

Minutes

Present: Cllr Tom Ellen (TE) (Vice-Chair), Cllr Tony Mulliken (TM), Cllr David Brisker (DB) (Vice-chair). In attendance: Parish Clerk Rosie Charnock (RC), 10 Parishioners.

1 Matters of the Council

TE asked councillors if they wished him to continue as Meeting Chair. This was agreed unanimously.

Absence, apologies and declaration of interests

Apologies from Paul Oatway QPM (Wilts Council Ward Member), parishioners Sean and Sandra D.

2 Approval of Previous Minutes

Approved by councillors. Two copies of the minutes of the North Newnton Parish Council Extraordinary Meeting Friday 11th March 2022 were signed as a record by the Meeting Chair.

Matters Arising: Legal standing of NNPC and its ability to co-opt councillors. When the NNPC extraordinary meeting on 11th March was open to the public, two parishioners queried the legality of the PC as then constituted, and its ability to co-opt councillors. One of the parishioners stated that he had contacted Wilts Council regarding this. NNPC had not been provided with the detail of his concerns so, as minuted at the time, were unable to respond until they had sight of his letter. NNPC had subsequently received no communication from the parishioner. The parishioner was not present tonight and the content of the parishioner's letter has not been shared with NNPC.

TE informed NNPC that he had taken advice from Paul Oatway and Perry Holmes (Corporate Director of Legal and Governance at Wilts Council) to clarify matters. TE was able to advise NNPC that:

- (1) It is a matter of record that the current NNPC councillors were elected unopposed in May 2021.
- (2) Provided that at least three councillors are present at meetings the Parish Council is 'quorate' and conforms to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, which is the relevant legislation.
- (3) The LGA 1972 authorises co-opting to fill vacancies arising from the resignation of councillors.
- (4) NNPC is established for seven councillors in total.

Separately, Wilts Council Electoral Services have confirmed that with effect 25th March 2022 the PC can co-opt up to four councillors to fill the vacancies caused by recent resignations from the Council.

TE checked with TM and DB, and they agreed that, at present, NNPC do not wish to become a 'competent parish council' and hence do not need to conform to the requirements of the Parish Councils Order 2012, a statutory instrument which relates to the Localism Act 2011. Therefore NNPC can proceed with co-opting additional councillors. All agreed and thanked TE for his efforts.

1 At this point TE referred back to **Item 1**. Motions Regarding Membership of the Parish Council were amended and agreed as follows:

1.1: DB proposed TE as chair, seconded by TM. TE accepted; motion passed unanimously. TE thanked his colleagues for their confidence in him, and stated his role was not to 'lead' but to facilitate and to ensure that all who wished to speak had a fair voice. He reiterated his overarching concerns regarding propriety, adherence to PC Standing Orders, and value for money in applying limited parish funds to best effect and for the benefit of the parish as a whole.

1.2: TE proposed TM as a vice-chair, seconded by DB, motion passed unanimously.

1.3: Andy Gray (AG) offered himself as a member of the parish council. AG stated that he lives in the parish of North Newnton. TE asked AG why he would like to join the NNPC. AG responded that his aim after retirement was to serve the community more and he would like to start now. He currently works for the military, and for the time being is looking forward to balancing both roles. Motion to co-opt AG was passed unanimously.

1.4: Rich Cook (RiC) offered himself as a member of the parish council. RiC stated that he lives in the parish of North Newnton. TE asked RiC why he would like to join the NNPC. RiC responded that he has lived in the area for over 30 years, integrates well with others and listens to others' views as well as having his own. Motion to co-opt RiC was passed unanimously.

3 **Adjournment: Welcome to the public**

Parishioner JM was concerned that the lack of welfare facilities at St James' Church would mean that some people would not wish to attend the Annual Parish Meeting. TM: Venue choices are limited at the moment: we can investigate availability at the (reopened) Woodbridge Inn, Woodborough Village Hall and Rushall Village Hall. JM is going to email RC concerning this matter. (**Afternote:** By kind permission of Sue and Graham, the Woodbridge Inn will be available for the APM)

Parishioner CW welcomed two new councillors and wondered whether the two remaining councillor vacancies might go to women, as the NNPC is now made up of five men. TE: made this point at the last meeting and would like to achieve a more representative gender balance. TM: would welcome suggestions of who we could approach. RiC: can ask around, the more people we ask, the more likely we are to find the balance. DB: had recently asked two ladies if they would consider joining, but they were unable to.

4 **Planning**

4.1 RC read the proposal regarding The Cottage, Stitchings Lane, Hilcott (Application: PL/2022/01926). TE: anyone is able to comment on the planning portal. No comments have yet been made regarding essentially internal modifications. No comments were made at the meeting. The applicants were in attendance. NNPC moved to support the proposal, voted unanimously in favour.

4.2 For the record, RC informed the PC that the proposal regarding The Old Apple Store, Bottlesford (Application: PL/2022/00308) had been withdrawn. TM: if parishioners have strong opinions about a planning proposal, as they did with this one, they can express these on the planning portal and it seems to be effective. (**Meeting reconvened after Planning discussions**)

5 **Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations**

TE: NNPC did not apply to Wilts Council for central funding for good reason and that deadline has now passed. NNPC has budgeted £500. Two parishioners have asked for NNPC funding for street parties. Some key considerations: £500 is 5% of our annual disposable income. What is a reasonable amount to grant per event? What information/business case should we require (Numbers, use of money, control/supervision, notification, safety etc?). TM: holding a jubilee celebration and asking people coming to help cover the costs. RiC: A central thing hasn't been organised, so more likely that smaller events will happen, which ought to be covered by those participating. If NNPC were to help fund events there would need to be a clear cut-off date. Perhaps better to use the £500 to fund something commemorative for those under 16 who live in the parish? TM: in agreement. AG: in agreement, would need to look at cost of items and number of people who would like them. RiC: Maybe if there are items left over, we could then sell the excess to other members of the community? TE: The consensus appears to be that a better use of limited PC funds would be to apply the budget of a maximum of £500 to commemorative items for younger parishioners rather than sponsoring street parties. Details could be confirmed at the APM. TM: offered to research cost of suitable items and use the 2021 census information to find out number of 16 year olds in the parish, to report back at PC Annual Meeting. All agreed. A formal Motion will then be placed before the PC.

