

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 7.00pm held at Sedbury and Beachley Village Hall, Sedbury.**

**Present:** Councillors: Burgess, Koning, Russell, Stead, Swambo and Tullett.

Officers: Carol Hinton (Clerk) David Stevens (Assistant Clerk)

Chris McFarling – County Councillor. Adrian Birch – District Councillor

**1. ATTENDANCE**

**a) Resolved to receive** apologies for absence from those councillors unable to attend from Councillors Cracknell, Drew and Thomas.

**b) Resolved to accept** those apologies received with reasons for absence from Councillors Cracknell, Drew and Thomas.

The Chairman informed Councillors that he and the Clerk had visited Councillor Chris Wall who, for health reasons, has moved to sheltered accommodation in Newport. Councillor Wall had tendered his resignation as Councillor and wished the Council and Councillors well. The Clerk will notify the District Council of the Casual Vacancy.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**a) To receive Declarations of Interest** in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers and in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members.

*Interests may be declared at any time during the meeting should they become apparent.*

**b) To consider any Dispensation Requests** received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered. **None.**

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**a) Resolved to approve** as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

**b) To consider any questions** arising from those minutes.

Cllr Burgess will liaise with Cllr Cracknell before the next meeting to arrange the next youth event.

Cllr Tullett asked if Clive Reynolds had been contacted regarding potential future S106 monies. This to be discussed at the development meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> February.

Cllr McFarling confirmed that funding towards the resurfacing of the B4228 at Lancaut / Netherhope Lane will depend on whether an election is held in May 2025 now that the Government has announced its devolved government plans.

**4. PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**To receive and consider** any questions from the Public. **None present.**

**5. POLICING IN THE PARISH**

**Resolved to note** Police crime statistics for Tidenham and Sedbury can be accessed following this link.

[Tidenham and Sedbury | Police.uk \(www.police.uk\)](https://www.police.uk)

The overall figures went down during the August – November 2024 period.

**6. COMMITTEES**

**To receive reports, minutes and recommendations from committees** already circulated, enclosed herewith or to be circulated and to consider any questions arising from them.

i). Planning and Highways Committee meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

There were no questions to Councillor Russell, Chairman of the Committee.

The Assistant Clerk reported on the data from the newly installed Community Speedwatch camera in Woodcroft. The trigger speed is 35mph and numerous vehicles exceeded the limit. 26 reports were sent out in December and several vehicles were identified as having no road tax or insurance. A maximum of 10 reports per week can be sent to Police for letters to be sent.

ii). Amenities Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

There were no questions to Councillor Swambo, Chairman of the Committee.

## 7. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

**To receive and note any announcements from the Chairman** of the meeting.

The Council will be putting increased effort into the use of the Electric Vehicle. The community groups originally consulted about the requirements of the vehicle will be contacted again. Hall users to be consulted. A pool of volunteer drivers is required for a programme of visits and medical appointments. Councillors discussed that sadly, constant negative comments about the vehicle on social media have discouraged people from coming forward to volunteer for this great community asset.

GAPTC – consultation going on regarding councillors attending meetings remotely and the introduction of proxy voting.

Western Gateway Strategic Investment Plan consultation – the Western Gateway transport plans do not appear to include the Forest of Dean. Cllr McFarling stated that he has previously pointed out that the Forest is in the heart of the area that extends from Birmingham down to Cornwall and that Lydney is a key strategic route, especially for freight. Because there is only the one railway line running through it, it does not appear in the strategy. He also stated that the line is key - potential future storm surges if predicted sea level rises happen could inundate the line. The Severn Tunnel is also in need of repairs. Also, the Govt. plans for devolving of power to unitary authorities locally may mean the Western Gateway is disbanded.

## 8. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

**To note** reports from Chris McFarling and the District Councillors who may attend the meeting.

Chris McFarling – County Council. Details of the Government's devolving of powers were received on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and a response required by 10<sup>th</sup> January 2025, which included the Christmas period of leave. Gloucestershire has applied to be a unitary authority with plans to then become a super unitary authority with the old Avon area, Hereford and Worcestershire. There will be no District or Borough councils. The devolving of power to larger unitary authorities distances decision makers from those who may be affected. County Council elections for Gloucestershire, scheduled for May 2025 may be delayed until 2026 when a shadow council could be elected pending the setting up of the unitary authority. The District Council are concerned that without a Council the Forest may lose its identity. Planning authorities will no longer exist. There has been no indication of what will happen to town and parish councils. Cllr Birch feels that they will either be given more powers or be centred in larger clusters. Both Cllrs McFarling and Birch stated that the councils have been landed with this and that, although the District Council is writing to the Minister, it can't be stopped. Cllr Birch has engaged wherever possible about this as this is essential for the future of staff etc.

Cllr Birch – has met with the leader of Glos. and Monmouthshire CC's regarding a possible bypass. Glos CC have put up £500k towards a feasibility study but Monmouthshire will not engage with this as they have already stated they won't go ahead with a bypass in the future. Instead they are considering solutions at various points including at the Highbeech Roundabout and the lights at Tesco's which may include a park and ride style scheme.

Cllr Tullett asked if there was anything the Parish Council can do to support the devolving of power. Cllr Birch did not feel there is at this stage – there is much to be done regarding planning issues etc.

Cllr Russell expressed concern about the pollution effects of the traffic queues through Tutshill eg lorries idling. Also – have the Govt calculated the savings of the local councils re-organisation? The feeling at District level is that the cost of the re-organisation which will include redundancies etc will outweigh the projected cost savings.

Cllr McFarling has been assured that Mears are doing what they are contracted to do regarding clothing and equipment for the Children from Afghanistan.

## 9. PARISH CLERK'S REPORT

**Resolved to receive and note** the Parish Clerk's Report.

## 10. FINANCE

**a) Resolved to approve payments** according to the Financial Statement for December 2024.

**b) Resolved to receive and approve the Financial Statement** for December 2024.

## 11. BUDGET / PRECEPT 2025/2026

**Resolved to note** the precept amount of £129,486 has been requested from the District Council.

**12. INTERNAL AUDIT 2024/2025**

**Resolved to note** the GAPTC Internal Audit Service has been appointed for 2024/25 for a fee of £320 for an independent, impartial audit of the Council's governance and processes.

**13. SEDBURY AND BEACHLEY VILLAGE HALL**

- a) **Resolved to note** the Amended Deed of Trust has been finalised and that this has been sent to the Charity Commission with the change of Trustee to the Parish Council also having been amended.
- b) **Resolved to approve** quotation from FutureCell Ltd for the installation of outside PIR lights to light up all around the building of £810 plus VAT, total cost £972, following comments from hall users that parts of the entrance and car park are very dark outside of daylight hours.
- c) **Resolved to approve** quotation from KJD Plumbing and Heating for £376 (no VAT) to fit external fresh air valves to the stack pipes for the toilets that should have been fitted during refurbishment in 2019. This will alleviate the bad smells reported in the toilets.
- d) **Resolved to note** Clerk had been unable to obtain quotes from other contractors for the proposed works at a) and b) and that the contractors have either worked for the Council previously or been recommended.
- e) **Resolved to approve** quotation from MJ Security, the original suppliers of the Hall CCTV system, to look at the faulty camera at the Hall, of £65 plus VAT, total cost £78.00.
- f) **To consider** displaying boards at entrances on rules for the use of the playing field following concerns at another unauthorised fire work display there on New Year's Eve.  
Following much discussion it was agreed that this will be considered by the Amenities Committee.
- g) **Resolved to note** Gigaclear has approved an application for a further 12 months free internet connection from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2025.

**14. SEDBURY AND BEACHLEY VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**To consider** structure of the Sedbury and Beachley Village Hall management Team for the day to day running of the Hall.

**Resolved** – existing hall users to be approached and volunteers to be recruited with a meeting to be arranged in February to discuss how the Team will operate.

**15. REMIT OF COMMITTEES**

- a) **Resolved to approve** revised Remit of Committees now that the Parish Council is sole Trustee of the Sedbury and Beachley Village Hall Charity.
- b) **Resolved to note** meetings of the Sedbury and Beachley Village Hall Committee will take place after the quarterly Finance and Mopla Committee meetings and will comprise the same Councillors.

**16. DEVELOPMENT SESSION – KIM BEDFORD 12<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2025**

**Resolved to approve** topics for discussion at the meeting.

Three areas identified – the work and necessity of committees, areas of work the PC does not need to be engaged in and further use of the electric vehicle.

Cllr Tullett had attended a NALC online session about encouraging young people to become involved in local councils – this to be discussed at the session.

**17. CORRESPONDENCE**

**To receive and consider** any other correspondence as detailed in the Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that the annual Wayleave payment from National Grid had been received. This will be included on the next agenda.

Correspondence from WCCTV regarding the newly installed CCTV cameras which will be added to the next agenda.

Further correspondence from a member of the public regarding an overgrown area in the allotments. The Clerk has chased a reply from the Allotment Association.

Section 106 monies – Clerk unable to have confirmation of the total amount outstanding due to absence at the DC. Will chase further – if not Councillors have asked for a meeting with a more senior person at the DC.

A further request for a list of information from Mr Powell.

**18. COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

**Resolved to receive and note** any matters which councillors wish to raise and where appropriate add to the agenda for the following meeting or meetings of committees.

Cllr Swambo – Two Rivers Housing have now fitted security entry to the flats. He has again spoken with them about the wall in the Sedbury Hall car park.

**19. FUTURE MEETINGS**

**Resolved to note** the dates of future council and committee meetings:

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025 – Planning and Highways Committee.

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2025 – Full Council meeting.

**The meeting concluded at 20.55hrs**