish Church has found the last year to be very difficult. For most of the period the church has been closed for public worship although we hope to resume this in a very limited way very soon. Our first service is planned for Easter Sunday.

At the end of the first lockdown the church and church hall were re-ordered to permit safe distancing.

Because of restrictions placed on the use of the church sadly some funerals had to take place at the graveside and the number of mourners was limited. Unfortunately, whilst funerals can now take place in the church the number of mourners remains limited to 30.

Whilst the choir are permitted to sing, suitably safe distanced, the congregation are not allowed to sing.

As a result of the lockdowns the church hall has been out of use and unavailable for hire which has been a hit to our finances. The following groups have been unable to meet in the hall: 100 Club, Table Tennis Club, King's Lynn Organ Club, the PCC and the Wednesday Afternoon Art Group.

The Parish Magazine in it's usual paper form has been another casualty of the pandemic. Fortunately, the Parish Council has allowed us to continue publishing by hosting Parish News on their website. We would like to thank the Parish Council and Sarah for their help.

Being unable to utilise both the church and church hall for such protracted periods has had a big impact on our financial situation and in particular we only managed to pay 69% of the already heavily subsidised £21,600 the diocese asked us to contribute in 2020.

At West Winch our churchyard continues to be kept in such a good condition by our dedicated group of volunteers and at Setchey a commercial contractor is used. We are grateful to the Parish Council for their financial support which helps us continue maintaining both churchyards. Unfortunately, some of the very old, large trees in the churchyard are coming towards the end of their life. Following a tree survey, we have to fell one tree and reduce the canopy of others beside the driveway.

Like everyone, we are looking forward to some semblance of normality.