

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Little Witley Parish Council

Held at the via Zoom on 23rd September 2021

Present: Chairman, Cllr P Cumming (PC).

In Attendance: Clerk, J Evans, Cllrs K Wilson (KW), P Owen (PO), Pam Cumming (PmC), L Slater (LS), C Bexley (CB), J Geach (JG), and D.Cllr P Cumming (PC).

There were no members of the public present so the meeting would not be adjourned for public questions.

1. **Apologies:** C.Cllr K Pollock (KP)
2. **Declarations of Interest:** None.
3. **To consider any Application for a dispensation:** None.
4. **Minutes:** Approved and to be signed later. [Minutes Annual Meeting of Parish Council 200624.docx](#)
5. **Councillors' reports and items for future agenda:**
 - i. KW queried why the new bench is painted blue and not green but PC reminded the parish council that a vote was cast and the dark blue paint was chosen. Sadly, it was also noted that someone had left a black plastic bin bag of rubbish under the new bench. PmC commented how lovely the new bench is. **ACTION:** The Clerk asked whether the new bench is listed on the parish council's asset register and insurance policy. PC suggested the Clerk contact Zurich to make sure the bench is covered on the exiting policy.
 - ii. CB asked if we could put the Community Engagement Strategy on the next agenda. PC agreed and commented that although there are funds available for projects, with the current COVID-19 crisis it may prove difficult to put the CES in place, but asked for ideas nevertheless.
 - iii. CB reported that WCC had completed siding out on the A443 and the Lengthsman will spray some weedkiller, but that not siding out has been done to the west of Bank Lane. WCC said this area did not need to be done as it is unused. The surface is in a bad state and will worsen over winter months. There is a lot of moss around the bus stop here. PC said that unfortunately, WCC were not interested when he brought this to their attention. PmC confirmed that people do wish to use this area but are unable to do so due to its poor state. PC thought that children from Rock Cottage have to walk on this un-sided out path. PmC asked PC to contact KP before his new replacement arrives as it is important that it is sorted out. PC asked if a list of people who use this path could message the Clerk. **ACTION:** The Clerk will email the parishioners circulation list to ascertain who uses it.
 - iv. JG warned that thefts are occurring in the parish and there has been a high-speed car chase. **ACTION:** PC will compose an email message to inform parishioners of this increase in crime. Another warning was of a person claiming their car had broken

down and they needed to use a householder's telephone to call for help. They entered the cottage in order to make a theft and a car chase ensued.

- v. PC reported that a couple of Rhodesian Ridgebacks dogs are being walked in an orchard near Ockeridge. They are off lead and have been attacking several dogs and dog walkers. The police are aware of the problem and an Order has been put on the owner to walk his dogs on leads and muzzled.
- vi. PC is concerned that a number of regular garden bonfires are being lit, especially throughout the lockdown during the hot weather. It is difficult to pinpoint who is lighting the fires at present but they need to be identified.

6. **CALC:** There was no interest in attending any forthcoming CALC events.

7. **District and County Councillors' Reports:**

District: PC said that land at the bottom of Church Lane has been tarmacked over. This is a passing point and not a parking layby which it is now being used for. KP has not been able to answer why this was done when asked, and it was suggested that perhaps WCC highways workforce had leftover tarmac and just 'dumped' it there?

MHDC have purchased land at Hallow. They did this without notifying members in accordance with the consultation and justified it by saying they were being put under pressure to buy the parcel of land. The land had been for sale since July 2019 and there was no hurry to make an offer. It has been agreed by the District that in future any proposed urgent decisions will be properly communicated.

PC is concerned by the new proposed planning rules which allow for housing requirements in Worcestershire to increase which in turn puts villages at risk of new developments. The new rules do not allow for people to make comment at the start of individual planning applications process and this was not felt to be a positive step.

County: [..\REPORTS\K Pollock 4.23.09.20 report.docx](#) Please click on the link provided or see the appendix to these Minutes.

- 8. **Planning:** There were no new planning applications to discuss. PC brought up the issue of enforcement as there have been complaints about activities being carried on at the stables at the top of Ockeridge.
- 9. **Finance:** All paid invoices and remittances received were circulated and approved at the meeting. The Bank Reconciliation balances, and the Budget Comparison will be circulated at the next meeting. The Clerk's appraisal and pay increase will be discussed by PC and PmC in due course.
- 10. **Correspondence for Information:** None.
- 11. **Clerk's report on Urgent Decisions made under delegation since the last meeting:** None.
- 12. **Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 5th January 2021.
- 13. To consider the exclusion of the public and press in the public interest for consideration of the following items: None.

The meeting closed at 20:00pm

Signed

Date

Chairman

LITTLE WITLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

23.09.20

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

N.B. report submitted for delayed meeting on the 3rd September

1.Flooding

I trust that you will all have heard about the award of £4.895 million towards the construction of a flood barrier scheme in Tenbury Wells. This is part of the massive amount of money allocated to seek to solve flooding problems across the country, including an additional amount of up to £30 million in the Severn Valley, to overcome the periodic flooding in the river basin. The official announcement contains the following comments on our local area:

In Tenbury Wells and the Severn Valley, two flood schemes will protect nearly 3,000 homes in areas which were badly affected by last winter's floods, and protecting and creating more than 22,000 jobs along the Severn Valley. This will be supplemented by an additional scheme combining natural flood risk management, tree planting and habitat creation to reduce flood risk and capture carbon throughout the Severn Valley.

There is a requirement for some local funding, and the Worcestershire LEP has been able to allocate £0.5 million to fill the gap, this being the maximum the EA will allow, amounting to 10% of their commitment. In addition, the projects must be regarded as "shovel ready" meaning they must be able to start soon, and in consequence that the work must be completed by the end of the next financial year.

Those of you who have studied the plans will know that there may need to be some revision or improvement to make them satisfactory, but in general, this is a very welcome announcement. You may know that Harriett Baldwin, our local MP, has played a major part in persuading Defra to fund this need, and her adjournment debate clearly helped to ensure Tenbury was included in the list of approved schemes.

A fairly large group of local representatives, including Harriett, will be meeting at 09.30 tomorrow, 4th September, to discuss the detailed design of the flood barriers, and I hope there will be agreement on the nature of them and the likely cost of the project.

We need to get on with it quickly and be sure we can cover all likely costs with the grants available.

2. Local Matters

Schools return earlier this month, and we have to hope that all the dire predictions of problems prove unduly pessimistic. The news media are concerned to tell us the figures for positive test results, but rarely put that in context of the numbers of tests carried out. They also more or less ignore the very small number of people needing to go to hospital and the even smaller number of people succumbing to the disease.

From the latter two figures, one would draw some hope that the whole pandemic is under control or coming to a close. That said, more drastic measures have been introduced recently, indicating the government is concerned about a major second wave of infection.

Meanwhile, on a more pedestrian level, the government is keen to support more walking and cycling in the country. This was first stimulated by the problems of using public transport in London, but it has been translated into a national drive to improve facilities for walking and cycling everywhere.

Contrary to the opinion of some people, the policy of the county, as promulgated in LTP4, is to support active travel and we are investing 11% of our transport budget in these areas. What we have not done is implement a lot of temporary measures with cones and one-way systems, not to mention closing roads altogether, to help active travel.

You may be aware that in several places, this sort of action has been severely criticised for penalising local businesses in favour of larger stores, and also making life more awkward for disabled people. It is difficult to strike the right balance, but caution is sensible in responding to changing circumstances.

Locally, your chairman alerted me to some apparently unnecessary tarmac laying on Church Lane. I have not received any answer as to why this was done, but I hope where such work is needed, you will all feel free to pass the request through your parish clerk or via me to the highways officers.

We have had 10 or more crews working on repairing pavements during lock down and you will be aware of some work done on the pavements along the A443 in the village. There was a request to continue the clearance to the west of the village, but I am not sure the expected usage would justify the expense. I would claim that these are matters where professional judgement should trump personal opinions.

Cllr Ken Pollock
Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire,
GL50 2BZ
23.09.20

August Payment Schedule

DATE	PAYEE	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
31/07/2020	C Bunn	Lengthsman services	£168.00
27/08/2020	C Bunn	Lengthsman services	£204.00
28/08/2020	J Evans	Clerk's August invoice	£162.40
	HMRC	August income tax	£34.60