

MINUTES OF THE PITCHCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM DUE TO COVID-19 ON
THURSDAY 14TH MAY 2020 AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr Nigel Shaw Chairman
Cllr Michael Little
Cllr Beverly Gorton
Jamie Cross

In Attendance: 1 member of the public – Ross Handby

The Chairman opened the meeting with an introduction at 7.35pm

There were no public questions.

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

County Cllr Keith Rippington
District Cllr Nigel Cooper
Cllr Philippa James

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS IN ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

Co-option point 6 – Jamie Cross.

3. MATTERS ARISING NOT ON THIS AGENDA

- a. Minutes from the March meeting will be signed in due course at the next face to face meeting.
- b. The Council was recently sent an email regarding the instalment of village defibrillators. Jamie Cross looked into this in more detail before the meeting. The cost of a defibrillator would be roughly £1500 and it would be in position for 5-7 years. It would need to be connected to an electricity supply; the electricity supply would be the only additional cost within the 5-7-year period. The £1500 would include the defibrillator, being linked to the ambulance service and training for local residents. There are currently defibrillators in Painswick, Cranham and soon in Edge. Depending on where it was located, the approved radius (i.e. the distance from the unit that the emergency services would advise people of its location) could cover the majority of the village. Fundraising could take place to help raise money for the defibrillator.

Cllr Little suggested that there might already be one installed at Resthaven or that Resthaven might be a suitable place for one.

It was decided that the Clerk would contact Resthaven in the first instance, meanwhile the Cllrs would try to identify possible locations and discuss them at the next meeting in September.

4. TO RECEIVE REPORTS:

a. County Councillor Report

Cllr Shaw had a phone conversation prior to the meeting with Cllr Rippington concerning access problems during the junction road works (see below).

b. District Councillor Report

An update was circulated to Cllrs and made available on the website prior to the meeting:

“There are no regular Parish Council meetings at present, or normal committee meetings at Stroud District Council.

So we thought an update from your District Councillors might be appreciated.

Officers are working from home and Council meetings are planned to resume soon using the Zoom platform.

However there has been considerable activity at SDC and this covers most of the main the major aspects.

All local Councils are working together and Gloucestershire County has established a Community Help Hub

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershires-community-help-hub

All residents have received a letter from SDC with helpful advice and important information.

Financial Support for Business

There has been much publicity from government, widely covered in the media, concerning the extensive assistance for employers, Business Rates holidays, furloughing help to maintain staff, business loans and grants.

SDC has received over £26m from the Government and so far, has paid out over £21m to almost 2,000 businesses. Not all eligible enterprises have claimed yet so council officers are continuing to promote the opportunities.

There has recently been announced further help for businesses not eligible under the existing scheme. For this District it amounts to an additional £1.3m.

Support for Council Tax Payers – Hardship Fund

SDC received £629,000 to support Council Tax payers who may be in hardship as a result of Covid-19. This fund will be to reduce certain taxpayers Council Tax by £150.

Community Resilience Fund

So far £31,682 has been paid out to various groups, to financially assist those helping in the local community

*Details of all the assistance available and the latest updates and advice can be found on the SDC website www.stroud.gov.uk
Throughout the District there has been a tremendously positive response at grass roots level to the crisis brought on by this pandemic and the ensuing measures.*

Parish Councils have taken the lead and been pro-active in co-ordinating the response, helping community groups with information and assistance. A large number of community groups have sprung up as people have utilised “WhatsApp” and Facebook to help neighbours, and no report would be complete without a mention (and thank you) for all the volunteers and all those little acts of kindness and help within the community by individuals.

Warning regarding criminal scams by phone and on internet

The risks of this has been mentioned before and now the NCSC (National Cyber Security Centre) has issued some very useful guidance under a Cyber Aware Campaign. They offer 6 tips about keeping us all secure, details can be found at <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk>. So as they say Stay home, Stay connected, Stay Cyber Aware!!

*Hopefully our next report will reflect positive moves forward as we recover from this unprecedented situation.
Until then, Keep safe.”*

c. Members Reports.

Cllr Michael Little:

Cllr Little explained that he had been revising the Councils Code of Conduct. He requested an electronic copy and asked for the matter to be placed on the September agenda.

The Clerk was asked to check when the Annual Parish meeting could next take place as a new Chairman would be required.

Cllr Beverly Gorton:

Cllr Gorton raised her concerns about the bridle way stretching from the common to the Bird in Hand on the Edge – Whiteshill Road, which has recently become impassable due to falling vegetation. It was unclear if it was within the Parish boundary or who owned the land. Cllr Little would look into this. Ross Handby volunteered to liaise with Cllr Gorton to clear the track.

Cllr Nigel Shaw:

Cllr Shaw will write an annual report as in previous years.

5. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE A46/A4173 JUNCTION:

The Parish Clerk received feedback from the Project Manager on the Major Projects team at Stroud District Council. Many points that were included on the snagging list

have now been rectified. The final safety checks will be carried out once the risk of COVID-19 has been reduced.

The layby above the gas valve house on Halfway Pitch is however still covered in soil. The Parish Clerk will make SDC aware of this.

Cllr Gorton explained that there was a cable still exposed close to the Pitchcombe North Junction. The Parish Clerk will forward this issue onto SDC. Cllr Gorton will send the Parish Clerk a map with the precise location on.

Cllr Shaw received a letter regarding land access during the construction of the junction from an affected landowner prior to the meeting. This had been circulated to Cllrs. The letter had since been passed to Cllr Keith Rippington, who requested Gloucester Highways look into the matter. Cllr Rippington will inform the Parish Council when he has received a response.

The Cllrs expressed their concern for the situation that had arisen and would investigate how they might assist. Cllr Little agreed to call the owner to update her on the situation so far.

Cllr Gorton explained that the arrows painted on the road close to the new junction (when turning from Painswick towards Gloucester) were confusing. The Parish Clerk will raise the issue with the Major Projects team to see if the arrows can be moved 10-12ft.

6. CO-OPTION TO FILL CASUAL VACANCY

Jamie Cross left the meeting whilst this point was being discussed. The Parish Clerk gave a brief update on the procedure. Cllr Shaw, Cllr Gorton and Cllr Little all agreed to co-opt Mr Cross.

Once Jamie Cross was once again in attendance, he signed the declaration and agreed to send all necessary paperwork to the Parish Clerk.

7. GIGACLEAR UPDATE

Cables have now been laid across the new junction. The Parish Clerk requested an update from Gigaclear in the weeks before the meeting. No response received as yet.

8. COVID-19 UPDATE

The Parish Council expressed their gratitude to the team behind pitchcombenet for all their hard work and coordination during the COVID-19 crisis and for keeping the residents up to date. They felt that all villagers who were seen as vulnerable or in need of help were getting the support they needed, and that social distancing was easy to adhere to due to the rural nature of the village. The Parish Council felt that there wasn't much more that could be done to improve the situation.

Cllr Shaw enquired as to why we couldn't use the full electoral register in similar situations in the future. The Parish Clerk will ask SDC.

9. VEGETATION CUTTING ALONG ROAD VERGES

The Parish Clerk read out Cllr James's email regarding vegetation cutting along the main road verges in the village – there was a concern about them becoming overgrown and untidy.

Jamie Cross expressed his concern with cutting back the verges as they were important wildlife corridors and beneficial for biodiversity.

The meeting did however express their concern that some footpaths were becoming overgrown and therefore posed a risk to those using them. The Parish Clerk will ask Highways if they are able to maintain the footpaths and what their specific procedure is for doing so.

10. ROAD SWEEPING IN THE VILLAGE

This point was raised via email by Cllr James as she felt Wragg Castle Lane and the gutters were in need of a proper sweep. The Cllrs felt that the situation had improved recently however the Parish Clerk would inform GCC.

11. FINANCE

a. To approve payments in accordance with the budget.

Clerks Salary / Expenses (Mar-Apr)	£328.90
Total invoices for payment	£328.90

The accounts were approved for payment. The Parish Clerk will send the cheques to Cllr Shaw to sign at a later date.

It was agreed that Roy Balgobin will cover the Parish Clerk whilst she has time off after having a baby. Mr Balgobin will invoice Pitchcombe Parish Council for his time whilst Holly Paton will not claim a wage.

Date of the next meeting: Thursday 10th September 2020 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS
THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.43 PM**