

ALVECHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk – Tammy Williams

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD MONDAY 8th OCTOBER 2018 AT 7 PM

AT HOPWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE REDDITCH ROAD HOPWOOD

18/071 Present: Councillors A Humphries (Chairman), J Cypher, P Freeman, A Helmore, A Smith, M Worrall, A Wallis & A Willetts

In attendance: Tammy Williams (Clerk), Richard Peach (The Village), District & County Cllr C Hotham & PCSO K Hearndon-Fellows

18/072 Apologies for Absence: Cllr N Wise & District Cllrs K Van der Plank & K Taylor

18/073 Declarations of Interest: None

18/074 Reports from Alvechurch Ward, District & County Councillors:

District Cllr Kate Van der Plank

Due to District Cllr Van der Plank's absence, she sent a report to Council which the Clerk read out at the meeting:

"1. Hollington road: More resident concerns have been flagged to me about children's safety / behaviour and the speed of cars driving in the area I have met with BDHT who have a number of interventions available to them but we agreed we would prefer to start from a positive note and try to encourage residents to be considerate of their neighbours.

We therefore propose for BDHT to draft a letter to all residents which we co-sign as District Councillor and as a Parish council which would include the behaviour areas that are causing concern and a route (or phone number, email etc) for residents to report issues or concerns"

District Cllr Van der Plank asked in writing if councillors could confirm if you are happy with this approach and then District Cllr Van der Plank proposed that she would progress the letter with BDHT and circulate to the Parish Council for comments and approval.

"2. I have asked the BDC planning to outline their plans for the consultation events and requested we include info about our own NP at the same time. Awaiting a response.

3. I have a meeting coming up with the head of finance at BDC to explore possible options for BDC collaborating on station car park improvement plans. I will invite BDC to nominate a representative at the meeting we are hoping to have with Network Rail"

Councillors stated that the approval of the letter would need to be an agenda item and therefore the letter couldn't be approved until it had been seen.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to contact District Cllr Van der Plank about this.

District Cllr C Hotham

- Residents have completed many diary sheets as part of the Community Trigger investigations. A somewhat positive response to the diary sheets has been received from the co-ordinator but there isn't a definite date for a follow-up meeting yet.
- Has received complaints from residents regarding the white lines and speed signs recently painted on the A441 which appear to have been painted in a ridged way and are creating a noise nuisance when they're driven over. This has been escalated and a Highways inspection will take place.
- The motion to consider creating a Unitary Authority didn't get heard at the last District Council meeting and will be the first agenda item at the next meeting.

Alvechurch South ward

District Cllr K Taylor left an ansaphone message for the Clerk at the office prior to the meeting and items that he is looking into include:

- Sorting out a fly-tipping incident
- A query about the Parish Council's Planning Committee minutes

County Cllr C Hotham

- Worcestershire County Council failed to save £21m and is therefore predicted to be £17m overspent at the end of the financial year.
- £9m overspend will be pushed into the next financial year.
- One measure to reduce debt is to pay suppliers later; larger suppliers will be paid within 30 days.
- County Cllr Hotham thinks that the Unitary Authority idea needs reviewing but there is quite a lot of resistance to it.
- County Cllr Hotham reports that issues reported by Members of the Public are far more likely to be resolved than issues raised by a County Councillor which appear to be added to a "list".

18/075 To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10th September 2018

These minutes were **approved** by Council and signed by the Chairman.

18/076 Reports from PC Simon Albutt on Behalf of Alvechurch & Wythall Safer Neighbourhood Team

See Addendum 1

18/077 Around the Parish – to Consider Developments and Issues Raised by Councillors Present as They Relate to Hopwood, Rowney Green, Bordesley and Alvechurch

Hopwood

- It was noted that there have been reports of rogue traders in the area
- The footpaths both side of the road between Hopwood and Roberts Corner, Alvechurch continue to be in a poor condition with trip hazards. It was noted by a Councillor that these footways should incorporate a cycle path. The Clerk noted that in around 2016 there had been a push to improve footways used to access schools and this one was used by Hopwood residents to access Crown Meadow First School and Alvechurch Middle School.

Bordesley

Nothing noted

Rowney Green

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to chase up County Highways for the Horse Safety signs for both ends of the village that had been agreed previously.

- Rowney Green residents had written to County Cllr Hotham to request 20mph signs. County Cllr Hotham will aim to have an update for the Rowney Green Association Meeting that he is due to attend.
- There has been a water leak in Rowney Green.
- Rowney Green Association's previous request for a grit bin was raised and the Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council had said that it would consider it as part of the budget planning in November. County Cllr Hotham advised that if the Parish Council agrees to fill and replenish the new grit bins requested by residents then he will look into purchasing them with his divisional fund.
- **ACTION POINT: The Clerk** to liaise with County Cllr Hotham regarding two new grit bins: one in Rowney Green and one at the top of Robin Hill Drive, Alvechurch.

Alvechurch

- There is a street light out immediately inside St Laurence Churchyard which has been out for 3 months but the Assistant Clerk has advised isn't on the Parish Council's inventory.

ACTION POINT: Cllr Lambert to provide the Clerk with a street light column reference number to double check.

- Concerns about the red areas in a Village Magazine report which denote potential development sites have caused concerns amongst residents and have been raised with Councillors.
- Residents have reported that parked cars on Tanyard Lane cause drivers to drive erratically in a bid to get around the parked cars. It was noted that this had been raised with our County Council Highways representative recently and it was noted that parked cars were "not ideal" and is being looked at.

ACTION POINT: Raise this matter again at the next meeting with County Highways.

- Cllr Worrall noted that there had been a meeting back in June with West Midlands Trains which appears to have been a catalyst to bring key stakeholders together. One proposal is that the car park is taken out of the lease with Network Rail and West Midland Trains would bring in a third party to help fund the works required to the car park which may also include expanding it, and then taking back to Network Rail somehow. A workshop meeting is being arranged with all prime stakeholders and District Cllrs Van der Plank and Hotham are looking get senior representatives from Worcestershire County Council and Bromsgrove District Council, Network Rail, West Midlands Travel and Alvechurch Parish Council.
- A Councillor queried what had happened to the proposed £60m pot from West Midlands Trains for improvements in the Network. Cllr Worrall advised that it is hard to make a business case for Alvechurch Train Station due to the number of parking spaces.
- A Councillor noted concerns that the improved car park could lead to housing growth and stated that there are inherent dangers that where there's infrastructure there's housing growth. Cllr Worrall stated that having the Workshop meeting will provide everyone with options and it is hoped that this meeting will take place in November.
- County Cllr Hotham added that he is discussing the proposed workshop with senior officers at Worcestershire County Council; concerns about how ownership could be transferred legally to the County Council to undertake the works and then transfer it back again to Network Rail legally.
- The Clerk queried if there were concerns about the proposed Workshop meeting that this could be debated at the November meeting.

18/078 Clerk's report: Including actions completed since last meeting, report of complaints, emergency expenditure and matters arising from previous meeting, including:

a. Update on the Arrangements for Grant Applications to the Parish Council for the 2019/20 Financial Year

The Clerk advised that grant applications have been sent out to organisations who usually apply. The grant application is on the website and a notice will be put on our facebook page.

b. Update on the External Audit Process

The External Auditor has signed off our accounts with no comments.

c. Update on the "Parish Makeover" Carried Out on the Village Green by Ringway

Ringway (on behalf of WCC) donated a day's resource in a deal called a "Parish makeover". Their efforts were focused on the village green in preparation for Remembrance Day and they did a great job, despite poor weather. So benches were cleaned, vegetation cut back, weeds removed and the wooden posts coated with preservative. Our thanks have been sent to the Ringway staff members who came out and did the work.

d. Update on the Letter to Bromsgrove District Council Regarding District Councillor Representation in the Alvechurch South Ward

A letter was sent to Geoff Denaro, Leader of BDC and copies sent to District Cllrs K Taylor, J Griffiths and Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive of BDC. To date the Clerk has received a response from District Cllr K Taylor and an out of office response from Kevin Dicks.

e. Update on the Letter Sent to Bromsgrove District Council's Planning Department Regarding Planning Issues

The Clerk advised that she had received an acknowledgement from the Planning Department. At the Planning meeting on 1st October it was agreed that Cllrs Worrall, Cypher and Wallis will attend a meeting with BDC at a date to be decided

f. Update on Recruiting a New Parish Lengthsman

Currently, Neil Hosking is picking up ad hoc Lengthsmans queries for us. Richard Clewer (WCC Highways) has arranged for Bromsgrove District Council to visit the office to discuss their proposal. BDC has also offered to assist where possible and cleared the leaves from the ramp last week within a day. The Clerk will speak to Neil Hosking and an applicant who has contacted the office prior to making a proposal to Council

g. To Note a Request from the Former Parish Lengthsman for Assistance in the Removal of Street Furniture Relating to the Lengthsman Post

The former Parish Lengthsman has requested that the Parish Council use its Lengthsman's budget to hire a skip for the clearance of his yard from his Lengthsman's duties. The Clerk has checked the contract and there is no mention of it being the Parish Council's responsibility but there is guidance that the Principal Authority can assist. The Clerk has therefore passed this on to the County Council's Highways department to deal with it.

h. Update on Relocating Bins Between Willowbrook and Birmingham Road

The Clerk met with the Team Leader for Environmental Services who advised that the bins were installed in response to excessive litter dropping in the past. They feel that this is a year-round issue but will monitor the situation in response to our comments.

i. Update on Signs for the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

Quotes are being sought for this as well as the dog tether station mentioned in the last meeting.

j. To Note the Late Payment of the Second Precept Payment to the Parish Council

By 3rd October the Parish Council had not received its second precept payment for the year. The Clerk chased up BDC and spoke to our District Councillors and confirmation was received that payment would be made before the end of the day.

k. To Note the Clerk's Communication with the Landowner Regarding Some Site Clearance of the Land to the Rear of 2/2A Birmingham Road, Alvechurch

The Clerk was made aware that there was site clearance taking place on the land to the rear of the old vets and which adjoins our Playing Fields. The Clerk contacted the landowner who advised that the Japanese Knotweed has now been fully treated and the landowner is

awaiting a certificate shortly signing off the treatment. The previously infected area is still zoned off and nothing will be happening there. The site clearance is to trim back the growth on the rest of the site to keep on top of it. The landowner also advised that he had taken further preventative measures against an incursion. The Clerk will request a copy of the certificate to confirm the successful completion of the knotweed treatment.

l. Update on the Parish Council's Proposed Street Lighting Tendering Exercise

The Clerk and Cllr Worrall have met on a couple of occasions to discuss this and a scoping exercise has been carried out by Cllr Worrall on four potential lighting contractors.

- m. Outstanding Items: Tree Surgery and Raised Manhole Covers Between Willowbrook and Birmingham Road

18/079 Finance & Administration

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

The Clerk confirmed that she had transferred £5,000 between the 30-day Account and the Deposit account during September. The Clerk reminded Councillors that we receive quarterly VAT returns that are credited to the 30-day account but payments are debited from the Deposit account so this balances the accounts. The Clerk also advised that the bank had overpaid the Clerk in September but it was noted that the Clerk hadn't been fully paid in August as the standing order wasn't updated in time by the bank. The Clerk had raised this issue with the bank and it wasn't immediately apparent why the bank had overpaid the Clerk but the bank had confirmed that this was a result of their actions. It is being investigated by the bank.

The cheque list was reviewed. A Councillor queried a payment and the Clerk advised that this was payment for listing our job vacancy in the local newspapers.

- b. To consider the Second Quarter Finances

The Clerk provided Council with details of the second quarter finances.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to clarify if the setup code for the replacement fund is correct

- c. To Consider the Installation of New Benches Either Side of the A441, Hopwood Near to the Bus Shelters

The Clerk provided Councillors with pictures of two benches already available and in storage. The Clerk queried whether Council wanted to use these benches which don't match or buy one so that once installed they do. It was queried whether one of these benches was even any higher than the ones already in situ.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk and Chairman to review the benches in storage to check the heights of them and appearance.

18/080 To Consider the Annual Request from Rowney Green Village Hall to Hold a Fireworks Display on Rowney Green Playing Fields

The Clerk advised that every year Rowney Green Village Hall's Association requests permission to hold a fireworks display on our Playing Fields; a method statement and insurance is provided. Last year the Clerk requested that the level of Public Liability Insurance be increased to £5m in line with Parish Council standards and this has been arranged for this year. However, the Clerk spoke to our Insurers and advised Council that our new insurers won't cover any damage to our Pavilion or any other claims from the event as we are not the organisers.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to clarify our insurer's exact requirements and clarify if the Rowney Green Village Hall Association's insurance will cover it instead. The Clerk to make a decision accordingly.

18/081 To Consider The Additional Detail on the Overhead Barrier for the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

It was noted that the Contractor who had made the overhead barrier for the Wiggin had added an additional motif of a bird and leaves to the barrier. Councillors were asked if they wanted to keep the motif, remove it or replace it with something else as this was not on the original design approved by Council.

It was proposed that the barrier stayed as the contractor had made it with the bird and leaves motif. Five Councillors voted in favour of this motion; five voted against; 1 Councillor abstained.

