

**Westfield Parish Council**

**Minutes of the Environment and Development Committee Meeting held at the Oval Office, St Peters Business Park, Westfield on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2013 commencing at 7pm**

**Present:** Cllr E Newman (Chair), Cllrs A Butcher (Vice Chair), A Clarke, D Cooper, P Wilkinson.

**In Attendance:** 3 members of the public.  
Mrs L Welch (Parish Clerk)

**Comments from the public**

***Planning Application 13/00583/OUT Erection of 92 dwellings, land adjoining Five Arches Greenway*** – Mr Wallace reported that the BANES website showed 54 objections and not one supporter of this application. Many endorsed the comment made by the BANES Environment Department to the effect that this is green space, it can be enjoyed by running, cycling and on horseback, it is of tremendous use in the community. On Easter Day there were some 200 people using the area – it is the local equivalent to Victoria Park. It is an educational tool – somewhere where nature can be observed. If the housing were allowed then eventually there would be housing estates both sides of the greenway and all the green space would be lost. (51 houses on the Wheelers Drive side and 92 on the Westfield side).

**1. Election of Chair**

Cllr Wilkinson proposed Cllr Newman as Chair, this was seconded by Cllr Cooper and agreed unanimously.

**2. Election of Vice Chair**

Cllr Newman proposed Cllr Butcher as Vice Chair, this was seconded by Cllr Wilkinson and agreed unanimously.

**3. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Appleyard who had another engagement, Cllr Fuller who was travelling back from a weekend break and Cllr Wallbridge who had a work commitment.

**4. Declarations of Interest and dispensations**

There were no declarations of interest.

**5. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2013 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting.**

**Signed .....** **Dated .....**

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### 6. Westfield Fun Day – 16<sup>th</sup> June 2013

Cllr Wilkinson reported that he had access to a 5x5 marquee which could be used free of charge on the day. It would be good to have the marquee manned throughout the Fun Day for people to ask questions of the Councillors. A rota would be circulated at the next Parish Council meeting. Last year people were invited to guess where the treasure was on the map, with three boxes of chocolates as prizes. Something similar could be done this year.

### 7. Planning Applications for Consideration

7.1 There were no objections to the following five applications:

13/01464/TPO	Crown reduced by 15 feet 1 x sycamore tree.	35 Westhill Gardens
13/00989/FUL	Two storey side extension, with front bay window and porch	42 Waterside Rd
13/01839/TCA	Pollard 1x ash and 2 x sycamore and prune 1 x horse chestnut trees	Scout Hall, Wells Rd
13/01860/TCA	Remove 1 x unnamed tree	9 Wells Sq
13/01810/FUL	2no three bed semi detached dwellings	Land off Upper Court

7.2

13/00583/OUT	Up to 92 dwellings with associated parking, provision of associated public open space, pedestrian routes, engineering works and landscaping on land adjoining Five Arches Greenway and alterations to existing vehicular access on to Radstock Rd (A362).	Land north of Fosseyway Gardens
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Bearing in mind the comments of the public both that day and at a previous meeting, the Committee strongly objected to this planning application on the following grounds:

- (1) The ecological impact – it is an educational place where nature can be observed. One example is the bat activity in this entire area, with 10 different species. Although the plans show dark corridors, the whole area is a foraging ground for bats and the development would cause a loss of feeding ground. Bird variety also needs to be protected.

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- (2) Loss of amenity for local people – The green space is hugely used and has been described as the local equivalent of Victoria Park. On Easter Day this year there were some 200 people enjoying the area. If there were housing estates both sides of the greenway (51 houses at Wheelers Drive and 92 on the Westfield side) then this amenity would be completely lost along with the unique character of this area.
- (3) Stability of the land – Houses built at Wheelers hill still suffer due to the instability of the land on which they were built. The gradient of the land does not appear to have been truly represented on the plan and we strongly recommend that BANES commissions an independent test on the stability of the ground.
- (4) Flooding – The fields in front of Fossey Gardens and Shakespeare Road have active natural springs all year around and there are at least three natural springs on the site. Diverting the water course will cause other areas to flood, potentially the Wheelers estate.
- (5) Impact on neighbouring houses – It would create a precipice for the existing houses at Highfields and Fossey Gardens, dropping down to the level of the field of the proposed development. Given the instability of the ground throughout this area, it created an unacceptable level of risk to these properties.
- (6) Breach of the conservation area - The smaller field is in an approved conservation area, adopted by BANES in 1999.
- (7) Change of use from agricultural land.
- (8) Access – there would be a great traffic impact on the Radstock Road, and given that there are no major bus routes, this access would be in constant use.
- (9) Historical/ archaeological interest – this was once a Roman Road and artefacts have been found.
- (10) The context within which these plans are made should be considered. 650 new homes are coming into the area within a 3 m radius. There is a real need to protect the character of this area and retain this piece of green space and flourishing wildlife as a local amenity.

### 8. Planning Decisions

The Committee noted the recent planning decisions in the Parish.

### 9. Area of hard standing next to the tennis court at Norton Hill Recreation Ground

The Committee discussed the potential use of this site which, despite the recent weed clearance, is rapidly reverting back and its use needs to be addressed fairly urgently. The entire area is approximately 37m x 18.5m, with a 2.2m path. The Committee looked at photos of local petanque rinks, particularly one in Keynsham which is used 5 days a week, with flourishing petanque leagues. There would be space for a three rink petanque area surrounded by kerb stones and 3 m either side. It could be built on the existing hard standing. The remaining area is 18m x 5m which would have to be re-surfaced if it were to be used for a concrete table tennis table and a

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basketball hoop, which would be positioned at the existing tennis court fence. Basketball and table tennis are both extremely popular, as are the football table and chess table which might be located on the edge of the site. The Committee discussed potential problems of a basketball hoop next to the housing. The Police had been consulted and they were supportive of young people having more to do. Funding might be available through Sport England's Small Fund which is for young people aged 14 and above. Possibly also the Big Local and a request to the Ward Councillors' initiative fund.

**RESOLVED** that the Clerk seeks quotes for the petanque rink and the re-surfacing of the remaining area, together with more details of the Sport England funding, such as the amount of match funding required, and brings these figures to the Finance and Personnel Committee for further consideration and a recommendation to the full Parish Council.

**10. Neighbourhood Planning**

Cllrs Butcher and Wallbridge would undertake further research and bring the matter back to the next meeting.

**11. Litter Picking in Westfield**

The Committee considered the funding available from BANES for taking on the litter picking and road sweeping in Westfield and the analysis of the Clerk.

**RESOLVED** to recommend to the Finance and Personnel Committee that, to meet the required standards, the figures are not cost effective.

**12. Westhill and Norton Hill Play Areas – programmed development**

The Committee discussed the renovation of the Norton Hill Play Area and the advice from Jane Robson of BANES' Parks and Play Areas.

**RESOLVED** To seek Finance and Personnel Committee approval to proceed in this project as follows:  
(a) to invite Jeremy Dymond of BANES to help consult local school children about what they would like at the play area.  
(b) to build up Parish Council funding and seek grant funding over the next two years to a level of £40,000 which should allow £15,000 for surfacing and £25,000 for play equipment.  
(c) at the appropriate time to go out to the local manufacturers for their play area designs to meet the aspirations of the local children.

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**13. Request for a Fun Fair**

This item was no longer applicable.

**14. Items for the next agenda**

- Noticeboards (Cllr Newman).
- Grassed areas which are driven across to reach residences (who cuts the grass outside Maple Drive?) (Cllr Wilkinson)
- Advertising for new football teams at the Trust Grounds

It was agreed to exclude the press and public on the grounds that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.

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