

**MINUTES OF THE WARNFORD PARISH MEETING held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024**  
**at 7.30pm in Warnford Village Hall**

**Chair:** As there is currently no Chair, the meeting was taken by the Clerk/RFO, Lucy Hutchinson

**Clerk:** Karen Cornelius standing in for Lucy Hutchinson

There were 23 in attendance plus Warnford's two WCC Councillors, its HCC Councillor and 2 representatives from Vitacress.

The papers referred to had been posted on the parish website in advance.

**1.Apologies** were received from 12 parishioners

**2.Minutes of the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 AGM:** proposed by Clare Swinstead and seconded by Stephen Short, these were approved and signed.

**3.Updates on the watercress beds from Vitacress:** Rean Lategan (UK Watercress Manager) and Leah Mathias-Collins (Group Environmental Manager) updated the meeting on the status of the watercress beds. Currently there is no plan to put them back into operation as demand for watercress remains static. A colony of water voles has been found in one bed and cannot be disturbed without a licence. Beds will be tidied and some watercress planted to help keep them clear but until a decision is made about future plans to eg i). Put some/all beds back into service, ii). Sell beds or iii) create wildlife reserve no definitive action can be taken. The River Meon Conservation Volunteers offered help with management of the beds, however this must be overseen by Vitacress due to insurance around Health & Safety. Any proposals must be sent to Vitacress for consideration and risk assessment. Vitacress confirmed that there is work happening currently, Himalyan Balsalm was noted as a concern and will be removed. They also committed to visiting some Warnford residents in the near future to discuss specific issues raised. Any problems with the beds should be notified to Vitacress, contact details will be provided to the Clerk.

**4.WCC Councillors' report:** As Cllr Neil Bolton had to leave early, this report was dealt with next. He and Cllr Jerry Pett gave an update on current activities

including review of the Boomtown licence following the fatality this year, contracted timescales for removal of fly-tipping (there is a link on the Warnford website to report fly-tipping) and revisions to the planning process with the governments new targets although this will have limited impact on the SDNP area.

**5.Chair:** Lucy thanked those who helped with parish matters, including Phil Chadder (Parish Lengthsman), Andrew Bayes (website & SIDs) and David Corbett & Pauline Swan (defibrillator). She also expressed thanks to Mark Rogers, during his 10 year tenure as Chair Mark brought energy and enthusiasm to the role. Whilst he was Chair WPM was involved in issues such as checking that the River Meon in Warnford was not at risk from a nitrate scheme, the protection of the Sheep Bridge ancient monument, stopping the 4x4 use of the green lanes, setting up SIDS and much more.

The position of Chair is a great opportunity and anyone who thinks they may be interested should talk to Lucy in the first instance.

## **6.Financials:**

**a)Receipts & Payments 1Apr-30Sept 2024:** no questions were received on these, proposed by Stephen Short and seconded by Clare Swinstead, they were approved.

**b)Budget & Precept 2025-6:** Lucy noted that, if approved, the grants sought would exceed available income and therefore eat into capital.

**i)Playground:** Requested £500, this is an important part of the village hosting the church fete and other celebrations, ongoing costs include insurance, managing ash tree die back and topping up bark in the play area. The grant was approved by the meeting:

**ii)Village Hall:** Requested £300, as in previous years. The hall is continuing to make a loss post-covid, however; there are plans for a new website which should help increase footfall. The grant was approved by the meeting.

**iii)Parish News:** Requested £100, this was deemed an essential with the feeling being the paper copy is more likely to be read. The grant was approved by the meeting.

**iv) West Meon & Warnford Care Group:** This is the first grant request from this group (£100). The group provides an essential service to local parishioners including transport to medical appointments and provision of 'lifeline' personal alarms. The grant was approved by the meeting.

The other possible expenditure on the Budget was £200 on **SIDs:** Their effectiveness was discussed and overall the meeting felt that they did slow drivers down when they were in use. The meeting agreed SIDs remain useful and approved their continued use.

Grants totalling £1100 had been approved plus £200 for SIDs, this expenditure would exceed available income and so an increase in the precept was discussed noting that Warnford has one of the lowest precepts in the area. The meeting approved an increase in the precept of £200 to £2100. The budget was approved on this basis.

**c) Clerk's Expenses:** The meeting approved the Clerk's expenses of £50.

**7.Planning:** Lucy took the meeting through the pending applications, noting that the Old Calf Shed applicants are appealing against the last decision. Parishioners were advised that they can be added to an email distribution list and receive details of planning applications, they can provide comments on them, which is helpful as their comments can be fed into WPM's response to these applications. Parishioners are of course free to make their own comments direct to the planners,

## **8. HCC Councillor's Report:**

Cllr Malcolm Wallace spoke about the recent consultations and confirmed that the Bishops Waltham tip will remain open and that the 67 bus has not been cut, however HCC has essentially run out of money and is providing the legal minimum level of services as a result. Winter services (e.g. salting) will be less, pothole repairs restricted to major routes and loss of the Meon Valley Community bus funding.

## **9.A.O.B**

**a)Lengthsman:** next visit is the 15<sup>th</sup> November, any suggestions for work to be done should be given to Phil Chadder;

**b) Touchet Trust:** reminder that grants for educational purposes are available to any age group, the contact for Warnford is Jeremy Barber;

**c) Village Website:** There is much information, including on the history of the village and details of events. A new web address should be set up soon making it easier to find; and

**d)** There is a **new email address for the Chair** which the Clerk is looking after until a new appointment is made.

**10. Date of next meeting (the AGM):** this will be in May 2025.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm.