

MINUTES Of a Meeting of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 17th February 2014 at Crown Chambers, 7 Market Place, Melksham at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllr. Richard Wood (Chairman); Cllrs; Alan Baines; Rolf Brindle; Paul Carter; Gregory Coombes (*until 8.12pm*); Steve Petty; and Pat Nicol.

Apologies: Cllrs John Glover; Mike Mills; Mike Sankey; Terry Chivers; Trudy Fennell and Adam Nardell.

- 492/13 **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Carter declared an interest in the item relating to the Mobile Home Park as a resident. The Clerk and Assist Clerk declared an interest in the items relating to staffing matters and the Asst Clerk left the meeting when the items were discussed.
- 493/13 **Draft dates for Council Meetings 2014/15:** Draft dates for the next Council year meetings 2014/15 were circulated, as follows:
Full Council 2014: 16th June, 21st July, 8th September; 13th October, 8th December
2015: 19th January; 16th February; 23rd March (APM); 13th April; 18th May (Annual Council)
Planning 2014: 2nd June; 11th August; 29th September 10th November.
2015: 5th January; 2nd February; 2nd March; 27th April.
Finance 2014: 2nd June; 10th November
Staffing 2014: 30th June; 2015 5th January.
The Clerk requested Councillors to advise if there were any problems with these dates.
- 494/13 **Procedure for Confidential Minutes:** The Clerk reported that in the past when the Council had to go into Committee, for reasons as detailed in Standing Orders, then the Minutes had recorded just the decision made. However, recently the Council has had to deal with more complex items and the need has arisen for the main facts to be recorded as Confidential Minutes. The Council discussed the suggested process detailed in the Clerk's report. It was agreed that Councillors were bound to confidentiality by their Code of Conduct but a process should be put in place regarding the signing and storing of Confidential Minutes; this would be best done by adding a clause to the Standing Orders. It was noted that a change to Standing Orders proposed at the next Full Council meeting, would then stand adjourned without discussion to the next Full Council meeting. Councillors were happy that Confidential Minutes be sent out to Councillors with Agenda papers, as the other Minutes were distributed, and it was noted that information would not be fundamentally different than Confidential material contained in the Budget that was distributed that way. The Clerk reported that the information in the Confidential Minutes had been shared with the relevant Committees.
Resolved: 1) *The Council add a clause to their Standing Orders to cover the process of Confidential Minutes.* 2) *The Council take home the copies of Confidential Minutes 403/13, 463/13, 464/13 and 485/13 to read and confirm as a correct record at the Short Council Meeting on 24th March.*

It was agreed to suspend Standing Orders for a period of public participation.

- 495/13 **Public Participation (1):**
- a) **Update from Wiltshire Councillor, Roy While:**
- i) **Yellow lines at Halifax Road:** Cllr While advised that the contractor had now been instructed with work planned to be completed by 31st March, however this date was now weather dependant.
 - ii) **Wiltshire Council Budget:** The Budget was due to go before the Council on 25th February and was very tight as there will be no rise in Council Tax, with a £26 Million saving to be achieved.
 - iii) **Melksham Campus:** The planning application for the Campus had now been submitted with a decision expected at the end of April. It was a huge application with many detailed documents and plans. The Chairman asked if the Parish Council could received a copy of the application to review. Cllr While explained that the application could be viewed online but would see if he could provide an overview site plan for the Parish Council.

The Council re-convened.

- 496/13 **Minutes, 10th February Planning Committee: Resolved:** *The Minutes of this Planning Committee be formally approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.*
- 497/13 Arising from Min. 480/13b) **Section 106 Agreement funding for Land North of Cranesbill Road (East of Melksham Local Centre Land):** The Council discussed the idea of Open Air gym equipment and felt that this type of equipment was a good idea, and used extensively on the Continent but may be too expensive for this project. The Asst Clerk suggested that the £13,000 S106 funding could be used for match funding to try and obtain further grant funding. Councillors felt that a fitness trail could be a more cost effective project. **Resolved:** *The Council investigate the option of a Fitness Trail on the community sports facilities and footpath at the East of Melksham housing development.*
- 498/13 Arising from Min. 484/13 **Draft Solar Farm Policy:** It was noted that this item would be discussed at the next Planning Committee.
- 499/13 Arising from Min. 484/13c) **W13/06707 Shurnhold Solar Farm:** It was noted that further comments had not yet been submitted to the Planning Department following the supply of additional information sought. The Council noted an offer of £28,000 community benefit for this planning application. **Resolved:** *The Council comment to Wiltshire Council that they have no objections to this application.*
- 500/13 **Planning Committee Recommendations: Resolved:** *The Recommendation as detailed in Min. 485/13 be formally approved by the Council.*
- 501/13 **Planning applications: Resolved:** *The following application was reviewed and the following comment made:*
W/14/00988 22 St Athan Close, Bowerhill
Single storey rear extension and internal alterations.
Comments: *The Council have no objections as long as the workshop is for private use/hobbies and not for commercial use.*

502/13 **Planning Correspondence:**

a) **Core Strategy Housing numbers for villages:** The Council noted an update from David Way to inform that, due to the Inspector's request for a higher housing requirement for Wiltshire; (from 37,000 to 42,000 units) the remainder number for the villages was also likely to go up from 110 units to 130 units. This number would be split between the large villages of Atworth, Seend, Semington, Shaw/Whitley and Steeple Ashton. Out of 110 dwellings approved for the period 2006 – 2026, there had already been 58 completions. There was no maximum amount per village but there were policies restricting development to within the settlement boundaries of villages. The given number was the minimum amount for the remainder of the community area (excluding Melksham Town and Bowerhill Village)

503/13 **Minutes of Council Meeting, 20th January 2014: Resolved:** *The Minutes of this meeting be approved by the Council and signed by the Chair.*

It was agreed to suspend Standing Orders for a period of public participation.

504/13 **Public Participation (2):**

Arising from 439/13 **Proposed Warehouse extension, Bowerhill:** Wilts Cllr While reported that he had talked to Cllr Mills, Gompels and the Planning Office about this proposed planning application, and had been acting as a “middle man” for them. Gompels were not yet ready to make a planning application. Cllr While envisaged a public meeting to be held within the next 6 weeks.

The Council re-convened.

The Asst Clerk reported that the agents had rung the Council office to find contact details for Bowerhill Village Hall and she had put them in touch with Cllr Mills who was arranging a meeting with residents and Gompels on behalf of BRAG (Bowerhill Residents Action Group).

505/13 Arising from Min. 442/13 **East of Melksham Housing development – Notice Board:**

The Council reviewed the proposed site for a new notice board suggested by GreenSquare. There was concern that GreenSquare had described the site as “unobtrusive to residents” as the intention was for a site that had high footfall and would be seen by as many residents as possible. It was agreed that there may be better locations on the housing development, these may be owned by the developers rather than GreenSquare. There were also additional cost implications of the GreenSquare site as the notice board would require post mounting, and paving in front of it. The Clerk suggested a good time to search for alternative sites would be when the Council representatives walked the housing development with Colin Kennerson of Wiltshire Council in order to discuss S106 proposals for the area (*See Min 480/13a*). **Resolved:** 1) *The Council send a holding letter to GreenSquare thanking them for their proposal, but that the Council were currently reviewing other site options on the housing development. 2)The Council look for alternative sites.*

506/13 Arising from Min. 447/13 **MUGA at Hornchurch Road:** The Clerk reported that a planning application had been submitted for the MUGA and surrounding fencing. Cllr Mills had reported that 2 residents had expressed concerns over the fencing and might object. Councillors queried what the objection was and if it was possible concerns of the

noise of balls against the fence, although they felt that this was preferable to balls coming into gardens. It was noted that the MUGA was a long way from any housing.

- 507/13 Arising from 449/13b) **Area Board funding:** The Asst Clerk reported that BRAG had made an application to the Area Board for a community grant for the target/goal boards to enhance the MUGA specification. This would be considered at the April Area Board meeting in the new financial year; the Area Board had not yet issued details of the funding criteria for 2014/15.

It was agreed to suspend Standing Orders for a period of public participation.

508/13 **Public Participation (3):**
Area Board grant funding:

- a) **2014/15 Funding:** Wilts Cllr While reported that there would be money available for community grants via the Area Board in the next financial year but that the conditions might be quite different, with the possibility that CATG requirements might have priority over some grant applications.
- b) **BRAG application for MUGA enhancement:** Cllr While reported that he would be supporting the application for the MUGA enhancement with target/goal boards.
- c) **Bowerhill Village Hall application for solar panels:** Cllr While reported that at the Area Board meeting on 12th February the Bowerhill Village Hall had been awarded a grant for solar panels to be installed on the roof, Cllr While had supported this application.

The Council re-convened.

- 509/13 Arising from 451/13 **Future Grass Cutting contract 2014-2017:** The Asst Clerk reported that request for tenders had been sent to the Council's existing and previous grass cutting contractors and those that have expressed an interest in the past for previous contracts let. A public notice had been advertised in the Wiltshire Times, next edition of Melksham Independent News, on the Council notice boards and on its website.

A request had been made to the Shaw Village Hall committee for the specification for their grass cutting and maintenance contract for the playing field but had not yet been received and so the invitation to tender detailed that there may be other items to be quoted for at a later stage; this could also apply to the MUGA at Hornchurch Road if the Council have a small element of grass cutting on the land they adopt from Wiltshire Council. Other optional items had been included in the specification for Bowerhill Sports field to cover the emptying of bins and clearing of rubbish (plastic bottles) from the Sports field, if required in the future.

It was noted that the deadline for the tenders was midday on Monday 10th March and that Council representatives would be needed to open the tenders later that day.

Resolved: *A special Finance Committee be held on Monday 10th March at 3pm at Crown Chambers to open the tenders and then review and make a Recommendation on the approved contractor, for approval at the Short Council meeting on 24th March.*

510/13 **Neighbourhood Plan:**

- a) **Financial contribution:** The Chairman reported on the informal meeting held on 13th February with representatives of the Town and Parish Council, the Town and Parish Clerks and David Way, the designated Planning Officer for the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan. The Chairman explained that he was Chair of the Joint Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group but had invited David Way to chair the meeting as it was an informal meeting to agree the split of costs between the two Councils and David held a neutral position as a Wiltshire Council officer.

The Parish Council still held their view that the split of costs for the Neighbourhood Plan should be on a per capita basis; by electorate or number of houses which would give a 60 (MTC)/40 (MWPC) split. This would result in all residents in the Melksham area (Town and Parish) paying the same contribution each. The Town Council retained their view that the split should be 50/50 but the Parish Council representatives were still unclear as to the principle underlying this split.

The Town Council had wished to link CIL funding from new housing to the split between the two Councils but the Parish Council strongly felt that this was a separate issue. Any CIL contribution should be spent primarily on improving amenities overall for new and existing parishioners and should be related to new development needs rather than Neighbourhood Planning funding.

The Chairman reported that it was a difficult meeting, and that with the Councils retaining their individual positions, they had reached an en passé. At this stage, Cllr Jon Hubbard proposed that a compromise position be met, with a 5 (MTC) / 4 (MWPC) split being roughly halfway between the Town Council's position (50/50) and the Parish Council's position (per capita). Representatives of both Councils agreed to take this proposal forward to their respective Full Council meetings (both being held on 17th February) with the proposed compromise a way to move forward.

The Chairman invited Council members to put their views forward on the proposal.

Cllr Baines who attended the informal meeting, confirmed the Chair's report was an accurate synopsis. The Town Council felt that the costs should be split 50/50 as there were two councils, but there was an imbalance between the councils in terms of size, budget and number of residents, and therefore it was not an equitable solution. Cllr Baines emphasised that the split needed to be based on a verifiable basis otherwise it could be open to alteration in the future. Other local authorities had come to an agreement, with town and rural councils in agreement that each person in the Neighbourhood Plan area should pay the same amount. The fairest way was to base payment per council on the number of electors. A slight variation could be made by basing it on the number of households but this was more difficult to determine.

Cllr Petty agreed with Cllr Baines's view. Having discussed with various Councillors what the intention of the Town Council were for having a Joint Neighbourhood Plan he understood they were keen to be involved to influence housing development in the Parish..

Cllr Coombes asked if a Planning Officer was available to assist with the Neighbourhood Plan. The Chairman and Clerk confirmed that David Way was the

designated Planning Officer assigned to the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan and he had been attending meetings and assisting with the process.

Cllr Carter explained that as a new Councillor he didn't yet understand all the intricacies of the negotiations but his gut feel was that it should be based on a per capita basis.

The Chairman explained that he was minded to accept the compromise position as the alternative was that the Town Council could pull out of doing the Joint Plan, leaving the Parish Council with no choice except to do its own individual Plan and having to pay for the full cost of a Plan themselves. The Chair felt it would be foolish to not do a Plan as if the Parish Council do not designate sites for housing, and rule out other sites, then the Council will have passed up an opportunity to have their say on housing development in the Parish. He felt it was unwise for the Council to do the Plan on their own, just as a point of principle, and it cost a lot more money.

Cllr Baines commented that the Neighbourhood Plan represented much more of a vision of an area than just new housing development. It appeared that the Planning Inspector did not wholly accept that Neighbourhood Plans were sufficient to determine housing sites and would also be relying on the Strategic Housing DPD (Development Plan Document) being prepared. There were also other options to explore rather than producing a Plan themselves, with the possibility of joining with other rural parishes such as Shaw & Whitley and Beanacre working with Atworth.

Cllr Coombes was looking to the bigger picture and the National Planning Framework with the Town and Countryside Planning Act still giving a shortfall of 2 million houses across the Country. Cllr Coombes welcomed the Neighbourhood Planning process, whatever the contribution the Parish Council had to make, he wanted to ensure that the Plan proceeded.

