**FYFIELD AND WEST OVERTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES** of the **JOINT ANNUAL PARISH MEETINGS** held on Monday 300th April 2018 in the Kennet Valley Hall at 6.30 for 7.00pm.

**PRESENT:** Cllr N Fisk (Chr), Cllr A Baring, Cllr S Nicholls, Cllr G Emberlin, Cllr J Turner, Cllr D Woolley, Cllr J Drew & Cllr L Davies.

**IN ATTENDANCE**: Mrs S Roberts (Clerk), Unitary Cllr J Davies & 18 parishioners.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**: Cllr R Green & PCSO Lucy Stonestreet.

Refreshments were served at the beginning of the meeting.

**1. MINUTES** of last year's meeting were circulated and displayed; these had already been approved at the AGM last year.

##### 2. CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR – Nick Fisk

The Chair welcomed everyone present.

This year has been a year of steady improvements to the safety and visual impacts on the three villages that are part of the combined parish of Fyfield and West Overton. As the previous Chair, Ruth Lamdin, remarked in the last report we are two parishes, but three villages and each village has its own very particular character. It is pleasing to see that each village maintains its own character regardless of the changes in population.

In terms of safety we have seen the introduction of the 20mph speed limit in Lockeridge, possibly the first such limit in a rural setting. The residents of the village worked hard to achieve this and put in a considerable amount of funding themselves. We are monitoring the impact of the new speed limit to ensure it continues to be observed, although the road itself is a significant arterial route between the A4 and the villages to the south in the Pewsey Vale and beyond.

In West Overton we have been monitoring the speed on Church Hill and intend to introduce new signage to improve safety to pedestrians and horse riders. The later, in particular, are always a welcome sight on the roads and by-ways and, with the expansion of a number of studs in the parish, continue to be part of our rural way of life.

In terms of visual impacts, we have seen a number of pleasing improvements to houses and larger estates in the parish and the parish council takes care in supporting opportunities of refurbishment and modernization in general. The development at Manor Yard in West Overton has definitely improved the character of the village to the benefit of all, whilst on the outskirts of Lockeridge, schemes have been approved on larger estates to replace dilapidated outbuildings with new equestrian buildings sympathetic to the rural setting.

In West Overton, various residents came together to repaint the telephone box and turn it into a book exchange library and this has been a great advert for a community project as well as improving the visual aspect.

Sadly several of our older folk have died this year, but there are an increasing number of younger families moving into our villages and we need to take into account their needs when planning ahead.

Looking forward, the challenge for the Parish Council is to campaign vigorously for improvements to infrastructure, in particular around technology. Outworking and working from home are steadily becoming a feature of modern life but rural villages are always having to compete with larger towns and cities for better access to mobile and internet connectivity.

Last year, there was an application to site a mobile transmitter mast behind the Bell in West Overton. The Parish Council objected to this application on the basis that it only properly served West Overton and we wanted coverage for all three villages. Since then the application has been withdrawn but we are continuing to lobby mobile telephone providers and our MP to seek a better site for a mobile mast.

Residents will no doubt be interested in a scheme to improve Wi-Fi connectivity and I am pleased to note that the Marlborough Area Development Trust (MADT) is leading a new project in Lockeridge. The Trust has developed a Free Community Wi-Fi programme that is completely free of charge and has been installed already at Kennet Valley Hall.   A stronger Wi-Fi presence in Lockeridge will enable local residents to use ‘Wi-Fi calling’ or Skype (or whatever App their networks approve) to make and receive mobile calls, make and receive text messages when they're sent/delivered, and also surf the internet, whilst in the village.  The latest installation has been in the Who’d A Thought It and we will be monitoring the results and, if positive, will look to introduce similar projects in West Overton and Fyfield.

In the next few weeks, we expect to receive a sizeable amount of money from the 106 agreement which will provide much needed play equipment at Knights Close for our growing population of young people. It has taken us over 18 months to get to this position, having had to negotiate a new lease with Aster for the land. Once achieved, we intend to form a local residents group to plan for the new installation.

In terms of forthcoming events, we look forward later in the year when the Parish come together to commemorate the end of WW1. The event will take place on November 11th at 2.30pm at the Kennet Valley Hall and there will be a ceremony and tree planting. The school has agreed for the children to put together a display and we expect that there will be refreshments provided after the ceremony. We hope to see many residents from the three villages.

We are always looking to improve our methods of communication. It is pleasing to see the introduction on the community web site Nextdoor in West Overton and we use this often for promoting parish updates and news. We hope to promote this in Lockeridge and Fyfield as an excellent method of reaching out to residents.

Our website is always there and we are about to upgrade it and make it more user-friendly. All official notices go up on the 3 noticeboards.

Our council is never at full strength, but we are pleased to have co-opted three councillors this year. Jill Turner and Jane Drew have come on board to represent Lockeridge and Andy Miller to represent West Overton. We are looking for one councillor for West Overton and one for Fyfield to bring the council up to full strength. If you are interested in participating, do let me know.

Thank you to all the councillors who give their time, knowledge and experience to help make our villages better places to live in and especially to Sophie Roberts, our clerk, who is the ‘glue’ that holds the Parish Council together and for whom we owe a special thanks for all her hard work.

**3. REPORTS – Committees & Working Groups**

Cllr S Nicholls explained about the forthcoming Avebury Transport Group exhibition to be held in the Kennet Valley Hall – the date towards the end of May will be advertised shortly.

Cllr J Turner explained about the proposal for Automatic Number Plate Recognition in Lockeridge.

An email from PCSO Lucy Stonestreet was read out. There has only bee one crime recorded in West Overton in March which was theft of domestic heating oil from an oil tank. She asked for parishioners to be reminded to be vigilant when visiting beauty spots, report anything suspicious and keep an eye out for vulnerable tourists.

Please see attached reports.

# 4. Report from Wiltshire Unitary Councillor Jane Davies

Unitary Cllr J Davies provided a verbal update. The Wiltshire Council budget although under huge pressure is expecting to have a funding surplus within 5 years. Emphasis this year is on protecting the vulnerable, boosting the economy and supporting communities to become more self-reliant.

The C38, Lockeridge to Alton Barnes road is scheduled to be resurfaced this year at a cost of £22,000.

She reminded the Parish Council to take advantage of Area Board and Youth Network funding.

**5. Friends of The Ridgeway – an illustrated talk by Anthony Burdall**

Anthorny Burdall, the Chairman of the Friends of The Ridgeway gave a fascinating talk about the ancient Ridgeway, the National Trail, it’s geography, history and environment and the objectives and activities of the Friends of he Ridgeway.

The Friends of the Ridgeway was originally set up in 1982 to campaign against 4x4’s using and damaging the Ridgeway. They are committed to preserving and increasing awareness the Ridgeway with plans to extend and improve it and ultimately increase the numbers who use it.

The Ridgeway is one of 13 National Trails managed by separate partners on behalf of Natural England, more information can be found on the Natural England website.

The Ridgeway is the oldest road in Europe forming a highway between forts and barrows. In 1750 it became a single road from one ancient monument to another and used a drove road to London for herding sheep and other livestock.

The current threats to the Ridgeway are the regular use by off road vehicles, travellers and adjacent planning issues. There is currently no ban on vehicles using the Ridgeway at Avebury but it is hoped there will be in the near future.

Their vision is for the Ridgeway to become the most used National Trail in the country.

Cllr Nick Fisk thanked Mr Burdall for his highly informative talk and slide presentation.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm

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