MINCHINHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 31st October, 2016
at 7pm at the Trap House


198/16: Apologies: Cllr C. Morriss.

199/16: Chairman’s announcement: Cllr Hurst paid tribute to ex-parish councillor and retired BBC Director of Public Affairs Johnny Wilkinson who had recently died. Mr Wilkinson had moved to Box in 1987, became involved in local affairs and was a councillor, initially for the South Ward, from 1991-99. Among his considerable achievements had been the creation of the Box Ward of the parish council. Mr Wilkinson’s many interests had included Box Gardening Club, Minchinhampton Cricket Club, and Box Village Society which he chaired until March 2007.

200/16: Public questions/participation: There were no members of the public present.

201/16: Declarations of interest: There were none.

202/16: Minutes: The minutes of the council meeting held on 26th September, 2016, were proposed by Cllr Hemmings and seconded by Cllr Williams. Cllr Nicholas, who had chaired that meeting, then spoke to minute 181/16 which had recorded the council’s objection to planning application S.16/1809/FUL for a bungalow at Greenacres at Old Common, Minchinhampton. Cllr Nicholas reminded members they had unanimously requested the Greenacres plan was referred back to the Stroud District Council Planning Committee. The webcast was then screened of the SDC meeting at which the Greenacres plan was given permission. Cllr Nicholas was among councillors who expressed extreme dissatisfaction that the decision had been based on factually incorrect information about the ownership of a strip of land over which access was to be obtained. It was decided to inform the National Trust, who were believed to the landowners involved, of what had taken place. A letter would also be sent to the SDC to complain about the way in which the case was handled, especially the manner in which the Development Control Committee meeting had been chaired with derogatory criticism levelled at the parish council. An Amberley resident with specialist knowledge of common land ownership issues would also be consulted. The minutes were then approved and signed.

The minutes of the council planning meeting held on 10th October, 2016, were then proposed by Cllr Ford, seconded by Cllr Williams, approved and signed.

203/16: Neighbourhood Plan Update: There had been a very good, in excess of 30 per cent, response to the NDP residents’ survey. It was hoped the responses would be presented to the next full council. Preparations were underway for ‘Roadshows’ early in 2017 to share with all the parish the tone of the responses so far and gather further opinions. A business/stakeholders’ survey was being prepared and the steering group would next meet on 7th November, 2016.
204/16: County and district councillors’ reports: Stroud District Cllr Hurst stated that four other local NDPs had come before the district authority and that after their referenda and adoption they would now gain weight by becoming part of the statutory Local Plan.

Gloucestershire County Cllr Waddington reported that cattle grid surrounds had been painted under the Lengthmans’ scheme. A further grid in Summersfield Road was being repaired. Lengthsmen had cut the hedge that had overhung the Bell Lane to Cambridge Way footpath. The county was being urged to re-visit newly reorganised local bus services as these no longer co-ordinated for longer journeys. Cllr Molyneux pointed out there were now no buses at all through Amberley. The county had assured community libraries of funding for a further four years.

205/16: Finance Committee report: A draft of the Vestry Cottage lease, which was being renewed, had been received. The council’s solicitor had advised the council to now wait until the Diocese confirmed it was acceptable. The lease would run for 10 years with the initial rent increased to £7,560 per annum. The signed copies had now been received for counter signature.

A quotation for £1,125 had been accepted for archaeological works at The Park car park extension site at Bell Lane. The work was as required as a condition of planning permission for the scheme. Cllr Williams asked that consideration be given in next year’s budget to about £2,200 needed for repairs and replacements to ageing play equipment. Other necessary repairs would cost under £500 in the current year.

Box Village Society had been granted £250 towards its maintenance of Box Village Green and footpaths. The bank reconciliation at 30th September, 2016, showed a balance of £64,879.80. The second quarterly detailed comparison of expenditure to budget was presented and is available on request from the clerk. It showed spending of £35,214.19 against a total annual budget of £84,190, excluding VAT.

206/16: Updates on: a) Box Woods – Cllr Hemmings announced that the long awaited registration of the Box Community Wood charity by the Charity Commission had finally enabled the purchase of the woods to progress through setting up a bank account and registration with HMRC for gift aid receipts towards conveyance of the woods. The meeting agreed the parish council’s previous allocation of £12,670 Section 106 money toward the project would be confirmed to the SDC officer involved for direct payment; b) Lovell’s development – Cllr Nicholas had written to the SDC chief executive pointing out that the problems with boundaries and the street scene at the Old Common redevelopment had still not been resolved after over 12 months’ effort. A reply had been received that an SDC officer would address the problem; c) The Park car park – Cllr Hurst said the appointment of an archaeologist to survey the site, as recorded at minute 205/16 above, had been confirmed. The archaeologist would now liaise with the county archaeologist and would seek written agreement from the landowners the National Trust, although verbal permission had been obtained. The project to create additional car parking by extending the existing car park was therefore work in progress; d) Vosper Field tenancy/doctors’ surgery – There was no new information; e) New council website – Cllr Hemmings screened the new website for members to see. The site, which was based on a template, was still under development with councillor and staff training continuing from its provider 2Commune. New council staff e-mail addresses were being set up in readiness for the withdrawal of the existing SDC supported site on 30th November, 2016. The current NDP website would be included as sub-site. News from the SDC about provision of
planning application details was still awaited. Discussion turned to the creation of a new council logo/corporate image to display on the new site and elsewhere. It was agreed a former working party of councillors would be revived to consider the logo issue; f) Allotments – Cllr Mylechreest had been unhappy with the tone of the allotments’ renewal letter sent to him and other allotment holders. It was agreed to adjourn discussion until the next meeting when Cllr Morriss could be in attendance.

207/16: Traffic matters: a) High Street light - Cllr Waddington had met members of the public who had expressed concerns about the siting of a replacement lamp standard in Minchinhampton High Street. Issues included pedestrian safety in the dark and light disturbance at nearby residential properties. It was decided councillors should take the opportunity to look at the situation before a resumed discussion at the next meeting; b) Cows on Commons meeting/PCC meeting and grant bid – Cllr Schwartz had submitted a detailed written report (available on request from the clerk) of the latest Cows on the Commons meeting, called after the latest of six cattle deaths so far in the 2016 grazing season. Achieved and planned actions, including additional road signs, a public meeting and public demonstration were detailed. Cllr Schwartz and others had also met the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner Martin Surl who had encouraged a bid to his Safe and Social Driving Fund for Vehicle Activated Signs. The bid had been submitted and the outcome was awaited.

The clerk reported forthcoming road closures - Brimscombe Hill to Walls Quarry road, Brimscombe from January 23rd-25th, 2017 for Severn Trent hydrant works and the road from Nailsworth Hill to Beaudesert Park School November 1st-December 31st, 2016, for Amey highways works.

Cllr Nicholas’ complaint that double parking was causing an obstruction at Old Common would be referred to the PCSO.

208/16: Clerk’s report/correspondence: a) General Power of Competence - A report was received from the clerk advising adoption of this power, included in the 2011 Localism Act. The council resolved it met the criteria of a qualified clerk and sufficient elected members and the policy was formally adopted; b) Phone boxes removal - Cllr Hemmings had been concerned by advance notice from BT that around 80 phone kiosks were to be removed around the Stroud district. Further details were not yet available. Cllr Hemmings urged councillors and communities to be alert to the situation and to consider if they might wish to preserve any boxes and put them to other uses.

The dilapidated state of the Tom Long’s Post signpost had been raised. The landmark sign was in a poor condition and in need of cleaning or repainting. It was agreed to ask whether a Leyhill work team might tackle the task.

Correspondence: The CPRE “Gloucestershire Views”.
Correspondence Forwarded previously via e-mail: BT re: payphones removal/adoption
Glos Playing Fields Assn AGM invitation
The Door monthly update
GCC Draft Minerals Local Plan consultation
Cows on Commons notes from 21/9/16 meeting
Glos Wildlife Trust summer raffle
Cotswold Canals Trust e-news
209/16: Matters raised by the chairman: a) Burleigh footpath modification order - This was adjourned until the next meeting; b) Changes to meetings cycle – Combined full council and council planning meetings in both May and August 2016 had created a heavy workload and led to a suggestion from the chairman that instead the normal separate full council and council planning meetings should be held in those months. After discussion it was agreed to continue with the combined May meeting in 2017 but that, as a trial, August 2017 would include both full council and council planning meetings.

210/16: Council payments: The below list of payments of the council was proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by Cllr Callaghan-Wright and approved –

Thomson & Partners LLP £390.00
Minchinhampton Parochial Church Council £135.00
Stroud Living Landscapes £120.00
James Wilkinson £2,205.00
D. P. Merrett £269.00
Cotswold District Council £1,105.27
MDL Kelex £198.00
Greenfields Garden Services Ltd £216.00
Gloucestershire County Council £225.00
Stroud Cleaning and Maintenance Services £176.00
Staffing £1,745.97

Direct debits:
Utility Warehouse £158.44

211/16: Councillors’ items for future discussion: Cllr Schwartz’ concern about containers sited at a former builders’ yard in Knapp Lane had already been placed on the next council planning agenda.