Cllr Petty explained that he had concerns working with the Town Council as it would just give them a voice on what happens in the Parish; he would prefer to work on a joint Plan with the rural parishes. He felt unsure that the Neighbourhood Plan had got the teeth that it purported to, and in any case the Plan could not proceed until the Core Strategy was finalised.

The Chairman proposed that the Council accept the proposal from the informal meeting that the split of costs for the Neighbourhood Plan be split 5 (MTC) to 4 (MWPC). This was seconded by Cllr Coombes. The proposal was carried with 3 votes for, 2 against and 2 abstentions.

Resolved: *The Council accept the split of costs for the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan to be in the ratio 5/4 (with 5 Melksham Town Council and 4 Melksham Without Parish Council). (See also Min. 510/13e)*

Cllr Coombes left the meeting at 8.12pm.

It was agreed to suspend Standing Orders for a period of public participation.

- b) **Public Participation (4):** Wilts Cllr Roy While commented that he agreed with the Chairman in the importance of the Neighbourhood Plan and that if the Parish Council did not get involved now they would regret it in the future. The Town and Parish areas are inextricably linked, with future industrial expansion in Bowerhill rather than the Town, and it is right that the two Councils work together.

The Council re-convened.

- c) **Clerk's Professional advice & conduct of informal meeting:** The Clerk reported that she had advised the Chair against supporting the cost split being advocated by the Town Council as it was not a fair basis on which to split costs (i.e. Melksham Without would be paying more per elector than electors in Melksham Town). It did not tally with cost splits being proposed in other parts of Wiltshire where a town council was joining with another adjacent parish to produce one joint Plan. The Parish Council would now have to agree from which part of the budget the extra funding would come. The Town Council electorate was 11,405 and the Parish Council electorate was 6,484, a split of 6:4. The Town Precept was £371,110 compared with the Parish Council precept of £125,000; almost three times as much.

Councillors expressed concern and unhappiness about the informal meeting, the pressure to accept a compromise position and the resulting subsequent decision. It was intended to be an informal meeting between the two Council's representatives and they were unsure what role Cllr Jon Hubbard was undertaking at the meeting. Was he there as a Wiltshire Councillor or as Chair of Melksham Area Board or as the Town Council representative? The Town Council representatives were Cllr Terri Welch and Cllr Richard Wiltshire. Cllr Wiltshire did not attend but was still expected at the onset at the meeting so Cllr Hubbard was obviously not substituting for him. It was noted that Cllr Baines had substituted for Cllr Chivers with his permission, as Terry could not attend this meeting.

- d) **Terms of Reference clarification:** Councillors clarified and confirmed their understanding that the Joint Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group did not have delegated powers, but that any Plan had to be ratified by both the Full Councils.
- e) **Timescale for Financial Contribution:** Councillors discussed the timescale for the financial contribution agreed (*See Min. 510/13a*). There was concern that when the development of the old George Ward school site and the 2017 boundary review took place, the imbalance of electors between the Town and Parish would become even more unbalanced and unequal. Cllr Baines proposed that the financial contribution should be for the 2014/15 financial year only and then reviewed again. This was seconded by Cllr Nicol, and was carried by 4 votes, with 1 against and 1 abstention. **Resolved:** *The resolution that there be a 5:4 split of costs for the joint Neighbourhood Plan be applicable only for the financial year 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015.*
- f) **Site Selection & Neighbourhood Planning:** The Clerk reported that she attended this very useful training session on 3rd February and had provided feedback at the Planning Committee on 10th February. She urged Councillors to remember that expensive consultants were not always needed for such items as Strategic

Environmental Assessments (SEAs) as the Council could have the necessary experience in-house, or amongst residents.

- g) **Neighbourhood Planning information source on Parish Council website:** The Clerk reported that a whole host of Neighbourhood Planning information had been posted on the Parish Council website. This included notes from training sessions attended as well as nationally produced Guides, and those produced by Wiltshire Council. See News section “Neighbourhood Plan – Useful Information” on www.melkshamwithout.co.uk.
- h) **Joint Neighbourhood Plan Boundary Consultation:** The Asst Clerk reported that the Consultation on the Joint Boundary proposed for the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan was also posted on the Council’s website. The 6 week consultation commenced on 3rd February and gave residents the opportunity to have their say about the proposed boundaries for the joint Plan. The closing date for comments was Tuesday 18th March.

511/13 **Finance:**

- i) **Receipts:** The Asst Clerk advised that Mike Rogers of AFC Melksham was continuing to do a good job sourcing adhoc bookings for the Bowerhill Sports Field, two new teams had played this month. A booking had also been refused due to the potential damage to the pitch in the very wet weather conditions. **Resolved:** *The Council formally note the receipts since the last Council meeting 20th January, as follows:*

Bowerhill Jubilee Sports Field: Adhoc bookings for FC Buscots £100.00
and Trowbridge Town Reserves

Briansfield Allotments: Advance rent for 2014/15 £ 17.50

- ii) **Accounts for Payment:** Cllr Petty expressed concern that the Asst Clerk had used her credit card to pay for items that were then claimed back (*See Chq 4552*). The Asst Clerk explained that the deadlines for both adverts in the Wiltshire Times would have been missed if a cheque was raised as payment. It was acknowledged that this was not good practice but only done when the circumstances dictated it. **Resolved:** *The following accounts were checked and formally approved for payment:*

** Paid since the last meeting*

4549* Post Office Ltd: Postage stamps £ 100.00

4550* Wiltshire Council: Planning application fee for MUGA at £ 97.50
at Hornchurch Road (50% discount applied)

4551 GreenSward Sports Consultancy: Bowerhill Jubilee Sports £ 742.09
Field January monthly contract works £453.41 + additional
marking costs @ £55 per month (backdated to Nov). *This is
for Senior pitches to be marked fortnightly rather than monthly
(Min. 351/13 a) £165 + VAT*

4552	Mrs Teresa Strange: Reimbursement for advertisements in Wiltshire Times (paid to Newsquest Wiltshire). Clerk job advert £334 Grass cutting tender invite advert £74.50 + VAT	£	490.20
4553	Wiltshire Publications Ltd: Adverts in Melksham News Annual Parish Mtg £79.75, Grant Aid £44, Clerk job advert £82.50 & Spring Newsletter £142.50 + VAT	£	418.50
4554	Melksham Town Council: Joint funding (50%) for "Visit "Wiltshire" subscription	£	350.00
4555	J Beaven: Bowerhill Pavilion cleaning 16/12/13 – 10/2/14 £162.00 + Cleaning materials £56.25	£	218.25
4556	Condor Office Solutions Ltd: Photocopying 21/10/13 - 23/01/14 £133.76 + VAT	£	160.51
4557	TOTAL Equipment Ltd: Electricity contribution for Crown Chambers Dec '13 £103.95 + VAT	£	111.99
4558	SLCC Enterprises Ltd: New editions of "Local Council Administration" and "Clerks Manual" + postage	£	98.50
Salaries:			
4559	Mrs Mary Jarvis: February salary + additional hours (32¾) + Expenses (postage £5.40)		
4560	Mrs Teresa Strange: February salary + Expenses (postage £1.09)		
4561	Mr Terry Cole: w/e 11/01/14 – 01/02/14 + Travel Allowance + Mileage £58		
4562	Mrs Joanne Eccleston: February salary		
4563	Mrs Margaret Mylchreest: February salary + additional hrs (5hrs) + tax refund		
4564	Mrs Elaine Cranton: January office cleaning		
	Total Salaries	£	4,079.07
4565	Wiltshire Council – Wiltshire Pension Fund: Superannuation Jarvis/Strange/Eccleston	£	993.36
4566	Inland Revenue: PAYE Tax & NI contributions	£	903.42

iii) **Bowerhill Jubilee Sports Field usage:** The Asst Clerk sought clarification on what to charge Melksham AFC for their football pitch usage. Mike Rogers had negotiated from a £720.25 season charge down to £500 for a maximum of 10 games; to be paid in two instalments of which £250 had been paid. The invoice was

due to be raised for the 2nd instalment but Mike had just advised that due to 4 teams pulling out of the Chippenham & District Sunday League, Melksham AFC only had 6 Home games all of which had already been played and therefore was asking the Council to review the charge to them. Cllr Baines warned that if the team were invoiced for less than 10 matches then both the Council and Melksham AFC would be no longer exempt from VAT rules. **Resolved:** *The Council offer Melksham AFC a credit of 4no. match hire fees for Bowerhill Jubilee Sports Field against their 2014/15 season booking against payment of the 2nd instalment invoice of £250.*

- iv) **Government News re: Council Tax Thresholds:** The Council noted an item from First News which informed that from 2014/15 onwards, local authorities, apart from parish councils, would have to hold a referendum if their Council tax exceeded 2% and councillor votes would be recorded. The Local Government Finance Report 2014/15 had also informed that tax referendum principles could be set for local councils from 2015/16.
- v) **Update on Dispensations for Voting on Precept:** The Council noted advice from Ian Gibbons, Wiltshire Council Monitoring Officer that there had been no change to the law but revised guidance from the DCLG (Department of Communities and Local Government) now specifically states that dispensations are no longer required. However, the guidance did not have the force of the law; the advice was that the risk of successful prosecution against breach of rules on disclosable pecuniary interests was lower as a result of the guidance. The Asst Clerk advised that dispensations were already in place for Councillors and recommended that they stayed in place.
- vi) **Wiltshire Pension Fund – revised scheme from 1st April 2014:**
- a) **Scheme changes:**
- The Asst Clerk reported on the changes to the existing scheme (LGPS 2008) to the new one coming into force on 1st April 2014.
- 1) Basis of pension: changing from Final Salary to Career Average Revalued Earnings
 - 2) Accrual rate: changing from 1/60th to 1/49th
 - 3) Pensionable pay: changing from Pay excluding non-contractual overtime and non-pensionable additional hours to Pay including non-contractual overtime and additional ours for part time staff.
 - 4) Contribution flexibility: this will now be available with members able to pay 50% contributions for 50% of the pension benefit
 - 5) Normal pension age: changing from 65 to Equal to the individual member's State Pension Age (minimum 65)
 - 6) Qualifying period for benefits: changing from 3 months to 2 years
 - 7) Contribution rates: The new rates are yet to be confirmed but used to be based on whole-time equivalent pay whereas it will now be based on actual pay.
- The Asst Clerk drew attention to item 3 which would have a financial impact on the Council's employer contributions that they pay for staff in the superannuation scheme (currently one member that this would affect).

b) Feedback on advice to members on revised scheme:

The Asst Clerk reported that she had provided feedback to Wiltshire Pension Fund as a member of the scheme as she was very concerned that fundamental changes were being made to members' Pension scheme, but the notification received was a small leaflet that looked like a circular and did not give the impression that it contained important imminent changes. A reply had been received to acknowledge the concern but pointing out that information was available at road shows and company's intranet. The Asst Clerk commented that this was fine for large employers but not suitable for small employers without separate HR and Payroll departments. Cllr Baines supported the Asst Clerk's concerns.

vii) **Weed spraying Quotation:** A quotation for weed spraying in the Parish had been received for 2014/15 at a cost of £799.00 plus VAT. The Asst Clerk reported that £815.00 had been reserved in the Budget for this item for 2014/15. **Resolved:** *The Council accept the quotation for Weed spraying in the Parish from Complete Weed Control, at £799.00 + VAT.*

512/13 **Minutes, Flooding Group Meetings 9th & 18th January:** **Resolved:** *The Minutes of these Flooding Group meetings be formally approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.*

513/13 **Minutes, Emergency Plan Meeting 27th January:** **Resolved:** *The Minutes of this Emergency Plan meeting be formally approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.*

514/13 Arising from Min. 473/13 **Community Sandbags:** The Asst Clerk reported that she had made an application to the Area Board community grant scheme on behalf of the Shaw & Whitley Flood Group and the newly formed Beanacre Flood Group for Community Sandbags. This was to provide residents with the necessary equipment and supplies to be in a position to help them to prevent flooding to their properties, and those of their neighbours. The provision was for 3 grit bins (2 for Shaw & Whitley and 1 for Beanacre) holding 500kg of sand each. The advice from the Environment Agency was that 6 sandbags were needed to keep out 20cm depth of water for a standard door opening. Each sandbag needs 15kg of sand. Therefore each grit bin would hold enough sand to fill 33 sandbags which would supply enough sandbags for 5 houses. The total sum for the grit bins, sand, locks, sign for grit bins, and labour for delivering and filling the grit bins came to £ 996.29 including VAT.

The Asst Clerk reported that for any grant application over £500 then at least half of the funding had to be matched funded and therefore the grant application had shown a £500 contribution from the Parish Council.

The grant application had been submitted on the 30th January but had yet to be confirmed that it would be considered at the next Area Board meeting in April.

515/13 **Parish Emergency Assistance Scheme (Flooding):**

The Council noted the Wiltshire Council Briefing Note (174) on Flooding Response update. The briefing note detailed a new Parish Emergency Assistance Scheme that will enable towns and parishes to bid for sandbags, aqua sacs, sand and flood warning signs;

these would be available by the end of February. These items will be delivered free of charge to a Parish that has a Flood Plan, suitable storage and a means of getting equipment out when needed. **Resolved:** *The Council apply for the Parish Emergency Assistance Scheme and find out if suitable storage containers for sand could be obtained from Wiltshire Council.*

516/13 **Resident's letters Duncan Hames MP and Wiltshire Council:** The Council noted copy correspondence from Whitley resident Mr Codgebrook relating to flooding of his property alleged to be caused by the Wiltshire Council. He had sent a) a letter to MP Duncan Hames to ask that a proportionate share of Government money for flooding to be allocated to Wiltshire and b) a letter to Wiltshire Council's solicitor to request an exoneration letter making clear recent flooding of his property had been due to a Wilts. Council drainage design error.

517/13 **Highways, Footways & Rights of Way:**

a) **Berryfield Village nameplate:** Following the Council request for a Village Nameplate at Berryfield, Wiltshire Council have now provided a site plan suggesting the only site is available outside the Mobile Home Park and requested the Parish Council to seek permission of the Mobile Home Park to erect the sign on their land. Cllr Petty requested that the sign be set back further than indicated on the plan, so as not to restrict the visibility when pulling out of the property immediately behind it. **Resolved:** *The Council seek permission of the Mobile Home Park to site a Berryfield Village Nameplate on their land, in the revised position agreed above.*

b) **Sign De-Cluttering & Minor Signing requests:**

i) **Sign De-cluttering:** The Council noted a paper from Wiltshire Council requesting Parish and Town Councils to compile a list of traffic signs and road markings that they would like considered for removal. Funding for the removal of approved features will be covered by centrally held highways budgets.

Cllr Carter reported that he had counted 11 signs between the New Inn and the Mobile Home Park on Semington Road. It may be that some signs were left from when this was a main road, before the Bypass. Cllr Carter agreed to review the signage on this stretch of road.

ii) **Minor signing requests:** The Council noted that in the future requests will go through CATG rather than to Wiltshire Council officers direct.

iii) **New signage at Melksham:** Councillors gave their views on the new signage erected at on the Western Way and expressed concern at some of the preferred routes that Wiltshire Council directed traffic through. Cllr Petty had taken up his concerns directly with John Thomson, Cabinet Member for Highways & Streetscene. The Asst Clerk reported that Cllr Chivers had advised that new signage was due to be erected on Bowerhill roundabout shortly.

c) **Countryside Access Improvement Plan (CAIP) Consultation:** The CAIP sets out the actions Wiltshire Council will take to manage, improve and promote Wiltshire's countryside access network. This replaces the 2008 Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). The Consultation period runs from 3rd February to Friday 28th March.

The Clerk explained that the consultation was a lengthy document, with no Executive Summary. Cllr Carter took a hard copy to review and Cllr Brindle had reviewed the consultation online.

- d) **Rights of Way Map 2013:** The Council noted receipt of a new definitive Rights of Way map and Statement for the Parish.
- e) **Area Board Issues updates:**
- i) **Request for pedestrian crossing, A365 The Spa:** Cllr Baines reported that this was discussed at the recent CATG meeting. Mark Stansby had advised that he had conducted a survey and felt that pedestrians were able to cross the road. In fact, whilst conducting the survey, drivers stopped and beckoned Mark across the road. Of more concern was traffic exiting the roundabout (which had a 40mph limit) towards The Spa (which had a 30mph limit). The Area Highway Engineer Andy Cadwallader had agreed to remove the vegetation to give a better sight line. Cllr Baines concluded that there was no chance of obtaining the £30k required for a crossing and that a traffic lane could not be removed as it's needed for traffic turning right at the roundabout onto Spa Road. As before, there was frustration that this issue would now be closed as there was no funding available, but the issue had not gone away.
- ii) **20mph limit for Westlands Lane, Beanacre:** The Parish Council had been advised that the 20mph policy was now in place and the Council were to advise if they wished Westlands Lane to be considered for one of the two 20mph areas in Melksham Community Area. **Resolved:** *The Council propose Westlands Lane for a 20mph limit in line with previous request.*
- iii) **20mph limit for Snarlton Lane:** The Council discussed which other road in the area would benefit from a 20mph limit and agreed that Snarlton Lane would be a good candidate as there had already been concerns raised over increased traffic as a result of the planned new school. Cllr Baines explained that the criteria for a 20mph limit was an average speed no more than 24mph. Cllr Petty explained that at a recent Community Safety meeting they had difficulty agreeing a site for a metro count. It was noted that Snarlton Lane was in both the Parish and the Town boundary. **Resolved:** *The Council propose Snarlton Lane for a 20mph limit.*
- iv) **Crossing request – Valldata offices, Bowerhill:** The Council noted an Area Board issue raised by Valldata with a request for safer crossing for pedestrians between their two offices on Lancaster Road and Halifax Road
- f) **Semington Road Community Speed Watch:** The Council noted that following a metro count and SID, Semington Road now qualified for a Community Speedwatch team and therefore 6 volunteers were needed to put themselves forward for training. Cllr Petty volunteered for the scheme, Cllr Carter may be interested if time permitted, and the Chairman offered to talk to local residents to see if any were interested in forming part of the Speedwatch team.

518/13 **General Correspondence for action:**

a) **Woodland Trust tree packs:**

i) **Bowerhill Jubilee Sports Field:** The Asst Clerk reported that the Woodland Trust has awarded the Council a pack of 105 “Wild Harvest” tree saplings comprising of: 30 hazel, 30 blackthorn, 15 crab apple, 15 dog rose, 15 elder. The trees would be delivered week commencing 3rd March and come with free tree protection. Cllr Mills had advised that BRAG had also been notified of their own tree pack awards and had a well experienced team used to planting these quantities of tree saplings on a regular basis. **Resolved:** *The Council ask BRAG if they would be interested in planting the 105 tree saplings on behalf of the Parish Council, at Bowerhill Jubilee Sports Field.*

ii) **Heritage Turbine, Bowerhill Industrial Estate:** The Asst Clerk reported that she had made an application to the Woodland Trust for a short hedge pack comprising of 6 each of hawthorn, hazel, holly, dog rose and dogwood for planting behind the Heritage Turbine.

b) **First Bus Fare Consultation:** The Council noted the Consultation running from 1st February to 16th March 2014. Councillors gave examples that could be considered under the consultation. Cllr Petty advised that when a reduced price has been available before it doubled the take up of the service for example the £2.50 off peak price for the journey to Bath always had a full bus. Cllr Brindle advised that following the similar consultation in Bristol a number of short stops were available for £1. **Resolved:** *The Council comment on the consultation suggesting that a short journey fixed fare be considered, as is the consideration of a reduced off peak fare.*

c) **Bowerhill Jubilee Sports Field – unplayable pitch:** The Council noted that the pitches had been declared unplayable over the previous weekend (15th/16th February) and Mike Rogers had refused an adhoc booking the previous weekend due to the damage that would be caused by playing on the waterlogged pitch.

Unfortunately Rob Bridges (Melksham Town Youth FC) had reported that had seen a match taking place on a pitch and it had caused quite a bit of damage. There was no booking for this match, which didn’t have nets on the goal posts but was an organised session as one team had matching shirts.

Councillors discussed how people could be dissuaded from using the pitches when waterlogged to prevent damage to the pitches. A signal system of red flag/green flag and notices was discussed but it was difficult to man, and may well be ignored like the “keep dogs on a lead” signs were. It was noted that off season the goal posts would be removed and stored on site, to give the goal areas less focus for impromptu games and have chance to recover and be re-seeded.

It was agreed that the best way forward was to provide more information to local people on how to book the pitches, and to warn of the damage caused if the pitches were played on when waterlogged. It was noted that the information needed to be circulated wider than just in Bowerhill as many users of the Sports field were from other parts of the Town and Parish. **Resolved:** *The Council ask the Melksham Independent News and Bowerhill Villager to run an article on the Bowerhill Jubilee*

Sports Field on how to book the football pitches, and to not use them in wet weather due to the damage caused.

- 519/13 **General Correspondence for information:** The Council noted receipt of the following papers:
- a) **X ray Department – Melksham Hospital:** Copies of correspondence from Paul Clark.
 - b) **Melksham Crown Post Office:** Letter and Information Sheet from Franchise Manager
 - c) **AFC Melksham Disabled Football team update:** The Council noted the excellent news about the development of other disabled football teams in Wiltshire as a result of the work of Mike Rogers and AFC Melksham.

(Teresa Strange left the meeting at 9.30pm)

- 520/13 **Townsend Farm roundabout:** The Clerk reported that she had spoken with the Town Clerk Stephen Gray about the interest from a company in sponsoring the Townsend roundabout which was half in the Melksham Town parish and half in Melksham Without. Steve Gray had confirmed the Town Council would be happy to administer the sponsorship. This was agreed.
Resolved: *The Clerk forward the details of the sponsor to the Town Council.*

- 521/13 **Minutes, Staffing Committee 27th January:** **Resolved:** *The Minutes of this meeting be formally approved by the Council and signed y the Chairman as a correct record.*

- 522/13 **Staffing Committee Recommendations:** **Resolved:** *The Recommendations as detailed in 467/13 and 469/13 – 471/13 be formally approved by the Council.*

The following item was held in committee in view of the confidential nature of the item under reason Standing Order 62(a) engagement and terms of service of employees. The Asst Clerk, Teresa Strange left the meeting at 9.30pm as she had declared an interest in this Staffing Item

- 523/13 **Appointment of New Clerk:** **Resolved:** *1. The new Clerk be paid a salary commensurate with qualifications and experience, taking account of the NJC recommended salary scales for July 2013.
2. The Interview Panel be given delegated powers to interview and recommend a candidate and salary for the appointment of a new Clerk on 20th February and a special Council Meeting be held on Monday 3rd March to confirm this appointment and salary.*

Meeting closed at 9.50 p.m.

Chairman, 24th March 2014