

WANBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of Wanborough Parish Council held on **13th July 2009** in Hooper's Field pavilion, Rotten Row, Wanborough at 19:30.

PRESENT: Mr C Offer, Dr A Phillipson, Mr W J Smith, Mr G Sumner, Mr W Suter, Mr R Whitfield and 2 members of the Public.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs P P Shepherd (Clerk and RFO).

1 Apologies: Mr A Bennett, Mr B Biggs, Mr C Hayes, Mr D Hayward and Mrs K Pearson.

2 Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd June 2009 had been circulated to all Parish Councillors. The minutes were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

The meeting was adjourned for Public questions.

Public question: A member of the Public commented that the proposed Parish Council expenditure on a flood management plan would be a form of double taxation, as this type of flooding assessment should be carried out by, and is the responsibility of, other agencies.

GS replied that Swindon Borough Council, the Environment Agency, Thames Water etc have passed the responsibility down the line, to date.

CO replied that this is not Wanborough Parish Council's responsibility.

It was agreed that further discussion would be deferred until the next agenda item.

Public question: If the Parish Council produces such a report they might be deemed to be negligent if they do not implement the recommendations contained in the report.

JS replied that was not the purpose of the report. It was intended to be used to lever action from the agencies that should be responsible for carrying out the flood protection work.

Public question: A member of the public asked what Wanborough Parish Council planned to do next; following Anne Snelgrove MP's declined invitation to attend a Public meeting, to discuss residents' views on the proposed Eastern Development area, and the summary report received from her, relating to the multi-agency flooding meeting which she attended on 1st May 2009.

The Clerk reported that these documents had been received since the last Parish Council meeting, held on 22nd June 2009, and that they had been circulated to Councillors and posted on the village website. BS confirmed that this correspondence would be included on the agenda for the next Parish Council

meeting, to be held on 27th July 2009, and that Councillors would have the opportunity to debate them fully then.

GS commented that Michael Wills MP for North Swindon had been instrumental in co-ordinating the flood prevention work carried out in Covingham. It was believed that he intended to speak to Anne Snelgrove MP about her declining Wanborough Parish Council's invitation to attend a proposed Public meeting to discuss the EDA. CO asked whether the Parish Council might take the alternative approach of a small group visiting AS MP to discuss the issues of the EDA and flooding; in a less confrontational manner. AP said that it might be appropriate to attend her constituency surgery. AS MP might also be approached via our Ward Councillor, and Swindon Borough Council Officers.

Public question: No minutes had been received relating to AS MP's meeting with the Environment Agency and Thames Water held at the time of the floods, a year after the event.

The Parish Council would consider sending a formal response to AS MP's summary report letter.

A member of the Public said that she would email, or send a disc, containing the information on the Commonhead roundabout flyover, produced by the Highways Agency.

The meeting resumed at 20:00.

3 Wanborough Parish Council Flood Management Plan.

BS reported that the Parish Council had received three fee proposals for a Parish Flood Management Plan. Michael Wills MP had exerted pressure to get the remedial work done in Covingham Parish. No progress had been made with SBC, Thames Water and the Environment Agency. The quotes range in value roughly between £3k, £4k and £6k for the survey. There is some concern that we might be committing to a lot more expenditure for enforcement. The formation of a Flooding Action Group had also been suggested.

AP asked whether we already understand the causes of the flooding problems and do we know the solutions?

JS replied that this is a complex issue and we don't know the cause; other than a long historic build up of problems.

GS and BS reported briefly on the meeting held earlier this year between SBC Highways Officers Nick Smith and Glyn Bennett and GS, BS, JS and the Clerk. The promised report on the problems experienced at Springlines and The Beanlands

area has not been forthcoming.

AP commented that the Parish Council must insist on improved drainage as part of the infrastructure requirements for the EDA.

CO reiterated that the Parish Council has tried many approaches to the flooding problems in the village.

AP commented that **we need to decide if any report would in fact help us to achieve our aim of inducing various agencies to take the necessary corrective action?**

The Clerk advised the Parish Council that it must be able to justify the expenditure of a relatively large proportion of the precept, on a project benefiting a comparatively small number of residents compared to the whole electorate of approximately 1400, to the internal and external auditors.

RW was invited by BS to make his comments, and he said that we do need to do something.

BS said that we can justify the expenditure.

AP said that moving on from his previous question, **we would then need to decide which proposal to choose?** He stated that, having considered the nature of the proposed reports, he concluded that none of them would help us achieve our aims. He also added, do we employ an organisation or do we do it ourselves?

BS summarised emails received from DH, AB and KP giving their opinions on the electronic discussion on this issue that had ensued prior to the meeting; in order that their views be known. The Clerk commented that, to the best of her knowledge, CH and BB had not made written representations as part of the discussion.

The resolution was proposed:

“The Parish Council agrees in principle to spend funds on instructing the production of a Parish Flood Plan, the amount to be strictly limited by up to an additional 10% expenditure.”

JS, RW and GS voted in favour of the resolution. AP and CO voted against the resolution, and both commented that they did not think that this was the correct decision. **The resolution was therefore carried by a majority vote of 3 Members to 2 Members.**

The following fee proposals had been received:

- Carl Collins, of CPLC Water and Environment Ltd.: **£3,000** excluding VAT, statutory authority and regulator fees, digital mapping and travel costs;
- Matthew Elliott, WYG Engineering: **£6,750** excluding VAT;
- Dr Rob Sweet, Senior Flood Risk Specialist, of Scott Wilson Ltd.: **£4,400** excluding VAT. In addition, an allowance of £400 should be made for the purchase of data including Ordnance Survey digital mapping (approximately £200 for the study area) and other data where necessary. Agreement will be

sought from Wanborough Parish Council prior to expenditure to ensure costs are justified.

AP said that he would prefer Scott Wilson, as they are a larger organisation with more professional accreditation.

Votes were cast for each proposal in turn. **It was resolved that the Parish Council would accept the proposal from Carl Collins as 3 Members voted for this proposal. The resolution was therefore carried by a majority vote of 3 Members to 1 Member.**

The Parish Council decided that external funding would be sought.

AP left at 21:15.

The intention of the Parish Council is to pursue the “powers” using the report; by sending copies of the report to all agencies identified during the preceding discussions. A digital copy would also be uploaded, as a pdf file, to the village website.

An open letter would be prepared for the September issue of The Lyden Magazine asking residents for financial contributions towards the report, and informing residents that the Parish Council has tried all other options. It was suggested that the Parish Council might also take a stand at the Wanborough Summer Show in order to invite financial contributions and inform the residents of the work that it does. Contributions would be sought from SBC, via our Ward Councillor, and from Anne Snelgrove MP. The Clerk suggested asking for a contribution from the Environment Agency, as we will potentially be duplicating their work.

Meeting closed at 21:35.

Date on next meeting Monday 27th July 2009.