6 **Annual Parish Spring Clean**

DB: Spring clean notification went out today (28/03/22) via email. Spring clean to take place in the week beginning 4th April 2022. Can also be done in the week leading up to or afterwards. DB will deliver black bags, pickers and high-vis vests to volunteers this week. There has been a high level of interest. When finished with, items should be returned to blue boxes outside DB's house.

7 **Road Safety**

7.1 DB: SIDs update: items are in DB's garage awaiting installation. The contractor is now unable to take on the job, so DB is looking for a contractor with the appropriate liability insurance and permissions from Wilts Council to be able to carry out the job. AG: asked if Wilts Council had a list of approved contractors, DB had not been given one. RiC: will liaise with DB as he may have some contacts in the building trade who would be able to help with this.

7.2 TE: Park/Rushall Road junction safety and driver visibility concerns. On Thursday 17th March 2022, TE met with Malcolm B (MB) from Wilts Council Highways, PO and Sean D (SD). TE expressed his thanks to SD for representing local interests extremely well. MB said Wiltshire would review safety measures and geometry of boundary fence in light of the historic plan provided by SD. Also, MB said that Wiltshire would be willing to refresh any existing speed signage that might need it.

7.3 TE: Self-help road safety signs. TE has installed four speed limit signs on Upavon Road and Rushall Road, four further yellow warning signs will be going up shortly. NNPC agreed these informal measures should continue.

8 Projects

8.1 TE: North Newnton Footpath. Monday 21st March TE spoke to the owner of the field which runs along the eastern side of Upavon Rd. The owner is open to the suggestion of stiles and a mowed grass strip to make a usable path allowing pedestrians to be safe from traffic. The use of such a 'permissive path' might be allowed by the landowner after negotiation and study of any PC proposal. It would provide a temporary solution to the footpath (TE also spoke to Parishioner Rob, who lives on Upavon Rd, and who appreciated the effort the PC were making to improve road safety). All agreed that TE should continue to work with the landowner to establish what was acceptable to him.

8.2 CW (Hilcott VH Trustee): Parish Space. Barnard Meadow is being cleared by volunteers. They have uncovered a 1960s nuclear shelter! Still a lot of work to do, but the aim is to make a small car park and a community area and garden (subject to planning). This is a long term project, meanwhile CW is also working on plans for Hilcott Village Hall, for which some grants have already been received. TE: NNPC funding for Parish Spaces is on the agenda for the APM. Any Parish Space proposals which seek PC funding can be put on a meeting agenda for consideration on a case by case basis. CW: funds are not needed currently, but a proposal will be brought to the NNPC as and when. DB: concerned and eager to ensure that it is always really clear what the NNPC has and has not agreed to fund. TE: summarised by stating that any funding request is to be a motion on the agenda, to allow clear and open discussion of how best to apply the PC's limited funds for the betterment of the Parish as a whole.

8.3 DB: Bottlesford Bench. The bench is in DB's garage awaiting approval from Aster to place in Martin's Close; this is a designated village green but the land does belong to Aster. This is an ongoing issue, a letter has been sent to Aster, if a reply does not come within a week then advice is that the bench can be put in place. (**Afternote:** Parishioner Fenella R has written to Aster with proof that this is a Wilts Council-approved 'Village Green')

8.4 TM: Neighbourhood Plan. Expressed his thanks to CW for all the hard work on this project, he now held lots of paperwork for the neighbourhood plan. TM happy to keep hold of all the paperwork and design statement for anyone who would like to continue to move forward with the project.

9 Finance

RC gave banking update of recent expenditures. £2,871.08 on SIDs, and two cheques to be ratified for email hosting (£11.99 to Netcetera) and Defib Servicing (£40 to Lifesaver Technology).

Lloyd's bank mandate forms to change signatories over have been chased by RC. At the time of the meeting they were not complete, therefore no cheques can be signed until these are approved. RC to continue to communicate with Lloyd's bank and report back to NNPC.

10 Upcoming External Meetings

CATG 20th April 2022, 2pm. Pewsey Area Board 23rd May 2022, 7pm. TE to attend. TE has written to both regarding the motion to reinstate footway funding made at the recent extraordinary meeting, with no response from either as yet. (**Afternote:** TE spoke to Stuart F at Wilts Council on 1st April 2022 and will re-engage via email)

11 Future Parish Council Meetings 2022

TE expressed NNPC's thanks to the 'Messenger' team for the NNPC insert. Noted that the Annual Parish Meeting is open to all, with a change of venue. Details of any proposed agenda items should be emailed to the Clerk by 4pm on 22nd April 2022.

Annual Parish Council Meeting: Tuesday 3rd May 2022, St. James' Church, North Newnton, 7pm

Annual Parish Meeting: Saturday 7th May 2022, The Woodbridge Inn, North Newnton (**a change of venue from that advertised**), 10.30am

Next Parish Council Meeting: Monday 13th June 2022. Time and location to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 8:20pm.

Rosie Charnock, Clerk to North Newnton Parish Council

clerk@nnpc.org.uk