

MITCHELDEAN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 8th July 2024 at 7.00pm at Mitcheldean Sports Pavilion

Present:

Parish Councillors: David Thomson (Chairman), Bill Waddell, Tracey Cruickshank, Andre Edwards, Kay Wozencroft and Matthew Brownsell-Dalton

Also present: April Seabrook (Clerk)
2 members of the public

1. To note apologies for absence

Cllr Janet Keene, Shaun Stammers and Adie Batt, County Councillor Philip Robinson and District Councillors Jackie Fraser and Trevor Roach

2. Members of the public issues (15 minutes Standing Orders suspended)

A resident discussed the memorial for Jackie Baber and suggested that an Oak tree would be fitting as this was the symbol on Jackie's school badge.

She also mentioned that a boar had been in the Sheep and Dirt Jump Field and she was informed that the Council would have the fencing checked to make sure that there were no holes in it where the boar could access the Council's fields.

3. County & District Councillor Reports

None

4. Declarations of Interests

Cllrs Wozencroft and Waddell declared an interest in item 13 regarding the donation to Lydcare, as they both use their services, and therefore will not join the discussion or vote on this item.

5. Requests for Dispensations

None

6. Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th June 2024

It was resolved to accept the minutes of the meeting which was held on 10th June 2024 as an accurate record of the meeting, and was signed by the Chairman.

7. Planning matters

a) P0697/24/FUL – Grace Barn, Abenhall Road, Mitcheldean – Removal of Condition C (occupancy restriction) relating to planning permission DF7670/G (P0822/00/FUL)

Decision: Objections as Abenhall Road is not suitable for the extra traffic that this proposed site would produce and also the site has a concealed entrance which would be dangerous when accessing a narrow road.

b) P0754/24/FUL – Ceterach, Wigpool Common, Mitcheldean – Demolition of existing utility. Erection of a single storey rear extension.

Decision: No objections

c) P0637/24/FUL – Ferneyfield, Abenhall Road, Mitcheldean – Minor external and internal alterations to existing two storey dwelling house, change of use and alterations to a redundant attached annexe (formally a commercial carpentry workshop) into holiday lets, new site access and associated hard and soft landscaping.

Decision: Objections as Abenhall Road is not suitable for the extra traffic that this proposed site would produce and also the site has a partially concealed entrance which would be dangerous when accessing a narrow road.

8. Community Engagement Policy

Council reviewed the Community Engagement Policy and agreed that the following amendments should be made, 'The annual accounts will be displayed on the notice boards providing opportunity for them to be viewed', will now read 'The Exercise of Public Rights notice will be displayed on the notice board and the Council website from the beginning of June for 6 weeks during which time residents of the Parish can book an appointment to view the accounts of the previous financial year.' Once the policy has been amended it will be brought back to Council for agreement at the August meeting. **Action: Clerk**

9. Expenses Policy

Council reviewed the Expenses Policy and agreed to replace the words 'will make reimbursement for all or some of the expenses of the Clerk and the Chairman or Parish Councillors may meet on its behalf when incurred in performing the duties required by the Council, such as attending training or meetings on behalf of the Council' with 'at the discretion of the Full Council, reimburse the Clerk, staff, Chairman or other Councillors for expenses incurred in performing the duties required by the Council' Once the policy has been amended it will brought back to the Council for agreement at the August meeting . **Action: Clerk**

10. Playing Field Shelter

Council agreed that Cllr Thomson will bring a proposal regarding the playing field shelter to the August meeting. **Action: Cllr Thomson**

11. Bank Signatories

Council were informed that the bank account had the following signatories, April Seabrook (Clerk), Cllrs Tracey Cruikshank, Andre Edwards, Janet Keene, Shaun Stammers, David Thomson, Bill Waddell, Kay Wozencroft, and former councillors Phil Didcote and Susan Henchley. The Council agreed to remove Phil Didcote and Susan Henchley. **Action: Clerk**

12. Debit Card

Council agreed to apply for a bank debit card which will be held by the Clerk. **Action: Clerk**

13. Donation Request from Lydcare

Council agreed to donate £500 to Lydcare and will consider if the Council could afford to make a further donation at the October meeting. **Action: Clerk**

14. The District Council's Local Plan

Council agreed to send the following response to the District Council regarding their Local Plan.

The Council is opposed to the plan's proposals for Mitcheldean. We will not comment on other Parish or Town Council proposals as we do not want to engage in a battle with other councils.

The proposal does not take into account the Mitcheldean Neighbourhood development plan as it includes a new site which has already been subject to a failed planning application.

It also contradicts some of the policy suggestions on the general planning proposals.

At 1.4, the draft plan states that the changes that are likely to be required may see a 12% growth in the number of dwelling and associated facilities. What is this based on? Using the numbers presented in the plan for the indicative rate of provision, does not take into account different sizes of household. What evidence do you have of what types/sizes of household are likely to be required? Does your estimate of potential dwellings include flats or small elderly persons bungalows or supported accommodation?

2.6 Does protecting the environment and supporting nature include building on valuable farmland?

2.7 Does building on valuable farmland meet the demands for conservation and protection of the environment?

2.14 It is not just areas currently at risk from flooding that should be protected from development. It is also necessary to protect areas which could be flooded due to lack of soakaway when a field is built on. Loosing fields to building would put more strain on neighbouring roads and dwellings.

Policy LP1 – Sustainable development requires that any development is required to be designed to maximise green infrastructure, support nature recovery and improved biodiversity...making optimum use of and enhancing water courses and other features. Building on good quality farmland reduces the green infrastructure and reduces nature recovery and reduces biodiversity.

3.3 We are concerned with the comments about setting foundations for the future. This implies that the current plan will be just the first step to further unsuitable growth in Mitcheldean.

Policy LP4 The plan suggest that in large villages housing in small groups (typically fewer than 10 dwellings) and smaller scale developments are likely to be appropriate and yet the plan suggest one development of 180 dwelling is suitable. As Mitcheldean is a large village this allocation would seem to contradict the policy.

Policy LP5 – Requirements for development in the country side (outside defined settlement boundaries) should not just apply to business development but also to housing and should demonstrate why a rural location is necessary.

4.6 guidance makes clear that planning policies should ensure that they will add to the quality of the area. How will this be measured and how can developing a greenfield site fit in with this policy?

4.14 building on good quality farmland will reduce provision for food production close to housing.

4.18 there is not adequate infrastructure in Mitcheldean to support the size of proposed developments.

Mitcheldean

As a Council, we accept the need for affordable housing to rent and buy in the Forest of Dean, but we don't consider that the Settlement summary or the proposals in the draft local plan reflect the situation in Mitcheldean.

Parts of Mitcheldean Parish – mainly south of the A4136 are within the statutory forest.

Breakheart Hill is largely in Longhope Parish and forms the boundary between the two parishes it is not within Mitcheldean Parish boundary. We acknowledge that the rising ground limits development expansion.

The former Rank Xerox site, now known as Vantage Point Business Village is under utilised and the Mitcheldean Neighbourhood plan included a part of this to be used for housing. (building 5) We understand that there is a new owner of the site and so are not yet aware of what plans there are now for the site, but we believe that the building which formerly was occupied by Farmplan has been empty for a number of years and would seem to be prime for development – possible as flats.

All of our local facilities are oversubscribed. Both schools have good Ofsted ratings and are oversubscribed – leading to many children having to be educated outside of the Village. The Doctor's surgery has had to take on patients from other areas whose surgeries have closed and residents are having to wait for a number of weeks for appointments

Policy LP 93

The Land off Carisbrook field in regular use on a regular rotation between crops and grazing. It is valuable farm productive farmland. It is on a slope. The corner of Carisbrook Road and Bradley Court Road used to be a pond. The remains of that much reduced pond are with the Vantage Point boundary. The road frequently floods with rainwater flowing down from the Road from Lea Line and from the field. Building on that field would mean that there is less soil available for rainwater to soak away naturally and cause flooding the in the houses on Carisbrook Road, which are below the level of the proposed housing.

Policy LP9.3 states that any developer must be able to demonstrate no adverse impact on the nearby protect nature of the conservation sites and their areas of influence, but we believe that any developer must also be able to demonstrate that there are no adverse impact on the houses in Carisbrook and Ross Roads. This will not be possible in our view and the best way to protect those houses and the conservation areas and access to the adjacent area is not to include that site in the plan. All adjacent areas would be subject to light pollution from the site.

It should also be pointed out that when there was a planning application from developers to build on this land – which is outside the Mitcheldean Neighbourhood development plan – there was a very well attended public meeting which overwhelmingly opposed the application to build on this site.

Policy LP 94

We agree with the proposal to build on the sites at St Michael's close and adjacent to the High Street, but don't accept the number of dwellings proposed. We were willing to support the latest planning application of 8 houses for the site of the former George Hotel, in Star Pitch as we are eager to see the site developed, rather than the eyesore it currently is, but we preferred the previously consented application for 28 elderly persons dwellings. There is a need for this locally. We are aware that the current owners of the site have not been in contact with either the parish or the District Council. Perhaps this is a suitable site for a compulsory purchase or a site for a local housing association.

Policy LP 95

We do not accept that the entire area of land at Vantage Point should be protected for employment generation. The previous owners were unable to find tenants for all of its buildings and the industrial site overwhelms the village. There is plenty of land that could valuably be used for housing – not least the Farmplan building as previously mentioned. Much of the land is used by very underutilised car parks. A greater occupancy of some buildings could free up other buildings for domestic accommodation – either by demolition or redevelopment of the existing building.

In summary

There are other sites in the village which could provide additional development opportunities. There is Cross House, also known as the Pink House, in Star's Pitch which could provide possibly up to 4 dwellings.

The former Townsend House nursing home is currently owned by Gloucestershire County Council and has been designated as a family support unit, but it is a large site and could be better used for development for housing. We have been waiting for more than 4 years for the site to be developed by the County Council, but we haven't seen any action other than an amount in the budget. In our view it is unlikely the proposal would need the entire land area and our preference would be for domestic accommodation on the site.

15. Memorial for Jackie Baber

Council agreed that an Oak tree would be planted as a memorial to Jackie Baber. This item will be discussed again at the August meeting to decide on a location for the tree and the date when it will be planted. **Action: Clerk**

16. Townsend House Site

Strong views were expressed by the Council regarding the Townsend House site and Council agreed that if the site is not going to be developed in the short term Council will press the County Council to release the land for housing.

17. Working Group Reports

None

18. Councillor Reports

Cllr Brownsell-Dalton informed Council that the new streetlight at the Bullring was overgrown with vegetation, the Clerk informed him that she would ask the Ground Staff Team to deal with this matter.

19. Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported:

Ordered 20 bags of salt from the County Council Highways Department for this winter.

Informed the tree contractor that their quote to carry out the tree works required as shown on the tree survey had been agreed at the June Council meeting.

Informed the grass contractor that the grass at Abenhall Church and on the children's play area was getting very long, and he informed me that due to the bad weather he was a little behind at the moment, but he would try and get the grass cut by 21st June.

A letter has been sent to the manager of Wylderne to inform him that the Parish Council support their bid to turn part of the Wilderness Centre in to an Asset of Community Value. The District Council have also been informed of the Parish Council's support in this matter.

The District Council have stated that the Parish Council can no longer use the large green waste bin that the Ground Staff Team use, this will be replaced by four domestic size green waste bins which meant that two further green waste licences had to be purchased.

20. Accounts/Finance

a) Council agreed the following payments and receipts:

Payments made since last meeting

No	Payee	Details	Method	Amount	Power	Budget
53	NEST	Pension Contributions	DD (13/06/24)	£322.70	LGA 1972 s112(2)	Staff Costs
54	Ecotricity	Gas @ Town Hall	DD (20/06/24)	£21.85	LGA 1972 s111	General Admin
55	Ecotricity	Electric @ Pavilion	DD (20/06/24)	£226.29	LGA 1972 s111	Pavilion
56	Ecotricity	Electric @ Town Hall	DD (20/06/24)	£37.63	LGA 1972 s111	General Admin
57	Ecotricity	Gas @ Pavilion	DD (20/06/24)	£23.62	LGA 1972 s111	Pavilion
58	XLN (Daisy)	Broadband & telephone	DD (22/06/24)	£115.39	LGA 1972 s111	General Admin
59	Lisa Robertson	Reimbursement for children's games	BACS (24/06/24)	£64.97	LGA 1972 s111	Youth
60	Local Medics	First aid cover for Village Fete	BACS (26/06/24)	£300.00	LGA 1972 s137	Fete
61	Ross Bouncy Castles	Bouncy castle & slide for Village Fete	BACS (26/06/24)	£210.00	LGA 1972 s137	Fete
62	Salaries	June payroll	BACS (28/06/24)	£4,747.17	LGA 1972 s112(2)	Staff Costs
63	EE	Mobile phone	DD (28/06/24)	£32.57	LG(FP)A 1963 s5	General Admin

64	99 Web	Monthly website maintenance	SO (01/07/24)	£60.00	LGA 1972 s142	Communications
	Water Plus	Water @ Pavilion	DD (01/07/24)	£144.43	LGA 1972 s111	Pavilion
			TOTAL	£6,306.62		

Payments to be agreed at meeting

No	Payee	Details	Method	Amount	Power	Budget
65	PATA	Payroll services	BACS (09/07/24)	£45.10	LGA 1972 s111	General Admin
66	HMRC	PAYE & NI	BACS (09/07/24)	£1,156.40	LGA 1972 s112(2)	Staff Costs
67	Anne Maliphant	Reimbursement for hanging baskets	BACS 909/07/24)	£60.00	LGA 1972 s111	Contingency
68	Isabelle Nash	Reimbursement for cleaning products	BACS (09/07/24)	£67.93	LGA 1972 s111	Contingency
69	Toolite	Black bags, mini roller etc	BACS (09/07/24)	£87.77	LGA 1972 s111	Playing Field
70	April Seabrook	Reimbursement for 2 green bin licences	BACS (09/07/24)	£110.00	LGA 1972 s111	Contingency
70	April Seabrook	Reimbursement for Youth Café petty cash	BACS (09/07/24)	£50.00	LGA 1972 s111	Youth Space
71	Neil Craven	Repaired toilets	CHQ (09/07/24)	£35.00	LGA 1972 s111	Pavilion
			TOTAL	£1,612.20		

Receipts:

10/06/24 Interest	£23.21
10/06/24 Interest	£35.74
13/06/24 Gigaclear	£100.00

- b) Council approved the petty cash figures for June 2024
- c) Council received the bank reconciliation for June 2024
- d) Council received the budget versus spend report up to 6th July 2024
- e) Cllr Thomson carried out the monthly financial checks of the Council's accounts on 8th July 2024

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.10pm

SIGNED:

DATE: