

Minutes of the Meeting of Little Witley Parish Council
Held on Monday 16th July, 2018 at 7.45pm in Little Witley Village Hall

Present: Cllr Paul Cumming (Chair), Cllr Colin Bexley, Cllr Pam Cumming, Cllr Philip Owen, Cllr Louise Slater, Cllr Kay Wilson

In Attendance: 2 members of the public, District Councillor Dr Ken Pollock and The Clerk

The meeting was formally opened and then moved straight to item 017.

- 017 Public Question Time
For matters raised in this item, please see aide memoire appended to these minutes.
- 018 Apologies
The Clerk had previously been notified by Cllr Jonathan Geach that he was unable to attend due to work commitments.
- 019 Declarations of Interest
There were no declarations of interest of any kind.
- 020 Code of Conduct
The new Clerk would circulate the current code of conduct to all councillors to ensure that everyone had the most up to date copy to hand. It is also to be uploaded to the new website and stored in the relevant area.
- 021 a. County Councillors Report
- County Councillor Dr Ken Pollock walked through the Council through his report (Appendix 2).
- Hockhams Lane
He also noted that question asked by Mr Malcolm Lamb during public question time and promised to get back with a response.
- Passing Place by Village Hall
Cllr Owen raised notice of the problem caused by vehicles using the passing place by the Village Hall which was causing the road surface to break up and the bank itself to wear away. Dr Pollock noted this issue and promised to get back with a response.
- Cllr Wilson raised her concerns about the increasing inadequacy of Holt Fleet Bridge (Thomas Telford) and asked what plans were in place to deal with this situation. County Councillor Pollock replied that there were no plans in place in the current transport provisions for a new bridge or additional bridge(s) for this side of the river.
- Cllr Bexley raised his concerns about the traffic congestion in the area of Holt Fleet Bridge. County Councillor Pollock noted that the LTP4 did contain some junction changes in the local area. (see <http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/LTP>)
- Cllr Pam Cummins asked County Councillor Pollock for information on the Western Orbital route. County Councillor Pollock responded that at present he was unaware of anything on this plan being seriously discussed.

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b. District Councillors Report

Paul Cummins outlined his attendance at the District Sports Award and encouraged all local councillors and parishioners to promote this yearly event so that local interest could be generated.

022

a. Lengthsmans Scheme

It was noted that Mr Bunn remained an excellent, pro-active, Lengthsman and his recommendations should be sought for maintenance for the coming year. The Clerk was instructed to invite Mr Bunn to a council meeting so that he could update the Parish Council appropriately.

023

Risk Register

Councillors had been supplied with a copy of the Risk Register and were asked to review it and bring recommendations and observations before the next Parish Council Meeting.

A Freedom of Information advice note would be sourced from NALC and the Clerk was making arrangements to deposit the original Minutes within the County Archive.

024

Project: SMART Water Forensic Marking System

Cllr Cummins had located a number of monetary supplements and discounts for this project and calculated that the Parish Council would be looking at approximately £800.00 plus VAT to provide the majority of Parishioners with no cost kits. However, in order to obtain the main discount (by ordering via the West Mercia Police Service, "We Don't Buy Crime" initiative), a minimum of 70% of parishioners would need to be prepared to take a kit. If this uptake figure could be reached, then there would be the added bonus of receiving the village signage kits, which were worth £40.00 + VAT a time.

The Council decided to leaflet drop the entire village to gauge interest.

Cllr Cummins was instructed to go ahead with a print run of an appropriate number of leaflets and they would be distributed amongst councillors for deliver to each section of Little Witley.

025

Planning

No active planning items at present.

026

IT

a. Website.

The excellent services of Cuttermoon Website Design had benefitted the Parish Council and The Clerk was instructed to write a letter of thanks from the Parish Council to Mrs Geach.

Councillors and Parishioners are encouraged to submit their photos of the Parish to the Clerk. A policy for item inclusion on the Parish Council website would need to be written.

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b. GDPR

The Clerk had attended the WorcCalc training event and subsequently acted on an opportunity to link with Abberley Parish Council to work together on the Risk Audit. Council will be updated on a regular basis, as the Risk Audit would be a rolling review item.

027

Highways and Footways

a. Main A road footways

Hannah Davies had been out to inspect the main footway with Councillor Louise Slater (deputising for Cllr Colin Bexley) and her advices were awaited.

b. Dog Fouling on public and private land

The problem of irresponsible dog owners continues to be a vexation to many parishes and individuals alike.

Reports of identified dog owners who fail to pick up their dog's excrement in accordance with the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 and the Public Space Protection Order (2017) should be reported to the Malvern Hills District Council Street Scene Team. Fines can and will be imposed by the District or County Council.

https://swict.malvern hills.gov.uk/sw2forms/mhdc_reportissues.jsp

028

Finance (See attached Appendix 3)

a. Payments Made.

b. Receipts.

c. Payments to be authorised

d. Any other items (None)

029

Councillors Items Not Covered Elsewhere

a. Lighting of Bonfires

Complaints had been made to the council about some parishioners lighting bonfires which meant that others felt they could not open their windows.

b. Witley Court Residents Pass Scheme

The Clerk was asked to ascertain the current state of the scheme from Cllr Dermietzel at Great Witley Parish Council.

030

Clerks Items Not Covered Elsewhere

None

031

Next Meeting: 10th September, 2018 at 7.45pm (Public Question Time)

032

There being no further business, the meeting was closed.

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Appendix 1 – Item 017 Public Question Time

Parishioner, Mr Malcolm Lamb asked the Parish Council why the County Council had put chippings down on a road surface at Hockhams Lane that was he felt, in better condition than many of the other road surfaces in the parish. A response to this question was deferred to County Councillor Dr Ken Pollock.

Appendix 2 – Item 021a County Councillors Report (16.07.2018)

1. Road Developments

Last Monday at a Midlands Connect meeting in Birmingham, I heard of various plans for coordinated improvements to the transport infrastructure for the Midlands Region. Chris Grayling the transport minister, who effectively decides on the allocation of funds to our road and rail systems, was scheduled to speak but did not appear, due to the political situation.

Highways England should be removing the throttle at Junction 4A in the autumn, which should relieve the congestion at that point and the dispersal of through traffic to local roads in the vicinity. They are also planning on improving the A46 trunk road, which will relieve some of the pressure on the Birmingham motorway box.

During the smart motorway road works, Bromsgrove has suffered from displaced traffic on to the A38. At Cabinet last Thursday, I presented an interim report on the planned developments along that section of the A38 through Bromsgrove. This is partially funded from various nationally determined sources, and is intended to relieve the long term congestion through the town.

We have rejected the idea, popular with some local District Councillors, to plan for a western distributor route, running through the housing developments between the town and the M5, partly on cost grounds and also as it might be used as an alternative to the M5 at busy times.

Some of you will have noticed that the works to raise New Road passed the cricket ground in Worcester are now complete. We all appreciate that funds are tight and there may need to be reduction in services like school crossing patrols. I would like to make clear that these two projects have different sources of funding, the New Road work being paid for by central government through the Environment Agency. As such it is not using money that could be used for school crossing patrols and other such services that we may need to review.

2. Rail Developments

One of the important matters we have taken to Midlands Connect is the Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy, which seeks to improve rail services in the county. The priorities are the dualling of the Cotswold Line to London, so that we can carry two trains per hour on that line. One of those should take no more than two hours, bringing London a lot closer for business people.

A second important development is the Worcestershire Parkway station now under construction at Norton. Last Tuesday we held a press conference there, to highlight the rapid progress the station is making. Trains should be stopping there within 12 months.

The station will not only allow passengers wanting to go to London to bypass the city and park next to the station, but also there will be trains stopping on the cross country line between Birmingham and Bristol. This will mean that people wishing to travel by train to the north east and the south west will not have to leave the county to catch the right train.

On a more parochial level, work on a new station at Kidderminster will start later this year. This station is already the second busiest in the county, and the new buildings will reflect its importance for travel to Birmingham and London.

3. The Financial Position

We cannot disguise the fact that the county's finances are very tight and we will be under pressure to make savings for some years. This is never a popular matter with residents but I hope we all appreciate that we need to balance the books.

Our finances are not helped by the increasing demands for Children's Services and Adult Social Care. These are areas where we have statutory obligations and the demand for our services is increasing. At Cabinet last Thursday we brought forward plans for a wholly owned company to run our children's services, which are improving swiftly, but still under an Ofsted judgement of being inadequate.

Given that some 70% of our income is devoted to meeting these two needs affecting only 12,000 people, you can appreciate why we may be short of money for crossing patrols, repairing potholes and the like. We certainly do not want to be cutting road side verges unnecessarily – and cutting down valuable wild flowers before they have had a chance to seed.

4. Economic developments

Meanwhile, we are keen to support local industry and get more new companies started or relocated to this county. Worcester 6, the business park next to Junction 6 of the M5, has seen new tenants being established, with Kimal, the medical supplies company building their large depot there just now. There will be announcements about other new tenants in the near future.

We need to produce as much sand, gravel and crushed rock locally as possible. At Cabinet last Thursday, I presented the results of work to improve the number of appropriate sites for aggregate extraction in the county. In addition we will be bringing forward the latest waste strategy to ensure maximum recycling of waste where possible and incineration of other materials at the plant at Hartlebury. There is scope for increasing the throughput at that plant, which should bring in extra income for the county.

You will know of the developments in 5G in Worcestershire. While we are acutely aware that not all residents get a good service at present, there was a celebration last Friday at Upton Warren of the superfast broadband that has been installed in an area that has been unable to get good speeds for some time. Our new Home Secretary, the MP for Bromsgrove, Sajid Javid, has been active in this but was not able to be present.

Meanwhile, we are all concerned about the future security of energy supplies, and I have been to a couple of local conferences recently examining the alternatives available, several of which are local developments of new ideas in this area. Western Power Developments held a workshop last Friday, and the Worcestershire Energy Strategy held another meeting today on how we can improve our situation locally.

5. Local issues

While this report has concentrated on county wide issues, I am aware of the local problems and needs in Little Witley. We have tried to find ways of improving the speeding situation without great impact. I will be pleased to hear of any other problems that need attention.

Last Wednesday, I was able to spend some time at Tenbury High Ormiston Academy discussing the importance of local politics with some of the pupils. I hope I was able to convince them of the importance of the sort of dedication shown by people like yourselves at local level, as well as those who serve at District and County level, not to mention our Members of Parliament. There is a tendency to believe that anyone who gets

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involved in this sort of activity is only interested in furthering their own careers and status. I am sure you will agree with me that this is far from the truth in most, if not all, cases.

Cllr Ken Pollock, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 2BZ

Appendix 3 – Item 028 – Finance

a	Payments Made	£763.93	Laptop & Software (Transparency Grant Funded)
		£50.00	Grant – Friends of St Michaels (Royal Wedding Event)
		£50.00	Grant – Nora Parsons Centre
		£186.81	CALC (National and Regional) Subscriptions for support services
		£257.60	Zurich – Compulsory Parish Council Insurance
		£138.70	Parish Clerk’s Salary and Expenses (to date in financial year)
		£444.00	Lengthsmans Scheme, outgoings
b	Receipts	£2500	MHDC Precept, 1 st Half of year
		£300	Lengthsmans Scheme, repayments from WCC.
c	Payments to be made, agreed at meeting 16.07.2018	£10.00	Clerks Attendance at GDPR Training Event – WORC CALC
		£60.00	Cllr Bexley and Wilson Training Event (28 th Nov 2017) – WORC CALC (5 P’s procedural training), outstanding invoice previously agreed.
		£60.00	Cllr Bexley & Wilson Training Event (27 th Dec 2017) – WORC CALC (3 M’s procedural training), outstanding invoice previously agreed.
		£145.12	Website hosting, certificates and upgrades – 16 th February 2017 to June 2020 – Little Witley Village Hall Committee
		£285.00	Cuttermoon Website Design – New Website for Parish Council (conforms to Transparency Code Regulations)
d	Any Other Items	NONE	