

# SEAGRY PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes

of the **Virtual Annual Parish Meeting** held on  
**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021**  
at 7.30pm

**Present:** Parish Cllrs M Barber (Chairman), J H Crosland (Vice Chairman), A Ball, R Barr, K Pearce, K Taylor and Mrs B Zehetmayr, Mr V Vines Clerk of the Council, Wiltshire Councillor H Greenman, Neil Hutton, Emma Sorrell, Jo Crosland, John Kingston, Brian Zehetmayr, Ian Blackmore, Julia Harle and Tim Harle.

**Prior to the commencement of the Annual Parish Meeting a One Minute Silence was observed to mark the death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh**

**MIN 1. Apologies for Absence:**

There were no Apologies received.

**MIN 2. Annual Parish Meeting 2020:**

There was no Meeting held in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions.

**MIN 3. Chairman's Report:**

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr M Barber, reported on the Parish Council activities for the past year and over the 4-year term of office ending on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

He thanked all Parish Council Members and the Clerk for their work during the last 4 years, particularly in the difficult last year. He was sad to say that two long standing Members had decided not to continue after the Elections on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and thanked Cllr Kevin Pearce and Cllr Berta Zehetmayr for all they had done for the Council and Seagry Parishioners while Council Members.

He referred to the projects that the Council had completed in the last 12 months, including the provision of defibrillators and also Autospeedwatch tools and much more that the Council had achieved.

As always, he felt lucky to be living in the Parish and was well aware that much of what it had was down to the hard work of volunteers who gave up their time to support the facilities. He felt that there was so much to be proud of in the Parish, including the Primary School, the Recreation Ground, the lovely Church and the Goss Croft Hall.

He referred to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's efforts, led by Brian Zehetmayr and the fact that the Referendum would now take place on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 having been postponed for a year because of Covid-19 restrictions. In line with national advice it was nice to see that the advanced stage of the Plan was now already part of the determination of planning applications.

In closing he reminded Parishioners that they were always very welcome to attend Parish Council Meetings throughout the year and it would be nice to see more. There was always a public session at the start of every Council Meeting.

A copy of his full Report will be made available for publication on the Parish Council's Website.

There were no questions raised.

**MIN 4. Parish Council Budget 2021-2022:**

A copy of the Parish Council's Adopted Budget and proposals for the year 2021/2022 was circulated to those in attendance. This would also be made available on the Parish Council's Website.

There were no questions raised.

**MIN 5. Reports from Parish Council Sub Groups and Committees:**

There were no Reports.

**MIN 6. Reports from Local Organisations:**

- a) **Goss Croft Hall:** Ian Blackmore, provided a Report and advised that the Hall's use and income had been seriously affected by both of the Covid-19 Lockdowns. Steps were now being taken to re-open in May 2021 following Government guidelines. It appeared that some bookings could be lost as online meeting methods had been used during Lockdown and could remain. There was a need to promote wedding facilities again. Notwithstanding the loss of income the Hall from a financial perspective had made a £5,000.00 surplus for the year as they had received £20,532.00 in Government loss of income grants. Despite of Covid-19 the Hall maintenance team stalwarts had carried on with external works and they, the caretaker and the booking clerk were all thanked for their work during those difficult times. He concluded by advising that the existing Trustees were "aging" and new "younger" blood was required to take on the responsibilities and he hoped that some would soon come forward.
- b) **Friends of Seagry CE Primary School (FOSS):** Emma Sorrell, provided a Report that highlighted the continuing success of FOSS despite the last year being affected by Covid-19. Normal fundraising had been impossible because of Covid restrictions with all events being cancelled. But by the introduction of "innovative" fund raising ideas, the use of "Just Giving" and "Amazon Smile" it had still resulted in a financially good year. They were looking forward to the next year with optimism.
- c) **St Mary the Virgin Church PCC:** Jo Crosland, on behalf of the PCC reminded all that Seagry Church was an integral part of the Draycot Benefice and had also been significantly affected by Covid-19. This had resulted in regular worship ending for around 16 weeks. However, new technology had been embraced with virtual meetings/services. Despite the Church being closed other than for private prayer on Sundays the Churchyard had been well used for recreational purposes being a wonderful place for quiet contemplation and a haven for wildlife and plants seen in record numbers. The Rev. Alison Love had left after 6 years in post in December 2020 and consideration was being given to the vacancy becoming a part-time post. A Christmas tree had been erected in the Churchyard during Covid closure. It was nice to be able to hold Easter services. Fortunately, the 1980 financial legacy for maintaining the actual Church Building meant that the moss could be removed from the roof. All volunteers were thanked including the Goss Croft Hall maintenance team. The "future" was being considered and a questionnaire was available for responses.

- d) **Seagry CE Primary School:** Julia Harle, provided a Report from the Local Governors. She advised that Seagry remained part of an Academy together with the Christian Malford and Somerfords' Walter Powell Primary Schools. This allowed all three Schools to work together strategically and operationally, whilst retaining the identities of the individual Schools. Covid-19 had affected the School but it had still remained open for key worker's children and for home learning. There were now 68 pupils in the School and this had created some concern with Class sizes. Ofsted had rated the School as a "Good School". A thank you was given to FOSS for their continued support.

**MIN 7. Report from Wiltshire Council Representative:**

Wiltshire Councillor Howard Greenman was pleased to attend to give his 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Report ending a year fraught with Covid-19 problems. He extended his thanks to the Parish Council for being a delight to work with and congratulated them on how they adjusted to holding Virtual Meetings. On a personal note he was sad that the Community Area Parish Forum, well supported by the Seagry Parish Council, had been unable to meet.

He applauded all those who had been involved in the Neighbourhood Plan and hoped that there would be a good turnout at the forthcoming Referendum.

Covid-19 had taken a toll on all levels of service provision at Wiltshire Council particularly in Adult Care and Social Services but an urgent additional funding intervention had assisted, although the repercussions would impact over the next few years.

Having said that, through Central Government support Wiltshire Council would be able to invest further in Adult Social Care (£8.6m), Children's Services (£8.4m), Waste Services (£2.6m) and Leisure Services (£4.5m).

In addition a 10 year Capital Program was agreed for 1000 new Council Houses (£50m), Wiltshire road maintenance (£22m), Schools (£23m), Health & Well-being (£20m) and Energy Improvements (£7m).

He was looking forward to the year ahead, following the lifting of Lockdown when things return to normal and concluded by asking all to keep up the good work done and to continue to contact him if required.

The Chairman of the Parish Council thanked Councillor Greenman for his advice, continued involvement and assistance during the past year.

**MIN 8. Report from Seagry Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group:**

Brian Zehetmayr reported that there had been no change in circumstances in the last 12 months as the Parish Referendum originally scheduled for 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020 had been postponed and would now be held on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021. It was good that the Plan had reached what was known as an advanced stage and was now being accepted as a material planning consideration in determining planning applications. It was hoped that there would be a good response at the Referendum. The Group intended to publicise with a leaflet drop to encourage voting.

The Chairman of the Parish Council thanked Brian and whole Group for their continued involvement during the past year.

## **MIN 9. Public Questions and General Discussion of Parish Issues:**

- a) **Parish Council Elections 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021:** It was confirmed that there would be no Election as 5 eligible persons had stood for Council. The new Council would be formed with Andrew S Ball, Michael J Barber, Richard P Barr, John H Crosland, Neil A Hutton, Emma J Sorrell and Keith R M Taylor.
- b) **CPRE Best Kept Village Competition 2021:** The Parish Council had agreed to enter the Wiltshire CPRE Best Kept Village Competition. Upper Seagry & Lower Seagry had won the North Wiltshire Small Villages Category on a number of occasions and it was hoped that they might be judged the Small Villages winner and reach the final whole of Wiltshire round.
- c) **Keep Britain Tidy – Great British Spring Clean:** As usual the Council had received Keep Britain Tidy information and there was a need to ensure that the Parish was regularly litter picked. With Covid-19 restrictions now being lifted it would become possible to organise litter picks throughout the Parish.
- d) **Defibrillator Project – S W Ambulance Trust Training Session:** Part of the 4-year lease agreement allowed for a yearly training session. With Covid-19 restrictions now being lifted it would become possible to make arrangements for a training session later in the year.
- e) **Community Safety/Neighbourhood Watch/Emergency Plan:** The Parish Council would be considering how to attract volunteers to fulfil important roles within the Parish.
- f) **Traffic Speeds – the provision of Autospeedwatch Tools:** The Parish Council had purchased and installed 2 solar power Tools. Data was now being collected to identify persistent speeding offenders.
- g) **Community Speedwatch – to consider a Speedwatch Scheme:** As part of the efforts to reduce traffic speeds throughout the Parish there was a need to identify volunteers to form a Community Speedwatch Team and for them to take the required training.
- h) **Speed Identification Devices (SIDS) - the provision of SIDs:** The Parish Council had agreed to purchase an ElanCity Radar Device and erect around the Parish at identified "hot Spots" to provide advance warning to drivers and collect data in efforts to reduce speed levels.
- i) **Covid-19 – Impact on the Parish:** The Pandemic and repercussions had affected Parishioners and businesses within the Parish, including the closure of the Goss Croft Hall. Local volunteers had assisted vulnerable people and continue to do so when required. Lockdown restrictions were being relaxed and when things returned to being more "normal" it was suggested that a "Covid Party" be held in the Goss Croft Hall to celebrate the freedom and thank volunteers.
- j) **Gigaclear- Super Broadband installation and reinstatement:** Seagry Parish was one of the first to be included in the Gigaclear works program and suffered from overall discomfort as the works were carried out. At one stage works had actually been suspended, particularly as reinstatement works were inadequate. Despite all of the problems the works had now been completed and Parishioners had begun to take advantage of high broadband speeds now available.

- k) **Public Rights of Way-Footpath maintenance:** The importance of the designated Rights of Way within the Parish was acknowledged and it was stressed that the Parish Council and volunteers would need to protect and enhance them so that they remained open for use.
  
- l) **Mr John Kingston:** John Kingston raised the issue of blocked highway drainage within the Spitfire Memorial to Hungerdown House area. The Parish Council would continue to pursue solutions with Wiltshire Council. He also raised the issue of a padlocked gate blocking the Rookery House Right of Way. This was unlawful and action would need to be taken to resolve the matter as soon as possible.

**CLOSURE OF MEETING:**

Cllr M Barber, the Parish Council Chairman thanked all those who had attended the Virtual Annual Parish Meeting and closed the Meeting at 8.55pm.

Signed:

Councillor:

Date: