

# LITTLE WITLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held in the Village Hall on Thursday 9 January 2014 at 7.30 pm pursuant to notice

**In the Chair:** Cllr Mr P Hill

**Present:** Cllr Mr D Buggins, Cllr Mr A Drew, Cllr Mrs B Martin, Cllr Mrs P Cumming, Cllr Mr Bob Jose, Mr Paul Cumming (District Councillor)

**Apologies:** Cllr Mr H Kenrick, Mr K Pollock (County Councillor)

**Minutes:** Sarah Jeffery (Clerk)

**In Attendance:** 6 members of the public

## 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Hilgrove Kenrick and County Councillor Ken Pollock.

## 2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Adam Drew declared an interest on agenda item 7.1, Church Lane turning area, having submitted a preliminary cost estimate for proposed resurfacing work.

## 3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting on 14 November 2013.

3.1 The Minutes were approved and signed.

## 4. Matters Arising

4.1 District Councillor Paul Cumming submitted the following slight clarification regarding his report to the earlier meeting:

*“So far as the comment about the West Midlands and the local plan is concerned, they objected to the amount of commercial growth that was assumed in the S Worcs rather than in the West Midlands. Their view was that more business should remain in the West Midlands in spite of the fact that people were expected to move house from the WM to S Worcs and thus increase the housing requirements of S Worcs. The inspector quite rightly, in my view, felt that it was reasonable that jobs should move with the people rather than accept a large increase in the daily commuting from S Worcs to the WM.”*

## 5. Planning Matters

5.1 The Bloor Homes planning application for the proposed development of 27 new houses in Great Witley has been approved, subject to the settlement of some minor remaining issues.

6.1 **Existing Applications** – No existing applications outstanding.

6.2 **New Applications** – There were no new applications for consideration.

## 7. Local Issues

### 7.1 Turning Area, Church Lane

Further discussion took place on the proposal to create a turning area at the top of Church Lane. The Chairman noted that local feeling seems to be that if the turning area is to be created it should be the responsibility of the County Highways department to bear the cost. Cllr Adam Drew has submitted a preliminary cost estimate for the works of £1950 plus VAT (VAT would be recoverable if the parish council orders the works) and it was agreed that further quotations would be obtained for comparison purposes.

At the same time it seems clear that as things stand at present, although Highways and Councillor Ken Pollock's divisional fund are willing to bear a substantial part of

the £1950 cost, it also seems to be expected that the residents and/or the parish council should make a financial contribution to the project. Discussion took place as to the benefits of the proposed scheme for all members of the parish and village.

It was suggested that the parish council could consider the establishment of a specific fund within their annual budget each year dedicated to small road repairs in the village such as this one. Concern was expressed that this may set a difficult precedent for the parish council in the future.

It was resolved that:

- i The parish considers the £1950 plus VAT works to be the financial responsibility of County Highways and/or the divisional fund;
- ii A small fund of £500 per annum will be established within the annual parish council budgets to be dedicated to special projects;
- iii The Chairman of the parish council, along with Cllr Mrs Cumming and the landowners Mr & Mrs Howell, will go back to County Highways and Councillor Ken Pollock, to see whether they can be persuaded to reconsider bearing the cost of the works and/or the formal adoption of the turning area as part of the highway.

## **7.2 Broadband**

There is nothing to report on this matter at present. Anyone experiencing broadband issues should as usual report them to the Chairman who will liaise with the broadband suppliers.

## **7.3 Highways**

The Chairman and Cllr Buggins are in the process of liaising with the landowners in Bank Road regarding maintaining their hedges and keeping them in good order. Contractor Adrian Bullock is prepared to carry out the works on behalf of all the landowners if they are in agreement.

## **7.4 Affordable Housing**

Cllr Jose reported on his research into Community Land Trusts and recommended that the parish council avail itself of the opportunity to receive a grant to visit a CLT at Bishop's Castle to learn more about how they operate.

*Councillors*

## **7.5 Housing Needs Survey**

In the meantime it was agreed that the first stage is to carry out a Housing Needs Survey to establish local need for affordable housing and allow parishioners to have input into the process. Cllr Mrs Cumming agreed to liaise with the Housing Strategy Officer at MHDC on this matter.

*PC*

## **7.6 Speeding Issues**

An email has been received offering Little Witley the opportunity to join the rota for a vehicle-activated sign (VAS) once every eight weeks, maintained by a local Lengthsman, Rob Wilkes. It was agreed that the clerk would contact Mr Wilkes to ascertain exact costs for this.

*Clerk*

The Clerk will also contact the Safety Camera Partnership to find out if it is possible either for the speeding van to visit Little Witley, or for the village to have the use of the Speed Indicator Device (SID) which gathers speeding data as well as warning vehicles to slow down.

*Clerk*

## **7.7 Withdrawal of Subsidised Bus Services**

The Chairman asked for comments regarding the proposed withdrawal of subsidised services in Worcestershire but as Little Witley does not benefit from any of these services no comments were forthcoming.

## **7.8 Bus Shelter & Telephone Kiosk**

After discussion it was agreed that the phone kiosk would be left in its current position rather than being removed to the centre of the village.

## **7.9 Grit & Salt Bins**

It was agreed that the parish council would purchase grit/salt to fill the green bins in the village. It was agreed that half a ton would be purchased on behalf of the parish council by Cllr Drew. Thanks were expressed to Cllr Drew who agreed to fill and monitor the bins, and to Mr Andrew Owen for permission to store the surplus grit in his barn.

It was also agreed that Cllr Buggins would request a yellow (Council) grit bin for the use of residents in Church Lane.

## **8. Correspondence**

**8.1** The CALC Update and Draft Rural Crime Strategy were circulated for councillors' interest.

**8.2** Councillors are invited to a Budget Consultation meeting at County Hall Worcester, on Wednesday 22 January 2014 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber.

## **9. Police & Neighbourhood Watch Matters**

**9.1** The clerk circulated the district level monthly crime report which shows an extremely low level of reported crime in the Woodbury area.

## **10. County Council Matters**

**10.1** In County Councillor Ken Pollock's absence his report was tabled to the meeting as follows:

### ***"1. COUNCIL TAX***

*At the recent road Show consultation events, there was strong support for an increase in Council Tax, if the extra income was devoted to safeguarding. This is an area where costs are rising as we need to take more children into care.*

*It seems likely that a small increase in the County Council precept will be approved, but lower than the 2% threshold that would trigger a referendum.*

### ***2. ENERGY FROM WASTE***

*The final decision approving the Energy from Waste plant for Hartlebury should be taken at the Full Council meeting on January 16th. I am entirely satisfied that this is the right decision for the two counties and it is distressing to see so much false and misleading information peddled in the press. There is no proven cost effective alternative. WCC is dedicated to reducing waste, to reusing it, to recycling it and then recovering energy from the residue. I would be very happy to bore any resident for hours with more detail if they wish to know it.*

### ***3. BUS SUBSIDIES***

*Please make your concerns known, should you have them, about the possible withdrawal of the subsidy for the 291 service to Kidderminster. The consultation closes on the 17th January, and contrary to the claim in last Friday's Worcester News, it can be filled in on paper. Copies in the library.*

### ***4. SPEED CONTROLS***

*I am sympathetic to your wish to have some sort of speed control on the A443 in the village. Probably the best would be a VAS opposite Des's garage site. This would be the most expensive option and I would support your efforts to get the Safety Camera Partnership to use the layby there to clock cars. A highly visible presence could be more effective than a few fines.*

### ***5. DELAYS CAUSED BY TRAFFIC LIGHTS AT HOLT HEATH***

*Your District Councillor drew my attention to this problem as it happened. The County Council officers reacted very quickly, and I think the problem was tackled. It arose when the lights supplied by a sub contractor of a utility company were not manned, to take account of the need for tidal flow at peak times, especially necessary on a three way junction. I have insisted that this should be programmed in to lights for our council workings, but the utility companies are beyond both County Council control or sanction.*

## **6. DIVISIONAL FUND AND LOCALLY DETERMINED HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENTS**

*There is a small amount of money left in the divisional fund, should any good cause spring to mind in your parish. In the financial stringency of the moment, there are plans to remove the councillors' discretionary highways money, worth about £5,000 per year. In fact, this year we have extra funds available, and I would be keen to know of any small highway maintenance problems that could be eligible for this support.*

*I have discussed the possibility of helping with the Church Lane turning, but am not convinced that it affects enough people for the investment to be justified. The County has said it will not adopt this drive entrance. Work at Bank Farm was in recognition of permission being given for a drain to be laid across farmland, rather than down the private lane, a scheme that had caused a lot of anguish for the residents. I do not believe the section has been adopted.*

## **7. THREE COUNTIES TRADITIONAL COUNTIES PROJECT**

*The Malvern Hills AONB wishes to draw the attention of parishes to a project to restore traditional orchards in the county, especially around Alfrick and Suckley, Tenbury Wells and Evesham. If anyone would like to know more or get involved by volunteering, please contact Karen Humphries on 01684 560616 or [khumphries@worcestershires.gov.uk](mailto:khumphries@worcestershires.gov.uk)."*

### **11. District Council Matters**

**11.1** District Councillor Paul Cumming's report included reference to the agreement of the medium-term financial plan and the fact that further savings will be required in future years, which will in all likelihood involve cuts to services as all possible efficiencies have now been made. Consultation will take place with the community in the district as to where exactly the cuts should be implemented.

**11.2** Cllr Cumming stressed the need for careful management of a process regarding any potential affordable housing scheme. It is important to ensure that a site is identified first and it is advisable to talk to the Housing Strategy Officer at MHDC to gain guidance on the process of a Housing Need Survey. Cllr Cumming also noted that anyone who is interested in acquiring one of the affordable properties on the Great Witley development should not delay in joining the housing list, as the properties will only be offered to locals first for a specific period of time, after which they will be open to applicants from elsewhere in the district.

