



Whiteparish Parish Council

MINUTES of the meeting of Whiteparish Parish Council held on Tuesday 17th January 2023 at 7.30pm in the Memorial Centre, Whiteparish.

Present: Cllrs King (Chairman), Hayday (Vice Chairman), Bell, Bishop, Camley, McFarland, Palmer, Pavey and Francis.

In attendance: 2 members of the public and PC Pete Jung, Unitary Councillor Richard Britton and Maria Pennington (Parish Clerk).

Public questions

PC Pete Jung gave an update on recent issues in Whiteparish. He confirmed the bike security marking event in Whiteparish will be held on Saturday 18th March at 9am in the Memorial Centre carpark. PC Jung advised of his retirement in May and that he will introduce his replacement in due course.

A member of the public raised concerns over the ruts at the passing places on Dean Lane (WC Highways), the lack of maintenance at the pond at Dean Lane (private ownership), vehicles at BKG and also if the Parish Council considered there is enough publication of the extra ordinary Parish Council meeting next week regarding a planning application. The Chairman advised the agenda had been published a week ago and was placed on the noticeboard and on the Parish Council website. It is a public document and should members of the public wish to share it they are welcome to.

A member of the public asked for an update on the request for a bin at The Green. The Clerk advised that Wiltshire Council own the land and their input is being sought. It was also asked if a bin could be situated near the field entrance, next to the pond, at Dean Lane as they are frequently picking rubbish up here. This land is private ownership.

Unitary Councillor Richard Britton reported that Wiltshire Council had considered its draft budget and will be recommending a 2.99% increase to general fund expenditure with a further 1.99% social care levy applied.

To receive Apologies for Absence and to approve the reasons given.

1/23 Prior to the meeting an apology was received from Cllr Gould due to illness. Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED to accept the apology for the reason given.

To receive any Declarations of Interest from Members.

2/23 Cllr Hayday declared a personal interest in the following agenda items as he is a close neighbour:

7a. PL/2022/09650 2 Newton Lane, Whiteparish SP5 2QQ. Change of use of parcel of agricultural land to residential garden

7b. PL/2022/09828 2 Newton Corner Cottages, Newton Lane, Whiteparish SP5 2QQ Retrospective change of use of land to domestic garden

7c. PL/2022/09820 Torlundy, Newton Lane, Whiteparish SP5 2QQ Retrospective change of use of land to domestic garden

3/23 Cllr King declared a personal interest in agenda item 19. Re-appointment of Mr Trevor King to Whiteparish Charities as he is the trustee to be re-appointed.

Exclusion of the press and public. To agree any items to be dealt with after the public, including the press, have been excluded under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 and Local Government Act 1972 ss100.

4/23 Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED to discuss items:

16. To approve a new 2-year grounds maintenance contract.

17. To approve bin emptying at the skatepark.

18. To consider having a village caretaker.

(consideration of quotations) following the exclusion of the press and public.

To receive written applications for the office of parish councillor and co-opt candidate to fill the vacancy.

5/23 The Chairman reported that no written applications have been received.

To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Finance Meeting held on Friday 28th October 2022.

6/23 Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 28th October 2022 as a true record and they were signed by the Finance Committee Chairman.

To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 13th December 2022.

7/23 Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2022 as a true record and they were signed by the Chairman.

To consider a response to planning applications received:

8/23 **PL/2022/09650 2 Newton Lane**, Whiteparish SP5 2QQ. Change of use of parcel of agricultural land to residential garden. Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED to make no comment to this application.

9/23 **PL/2022/09828 2 Newton Corner Cottages, Newton Lane**, Whiteparish SP5 2QQ Retrospective change of use of land to domestic garden. Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED to make no comment to this application.

10/23 **PL/2022/09820 Torlundy, Newton Lane**, Whiteparish SP5 2QQ Retrospective change of use of land to domestic garden. Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED to make no comment to this application.

Planning and enforcement update.

11/23 The Clerk had circulated the update prior to the meeting. The upcoming Wiltshire Council Southern Area Planning Committee on Thursday 2nd February was discussed as the Parish Council understands two Whiteparish planning applications may be for consideration. At present, no councillors are available to attend.

Finance update.

12/23 The Clerk had no updates to report.

To approve accounts for payment and to record the bank balances.

13/23 Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED to authorise payments totalling £6,262.28.

Community Account Balance 13.01.23 - £9,869.94

Business Reserve 13.01.23 - £100,355.74

To consider and resolve banking arrangements.

14/23 Further to the Finance Committee meeting on 28th October 2022 the Clerk had been asked to explore various aspects of banking provisions. This work has now been completed and the Clerk presented a paper proposing that the Council moves its banking arrangements from Barclays Bank to Unity Trust Bank. Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED that the recommendation be accepted and the Clerk should proceed to implement the new arrangements and the proposal paper to be attached to the Minutes.

To approve the renewal of the whiteparish-pc.gov.uk domain for a further two years.

15/23, 251/18, 250/18 Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED to renew the domain for a further two years at a cost of £125.00 plus VAT.

To approve the purchase of a new external hard drive for Parish Council documents.

16/23 Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED for the Clerk to purchase a new external hard drive for Parish Council documents up to the cost of £50.00.

To approve the implementation of the joint council increase of one day to all employees' annual leave entitlement with effect from 1 April 2023.

17/23 Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED to approve the joint council increase of one day to the Clerk's annual leave entitlement with effect from 1 April 2023.

To approve 2023 Village Fete on Parish Council land.

18/23 Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED to approve the 2023 Village Fete on Parish Council land subject to the necessary risk assessments and insurance to follow from the Memorial Trust.

Re-appointment of Mr Trevor King to Whiteparish Charities.

19/23 The Chairman advised that Whiteparish Charities was formed in 1990 as a combination of several very small charities and the Parish Council is required to appoint 3 trustees. The charity gives money to less fortunate in Whiteparish around Christmas.

Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED to re-appoint Mr Trevor King to Whiteparish Charities.

Rights of Way and Common Land update.

20/23 The Chairman reported that there has been dumping of spoil on a part of Whiteparish Common - CL82 Hop Gardens/Clay Street, beside Alford House. This section of CL82 was deemed ownerless when the common land was registered in 1970, under the 1965 Commons Registration Act. It was agreed for the Clerk to write to the neighbouring landowner to confirm that it is their intention to make good.

21/23 The Chairman reported ROW 2, just after it crosses with ROW 11, heading towards the A36, is blocked by vegetation. The Clerk will ask the landowner to clear.

22/23, 377/22, 347/22, 304/22 It was reported that the stile at ROW 4 with Clay Street is still broken. The Clerk will ask the landowner again, to rectify.

Highway's update.

23/23 The Clerk reported that a resident has very kindly cleared the issue causing the flooding on Dean Lane. The Parish Council has been asked to remind Wiltshire Council that it is their duty to maintain it.

24/23 The Clerk has reported the poor road surface at Newton Close however Wiltshire Council Highways have advised Newton Close is not an adopted highway and is under Wiltshire Council Housing remit for repairs who will investigate.

25/23, 350/22 The Clerk advised that Wiltshire Council Highways have said that the undulations on the A27 at Cowesfield are “as a result of the extremely hot and dry weather that Wiltshire experienced earlier this year and are a consequence of ground movement. We are experiencing a lot of sites across Wiltshire which are impacted in this way, some of them quite severely. At the moment the A27 is on a watch list.”

26/23 Cllr McFarland reported a ditch parallel to the A27 at Cowesfield has not been cleared and is causing an increase in surface water. The Clerk will ask Wiltshire Council Highways to clear the ditch.

27/23 Reports from representatives:

Memorial Trust: Cllr Bishop updated on the Memorial Trust activities.

New Forest National Park: Cllr Palmer advised there has been no meeting.

Area Board: No update.

Whiteparish Education Foundation: Cllr Palmer reported they have received 2 applications.

Neighbourhood Tasking Group: Cllr Bishop advised the next NTG meeting is in Downton on 18th January 2023.

Correspondence/communications update

28/23 The Clerk had circulated the update prior to the meeting. There were no queries.

The members of the public left the meeting.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION – EXEMPT MATTERS - QUOTATIONS

To approve a new 2-year grounds maintenance contract.

29/23 Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a confidential summary of quotations for a new 2-year grounds maintenance contract at the recreation ground. Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED to accept the quotation from Hamblin Ground Care.

To approve bin emptying at the skatepark.

30/23, 340/22 Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a quote from idverde for emptying the bin at the skatepark. A councillor also volunteered to continue looking after the skatepark area and bin. Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED for the councillor to continue to empty the bin at the skatepark.

To consider having a village caretaker.

Cllr Francis proposed to suspend Financial Regulations to obtaining quotes for council work and Cllr Hayday seconded, all in favour.

31/23 Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated correspondence and a quote from Mr P Moore in relation to keeping the bus shelter and Parish Council noticeboard areas tidy. Whiteparish Parish Council RESOLVED to accept the quotation from Mr P Moore to keep the bus shelter and Parish Council notice board areas tidy on a weekly basis as he is a local contractor, who has voluntarily, up to this point, taken on the work of his late father, who carried out his duties to the Parish Council and village in an exemplary manner.

There is an extra ordinary Parish Council meeting on Wednesday, 25th January 2023 at 7pm in the Memorial Centre.

The next scheduled Parish Council meeting is to be held on Tuesday, 21st February 2023 at 7.30pm in the Memorial Centre.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.44pm.



Whiteparish Parish Council

WHITEPARISH PARISH COUNCIL CHANGING BANKING ARRANGEMENTS WPC Meeting 17th January 2023

Background

Further to the WPC Finance Committee Meeting on 28th October 2022, and the continuing terrible level of service from Barclays Bank and their lack of knowledge of Parish Councils, along with the FSCS compensation limit of £85,000 the Clerk/RFO was asked to explore various aspects of banking provisions.

This paper proposes changes to the Whiteparish Parish Council (WPC) banking arrangements and to consider banking with another financial institution whilst acting prudently, maintaining liquidity and to mitigate risk.

Current banking arrangements

Presently WPC holds two bank accounts both with Barclays Bank.

1. Current account - This is used to receive any income and pays all day-to-day expenses. Internet banking is used on this account with any payments requiring two Councillor signatures. The Clerk was initially added as a signatory on the account for access to account information as Barclays do not recognise or provide a facility for the Clerk to be a key contact on the account. Ideally, the Clerk should operate the account on behalf of the Council but should not be a signatory. Therefore, the Clerk must be given more access than is desirable. The Clerk does not authorise payments. There are no charges for the use of this account so long as it is kept in credit. This account receives no interest. The balance as at 13th January 2023 £9,869.94
2. Business Premium account – This is used as a savings account where Council reserves are kept. There are relatively few transactions on this account, activity being confined to transfers. The interest rate on this is 0.40% Gross (variable and paid quarterly) and the balance as at 13th January £100,355.74.

Experience with current bankers

Many councils, including WPC have issues with the main high street banks. These are large scale, "one size fits all" services designed to meet the needs of business users and generally work well for such users. However, Parish Councils do not function in the same way. Banking staff trained to deal with companies/partnerships have no knowledge of public sector finance and in any case do not have authority to vary the standard arrangements to accommodate public sector organisations.

The services are not adequate for a Parish Council with specific needs. Issues include:

- Long-winded telephone access.
- Inadequate support.
- Difficulty in removing old signatories and adding new ones.
- No understanding of the role of Clerk as Responsible Finance Officer, with banks assuming that since the Clerk/RFO has no authority then the Councillors are the responsible finance functionaries.

Alternative banking arrangements

There is one bank that specialises in bodies such as Parish Council's – Unity Trust Bank. Unity Trust (<https://www.unity.co.uk/>) was originally set up as a joint venture between the Co-op Bank and the trade union movement but is now backed by NatWest. It has a peerless reputation amongst Clerks for efficiency, ease of use, flexibility and responsiveness. With Unity Trust Bank the Clerk/RFO can be set up as a key contact on the account and not a signatory.

Banking Charges

For a current account suitable for WPC (based on turnover) the charges are:

Turnover per annum	Under £100k
Fee	£6 per month Charged Quarterly
Opening deposit	Minimum £500
† Interest	No credit interest paid

Although they do not have a High Street presence, Nat West Bank can be used for paying in as well as using direct freepost.

Unity Trust offers a charge card ("MultiPay"). The charges for a MultiPay card are £50 one off setup and £3/month thereafter. Barclaycard have confirmed we can continue to hold their card, no fees if balance paid in full each month.

Authorising Procedures

For all transactions Unity Trust operates a flexible one, two or three signature authorisation system. This system is applied to online banking as well as cheques. (WPC Financial Regulation 6.2 – 2 signatories). Signatories would be asked to login (user name and password) and authorise the payments.

Savings Account

Unity Trust Bank have an Instant Access business savings account which would be applicable to WPC with the interest rate 1.70% gross as at 13th January 2023, immediate withdrawal, no fee.

Currently Nationwide Building Society offers a Business Saver 0.35% gross and Cambridge Building Society offers a Council Saver 1% gross.

Recommendation

Although there some additional costs, Unity Trust emerges as a bank which is much more in tune with the needs of Parish Councils. Overall banking arrangements should be smoother and more transparent if WPC used Unity Trust for banking.

It is recommended that the banking arrangement with Barclays currently continues and WPC engage Unity Trust Bank to provide Council banking services using one current account and one savings account. In order to maintain liquidity, it is recommended to not use the switching service but for the Clerk to apply for both accounts after signatories have been appointed - using the current 5 Barclays Bank signatories. Signatories will be required to supply the Clerk with key information including DOB, nationality and possibly [additional documentation for identification](#). Once the application has been completed and printed off by the Clerk, each signatory will be required to sign the application before it is sent to Unity Trust Bank with an initial £500.00 to open the current account. The Barclays Bank accounts to be reviewed for closure after the Unity Trust accounts have been set up, along with the possibility of opening another savings account to spread the financial risk.