

CHILMARK PARISH COUNCIL

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 JANUARY 2024 IN THE READING ROOM

Sir Richard Packer – Chair

Bev Small – Vice Chair

Sir Raymond Jack - Cllr

Carl Jacobs - Cllr

Johan Denekamp – Cllr

Morag Philpott – Cllr

Peter Young - Cllr

Sofya Samokhina - PC Clerk

In attendance:

Bridget Wayman – Wiltshire Councillor

Dave Surtees, Natalie Surtees, Catherine Potts, Black Dog Working Party

Olivia von Halle, Chair, Claybush Playground Committee

Eloise Rees, Claybush Playground Committee

Adam Smith, Head Teacher, Chilmark and Fonthill Bishop Primary School

Caroline Marking, Chair Governor, Chilmark and Fonthill Bishop Primary School

Grant Philpott, Governor, Chilmark and Fonthill Bishop Primary School

Martyn Simpson, Sophie Eden, Micheala Hawkins, Helen Hooper, Roger Hooper, Charles Wolseley Brinton, Lesley Denekamp, Hugo von Halle, Alison Whipp-Long, Patrick Nixon, Liz Nixon, Becky Lee, Darren Lee, Angi Stoop, Tim Stoop, Roy Trigwell, Sarah Miller, Shelley Fisher, Stephen Fisher, Kirsty Beaumont, Mike Scott, Jo Scott, Tony Lewis, Susan Lewis, Nigel Goodenough

1. **Apologies/welcome** - The Chair Cllr RP welcomed all to the meeting. No Apologies.
2. **PUBLIC FORUM** – Cllr RP noticed that there was an unusual number of attendees and asked if there was anyone who wanted to speak.
Charles Wolseley Brinton asked to discuss the matter of Bevisfield, Cow Drive, as he was seeking a determination on the use. Cllr RP suggested that Planning matters should be discussed later as per the Agenda.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
Cllr MP declared an interest School / Playground fencing as MP is married to a Chilmark School Governor.
4. **Minutes** of Parish Council Meeting held on 1 November 2023. Approved unanimously without amendment & no Matters Arising.
5. **Wiltshire Councillor Bridget Wayman's Report**
Cllr BW noted that there was an unusual number of people waiting to discuss more pressing matters, so she would just ask about Flood Prevention and how it was progressing in Chilmark, given the recent weather. Cllr CJ said that he had a detailed piece for later in the Agenda, but he would just briefly say that the village had become more resilient as a result of action taken over recent months. There had not been any major problems and the village was well prepared. The main issue was the sewage system, which is in need of attention from Wessex Water. The next step was

to work with Wessex Water more to try to stop flood water from entering the sewage system.

Cllr BW offered help from Wiltshire Council with providing anything necessary and made a note of the need for small gritters for the Street and by The Cross to help with ice issues.

6. Black Dog Working Party update

Catherine Potts provided a progress update on behalf of the working party. She stated that the main aim was to keep the pub as a pub, whether that was by purchasing it as a community asset or by encouraging purchase by private buyers.

Catherine stated that the business plan was almost finished and Colin Diaper's contact had offered to help with it. The deadline was 24th January 2024 as it was the end of the moratorium period. With the information from the valuation report and the financial models created with the assistance of a pub surveyor and a pub marketing expert contact, BDWP were determined that they were going to make an offer to buy the pub and the whole site it currently occupied. Funding required to help purchase the pub and complete renovations (subject to survey) would be sourced from share issues, grants, loans and fundraising. By making a reasonable offer they were hoping to protect the pub from a change of use application. The offer would have to be in consideration of the market value of the empty property, while also assessing trading potential, nearby sales prices and the refurbishment costs (newly notified water ingress and rat infestation).

Next steps: Make an offer to Bob Jones prior to the 24th January 2024.

If accepted:

- Incorporation of a Community Benefit Society – Chilmark Community Pub Limited (CCPL)
- Issue the business plan to all survey responders and beyond
- Call Town Hall meeting, pop-up pub events, to introduce the pledge system/share sale and discuss the business plan
- Community Ownership Fund application can commence
- Full building survey to be completed with specific refurbishment costs budgeted
- Finalise a Management Committee for the recruitment of an operator and management of the refurb.

CP spoke about the Proposed Operating Model. Their intention is for the CCPL to lease the business to a tenant, who will run the pub and pay rent to the CCPL. The Management Committee will set the broad policy direction for the business and agree key targets with the tenant, including certain aspects which the community feedback has shown to be important. Beyond that, however, the tenant will be left to manage and operate the business as they see fit. The Management Committee does not intend to interfere with the day-to-day running of the business or attempt to micro-manage the pub.

The Management Committee will consider other incentives to help the new tenant. These will be discussed at the time of the tenancy agreement being finalised. CP also mentioned that Community Ownership application is a very difficult process and takes time and can only be done if the offer is accepted.

CP thanked everyone who came to the Carols at the RR which helped raise £1,000. She noted that to date BDWP have spent £3,050 of their own money on valuation (£2,160), Plunkett Membership (£240), Stock for Carols (£300) and other known spend (£350). BDWP will continue to fundraise.

7. Claybush Playground Lease update/ Playing Field Planning Permission update

During the meeting the two matters (7 and 8 on the Agenda) have merged into one as they are closely related.

Adam Smith, Head Teacher, Chilmark and Fonthill Bishop Primary School, started by saying that the standard of the school was now Ofsted Good, and had ambitions to improve further. The Playing Field was not attractive and needed work. AS apologised for the Planning Application not having been submitted prior to the start of the work on the fence. He said that it needed to be the right type of fence for the safeguarding of children. In regard to the playing fields, he noted that the issue centred on who legally owned the field and who was responsible. He said that he understood that the playing fields were considered as community asset, but SDBE legally held it in trust for the school and it could not be sold. He reiterated that it was a school field, not a village field. The field needed to be improved and fenced, 1.8m height minimum, with the reason being the safeguarding of children. He also confirmed that this time around, the school and SDBE were committed to make sure that any work would be done with planning permission, as required by Wiltshire Council. Most of the field was not within the conservation area. AS urged those present at the meeting to let him know if they were aware of any documentation regarding the field, as installation of the new fence was a costly matter for the school. He welcomed questions from the public.

Olivia von Halle, Chair, Claybush Playground Committee, mentioned the importance of seeking legal advice regarding the matter. It was said that so far SDBE had not given a clear reply to any of the questions and had not been consistent with the plans for the playground. There was a need to clarify the length and the terms of the lease for the Claybush Playground.

It was mentioned that there were many options which could be discussed separately from this meeting and that the matter needed to be approached delicately trying not to involve too much spending to keep the school funds in check.

More than one villager pointed out the importance of the field to the community and the free access to it as it was the only playing field in the village. Eloise Rees drew attention to the lack of use of the playing fields by the school. Both of her children had attended Chilmark School and she could not remember their having a PE lesson there.

It was decided to have a separate meeting between the School Governors, the Head Teacher and the Claybush Committee to come to a conclusion on the matter and present it to the Parish Council.

Cllr BS reiterated that, as advised at the previous PC meeting, planning officers consider that planning permission was required at both the school building site and school playing field site. It was good to receive the retrospective planning application from the school for the perimeter fencing at the school building site. This was supported by the PC. Planning Officers, including the Conservation Officer, Andrew Minting and Clara Davies, School Buildings Lead at Wiltshire Council, considered that full planning permission was likely to be required for new fencing at the school playing field. This is because, as part of the field and its boundary lay within the village Conservation Area, permission is always required for the erection of a fence over 1m next to a highway, irrespective of conservation areas. In terms of CA restrictions, permission is required for the removal of walls/fences when they are over 1m.

The Chair said that the school was perhaps the most important institution in the village. The Playing field and playground were of interest to the village as well as the school. We all had to recognise the increased importance now given to safeguarding. He welcomed the assurance that the school/SDBE intended to be guided by Wiltshire Council on what was necessary by way of planning permission. We all needed to keep costs to the minimum. He suggested that the playground committee might wish to reassess matters in the light of what had been said. It was good that communication between all parties had improved. Further meetings between the parties would be necessary and there were real time constraints. If anyone had

further views, they were welcome to inform the PC perhaps by email to the clerk or himself.

8. Frickers Paddock Playground update

Cllr RJ notified the PC that the grass cutting in Frickers Paddock would be done on the same terms but with the division of the playground and the land owned by the council, which will have a small increase in the price. His recommendation was to accept the terms. This was agreed unanimously.

There are 2 ash trees which might soon need to be felled. They are under observation. There may be an expense for removing them.

The Playground may have to be replaced in 10 years.

Micheala Hawkins pointed out that the playground is being used more than before as there are more and more children living in Frickers Paddock.

Cllr RJ asked her to please report to him if there were any problems with it.

Cllr JD mentioned that starting from 1st April funds would be put aside for a sinking fund for the playground.

9. Forbes Field update –

As Mungo Melvin was not present at the meeting, Cllr JD presented his report to the PC. Cllr JD started off by telling a bit about the history of the field and Diana Forbes. He told us that this report summarised the activities of the FFMG over the period November – December 2023 with a look ahead to 2024. During this period there were 3 events:

- **Field Preparation Day, Saturday 18 November** where 20 volunteers, comprising members of the FFMG and Friends of Forbes Field, attended to conduct various tasks. These included weeding around 60 tree bases, feeding the trees with horse manure and then top-dressing the bases with wood chippings. As a result, the trees were given a good start for growth in 2024. There were also a number of small jobs completed.
- **Field Planting Day, Saturday 9 December.** Despite a dire forecast of heavy rain, 20 volunteers, well supported by a team of five volunteers from the Chilmark-based charity, RE:ACT planted 29 trees in total.
- **School Visit, Monday 11 December.** Ten Year 6 children came to plant seven Whitebeams midway between the field entrance on Hops Close and the Orchard. This plot, known as the Coronation Grove, commemorates the crowning of HM King Charles III on 6 May 2023. There was a hope that the school would keep a close interest in ‘their’ trees over the years to come. To this end, FFMG intended to open discussions with the School Council about a plan of engagement.

It was also mentioned that the stone gabion work around the water outflow from the Field into the Winterbourne had proved its worth during successive periods of heavy rainfall, and associated high levels of ground water.

There are two firm dates of future tree pruning and planting in the Field (Wednesday 17th January, and Saturday 10th February, 9 am start – volunteers welcome!), together with programmed design work with regard to interpretation panels and a stone cairn. It is also intended to plan, organise and run an opening event in the Field during the summer (date TBC).

There is a plan to design and erect four weatherproof signs, otherwise known as interpretation panels: a principal information panel, a secondary information panel and

the school would be asked to provide a suitable sign to mark the planting of the Coronation Grove.

It was pointed out that the Forbes Field project remained firmly on track. The village had supported the project well and this seemed set to continue. The planning was well in hand to complete the initial phase of the project by summer, and the management team were already looking at the longer term requirements.

10. Forbes Field Financial update –

Cllr JD informed everyone present at the meeting that the report covered FFMG activity to 31st December 2023.

They submitted and had paid four National Landscape (NL and formerly AONB) claims in the amount of £4,962. They planted 87 trees costing £5,997. Only a few did not survive. Planting costs including, scything, drainage, stakes, fertilizer, manure, topsoil amounted to £1,548.

The Hops Close flank was fenced, and two high-quality gates and a lock were installed (£4,259). They procured a wide range of equipment, a website was up and running (<https://www.forbesfield.org>); and did a lot of work to improve the water supply as well as paid water bills, and maintenance charges. Total spent was £17,620. Cllr JD said that FFMG had £3636 in the bank + £3000 from the funding from AONB. Expected end with £6000.

Maintenance costs depended on how often it needed to be done and whether they would hire a professional help or do it themselves. Cllr JD noted that the project was doing well, and the overwhelming view of the villagers was that the transformation was amazing.

The possibility was raised that the Claybush playground might in the longer term be moved to Forbes Field. Cllr JD undertook to discuss this with FFMG team.

11. Finance

1) The Clerk presented the Payments and Receipts Statement for period 1 November to 31 December 2023. The Opening Balance on 1st November was £8205.86. In the two-month period 2 payments were received: £5341 - SSEN Resilience Grant, and £315 - VAT return. A transfer of £1290 to a separate account with an interest of 1.30% was made. The balance on the Millenium Cross account on 31st December was £1291.65.

There were 6 payments made, all to do with Flood Safety, amounting to £5369.90, making a loss of £28.90.

Previous clerk's salary of £850 was made on 30th November. Grass cutting invoice for Frickers Paddock, amounting to £80, was paid on 21st December. Two final payments were made for Clerk's admin expenses (£7) and the first salary (£284.40), amounting to £291.40.

Closing Balance on 31st December was £5981.26.

1) a) Proposed Budget for 2024/ 2025

Cllr JD presented the Budget plans for year 2024/2025 to help the Clerk at the beginning of stepping into the post. The Clerk was to manage finances independently after that. Clerk's salary of £2,800, grass cutting of £2000, Frickers paddock sinking fund was in plan to be put aside from April amounting to £1,000 a year. Historically Parish Council grants of some £500 each were made to various village endeavours. Insurance would cost approximately £550. Highways improvements costs would have to be taken forward to next year as the work hadn't been completed and would total approximately £1,200. There were going to be more, smaller costs for dog waste bins, admin expenses and there needed to be a buffer of £750. Total amount for the budget would come to £12,498.

b) Precept setting for 2024/2025

Cllr JD explained how the Precept was calculated. He pointed out that neighbouring villages had increased their precepts every year and Chilmark was on the 11th place out of 15. The proposed Precept was to be at least £10,500, an increase on 2022/3 of 9.3%. Cllr RJ said that this gave an anticipated loss for the year of £1,698, which would reduce the Council's free reserves from £4,265 to £2,567. He suggested that if precept could not be raised to achieve break-even (a 27% increase), it should be raised higher than £10,500. It was proposed that a gradual increase was preferable and £11,000 (a 14.6% increase) was agreed unanimously.

12. Planning Procedures & Applications - Cllr Bev Small

Applications determined or progress since last meeting

PL/2023/04332 & 04333 Ham Cross & Engine Shed, Chilmark Estates -

Retrospective planning application

Parish Council position: Objection

Consultation Deadline 21/11/2023

Wiltshire Council position: Under consultation.

PL/2023/07054 Frog Cottage - Replacement of the existing clay pantiles

Parish Council position: No Objection

Wiltshire Council position: Approved with conditions & notice sent 30/11/23.

PL/2023/09729 Old Bridge Inn - Tree works in a Conservation area

Parish Council position: No Objection

Wiltshire Council decision: Approved & notice sent 13/12/23.

PL/2023/09732 Laburnum Cottage - Tree works in a Conservation Area

Parish Council position: No Objection

Wiltshire Council decision: Approved & notice sent 13/12/23.

PL/2023/09616 Chilmark & Fonthill Bishop Primary School - Replacement of fencing

Parish Council position: No Objection with comment

Consultation Deadline 21/12/23

PL/2023/10053 Brazier Cottage - Tree works in a Conservation Area

Parish Council position: No Objection

Consultation Deadline 02/01/24

PL/2023/10702 Barn at Bevisfield, Cow Drive - Lawful development: Existing use

Parish Council Position: Under Consultation

Consultation Deadline: 31/01/24

The applicant is asking for a decision to be made that the outbuildings (2 barns, 1 stable and a yard) at Bevisfield, Cow Drove have been solely and continuously used for domestic purposes for the requisite 10-year period so that a Certificate of Lawful Development for Existing Use can be issued. It was agreed that Cllr BS would contact the Planning Officer and the Parish Council members would discuss the matter further beyond the meeting to decide their position.

PL/2023/11191 BLACK DOG INN, SALISBURY ROAD - Consent under Tree Preservation Orders

Parish Council Position: Objection

Consultation Deadline: 26/01/24

12 trees with Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are listed for removal due to ash die back. However, 20 trees appear to be marked on the only attached documentation - a small site plan. No tree surveys or replacement tree details have been included with the application. The garden of the Grade II listed Black Dog lies within the village Conservation Area (CA) and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (CCNL). This loss would be detrimental to the CA and CCNL. It is important that sufficient space is reserved to ensure adequate replanting. A proper plan is required which will benefit both the village conservation area and listed pub setting. Tree management is possible for Ash Die Back rather than removal - this should be investigated by a professional tree surgeon on behalf of the applicant. The Tree Officer has confirmed that he welcomes comments on this application as it will be helpful for him to understand specific concerns when he visits the site - this is planned for the end of January. He will be in contact with the PC once he visited.

