

# SEAGRY PARISH COUNCIL

## Draft Minutes

of the **Annual Parish Meeting** held on  
**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023**  
in Seagry C of E Primary School, Upper Seagry SN15 5EX  
at 7.30pm

**Present:** Parish Cllrs M Barber (Chairman), J H Crosland (Vice Chairman), A Ball, R Barr, N Hutton, Emma Sorrell and K Taylor, Mr V Vines Clerk of the Council, Ann Fentiman, Martin Foot, Brenda Foot, Kathryn Johnson, Debbie Short, Nigel Watson, Karen Watson, Dave Webber, Ian Whitehall and Brian Zehetmayr.

### **MIN 1. Apologies for Absence:**

Apologies were received from Wiltshire Councillor H Greenman and Ian Blackmore.

### **MIN 2. Annual Parish Meeting 2022:**

Draft Minutes from the Virtual Annual Parish Meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were circulated to those in attendance and had been available online.

Cllr M Barber proposed, Cllr K Taylor 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 3. Chairman's Report:**

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr M Barber, reported on Parish Council activities for the past year and starting by saying that it had been another busy year for the Parish Council, so he wanted to thank his fellow Parish Councillors, who give up a huge amount of their time to do what was an increasingly difficult job in order to support their community. In particular, he wished to highlight the tireless contribution of Cllr John Crosland, both to the Parish Council and to the wider community. John had let him know that after many years of serving as the Parish Council's Vice-Chairman, he had decided it was time for another to take up that role, so he wished to give his personal thanks to John for his guidance during his time as Vice Chairman, and was pleased to say that everyone would continue to benefit from his wisdom as he continued as a Parish Councillor.

Cllr Barber also wished to give special thanks to the Clerk, Viv Vines, and stated that the Parish Council benefited hugely from Viv's valuable knowledge, experience and professionalism.

In the past year the Council had made it a priority to address the challenges relating to the local roads, and in particular the speed of traffic through the village. While the Council had made some progress, that progress had not been as rapid as they would have liked.

In the previous year the Council had commissioned Wiltshire Council to undertake a traffic assessment with the aim of reducing the speed limit through Upper Seagry, particularly past the entrance to the school, from 30mph to 20mph. Wiltshire Council undertook that assessment, which measures the speed of traffic, last June 2022 and provided the resulting report in December 2022. Unfortunately, the quite frankly baffling conclusion of the report was that the speed of the traffic was found to be too fast for a

reduction in the speed limit to be recommended, on the basis that Wiltshire Police would be unable and unwilling to enforce a reduced limit.

The PC had not accepted this recommendation and were continuing to pursue Wiltshire Council to implement an advisory speed limit of 20mph in the short term, while continuing with efforts to have a permanent reduction. Those efforts included engaging with Wiltshire Police, who had indicated that they would not be opposed to a reduction in the speed limit, contrary to Wiltshire Council's view.

In addition the Council had established a Community Speedwatch team who are currently undergoing training. The Community Speedwatch team will be able to use a radar gun to record speeding traffic, with the potential for police involvement in the case of persistent offenders. The establishment of the Community Speedwatch Team also allowed the Council to put in place Speed Indicator Devices, which would be done shortly.

On to more cheerful matters, Cllr Barber remarked that it had been wonderful to see so many of the Parishioners take part in and enjoy the Parish's Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee celebrations last June 2022, which had also served as appropriate weekend of thanksgiving for our much loved and now much missed Queen. It was now good to see that both the new notice board and the new highway finger post in Upper Seagry serving has a long-lasting reminder of the Platinum Jubilee.

The Parish were of course very much looking forward to the Coronation celebrations for our new King Charles III, and everyone was invited to attend a service at St Mary's Church on the morning of 7<sup>th</sup> May 2023, and a street party on the recreation ground that afternoon.

Cllr Barber concluded by saying that every year there were huge amounts to be thankful for in the Parish - the beautiful Recreation Ground - the lovely Church - the brilliant Goss Croft Hall – the great village pub the New Inn – the fantastic School - the list went on and on so he finished by thanking everyone who devoted their energies to supporting the community.

There were no questions raised.

**MIN 4. Parish Council Budget 2023-2024:**

A copy of the Parish Council's Adopted Budget and proposals for the year 2023/2024 was circulated to those in attendance.

A question was raised enquiring how much the Council had in the Capital Budget? The Clerk responded by suggesting that it was difficult to be precise at the Meeting as the Council had placed Capital orders for the SID device and solar panels and also there would be commitments towards speed calming measures but as a guide he thought around £9,000.00 was available.

There were no further questions raised.

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

There were no Reports.

**MIN 6. Reports from Local Organisations:**

- a) **Goss Croft Hall:** Brian Zehetmayr, in the absence of Ian Blackmore the Hall Chair, provided a Report for the year ending 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022. At the start of

the year, government support for village Halls stopped with the end of Lockdown leaving the Hall concerned as to when, how much, hiring's would recover to acceptably viable levels. Given the cost-of-living pressures, they also feared that that could also negatively influence hiring activity. He was, however, pleased to report that at this time recovery was nearly back to normal.

The year had not been affected by the huge energy price increased as the Hall enjoyed a fixed tariff throughout that time. Unfortunately that had ended at the end of the Hall's financial year with electricity unit cost increasing from 20.5p to £1.00 an increase of some 390% !! This was fixed for 6 months. Going forward the Hall had already started researching a cheaper contract and, as a Charity, possible grants, with some expectation of achieving better rates. Additionally, to this the Hall was also investigating the benefits of installing Photovoltaic Panels.

Over time the Hall had seemed to have reached a plateau on hiring's, so it would be difficult to increase income as a result. Consequently, they had now, reluctantly, raised their hire rates for the first time in their 10+ year history, as from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023. Anyone who had confirmed agreed bookings in place before this date would be exempted.

To try to encourage hiring's they are currently looking at what additional marketing they could develop. Overall, the Hall remained positive for the foreseeable future, especially as they were well funded to meet any ongoing shortfall. Sadly, there were few hiring's from Seagry residents even though they enjoyed a 25% reduction in hire rates.

Good news was that with a reduction in Wedding bookings in 2022 there were now 5 Wedding bookings for 2023.

Celebrating the Hall's 10-year anniversary last November had been a time to reflect on what a success it had been and how well it had survived the many different uses it had been hired for. It highlighted what a practical and quality asset our communities have created as well as how well it had been looked after. There were of course, now, inevitable signs of wear and tear in the main building but mainly only needing cosmetic attention.

The grounds of course were permanently hungry for the attention that the team of volunteers so ably give. As always, the efforts of all involved were highly appreciated by the Trustees, and Ian Blackmore in particular, as it made the management of the facilities so much easier and rewarding.

In closing, Brian Zehetmayr, the Hall's Treasurer, advertised a forthcoming event in the Hall being a pre-performance by the White Horse Opera taking place on the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2023. He encouraged attendance.

The Chairman of the Parish Council thanked Brian for his Report.

- b) **Friends of Seagry CE Primary School (FOSS):** Katheryn Johnson, Chair of Foss, provided a Report that advised that the last year had been much easier without the COVID-19 pandemic as this had allowed more face to face events to take place.

The focus had been for more support on activities and equipment, including School trip support. Efforts had meant that a new IT screen could be provided and more books for the library.

Events included Ice Cream Friday, film nights and “Break the Rules Day”. Also successful “Counting Eggs” and Mother’s Day events. Another Community Conker Competition is planned, Quiz nights and also a School Fete to which the whole community is welcome to attend.

So overall, she reported that they could look back on a very successful year with the whole FOSS group working well together and that they were looking forward to the coming year.

The Chairman of the Parish Council thanked Kathryn for her Report.

- c) **St Mary the Virgin Church PCC:** The Churchwardens’ had provided a written Report that was read to the Meeting.

They had gradually been getting back to normal following the Covid pandemic.

At Easter 2022 they said goodbye to Mark their curate in charge as he moved to take on a parish of his own in the Gloucester diocese. Their 2 licensed lay ministers Tim Harle and Katherine Bloomer kept them going during the vacancy and organised visiting clergy to take services and this had proved to be very beneficial.

In June they held a service to celebrate the late Queen’s Platinum Jubilee followed by a very damp picnic lunch with a Jubilee cake in the churchyard. A tree was planted to commemorate the Jubilee and it was blessed by Rev Suzanne Grindrod earlier this year.

There was a successful Forest Church in July – so many thanks were given to Gynnette and all who helped with that. The churchyard was a great asset. They are most grateful to John Crosland who maintained it with help sometimes from the GCH team.

Sadly in September they were faced with putting Operation London Bridge into action following the death of the Queen. Forward planning meant that resources for all their churches were readily to hand and so they were quickly able to make sure that St Mary’s was open for prayer and reflection and to provide a Book of Remembrance.

They had held a thoughtful service full of reflection and thanksgiving where the presence of many wearing their medals to honour their Commander in Chief reminded everyone of how strong a military tradition there was here.

In the autumn they were delighted to hear that Rev Suzanne Grindrod was to be their new Priest in Charge. Her licensing service took place at St Peter’s Kington Langley in December which was a very happy occasion. They wished Suzanne and her husband Steve well as they settled in with all here.

Suzanne’s first visit to St Mary’s was for their combined Crib and Carol Service. This was the first time they had tried a combination, and it had worked extremely well. The church had been open early for children’s activities (making angels and finding hidden knitted sheep to go in the crib) followed by a short service. Julia Had been in charge of activities, and Janet had proved a very able second in command. It was definitely something they would do again.

Throughout the year their services had been enhanced as always by Geraldine’s playing and singing. They were truly fortunate to have her, and they can’t thank her enough.

During the year the PCC had met in March following the Annual Meeting and also in July, October and January. In addition to regular agenda items, they had reviewed church and churchyard maintenance, reported on the vacancy progress and talked about their parish share.

It was a busy year on the maintenance aspect of the church. They had employed a cleaning service to give the church a thorough clean.

All the monuments in the churchyard identified as needing attention had been made safe. The guttering was replaced. The chimney was rebuilt. The Celtic Cross on the roof was repaired and made safe. A new lock was fitted to the main door. The boiler had had its regular service.

A new gate into the churchyard had been installed with donations in memory of Ada Fletcher, a member of the church community over many years to be known as Ada's gate.

The Jubilee Tree had been donated and planted in the churchyard (It was blessed by Rev Suzanne in early 2023 and a plaque was placed beside it.)

Concluding they reported that the last Quinquennial Inspection had been in 2019 and the last Triennial in 2021. This meant that both were due again in 2024.

The Chairman of the Parish Council thanked the Churchwardens for their Report.

- d) **Spitfire Memorial:** Brenda Foot reported that the Committee held £1,864.17 in funds and more money was hopefully being raised at the Coronation event through the Junior Cake Competition. Thanks was given to all those who helped maintain the site throughout the last year. The recent installation of a gifted bench was welcomed. One concern related to damage being caused by horses being ridden on the grass leaving footprints. It was hoped that those responsible could be contacted and the matter resolved.

The Chairman of the Parish Council thanked Brenda for her Report.

- e) **Recreation Ground Trust:** Ian Whitehall reported that the Trust had had a successful year but was struggling with electricity costs spiralling. They had renovated the Pavilion. Funds continued to be raised with raffles and donations. Unfortunately, the 2022 car wash had needed to be cancelled because of the Queen's death but this year's was planned for 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023. A Village Day and Camp Out was planned for the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2023. The Recreation Ground would be used for the Coronation Celebrations. The Trust had recently had some challenges in regard to grass cutting and vehicle damage, but it was hoped that these had been resolved.

The Chairman of the Parish Council thanked Ian for his Report.

#### **MIN 7. Report from Wiltshire Council Representative:**

Wiltshire Councillor Howard Greenman had been unable to attend but had provided a written Report that was read to the Meeting.

He commented that it was his 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Parish Report and that we seemed to be gradually emerging from the grip of Covid19 although there could be no doubt a dark era that has left its' mark. That together with the continuing war in the Ukraine

and recent industrial unrest had faced Wiltshire Council with some challenges on a number of fronts. He would deal with a couple of them; the first one coming with an invitation too.

There was little doubt that the NHS had experienced considerable pressures on their capacity and waiting times across the spectrum of health provision had suffered as a consequence. One area in which necessary support could be given was that of providing a safe environment for those well enough to leave hospital, but not yet ready to return home. This may be because they were waiting for adaptations to be made for their home, or simply because they need time to recover or gain confidence. Wiltshire Council were working closely with the NHS then to launch a new service, the 'Shared Lives Home from Hospital Service'. Wiltshire Council were looking for Shared Lives Carers to help deliver this very important service for periods of up to 12 weeks. Shared Lives Carers were paid £850 per week per person, for the Home from Hospital service. Carers were self-employed and eligible for tax breaks and could claim mileage and have access to a range of other Wiltshire Council benefits.

He posed the questions. Could you help ensure that our hospitals run more efficiently and that our doctors and nurses were not run ragged, and additionally that patients were able to recuperate well? More information was available at 'Becoming a carer-Wiltshire Council'. Thank you.

He advised that Wiltshire Council's budgets were under pressure too although happily Wiltshire Council were not suffering the budgetary difficulties some neighbouring authorities were, with external auditors and responsible finance officers alike refusing to sign off the budgets. There was no room for complacency though, although their budget of £465m was well placed to ensure a balanced operating budget for the next few years. Budgetary spend and increases of particular note were;

- Whole Life pathway (mental health, autism, learning disabilities) £96m, an increase of £11m,
- Living and Ageing well (adult care) £83m, an increase of £15m.
- Families and Children, £63m, an increase of £2m.
- Environment which includes waste and recycling, £48m, an increase of £4m.
- Highways and Transport £41m, an increase of £3m.
- Education and skills £29m, an increase of £6m.

