ENFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of 7th January 2025

Held in the Village Hall at 7.30pm

Present:	Cllr Richard Roberts	Chairman
	Cllr Mark Hiskett,	Vice Chairman
	Cllr Pat Holdway, Cllr Rob Hibberd	Councillors
	Cllr Charlotte Clark, Cllr Anthony D'Arcy-Irvine	Councillors
	Cllr Cliffe-Roberts, Cllr Martin Farrow	Councillors
	Cllr Jane Young	Councillor
	Mrs Elizabeth Harrison	Clerk
	Mr Ian Blair-Pilling	Wiltshire Councillor

The Chairman opened the meeting at 19.35hrs

25/001 Apologies

Received from Cllr Bruce Waight. No Police Liaison was able to attend, though a report had been circulated and nothing has been heard from the MoD Liaison

25/002 Public Question Time.

No members of the public were present.

25/003 Police Matters and Neighbourhood Watch

The Police Report had been circulated to all Cllrs. Reported incidents for Enford were two attempted break-ins in Coombe Lane – one on a garden shed and another on a vehicle parked on a drive. It was later reported that the vehicle had been burgled with hundreds of pounds of tools and materials stolen. The Police have increased their patrols in the area and continue to engage with farms on the matter of hare coursing. The Police were also available to talk to in the Church car park last Friday, 3rd January.

- Cllr Clark reported on the seasonal warnings from Neighbourhood Watch. These include home security and awareness of child abuse.

25/004 MOD/Army Matters

MoD Liaison officer SSGT (QGI) Ben Whitbread appears uncontactable and was therefore unable to attend the meeting. No report had been sent.

25/005 Unitary Council Matters

WC Blair-Pilling wanted to raise the following points:

i. Update on flooding. Ground water levels in Wiltshire remain high and therefore any substantial rain will have an impact.

ii. The County's Budget. This is still being sorted before going to the County Cabinet and eventual approval by the Govt. The latter is cutting rural resources by £1 million including public health, housing and National Insurance. Fortunately the County has managed to raise extra funds from its assets and he said not to expect savings in services.

iii. Devolution. WC Ian Blair-Pilling reported that the Government wants devolution across the country. The proposal as it stands would mean that Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset – all predominantly rural counties - to come together as a Unitary Council with a Mayor overseeing all administration and services – Policing, Public Health, housing etc. A Unitary Council is defined as overseeing a minimum of 500,000 residents. He gave an overview of the prospect which would reduce duplicated expenditure. Councils as they stand are being asked to consider and propose what they believe would be most beneficial to residents. This would assist with funding and grants to allow a smooth

continuance of governance. Those existing Councils who do not engage in the proposals would lose their Govt grants and would most likely be forced to engage in the long term having suffered a large reduction in running costs and funding in the meantime. As it stands WC feels acceptance and forward planning is the best route forward. Bournemouth and Christchurch might be included and although it already has a Mayor, Swindon may also join 'the unit'. The Swindon Mayor currently deals with 250,000 residents and he is currently not eager to be included. Due to the Consultation periods required for such large changes, this could affect the Local Elections currently expected in May.

25/006 Verification of the Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of 3rd December were proposed as a true record by Cllr Holdway and seconded by Cllr Hiskett.

25/007 Declaration of Interests

There were none.

25/008 Matters Arising

i. Christmas tree lighting Event – Friday, 6th December at 6 o'clock. The event went well despite being moved into the Church on the same afternoon due to forecasted bad weather. Approximately 50 villagers, adults and children, attended. Many thanks were expressed for a lovely evening and the Chairman wished to thank Fi Leakey, Morag Hiskett and Marjut Roberts for the snacks and homemade mince pies, Clive Bullen for the sound system, Peter and Beren Cliffe-Roberts for preparing the mulled wine, Bruce Waight for help with the tree and Mort Burdick for presenting the fun and jolly carols. Due to the bad weather and high winds over the Christmas period, batteries needed replacing, lights had gone out and baubles had been blown off the tree. The tree was taken down by Cllrs Hiskett and Roberts on 6th January. It was agreed that next year more resilient lights etc should be bought.

ii. Update Flooding. The Flood Warden, Mark Symonds and Cllr Roberts attended a Flooding meeting on 18th December. Wessex Water has inspected the Pumping Station behind the Parish Hall site and have agreed that it does need updating, it is hoped this will happen in the very near future. It will help in keeping the drains and gullies clearer.

iii. Annual Litter Pick. The date for the annual Litter Pick has been set for Saturday, March 22nd from roughly 10 am to 11.30. Cllr Roberts will speak with The Swan regarding the customary refreshments to wind up the morning.

25/009 Resident's issues Raised.

i. Cars blocking the Public Right of Way by The Red Lion. A resident of East Chishenbury contacted the Clerk regarding the quantity of cars blocking the public right of way leading from the Red Lion onto the Plain. Whilst this piece of land is owned by the Red Lion they also have to allow for the public to cross it. This is in fact a Bridleway and by law, access has to be available to walkers, bikes, horses, powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters. It is currently used by the staff so as not to take up space in the car park which is for customers. Cllr Farrow has offered to speak to the Manager of the Red Lion to ask the staff for more consideration not only for the law but also for people wishing to use the Bridleway.

25/010 Finance

The Clerk reported that there had been a spend of £761.83 in December giving a balance at the end of the month of £17,644.84. There were no questions from the Cllrs.

25/011 Planning Applications

There were no new Planning Applications to be discussed.

25/012 New Playpark

Cllr Young had nothing new to raise.

25/013 Parish Hall

Cllr Cliffe-Roberts reported that the Charity Commission have finally terminated the Charity Scheme and that responsibility for the site now reverts fully to the Parish Council who were listed as the Custodian Trustees.

25/014 Roads and Highways

Cllr Farrow reported that following concerns raised last month (and in November), Wiltshire Highways Department will be inspecting the length of the A345 which runs from B crossing right through into Enford. It is hoped this will result with a speed reduction along the whole stretch, making it much safer for residents.

- All reported potholes have been dealt with.
- Flooding in front of a cottage in East Chisenbury has returned. This is most likely due to mud and silt run-off from the Plain blocking the drains.

25/015 Public Rights of Way (PRoWs)

Cllr Hiskett had nothing to report. He added that due to the recent freezing weather, the salt/grit bins should be checked. He and Cllr Roberts will do this. Cllr D'Arcy-Irvine requested some salt for the Village Hall steps and entrance, this will be supplied.

25/016 Correspondence

There was no correspondence to be circulated.

25/017 Any Other Business

Cllr Roberts reported that this year there is the 80th Anniversary of VE Day (Victory in Europe) to be held on 8th May. He requested that this is on the March agenda for discussion.

25/018 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 4th March 2025 - Parish Council meeting at 7.30pm in the Village Hall
Cllr Hiskett said he would be unable to attend and gave his apologies in advance.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 20.45hrs

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Richard Roberts - Chairman, Enford Parish Council
Dated: 4th March 2025