13. Bin emptying contract update

Cllr MP started by saying that Grist Environmental had been hired to empty the animal waste bins and it all seemed to be working fine. She mentioned that the driver who comes to collect the waste could not get to the bin on Lower Mooray and had to empty it by hand. She had checked with Grist if FF plans for the bin had a go ahead and could now buy it and arrange for installation. Cllr JD confirmed that it was highly likely that FFMG were going to purchase a big bin for both general and animal waste. FF were to pay for installation. The cost for emptying would be paid by PC. The Clerk agreed to check on the bin in Lower Mooray and let Cllr MP know when it had been emptied and at times when it was overflowing.

14. Flood Prevention update

Cllr CJ started with apologies to Cllr MP as she had been dealing with Wessex Water. Thank you!

He confirmed that the village was more resilient to flooding. He noted that maintenance was very important and that using Seeds4Success was a good idea and had paid off. SSEN grant had definitely improved resources. He also mentioned that it should be a team effort with residents helping and that non return valve seemed to be working.

Cllr CJ thanked Sarah Miller and Village Voice e-mailing system. Villagers had been reminded of the location of salt/grit bins around the village that were free for anyone to use. Icy conditions could also be reported on-line by villagers (www.wiltshire.gov.uk/mywilts-online-reporting) or via the MyWilts app to alert the Wiltshire Council weather teams.

Cllr CJ reiterated that the sewage network was the biggest issue. He also talked about RAF Chilmark sewage pipe along the fence line of the old RAF Chilmark site (near to the Quarry) had burst resulting in a plume of outflow escaping onto the woodland, which was the property of Chilmark Estates. This had been reported to Wessex Water, who were working with Chilmark Estates to remedy the problem. The actions going forward were agreed to be:

- Notifying villagers of the flooding problems via Village Voice e-mails sent out by Sarah Miller
- Notifying the school and parents of the likely disruption (thanks to Adam Smith, Grant Philpott & Ashley Fox)
- Putting up warning signs to warn drivers and pedestrians of the flood.
- Distributing gel sandbags to residents of homes at immediate risk

Informing villagers of the risks posed to vehicles parked in the flow of floodwater.

15. **Ridge phone kiosk** – The signed Adoption contract has been received from BT, and is filed in RR files.

16. Highways - LHFIG meeting of 15/11/2023 update

Cllr BS stated the key points of the meeting:

- report any signage damage on My Wilts app. Keep resubmitting if it says case closed and nothing has happened.
- The Chilmark SLOW sign near the summit/Rock Cottage Junction & white line extension works at The Cross are agreed but continue to be delayed by poor weather.
- Milestone Infrastructure was awarded the £300 million contract for 5 years starting on 1 April 2023 for Wiltshire Council. They employ council stewards and maintain streetlights, gullies, drains, repair pot holes, emergency gritting & carriage maintenance.
- 30mph extensions only in eligible areas fulfilling criteria to be considered in a village. That is 20+ properties along a 600m+ stretch of road.
- General update from David Button was more positive than last Autumn as more staff are now employed to support highway maintenance in SW Wiltshire.
- Verge cutting is now only in autumn - cut 1m on verges. We can request additional cuttings on My Wilts app. This is due to resource crisis on major resurfacing but programme is being improved and is going to be revised this year.
- Next meeting is planned for Wednesday 7 February 2-4 Nadder Centre.

17. Future SW Wilts Meeting Dates/Attendance

7th February LHFIG meeting – Cllr MP to attend.

Area Board mtg, Wednesday 28 February 7-9pm –Wilton Community Centre – Cllr CJ to attend.

18. Village Voice Items:

Black Dog update
School Playing Field Fencing
Forbes Field update
Budget and Precept
Planning applications (Bevisfield and Black Dog)
Frickers Paddock
Flooding update
Bin emptying/FF bin
Bridget Wayman's report on Wiltshire issues.

19. Number of Parish Council meetings –

After a short discussion it was agreed to continue to have 6 meetings a year.

20. Date for the next PC meeting – 6th March 2024, 7pm.

Clerk to send the dates for all the meetings to follow.