On another note he had received a number of emails reference waste and recycling over the last year and was conscious of some areas of concern and in fact complaint too. It had been suggested to him that Wiltshire Council needed to be more focused on food waste recycling and he agreed, although it was an expensive service to implement. He was hopeful though that by his next report Wiltshire Council will have a food recycling program in place. In the meantime he asked for people to please note that Wiltshire Council were offering discounted food composters called a Green Johanna for £60 (normally £129.99). More information was online at 'Reducing your waste and composting- Wiltshire Council.'

There had been some complaints too about refuse collectors investigating the contents of bins to ensure the contents were in the correct bin. Wiltshire Council received £2.24m in the first six months of this year for recycling commodity. However this sum was very much reduced if there was contamination so by way of reminder he asked people to please note the following:

- Only recyclables are put in blue bins, not general waste or nappies.
- Flexible or soft plastics such as bread bags and packaging film or carrier bags should be placed in residual waste.
- Polystyrene and non-paper wrapping paper to be put into residual waste.
- Scrap metals such as biscuit tins can be recycled but car parts cannot.

And finally, Wiltshire Council had now introduced a kerbside battery collection service. Batteries such as DC, AA, AAA, 9V and button-type batteries could now be recycled. Please put them in a sealed transparent plastic bag on top of the blue lined bin.

On a personal note he continued to serve on the Health Select Committee hence his passion for the Shared Lives Home from Hospital service above, and he remained Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee which had seen a number of challenges from planning applications over the last year from Waste Incinerators and Solar Farms to large scale house build programs.

As an authority they continued to be under the cosh with an apparent shortfall in the five year housing land supply, which was a government set target for housing delivery. He had made a number of representations to central government including writing directly to Michael Gove MP over this unfair metric, which did force in his view house build programs in communities where it would be inappropriate. Correspondence he had received from The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities assured him that planning policy was changing in this regard. However, what it also made clear was the continued need to have a Neighbourhood Plan in place. He was pleased to report that although greater weight had been given in the past to Neighbourhood Plans of less than two years old, that would be dispensed with, and more authority given to the decision maker, that being Wiltshire Council. In his view then Neighbourhood Plan Teams have everything to play for and must continue to secure their own Neighbourhood Plan for their own communities particularly where there was not one in place at the present time.

In conclusion he thanked all once again for their time and support too over the last year. The Parishes he represented once again had proved a delight to work with and made his job a lot easier and more pleasant in the process. Should anyone need his help or advice please contact him on his Wiltshire Council email address.

The Chairman of the Meeting thanked Councillor Greenman in his absence for his advice, continued involvement and assistance during the past year.

#### **MIN 8. Public Questions and General Discussion of Parish Issues:**

- CPRE Best Kept Village Competition 2023:** It was confirmed that the Parish Council had agreed to enter the Wiltshire CPRE Best Kept Village Competition.
- King Charles III Coronation Celebrations:** It was confirmed that the Parish would celebrate the Coronation on the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2023 with a service in St Mary's Church at 10.30am and a "big lunch" and music from midday at the Recreation Ground. On the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023 there would be a "Big Help Out" starting at 10.00am giving the chance to tidy up Seagry, meeting at the Recreation Ground and a flier had been produced that would be delivered to all households.
- Seagry Neighbourhood Plan:** The Neighbourhood Plan was now 2 years old and was being used by the Parish Council and Wiltshire Council in decision-making. It would soon reach a stage where less weight would be taken of the

policies and advice had been received that in a year or so it would be necessary to review the Plan. A similar process would need to be followed with a Steering Group taking the lead.

- d) **Traffic Speeds:** The Parish Council was thanked for their efforts to date, with the hope that speed reduction methods would be introduced leading to more physical Police visits to identify persistent speeding offenders. Varying methods of physical calming methods were raised including the possible provision of speed bumps and chicanes. There were disadvantages with those, but all solutions would be considered.
- e) **Seagry CE Primary School:** Mike Barber briefly commented that the School, part of the Diocese of Bristol Academy Trust Schools, had gone from strength to strength. Money was tight but lots of good work was being done. He thanked the School for hosting the Annual Parish Meeting that evening.

#### **CLOSURE OF MEETING:**

Clr M Barber, the Parish Council Chairman thanked all those who had attended the Annual Parish Meeting and closed the Meeting at 8.46pm.

Signed:

Councillor:

Date: