

MINUTES
12.12.2023
GODSHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 12th December 2023 at 7.30 pm at Godshill Village Hall.

Present:

Cllr Fell – Chairman

Cllr Atwill

Cllr Cakebread

Cllr Stammers

Cllr Woodward

Mrs Bev Cornish – Clerk

Six members of the public

Cllr Fell welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Joshua Goodchild, Community Engagement Manager for Wessex Internet, who gave a detailed report and took questions on the company's plans to bringing fibre to the premises to Godshill in late 2024/early 2025. A summary of his report is as follows:

- The company's network planners would be coming out in the new year so if the Council or residents knew of any owners of paddocks, please advise them that they might be approached by Wessex Internet to run the fibre through their land.
- They use soft dig methods for installing fibre and work closely through their own ecologist with Natural England to ensure that all of the requirements of the National Park are met. All work will be inspected by Natural England too. In uncultivated land its 700 mm but in fields which are ploughed its 900 mm. Through gardens the fibre will be laid 1 foot (300 mm) deep.
- As a form of compensation for use of land, the company offers a £1.05 per metre wayleave payment or we offer 50% discount for 25 years. If the company is sold, that agreement is passed on to its successors.
- They would also use existing infrastructure such as BT telegraph poles and wires.
- 149 properties which had yet to be upgraded were earmarked for funding. They would only be upgrading those which still had a copper connection. All cabling is armoured so you would not be able to push a spade through it. However, if it was damaged, it's Wessex Internet's liability and they would have to repair it free of charge. They also give customers a map of the location of the fibre within their properties.
- Mr Goodchild quoted various prices for broadband packages for different levels of service of between 250 and 900 MB. Packages range from £29 to £79 per month and these are constantly being reviewed to ensure they remain competitive.
- The build to install fibre in Godshill is part of the New Forest BDUK £14 million contract to install fibre across the forest. This is only HM Government's contribution towards the installation, the rest is being funded by Wessex Internet. All customers will be expected to pay is a £49 activation fee and a first-class package. If you are an earlier adopter, the company may take off the activation fee. Anyone who has pre-registered for a package will have their activation fee waived and if you refer a friend and both sign up, then both will receive a month's free internet. There's also no limit to how many people a person can refer.
- There is no limit to the amount of information which can be transferred via the technology so the company will not be back in the village in 4 years' time ripping out the cabling and putting in different cable.
- The company uses private land to install their fibre so long delays are not caused by having to use public or crown lands.

MINUTES 12.12.23

- As customer when dealing with Wessex Internet, residents will be able to talk a human being who was based in Blandford rather than an automated system. Any queries which could not be answered straightaway would be investigated and the customer called back.
- Over the summer Mr Goodchild will host a community engagement event at the Village Hall and perhaps a coffee morning and then there will be a drop-in meeting at the Fighting Cocks.
- They also offer a £1 monthly charge for internet connection for village halls with the proviso that they can use it for community engagement events free of charge.

Cllr Fell thanked Mr Goodchild for his report and asked if there was anything the Parish Council could do to assist with the delivery of the fibre. Mr Goodchild asked that it spread the word of the forthcoming work and that residents are likely to be contacted. He said he would send the Clerk a list of properties which he had for upgrading. If there is a large uptake of registrations, it may be that the company's installation schedule will be re-prioritised to deliver in Godshill earlier than initially planned. He also said that he would ask the question about putting a battery pack at the Village Hall to assist the parish with resilience issues at times of power cut or flood.

Litter Warden: Mrs Boyd said that she had nothing to report.

Part 1

89.23 Public Question Time

A member of the public said that she was interested in the outcome of the meeting which councillors had had with Sandy Balls. She also said that she had spoken to the maintenance manager about the light pollution caused by the numerous LED lights who said he would follow it up. Even though it had taken 3 months, she could report that there had been a dimming down of the lights which was positive.

90.23 Business Raised During Public Question Time

Cllr Woodward reported that due to a change in the General Manager again, no meeting had been held. Sandy Balls didn't currently have a General Manager but do have a member of staff who is there about one day a week but was currently on annual leave. He said that both he and Cllr Fell were on the case and would arrange a meeting with any new appointee as soon as possible.

91.23 Apologies

Cllr Fell proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the apology be approved from Cllr Sanger due to a personal commitment.

92.23 Declarations of Interest:

- a. To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers:**

Cllrs Atwill and Woodward declared personal and non-pecuniary interests in Minute 96.23 and did not vote.

- b. To consider any Dispensation Requests received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered:**

The Clerk confirmed that no dispensation requests had been received.

MINUTES 12.12.23

93.23 Minutes

Cllr Stammers proposed, Cllr Atwill seconded and it was RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on Tuesday 14th November 2023 with a minor amendment to the name of a tree works application which had been wrongly named by the NFNPA planning department.

94.23 Clerk's Report

Cllr Fell proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the Clerk's report be noted;
Defibrillator Training: The contractor unable to do the November dates so the Clerk will aim for a March date in seeking future dates and then coincide it with the visit by the PSCO from Hampshire Police.

Consultation on Improving Broadband for the Very Hard to Reach: A letter sent on 27th November to Dept for Science, Innovation and Technology supporting the response sent by the National Association of Local Councils.

National Grid application for generator: A discussion was still to be had with Cllr Stammers.

Street Cottage: The concerns raised were reported to Edward Heron and work was done to the road but this may be only temporary. The Clerk has advised him that the issue needs a long term plan of action due to the listing of the cottage and the fact that the prevalence of water on the road is getting worse.

Woodgreen Road: The concerns raised were also reported to Edward Heron. The Clerk suggested that there be an item on the agenda for January about identifying the key areas for highway improvement works in the parish and as these issues would not be resolved by continuously reporting them to the online highways App.

95.23 North West Quadrant Meeting and Elections

Cllr Fell gave a detailed report on a recent meeting of the North West Quadrant of the New Forest National Park. He said that he and the Chair of Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley Parish Council found the discussion held entirely unsatisfactory as it was clear that although the election was supposed to have been conducted independently of the National Park and its officers, it was clear from what was said by the Chair at the meeting that people who were part of the National Park and who should not have known anything about it, had identified a person to contact to ask them to put themselves forward for election despite all candidates needing to be selected and nominated by the parish and town councils within the quadrant. The Council had sought information regarding the process agreed for the election under the Freedom of Information Act. However, the response received was that the process was 'subject to legal privilege'.

Following a discussion, Cllr Fell proposed, Cllr Cakebread seconded and it was RESOLVED that the Clerk writes a letter of complaint to the Electoral Commission and to the new Chair of the New Forest National Park Authority about the way in which the Election for the North West Quadrant was conducted by Hampshire Association of Local Councils under the direction of the New Forest National Park Authority.

96.23 Planning Appeal Outcomes for Paysanne

Cllr Fell expressed his concern at the outcomes of the Appeals for Paysanne. He said that the Parish Council had been consistently stable in its responses and each time had defended the policies of the National Park. The Decisions from the Planning Inspector incorrectly referenced the wrong policy for determination and this needed to be brought to the Inspectorate's attention and also the NFNPA so that there can be no precedents set which could cause further damage the Park.

MINUTES 12.12.23

Following a brief discussion, Cllr Fell proposed, Cllr Cakebread seconded and it was RESOLVED that letters of concern and complaint be sent by the Clerk to the Planning Inspectorate and the Chair of the New Forest National Park Authority regarding the continued non-compliance with planning law and planning policy.

97.23 Dark Skies and Light Pollution

Following a lengthy discussion and guidance from the Clerk that with impending changes to the National Planning Policy Framework which were due to be received from HM Government before Christmas, Cllr Fell proposed, Cllr Atwill seconded and it was RESOLVED that the decision be deferred to the next meeting.

Cllr Woodward suggested that:

- An opportunity be taken to include comment that any reduction in light pollution involved reducing traffic on Roger Penny Way as the main cause of light pollution was traffic.
- There should be recognition given that there are different areas of Godshill with different light pollution aspects.
- It should be providing guidance on how the Parish Council will consider planning applications rather than providing guidance to developers.

Cllr Atwill said that whilst the Council needs to be mindful of the dark areas, it also needed to be mindful of not increasing the lighting in the lighter areas. She also said that perhaps more information could be brought into the text from the advice given in the links on the final page.

The Clerk suggested that information on light pollution could be included in a Newsletter sent to residents in the New Year.

98.23 Finance and Policy:

a. Payments

Cllr Fell proposed, Cllr Woodward seconded and it was RESOLVED that the following payments be approved:

£75.00 - NFDC - Uncontested Election Fee

£57.60 - Ionos - Website hosting September-November

b. Budget 2024/25 - To consider and resolve to approve the draft 3-year budget submitted by the Clerk:

Cllr Woodward proposed, Cllr Fell seconded and it was RESOLVED that the budget be deferred to the meeting being held in the New Year so that it could be raised by the current level of inflation and agree the projects to be completed in the next few years.

c. Precept 2024/25 - To resolve to agree a precept demand for submission to New Forest District Council:

Cllr Fell proposed, Cllr Woodward seconded and it was RESOLVED that the Precept be deferred to the meeting being held in the New Year.

d. To consider and resolve to approve the Earmarked Reserves of the Parish Council.

Cllr Fell proposed, Cllr Woodward seconded and it was RESOLVED that the Earmarked Reserves be deferred to the meeting being held in the New Year.

MINUTES
12.12.23

e. To give consideration and resolve to agree on the organisations to which a grant may be awarded:

Cllr Fell proposed, Cllr Woodward seconded and it was RESOLVED that any grants be considered at the meeting to be held in the New Year.

f. To resolve to approve the sum of £773.44 as the Accounts for payment for December:

		£
NFDC	Uncontested Election Fee	75.00
Ionos	Website Hosting – Sept to Nov	57.60
Unity Bank	Quarterly bank charges	18.00
B Cornish	December salary and backpay	622.84

Cllr Fell proposed, Cllr Woodward seconded and it was RESOLVED that the Accounts for payment for December be approved.

g. To resolve to approve the Bank balances - Cheque and Reserve Accounts:

Balances Approved and Noted as at 12.12.23

Current Account: £5,531.92 Deposit Account: £10,621.47

Cllr Fell proposed, Cllr Woodward seconded and it was RESOLVED that the balances be approved and noted.

99.23 Correspondence

Cllr Fell proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the following items of correspondence be noted:

1. Report from County Councillor Edward Heron.
2. Dates for the lengthsman in January from Fordingbridge Town Council.
3. Notification that Broadhill Cottage will be considered at the meeting of the planning committee of the NPA on 19th December at Lymington. The Clerk had advised the Committee Clerk that a representative from Godshill will attend to speak on the Council's behalf.
4. Email from Hampshire County Council advising that the community orchard fund is now open for applications. Community Orchard funding can fund any group which has publicly accessible land or is accessed by a large number of people (e.g. school or community allotment).
5. Copy emails from a resident regarding footpath numbering and footpath direction signs.

100.23 Any Other Business.

Broadhill Cottage: The Clerk advised that because notification that Broadhill Cottage was to be considered by the NFNPA Planning Committee at its meeting Tuesday 19th December had received too late for it to be added to the Council's Agenda, it could only be considered as part of AOB.

There followed a discussion on the issues to be raised in a statement to be read out to the Committee by the Clerk which was to be drafted by her and agreed via email to councillors by Monday 18th December.

MINUTES
12.12.23

101.23 Next Meeting

Cllr Fell confirmed the date of the next meeting as Tuesday 9th January 2024 to be held at Godshill Village Hall at 7.30 pm. He thanked everyone for attending the meeting and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Part 2 Exempt Matters – Staffing

102.23 The Chair to propose the following resolution – ‘That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they be instructed to withdraw in view of the confidential nature of the business on staffing about to be transacted’:
Seconded by Cllr Woodward and agreed by the meeting.

103.23 National Salary Award

Cllr Fell proposed, Cllr Woodward seconded and it was RESOLVED to approve the salary award and backdated payments for the Clerk for the period from 1st April 2023 in accordance with the National Association of Local Council’s document EO1-23 entitled ‘National Salary Award 2023/24’ and with her Employment Contract.

With no other business, the meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Members of the Council considered the foregoing in the matters in consideration of their duties: Equal Opportunities, (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability); Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety, and Human Rights.