

# ALVECHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk – Tammy Williams

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## **MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD MONDAY 8<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2018 AT 7.00PM**

**AT HOPWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE, REDDITCH ROAD, HOPWOOD**

**17/119 Present:** Councillors A Humphries (Chairman), M Ball, J Cypher, A Helmore, S Lambert, A Smith, A Willetts, N Wise & M Worrall

**In attendance:** Tammy Williams (Clerk), District Councillor K Van der Plank and 2 members of the public

### **17/120 Apologies for Absence**

Councillor R Chima (accepted)  
Councillor T Wallis (accepted)  
The Police (accepted)  
County Cllr C Hotham (accepted)

### **17/121 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Ball – 17/126 (Dispensation in place to contribute to discussion but precludes Cllr Ball from voting)

### **17/122 Reports from Alvechurch Ward, District & County Councillors**

a. Report From District Councillor, Kate Van der Plank

i. Station Car Park

District Cllr Van der Plank advised that in the intervening period since the last meeting, her efforts around resolving the state of the Station Car Park have gained a bit of momentum. Bromsgrove District Council's Planning department maintain that carrying out the work stated in the original planning application is at the discretion of Network Rail; whereas some initial legal advice District Cllr Van der Plank has received suggests otherwise. District Cllr Van der Plank has also referred the matter to the Monitoring Officer, the Press and Mark Carney at Network Rail. District Cllr Van der Plank noted that it was not appropriate that neither Barnt Green nor Alvechurch stations provided disabled parking facilities and in the case of Barnt Green, no disabled access either if the proposed lifts are not installed on cost grounds at Barnt Green now. District Cllr Van der Plank has also referred it to the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol and Sajid Javid MP who has stated that he will take the matter up with the new train operator.

Recently, due to parked cars on yellow lines and cars parked in the middle of the car park an ambulance had access issues at the station.

A Parish Councillor asked the District Cllr if she had considered approaching the new train operator for our line and District Cllr Van der Plank replied that she felt that primarily she is focussing on Network Rail whose responsibility it was to improve the car park originally. Cllr Worrall did state that he had personally raised the matter of the station car park with the Director of Projects for West Midlands Rail as he is hoping that in doing so, Alvechurch Station Car Park may be eligible for some of the £60m that West Midlands Rail has earmarked for station car park improvements. Another Councillor suggested that in light of

the access issues recently experienced by the emergency services that Parking Enforcement should also be pursued.

It was also noted that there is a document on the internet stating that there are 50 available parking spaces and no cycle storage available at Alvechurch Station, neither of which is true.

ii. Plastic Free Alvechurch

District Cllr Van der Plank has approached Cheryl Welsh for funding to reduce plastic wastage in Alvechurch with a focus of non-plastic bags for shops and cups for the three cafes.

District Cllr Van der Plank has asked the Clerk to the Parish Council for it to be added to the Agenda at the next February Parish Council Meeting.

b. Report from County Cllr C Hotham

County Cllr Hotham sent his apologies as our meeting had clashed with the Planning Meeting at BDC. Instead he sent a report to the Parish Council which Cllr A Humphries appraised Councillors that Bromsgrove District Council has managed to reduce the business rates being paid on the former Council House in Burcot Lane by stating that this building is now in a dilapidated state and the cost to restore it would be almost the same as what it's worth. As such the business rates have been reduced from £145,500p.a to £15000p.a.

**17/123 To Approve the Minutes of the Previous Meeting Held on 18/12/18**

The Minutes were **agreed** and signed by Cllr Humphries

**17/124 Clerk's report including Matters Arising From Previous Meetings and Emergency Expenditure...**

a. Update on the CCTV Coverage of the Cycle Racks at Alvechurch Station

West Midlands trains has confirmed that the remedial work required to install a CCTV camera pointing at the cycle racks at the station has now been completed and both cameras attached to the column are now fully operational and are recorded locally and monitored at Trains For West Midlands Headquarters.

b. To Note the Annual Review and Update of Councillors' Declaration of Interest Forms

Councillors were advised that the Clerk had brought a wallet to collect any completed Declaration of Interest Forms. Councillors were asked to submit any outstanding forms to the Clerk by the 31<sup>st</sup> January.

c. Update on the Change of Supplier for our Unmetered Street Lighting Contract

The Clerk confirmed that the forms were submitted to LSI on 19<sup>th</sup> December and advice has been received that the switch is being processed. As soon as confirmation of completion is received the Clerk will advise Council.

d. Update on the Request to Kevin Dicks, BDC, to Review the Traffic Management Issues Associated with the Weights Lane, Redditch Housing Development

The Clerk thanked Cllr Cypher for composing a letter to be sent to Kevin Dicks and the letter will be sent this week.

e. Update on the Clearance of Slippery Leaves on Swans Walk

The Clerk advised that these were cleared after the last meeting but the Clerk will ask the Caretaker to do it again.

f. Update From the Parish Lengthsman Regarding One Way Signs on School Lane

The Parish Lengthsman reports that he assessed all the one way signs on School Lane, top and bottom and he advised that they are clear of obstructions.

g. Update on the Presentation of Prizes to the Find Santa & His Reindeer Competition Winners

The Clerk contacted the three winners following the December meeting and each were presented with their vouchers.

h. Update on the Grant Applications for the 2018/19 Financial Year

The Clerk advised that the letters will be issued this week to all applicants.

i. Update on the Contingency Arrangements for the Parish Lengthsman

The Clerk has contacted Hosking Ground Maintenance to confirm Council's agreement that they would cover the role if necessary.

j. Update on the Flickering Light at Hopwood Community Centre

The Clerk advised that the electrician had fixed the light in the car park.

k. Update on the Footway Improvements at Willowbrook

The Clerk confirmed that Worcestershire County Council has continued the footway from Birmingham Road to Willowbrook, round past the play area and are finishing off the dropped kerb so that pedestrians can now cross over Swans Length to Crown Meadow safely. The contractors will then move on to fixing the raised manhole covers. Cllr Worrall is monitoring the situation and will report back as work progresses.

l. Update on Phase 2 of the Street Lighting Upgrade

The Assistant Clerk has contacted Western Power in order to ascertain the legal situation and also to establish if they have any original records for the street light.

### **17/125 Finance & Administration**

a. To receive a list of invoices for payment and consider any exceptional items

Councillors were provided with a list of invoices for payment and these were **agreed** and approved. Cllr Humphries signed the Cheque List

b. To consider the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Review Against 2017/18 Financial Year

The Clerk provided Councillors with Cost Centre figures and advised that all Cost Centres were on target to be in budget for year end. The Clerk will take a more detailed analysis of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter to the Finance & Resources Committee Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018.

The Chairman then moved on to Item 6.4 on the Agenda:

c. To consider the Budget for the 2018/19 financial year

Councillors had considered the draft budget at the December Parish Council Meeting. Councillors **agreed unanimously** the budget proposed for the 2018/19 financial year. The Finance & Resources Committee Members will meet on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January to consider and propose the Precept and then report back to the February Parish Council Meeting.

The Chairman then moved on to Item 6.3 on the Agenda:

d. To consider Phase 3 of the Street Lighting Upgrade

The Clerk advised Councillors that Prysmian had today supplied a list of seven concrete columns that they felt were in poor condition and needed replacing. The Clerk noted that the Parish Council had agreed to replace one of the seven in this financial year at the December Parish Council Meeting so that meant that there were in fact six street lights requiring an upgrade in Phase 3. Prysmian had advised that they were currently going through a pricing exercise but expected that the cost of each street light upgrade would be between £1100 - £1200 + VAT. Prysmian also advised that they had attended the site on Ash Lane where the reinstatement of a former street light had been requested and Prysmian advised that there were many unknowns, for example whether the former light had been sited on a wooden or concrete pole. As such they recommended that Western Power should service this as Prysmian is not permitted to work on wooden poles. A Hopwood ward Councillor advised that it had been on a concrete post as when it was taken away there had been a small concrete stub close to the road that for safety reasons had to be removed. If Western Power is involved in the reinstatement of this street light then the total cost is anticipated to be in the region of £1400-£1600 + VAT maximum.

**ACTION POINT: The Assistant Clerk** to advise Prysmian that it had been a concrete pole and seek Prysmian's advices on this.

A Councillor queried whether we should put the street lighting contract out to Tender to ensure we get best value? Council was advised that Prysmian is an umbrella contract for Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and as such it is believed that WCC does the tendering process and we use their appointed Contractor, in this case Prysmian

**ACTION POINT: The Assistant Clerk** to clarify the situation.

It was **agreed** that the Finance & Resources Committee would consider the quotation received as part of their Precept setting exercise and then bring it back to the February Parish Council meeting to make a final decision on Phase 3.

The Chairman then moved on to Agenda Item 6.5:

e. **To consider instructing the Internal Auditor for the 2018/19 financial year**

Councillors were advised that the Internal Auditor had written to the Parish Council asking if we would like her to internally audit our accounts for this financial year. It was noted that the External Auditor was changing for this financial year and as such it would make sense to retain the services of our existing Internal Auditor for this financial year. It was **agreed unanimously** to instruct DM Payroll Services to audit our accounts.

**ACTION POINT: The Clerk** to instruct DM Payroll Services to audit our accounts

f. **To consider the Parish Council's Response to Bromsgrove District Council's (BDC) Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Consultation**

Councillors considered the request for views on tinted windows and Disability handling training for all taxi drivers in the District. Councillors felt that tinted windows was a police matter and the Parish Council would support any decision to train taxi drivers to better assist passengers with disabilities. It was **agreed** that Cllr Humphries would compose a response and the Assistant Clerk would send it on to BDC.

g. **To consider the Clerk's Response to a Request for Details of the Recent Grounds Maintenance Tendering Process**

We have had a request for details of who tendered and how much for from Wythall Parish Council as they will be going through the same process in 2018.

The Clerk having investigated the requirements under the Freedom of Information Act and the Transparency Code requested Council's agreement on how to handle this request and future Tendering processes. It was **agreed** that once a Tendering Exercise was completed Council would:

1. Discuss the quotations received in the Confidential section of a meeting as the information is commercially sensitive.
2. Once the decision is made and the contract awarded, record the reasons for making the decision and the amount of the contract in the Minutes.
3. Email any contractors who were not successful in their bids to confirm this and advise who the contract was awarded to and for how much. The email would also confirm the other quotation amounts received but not who quoted what.

With regards to this current request, it was **agreed** that the Clerk would email the two unsuccessful contractors regarding the outcome of the latest Grounds Maintenance Tendering Process as per point 3 and also email the Clerk to Wythall Parish Council to confirm how we handled the Tendering process, who quoted and the annual amount for the grounds maintenance contract that was awarded.

In future, the Clerk will start to build up the financial information that we publish and make available to Parishioners and include the Grounds Maintenance Tender details as part of that process.

**ACTION POINT: The Clerk** to update the Parish Council's Financial Regulations.

**17/126 To Consider the Proposal From the Wiggin Development Working Group Following the Completion of the Public Consultation Process for the New Play Equipment at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields**

The Clerk had provided Councillors with a copy of the presentation given to the Working Group Members and Jackie Boreham (BDC) regarding the outcome of the three public consultations carried out in 2017. Cllr Humphries and the Clerk advised Councillors that over 400 responses had been received from the three consultations and that we had received very constructive comments as well on the forms. In almost all age categories, the most popular choice was for a double zip-wire, followed by some risky play equipment. After installation costs and safety surfaces/paths there may well be some funds left from the Section 106 monies but that this would not be enough to pay for a Skate Facility this time; therefore if there was any additional funds it would be spent on installing some gym equipment. It was noted by the Working Group that if there was any additional Section 106 monies for the Wiggin again that those funds could be earmarked for a skate facility then instead.

Cllr Humphries thanked the Clerk for the time put into the presentation and added that Jackie Boreham was going to undertake the Tendering process for us and involve us in the decision making process. The Working Group believes that we will not lose the VAT element

of the funds but Councillors asked the Clerk to clarify this before proceeding with the Tender process.

Nine Councillors **agreed** and one **abstained** (Cllr Ball - see 17/121) that the Clerk can instruct Bromsgrove District Council to tender for quotations to install a Double Zip-Wire, some Risky Play Equipment, safety flooring, paths and if funds permit, some gym equipment too, subject to receiving confirmation that the Parish Council will not lose the VAT element of the Section 106 monies.

It was also noted that the Parish Council does own two other Playing Fields that have play equipment on them and in the fullness of time the Parish Council will have responsibilities to the residents of Rowney Green and Hopwood to update the equipment there as well.

**17/127 To consider the final draft of the Neighbourhood Plan and associated documents and to consider forwarding them to BDC to check their conformity to BDC's Strategic Planning Policies**

At the December Parish Council Meeting Cllr Smith advised Councillors that he would be sending the final versions of the Neighbourhood Plan documents to be reviewed. Cllr Smith advised that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group required the Parish Council's agreement to begin the legal formalities. It was agreed unanimously that the documents should be sent to Bromsgrove District Council to check their conformity to BDC's Strategic Planning policies.

Cllr Humphries thanked the Steering Group Members and Cllr Smith who gave up a lot of time over several meetings to consider all 91 responses that were received from the last Consultation.

**ACTION POINT:** Cllr Ball to take down the banner advertising the Neighbourhood Plan Consultation on the fencing alongside Red Lion Street and The Square.

**17/128 To Consider the Approach to Forming an Emergency Plan for the Parish as Proposed in the Working Party Report**

Cllr Cypher had tabled this motion and advised Councillors that the Emergency Plan was last looked into by the Parish Council two to three years ago by Cllrs Cypher and Lambert. At the time, Worcestershire County Council (WCC) was encouraging Parish Councils to have a plan that would run alongside those developed by BDC and WCC. In light of the Grenfell Fire Disaster Cllr Cypher wondered if the Parish Council should once again look to have an Emergency Plan in place in the event of any disaster affecting the Parish. Cllr Cypher noted that this may include having details of key persons and details of shelters in each of the settlements in the Parish in place as well as what communications systems could be employed at the time to alert and keep residents up to date. Cllrs expressed their opinions as to what extent the Parish Council would be required to assist in the event of a disaster as it was likely that the Emergency Services would take over pretty quickly. Cllr Cypher had composed a briefing note with a series of questions for Councillors to comment on and it was agreed that Councillors would complete this questionnaire with their views on the extent that the Parish Council should be involved in Emergency Planning and pass it back to Cllr Cypher to collate views and feed back to Council at the February Parish Council Meeting

**ACTION POINT: Councillors** to complete the questionnaire and pass to Cllr Cypher to analyse. **The Clerk** to add this to the February Parish Council Agenda.

**17/129 To consider Bromsgrove District Council's response to our request for a litter bin at the top of Callow Hill**

The Clerk advised Councillors that the Assistant Clerk has passed on the resident's request for a litter bin to be installed at the top of Callow Hill near the canal (17/097). BDC had replied that they had assessed the area but did not feel that there was a need for BDC to install a bin at that site currently. Councillors debated this response and it was noted that it was a single request for a bin rather than many requests.

**ACTION POINT: District Cllr Van der Plank** to look further into why the request for a bin was turned down.

**17/130 To Consider Residents' Complaints and Queries, As Received:**

The Clerk advised that no residents' complaints or queries had been received since the December Parish Council Meeting.

**17/131 Around the Parish - to Consider Developments and Issues Raised by Councillors Present as They Relate to Hopwood, Rowney Green, Bordesley and Alvechurch**

a. Bordesley

None raised.

b. Hopwood

Cllr Smith noted that there was a lack of adequate crossings on the A441, that residents want a fixed speed camera to reduce speeds on the A441 and also the footways are poorly maintained in Hopwood.

Cllr Humphries advised that he had received another report from the Safer Roads Partnership which states that the average speed on the A441 through Hopwood during their latest study was 47mph. It was 49mph two years ago, then a subsequent study recorded average speeds of 47.7mph and this one 47mph. Cllr Humphries noted that on a 40mph road, speeds in excess of 46mph are enforceable however the Safer Roads Partnership has advised that the A441 isn't eligible for a fixed speed camera. The outcome of the investigation into the fatality on the A441 is still to be concluded. Cllr Humphries would like to arrange a meeting with the Safer Roads Partnership, County Cllr Hotham and the police in order to review the latest report, discuss next steps and to review the eligibility criteria for a fixed speed camera. It was noted that the Police & Crime Commissioner would be attending a CALC Meeting soon and that would be an opportunity to ask him directly about the eligibility criteria for a fixed speed camera.

**Standing Orders were suspended** to allow a Hopwood resident to advise Councillors that rather than a fixed speed camera, it would be better to have average speed cameras stationed at each end of Hopwood as this will bring the speed down along the route through Hopwood. The resident also noted that whilst mobile cameras were being used to check speeds, these were not bringing in revenue to the Parish.

Councillors noted that they would like the Safer Roads Partnership to attend a Parish Council Meeting so council could discuss the findings of the report with them.

c. Alvechurch

Cllr Lambert advised that she had advised the Office that street lights were not working on Swan Street and Church Walk.

Cllr Worrall advised that he had met with a representative of North Worcestershire Water Management at Tranter Avenue and Branden Road to discuss drainage issues there. Severn Trent are running tests to eliminate or rule in if the issues are arising from the mains water and Network Rail are also looking into their drainage systems from the railway behind the houses. Cllr Worrall will keep Council updated on progress with this.

d. Rowney Green

None raised.

**17/132 Date and time of next meeting:** The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2018 at 7pm at Hopwood Community Centre, Redditch Road, Hopwood.

This meeting ended at 9.10pm

Signed..... Date.....  
Chairman, Alvechurch Parish Council