

SEAGRY PARISH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes

of the **Annual Parish Meeting** held on
Tuesday 10th April 2018

at

Seagry Primary School, Upper Seagry - 7.30pm

Present: Parish Cllrs M Barber (Chairman), J H Crosland (Vice Chairman), A Ball, R Barr, K Pearce, K Taylor and Mr V Vines Clerk of the Council, Wiltshire Councillor H Greenman and 9 members of the Public

APOLOGIES: Cllr Mrs B Zehetmayr

MIN 1. Minutes:

Draft Minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 11th April 2017 were circulated to those in attendance and had been available online.

Cllr M Barber proposed, Cllr J H Crosland seconded and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to receive, approve and sign as a true record the Minutes from the above Meeting. The Parish Council Chairman duly signed the Minutes.

MIN 2. Matters Arising from the Minutes:

There were no matters raised that would not be covered by later Agenda items.

MIN 3. Chairman's Report:

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr M Barber, reported on the Parish Council activities for the year. He thanked Parish Council Members and the Clerk for their tireless work during the year.

He felt lucky to be living in the Parish and was well aware that much of what it has 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. The Primary School, the recreation ground, the lovely Church, the Goss Croft Hall and the New Inn village pub now listed as an Asset of Community Value.

The "new" Council, elected in May 2017, had continued to keep two strategic objectives in mind during the year when decisions were made, building on the quality of the village's natural environment and enabling better communication to allow engagement with Parishioners, community groups and committees.

He reminded all that the Parish Council was limited by the funding available to it. For the coming year the Parish Council's income from Council Tax would be £14,000.00, an increase on the previous year. He explained that out of that the Council pays £5,202.32 for the Public Works Board Loan for the Goss Croft Hall construction, around £4,000.00 for administration costs to cover the Clerk's salary, insurance and audit costs and £1,500.00 for grass cutting and general maintenance. This year £400.00 has been included in the budget to increase the Capital Project Fund and a one-off £2,500.00 to cover Neighbourhood Plan costs. He referred to the age of austerity, with Local Authorities such as Wiltshire Council, needing to cut services there was, or could be, an expectation that Parish Councils will take over the tasks. At the present time Seagry Parish Council would not have the money to do this and they will need to closely monitor the situation.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was continuing the work of developing the Plan under the leadership of Brian Zehetmayr and the Steering Group must be thanked for their efforts throughout the last year.

The Chippenham Community Area Parish Forum had continued to be a regular Meeting place of all the local Parish Councils and was firmly established as the voice of the rural Parishes. The Parish Council was an enthusiastic supporter.

He reported that the Council's website, www.seagryparishcouncil.gov.uk was well established and is a useful tool for both getting in touch with the Parish Council, either by posting comments directly on to the website, or through the e-mail addresses, which each Parish Councillor has. All Parishioners can find important information, like the agenda and minutes of Parish Council Meetings and updates on the work of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The website is kept up to date but the Council has not neglected the more traditional forms of communication and submit Signpost bulletins as does the Steering Group on Neighbourhood Plan news.

In closing the Chairman 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 is a public session at the start of every Council Meeting.

MIN 4. Parish Council Budget 2018-2019:

The Chairman of the Parish Council reported that the Council had considered Budget proposals for Year 2018-2019 together with background advice from Wiltshire Council and future Capital and Revenue spending requirements at their January meeting. The Chairman had highlighted cost pressures in his Annual Report and the fact that after the PWLB loan continuing commitment of £5,202.32 per year was paid the Council retained only a relatively small Revenue balance and a small Capital Fund for project funding. The Council was always mindful of the fact that any increases proposed needed the support of Parishioners. The Council had agreed that there was a need to add to the small Capital Fund that was being created and that with necessary increases in Revenue spending, which included a significant sum for the support of the production of a Neighbourhood Area Plan, there was a need to increase the overall budget by £1,900.00, which resulted in a Precept requirement of £14,000.00 for this Council Year. A comparative Budget spreadsheet was circulated to those in attendance for information.

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

- a) **Seagry Allotments:** Cllr K Pearce reported that all allotments were taken and were being used.

MIN 6. Reports from Local Organisations:

- a) **Seagry CE Primary School:** Julia Harle, School Community Local Board Member, provided an Annual Report from the Local Board of the Governing Body. She advised that the Local Board for Christian Malford, Seagry and Somerfords' Walter Powell Primary Schools as required by Law were holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the School and its' pupils and overseeing the financial performance of the School. Within this context she explained the objectives that had been agreed for the 2017/2018 academic year to maximise the benefits of all three Schools working together strategically and operationally, whilst retaining the identities of the individual Schools.

Julia provided details of the Governance arrangements and reported that Seagry Primary School had seen an increase in the number on roll in the academic year, which was set to rise again to around 50 in September. There was likely to be changes in the Senior Leadership team during the next year following retirements.

The School Hall is still available for hire by community groups and it was good to report that the 3 pre-Schools had now joined the School, which although separate entities was helping the School to grow.

In conclusion Julia thanked the Recreation Ground and Church Trustees for their assistance and welcomed any suggestions, feedback and ideas from the Parish Council and from the wider community.

The Chairman of the Parish Council on behalf of all thanked Julia for the comprehensive update and wished the School continuing success.

- b) **Recreation Ground Trust:** Moe and Ian Whitehall on behalf of the Trustees provided a yearly update. Fund raising and good will continued. Car washes would be continuing. Good maintenance was taking place, although there was still a need for all dog owners to be respectful and remove "deposits". A low maintenance approach had been adopted with former rose beds now grassed over. The Trustees now held sufficient funds to cover 2 years expenditure. The pavilion re-decoration was still planned. It was pleasing to report that the pavilion had been used for social events as well as changing rooms. The Trust was always open to ideas and new Members would be very welcomed.

The Chairman of the Parish Council on behalf of all thanked the Trust Members for their efforts.

- 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, which is made up of 5 parishes including Sutton Benger, Christian Malford, Kington Langley and Tytherton Kellaways. The Rev. Alison Love leads the Draycot Ministry Team. They have 23 members on the electoral roll of the Church, which all residents of Seagry are eligible to join.

Seagry has one service a month, on the first Sunday of each month and rotates with the other Parishes for holding the United Benefice Service on the third Sunday in the month. The Primary School comes to the Church 3 times a year to hold a Service, which gives them great pleasure and Members of the Church community foster close links with the School.

As with all organisations they are paying much attention to Safeguarding and are undergoing training for this with courses laid on by the Bristol Diocese. They are also working towards Data protection so as to be ready for the new legislation coming in May this year.

With the above in mind Members of the Churches in the Benefice work very much as a team and a new initiative called THRIVE is working towards combining all resources to make the running of the Benefice more efficient and enabling it to organise activities and especially opportunities for children. There is a holiday club in the October half term and also a Cribfest in December and the making of Easter gardens to name but a few.

Fortunately, there is a legacy in Seagry for maintaining the actual Church Building but they still need to raise over £15,000.00 a year for the cost of their

Rector, called the Parish Share, together with the everyday running costs of the Church such as the heating, insurance and some Churchyard maintenance. They also have special collections, which they donate to Charities. Last year they gave £700.00 to various Charities.

They are grateful to the Goss Croft Hall maintenance team who have been to help them with the Churchyard and to volunteers who give of their time to make this area a wonderful place for quiet contemplation and a haven for wildlife.

The Church has been in Seagry for hundreds of years and is there for everyone, also for Baptisms, Weddings and sadly sometimes for Funerals.

She hoped that this gave all a better understanding of what is involved in the running of Seagry Village Church and what is going on in the Benefice. The Annual Meeting (APCM) is on Thursday 26 April 2018 in the Church at 7.00 pm and all are most welcome to attend. Also they have a tidy up/cleaning day on Saturday, 14 April 2018 in the morning and would welcome any volunteers who can help. All equipment and refreshments will be provided.

The Chairman of the Parish Council on behalf of all thanked the PCC for their continuing efforts.

MIN 7. Report from Wiltshire Council Representative:

Once again Wiltshire Councillor Howard Greenman was pleased to extend his thanks to the Parish Council for being a delight to work with. Once again too he reflected on a challenging year both locally and across Wiltshire. He wished it wasn't.

He commented that it often appears that the area is particularly beset with planning applications which unavoidably change the face of our communities, some for good, and maybe some not so palatable. Locally we continued to have our patience stretched by the traffic signalisation of the Motorway Junction 17, which has taken a lot longer than expected. Junction 17 is of course the centre of traffic pressures from Dyson Technologies, Rawlings Green, and the Chippenham Gateway project, which has recently seen an outline planning application approval.

Howard mentioned last year the redevelopment of Chippenham Railway Station and unfortunately had to revise his report this year in that he thought the redevelopment work will be somewhat scaled down this year as budgetary pressures probably will mean expectations will need to be more modest.

On a more personal note he was pleased that across his County Division various Neighbourhood Plans were progressing well. He recognised that there are conflicting views in some quarters over the need for the Plans, but was certain that Seagry will benefit locally from the direction they provide over time.

Again, personally, he had been pleased to Chair the Chippenham Area Board and Community Area Parish Forum, which goes from strength to strength and has been well supported by the Seagry Parish Council.

Within Wiltshire Council the challenges continue with further budgetary cuts requiring savings of over £20 million and an increase in Council Tax of 5.99% including a Social Care levy of £3%. This would not be enough to shore up the Adult care need and resources however, so innovative means to provide needed services have to be explored including the Help to Live at Home Scheme, which so far has helped 6500 people to live independently at home. That said, Wiltshire Council had

increased the Adult care budget by 11% over the last four years, or £13.5 million. In Wiltshire there was the third largest older population in the UK with 100,000 of the 475,000 residents aged over 65 years.

He advised that there are over 6000 volunteers across Wiltshire helping provide services from Libraries to litter picking and maintaining Rights of Way etc which is fortunate given that there will be increasing pressure on these services. Litter picking is a sad example of monies being spent unnecessarily costing all over £2.5million to service.

Fly-tipping was also an increasing issue so £669,000.00 was being invested to help improve all these Street Scene services, and he had personally initiated a program whereby the Chippenham Area Board will be acquiring CCTVs to help mitigate fly-tipping in this area by catching those responsible. These areas too will be covered by appropriate signage.

More than £300 million had been allocated in the Capital program to be spent on infrastructure to improve access and transport across the County and regenerate market towns etc.

He 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. Public Questions and General Discussion of Parish Issues:

- a) **Best Kept Village Competition 2018:** The Parish Council had agreed to enter the Hills sponsored Wiltshire CPRE Best Kept Village. Upper Seagry & Lower Seagry had won the North Wiltshire Small Villages Category in 2017 but sadly had lost winning the whole of Wiltshire Competition. It was hoped to retain the Small Villages winner position and go one better in the final round this year.
- b) **Seagry Neighbourhood Plan:** The Steering Group Chair, Brian Zehetmayr, provided an update from the Group on progress since the last Annual Parish Meeting. As reported last year (APM 2017), the Steering Group had decided professional help was required to assist them in developing the Neighbourhood Plan for Seagry and they were in discussion with consultants and exploring grant options to pay for them.

As a result of this work the Steering Group was able to appoint Place Studios as their consultants and with their assistance obtain a grant of £5,375.00 to cover the cost of their work over 6 months. A further grant of £2,470.00 was obtained in February 2018. While not all of this grant money has been used in the end, having the funding enabled the Steering Group to commission Place Studios both to advise the Group and to carry out work on their behalf. Much of this work provided the evidence, which will underpin the Neighbourhood Plan when this is finally put to external examination and a referendum.

The major piece of work had been to prepare a Design Statement for Seagry. The process started by having the Design Day on the August Bank Holiday, which worked extremely well. The photos collected by the various groups walking around Seagry showed both the diversity of design but also common features. These will be detailed in the Design Statement itself and in evaluating development proposals. The Group has also been working on mapping the Character of Seagry and maps have been produced showing how and where

aspects of the character of the Parish fit together. Place Studio will convert these into larger scale drawings.

A number of areas for inclusion as a 'Green Space' were put forward both at the Design Day and afterwards. Place Studio evaluated these for the Group against the legal criteria and three areas were proposed as meeting these criteria. Details would be in the latest edition of Signpost and at the same time the Steering Group was asking for comments on these. If anyone had not yet responded, they should do. Related to 'Green Spaces', the Group had also been exploring the 'Local Landscape' and 'Green Infrastructure' both areas, which impact on Neighbourhood Planning.

While the Steering Group asked for suggestions on development in their original survey back in 2016, they were required to do a formal 'call for sites'. This was done, again through Signpost, and they received a number of proposals. Each of these sites had been looked at in detail and would be evaluated and compared against the same criteria. When the Neighbourhood Plan goes to referendum it is anticipated that all of these sites will be detailed together with a recommendation to accept or reject each. If any sites are suggested for approval there will need to be a 'Strategic Environmental Assessment' done for the site - Wiltshire Council will assist the Group with this.

There were a number of other areas which will have to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan that have been explored, such as the History of Seagry, Footpaths, Heritage. The Group has also been asking questions, such as do we need a Settlement Boundary, a Housing Needs survey or even an analysis of where parishioners work if they are employed.

The Steering Group had started writing the actual Neighbourhood Plan. It would however take them some time to complete this work, as everything they have done so far is preliminary and will need review and modification. They will then have to have the Plan looked at by Wiltshire Council before going for examination and ultimately put the Plan to Parishioners in a Referendum. It was hoped that this could be done by the end of 2018.

The Chairman of the Parish Council on behalf of all thanked the Steering Group for their efforts throughout the last year.

- c) **Seagry Parish Road Naming:** Tony Kay had raised the issue of Street Naming at last year's APM (2017), particularly Scotland Hill, Henn Lane, Five Thorns Lane and Seagry Road. The discussions that followed indicated that there was no need for the signage and no support for the proposal. Tony raised the matter again and advised that Historic Maps indicated that road names had been established in Upper Seagry for over two hundred years. He argued again that all surrounding villages had road Name Plates displayed for their old roads and that Upper Seagry is the only one that doesn't. He felt that there was little cost involved and proposed that the Parish Council should arrange for Name Plates be displayed. He argued again that the proposal should not involve making any changes to addresses or postal codes and should not affect any Statutory Authority. The discussions that followed indicated a lack of support for the proposal although the Parish Council, when considering all Annual Parish Meeting matters, would need to consider the matter.
- d) **30 MPH Sign – Broadleaze:** Moe Whitehall raised the issue of highway/pedestrian safety in regards to a corroded speed sign. This matter would need to be reported to Wiltshire Council Highways so that it could be replaced as soon as possible.

CLOSURE OF MEETING:

The Parish Council Chairman thanked all those who had attended the Annual Parish Meeting and Seagry Primary School for hosting the event. He closed the Meeting at 8.53pm.

Signed:

Councillor:

Date: