MINETY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 25 April 2019

Venue – Village Hall Minety

**Chair** Mr E Morrison

**Councillors** Mrs S Crompton; Mr I Cain; Mr A Read; Mr J Shephard; Mr A Slucock

**In attendance**

Ms V Hourihane (Clerk); Wilts Cllr Chuck Berry

###### **Present:** 3 members of the public, names were noted.

###### Meeting commenced at 7.00pm.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the procedure.

1. **Apologies accepted by the meeting:**

Were received from Parish Councillors Dupree and Gardner

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the previous annual meeting held on 25 April 2019 were approved by all present as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

1. **Introduction / Chairman’s Report**

The Chairman commenced by introducing himself as being only recently in post for the administrative year to – April 21 since the previous Chairman had resigned. Due to the pandemic, last year’s Annual meeting had been cancelled and this would be a report of the intervening 24 months. Cllrs Cook, D’Ambrosio, Hilliar and Jonathan Shephard had resigned due to family and work commitments, replacements had come forward, Ian Cain John Shephard and Andrew Slucock, giving complement of eight of the required nine Councillors. The Chairman thanked all the Councillors for their support and work during the previous 24 months, along with the assistance of Cllr Berry and the clerk, Veronica Hourihane, who will be stepping down later in the year after eight years’ service.

The Chairman encouraged everyone to report issues such as fly-tipping, potholes or pavement issues, and blocked road drains or ditches through the My Wilts app or website, as the Parish Council has no powers to enforce any action in these areas.

**Covid support**

During the initial stages of lockdown last year, the Parish Council created a food bank to support any families or individuals in need, and were helped by Jamie Denman of The Vale pub with purchasing initial supplies and by Mike Rees of Forensiclean with preparing the storage area to food-grade cleanliness standard. The Chairman took the opportunity to publicly thank them for their help. It became clear after a number of months that Minety had more to give than it required to take, so the decision was taken to close down the food bank and donate the supplies to the Cirencester food bank in November. These donations were gratefully received, and updates are still received from them. The Parish Council also created and coordinated a support scheme to help people with shopping and prescriptions in the early stages of the pandemic, benefitting many parishioners who were shielding or self-isolating, the Chairman thanked Sarah Crompton and Rob Hilliar especially for leading on this front, and a big thanks to the network of volunteers who ensured everyone who asked for help was helped.

One silver lining to the Covid pandemic is Minety now has a successful community shop, which has proved invaluable to many through the last year. Congratulations to the team for getting such a successful project off the ground, and good luck with future developments.

**Flood protection**

It is no secret that Minety suffers with flooding, even taking its name from the water mint which is found in the wet ground all around the parish. The Parish Council has, therefore, made flood prevention a priority this year and has spent many hours visiting parishioners and speaking with Wiltshire Council, Wessex Water and the Environment Agency to try and reduce the risks of future flooding events in the parish. John Shephard has been key in this work, and the Chairman thanked him for his efforts. The Chairman also thanked all the parishioners and landowners that have been spoken to over the last few months, as the vast majority of the meetings have been very positive. There is still some work to be done, but the parish is in a much better situation now than in previous years.

**Website**

The Parish Council was made aware early last year that all parish council websites were required to meet WCAAG compliance standards by Sep-20, and the previous website provider was not able to offer this. Therefore a new provider had to be sourced and the Parish Council has ended up with a great new website and it is hoped everyone has had chance to see.

**Speeding and road safety**

There are two Speed Indicator Devices in the village now, plus an Auto Speedwatch detector which is being considered by police forces across the country. High speeds are regularly seen in the 30mph zones and the Parish Council would encourage more people to join the community Speedwatch group to enable patrols on more regular occasions.

**Minety Playing Fields Association**

The MPFA continues to be a social hub for the village and completed a kitchen refurbishment during 2020. The playing fields now has food vans making regular appearances, which has proven to be a very popular decision by the MPFA. The Chairman thanked Andrew O’Dell in particular for ensuring the facility has been made available and kept Covid-secure and within all the government guidance at each stage of lockdown easing. The Chairman also thanked the other volunteers on the MPFA for arranging food van visits, coordinating with the sports clubs and helping with drinks service on what have

proven to be some very busy days recently. Personally, the Chairman would like to see the facilities at the playing fields improved even more in the coming years. Fingers crossed for some exciting times ahead.

**Planning**

Planning has been a real challenge since late 2019, especially with the number and scale of

renewable energy schemes that have been proposed, so the parish council has created a position dedicated to leading on planning proposals. Also, a dedicated group of parishioners from Hankerton and Minety formed the Minety Solar Farm Action Group to challenge the Upper Minety/Hankerton proposal made by JBM Solar/Pegasus Group, and between them they must have dedicated hundreds of hours collating information and challenging Wiltshire council on the scale and location of the development, and the overall strategy they adopt in relation to renewable energy proposals. The Chairman thanked them on behalf of the Parish Council for their efforts, and hoped the result is a refusal in this case.

**Annual Clean Up Day**

This year saw the first Minety clean-up day since Jacqui Hampton stepped down from the organiser’s role after 16 very successful years, for which she was thanked, and things had to be done differently to previous years due to Covid. This meant everyone using their own equipment and ensuring social distancing etc, and people were encouraged to go out when they had the opportunity, rather than a fixed 2-hour period. There was a great turnout over the weekend, even with the terrible weather. The Parish Council also recognised the efforts of one parishioner who has been doing her own clean up all year round, rewarding her with some garden centre vouchers.

**Other developments**

The Parish Council initiated a Volunteer Emergency Telephone System (01666 800212) to help lone rescuers in the event that a defibrillator is required, and the rescuer is unable to leave the casualty. The defibrillator at the playing fields has been upgraded to a newer version.

Councillors are also investigating whether they can (re)start a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in the parish.

**Wiltshire Councillor’s Report**

Cllr Berry reported the Wiltshire Council has a new leader, several new cabinet members resulting in a change of expertise levels. The current budget shows a deficit of £45m (about 10% of the annual spend). This is due to the loss of income and increased expenditure during the pandemic. It was noted that 65% of the annual spend went on vulnerable adults and children, the remaining 35% goes on universal services, road repairs, grass cutting etc. At this point, it is not known if there will be further relief from the Government as last year Wiltshire was one of the first Councils to declare Chapter 14 (which means the Council is nearing bankruptcy), this initiated relief from Government. It was noted that the exercise of community support, outside of the Council, has been of great assistance to all concerned and Cllr Berry thanked all those involved. There are challenges meeting the housing allocations identified in the Local Plan; should the proposed developments to the South East of Chippenham and Melksham, areas in North Wiltshire may be at risk. The Brexit affect, on housing needs, has yet to be analysed. There is a possibility that there will be a push from Government to force developers to utilise sites already designated. It was noted that within the County, Swindon take up 60% of the police deployment.

1. **Open Forum**

Representatives from local organisations were invited to introduce themselves and give a brief report.

A representative from the Village Hall Management Committee thanked the Parish Council for the recently received grant. Most of the interior redecoration has been completed and the exterior will be next on the agenda.

There were no further reports from the floor.

The Chairman thanked all those present for attending and, as there were no further questions, the meeting was closed.

Meeting closed at 7:55 pm