### **12. Finance**

#### **12.1 Accounts paid since last meeting:**

C Jones – Lengthsman services November 2013	£162.00
CJ Garden Services – Strimming November 2013	£24.00

#### **Accounts due for payment:**

C Jones – Lengthsman services December 2013	£228.00
Clerk's Salary November & December 2013	£371.62
Subtotal:	£785.62

#### **12.2 Balances at bank per statement dated 31.12.2013**

No. 1 main account	£2915.92
(Assuming payment of the above:	£2130.30)
No. 2 account	£ 50.00
Deposit account	£159.71
Barclays Business (Formerly Standard Life Bank)	£5,274.80
TOTAL (after payments as above)	£7614.81

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Cllr Jose, seconded by Cllr Buggins and passed unanimously.

### 12.3 Budget

Discussion took place on the proposed budget figures as circulated (attached). It was agreed that:

- i The level of the annual precept will remain unchanged at £5,000 p.a.;
- ii A "Special Projects" fund of £500 will be established within the annual budget;
- iii The clerk will ascertain from CALC what the training requirement is for new councillors and the relevant cost;
- iv Payment of the proposed annual donation to Nora Parsons Day Centre will be added to the March 2014 agenda; **Clerk**
- v Cllr Jose will assist the clerk in publishing the updated information for the Little Witley website; **Clerk / BJ**
- vi Subject to the matters detailed above, the annual budget for 2014-15 is agreed.

### 13. Meetings Attended

- 13.1 The next meeting of the Village Hall Committee is on Monday 13 January and Cllr Jose will report on that to the March meeting of the parish council.. **BJ**

### 14. Areas of Special Responsibility

#### 14.1 Highways

Work took place in November on Bank Road slippage opposite village hall but is cracking again due to recent heavy rain. Gabion Baskets are to be put on this area – clerk to find out from Gerry Brienza precisely when this work will be done. **Clerk**

Drains are blocked in Well Lane – Chairman to investigate. **PH**

Thanks were recorded to Mr Andrew Owen and others who worked so hard at clearing the tree debris from verges.

#### 14.2 Footpaths etc.

Reinstatement is in hand of signage at Haven Nurseries and the bridleway at Bank Road. **BM**

Footpath at Butts / Well Lane / Church Lane – Need to clear verges before reinstating gravel. **AD**

#### 14.3 Village Hall

Next meeting on 13 January as reported in 13.1 above.

***With no further business the meeting was closed.***

..... ***P Hill (in the Chair) 13/03/2014***

***Date of next meeting: 13 March 2014 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.***

### **Discussions during Public Question Time before the opening of the meeting:**

1. Discussions regarding establishment of Church Lane turning area. Request for clearer "Dead End" signage to deter HGVs from entering Church Lane.
2. Launch Meeting of Witleys' Oral History Project – 20 January 2014 at Great Witley Village Hall. Cllr Mrs Cumming to introduce the meeting on behalf of Little Witley Parish Council.
3. Discussion and agreement to move LW parish council meetings from Thursdays to ***second Monday in month, bimonthly, (May, July, September, November, January, March) as from May 2014.*** New list of dates attached below. ***NB: Start time will be 7.45pm for public question time, 8.00pm for formal parish council meeting.***

4. Discussion and agreement that parishioners wish to leave phone kiosk in existing position. Question of defibrillator to be sited in the village – agreement to consult with GP surgery to find out what their new emergency arrangements may be in future.

**Dates of statutory meetings for 2014/15**

Thursday 13 March 2014            7.30pm

\*\*\*\*\*

Monday 12 May 2014 – *LWPC Annual General Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting*

Monday 14 July 2014            7.45pm

Monday 8 September 2014      7.45pm

Monday 10 November 2014      7.45pm

Monday 12 January 2015        7.45pm

Monday 9 March 2015            7.45pm

Monday 11 May 2015– *LWPC Annual General Meeting and Annual Parish Meeting*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Proposed Budget 2014-15**

<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	<b><i>Projected</i></b>	
Precept	£5,000	
Lengthsman	£1,800	
Bank interest	£50	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£6,850</b>	
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b><i>2013-14</i></b>	<b><i>2014-15</i></b>
Insurance	£255	£267
Clerk salary	£2,230	£2,230
PAYE	£550	£0
Clerk expenses + admin	£280	£150
Web site	£85	£85
Village Hall Hire	£100	£100
Donations - NPDC	£150	£150
Donations - Church	£200	£250
Flowers & Strimming	£200	£200
Lengthsman	£2,190	£2,190
Audits	£200	£200
Subscriptions	£130	£140
Clerk Training / Cllr Courses	£100	£100
Election costs	£100	£100
Property repairs	£150	£150
Special Projects		£500
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£6,920</b>	<b>£6,812</b>
<b>ANNUAL SURPLUS/DEFICIT</b>	<b>-£70</b>	<b>£38</b>

***Budget agreed 9 January  
2014***