It was then proposed that the motif should be removed to reflect the original design and what was contracted.

Six Councillors were in favour of the motif being removed and 5 were against. The motion to remove the motif was carried.

It was **agreed** that the Clerk and Cllr Worrall would undertake a site visit to check the overall standard of the barrier.

18/082 To Consider the Parish Council's Annual Review of its Policy on Flying Drones on its Playing Fields

Cllr Worrall advised Council that the CAA has a Code that is very sensible in his opinion.

This was deferred pending the Clerk's review of GDPR requirements to provide Council with a complete picture.

ACTION POINT: Cllr Worrall to send the CAA Code to the Clerk to be circulated prior to the next meeting

18/083 To Consider Instructing ROSPA to Undertake a Risk Assessment of the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

Following feedback from members of the public recently regarding dogs in and around the play equipment, it was proposed by a Councillor that the Parish Council instructs ROSPA to undertake a risk assessment of the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields at a cost of £450 + VAT. The Parish Council would then replicate the methodology across the rest of its Playing Fields. The Clerk advised the Parish Council that there are risk assessments already in place. It was noted that the Parish Council had attempted to hold a meeting with Bromsgrove District Council about the concerns raised but this had not been possible to date.

Ten Councillors were in favour, no Councillors voted against and one Councillor abstained from the motion of instructing ROSPA to undertake a risk assessment at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields. The motion was carried and it was **agreed** that the Clerk would instruct ROSPA to undertake a risk assessment of the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

18/084 Committees/Sub Committees/working parties

a. Reports from Committees and minutes circulated since last meeting

- i. To Receive An Update From The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, to Include an Update on Bromsgrove District Council's Issues And Options Consultation

It was noted that the Independent Examiner conducted a site visit in the first week of October and is half way through reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan. Some questions have been posed and have been responded by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group members. Once the Independent Examiner has completed his review then he will advise whether the Neighbourhood Plan can proceed to the referendum stage. The Independent Examiner's report will then be published on Bromsgrove District Council's website and then it will be down to Bromsgrove District Council to rubber stamp the Neighbourhood Plan. It was noted that there will be another NHP Steering Group meeting before the next Parish Council meeting.

It was **agreed** that Bromsgrove District Council could attend the November Parish Council meeting to present to Council their Issues and Options Consultation.

- ii. To receive an update from the Planning Committee Meeting held on 1st October 2018

It was requested that Planning Committee members provide as much notice as possible when sending apologies for these meetings to ensure quorum. At the Planning Meeting held on 1st October two applications were considered and there were no objections recorded to each. It was noted that it may be necessary to meet before the next planned Planning Meeting.

iii. To Receive an Update from the WW1 Remembrance Working Group

It was noted that the service sheet for the Remembrance Service is being devised and that there will be a Peace Concert on 9th November at Alvechurch Middle School which is a ticket only event.

iv. To Receive an Update from the Hopwood Play Equipment Working Group

it was noted that two donations had been received from local Hopwood businesses and the Hopwood Mums had posted thanks on their Facebook page. Alternative fundraising opportunities are being sought to bring the total fund to £30,000.

v. To Receive an Update from the Christmas Arrangements Committee

Cllr Lambert provided Councillors with an update on the arrangements for the Christmas Light switch on event and it was noted that there would also be a Best Dressed Shop Window and Best Dressed House competition this year.

It was noted that the Baptist Church would also be open with their Christmas Tree event.

18/085 To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of agenda items 15, 16 & 17 which contains confidential employee information:-

“RESOLVED: that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1 Sub-Section 2 a body may, by resolution, exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature from that business or of the proceedings; and where such a resolution is passed, this Act shall not require the meeting to be open to the public during proceedings to which the resolution applies.”

The Parish Council **resolved** to exclude the public and press from the meeting.

18/086 To Consider The Future Staffing Arrangements as Proposed by the Staffing Committee

The Chairman of the Staffing Committee provided Councillors with details of the proposed new staffing structure and this proposal was **agreed** unanimously. Cllr Willetts thanked Cllr Humphries and the members of the Staffing Committee for all their hard work in putting this proposal together.

18/087 To Consider the Finances & Arrangements for the Transition Period for the New Assistant Clerk

Councillors **agreed** unanimously to pay the travel expenses incurred by the Assistant Clerk as a result of her agreement to extend her notice period from 4 to 6 weeks to support the office.

It was also **agreed** that Council would pay the Clerk to work additional hours up to but no more than 37 hours per week in the intervening period between the current Assistant Clerk's retirement date and a new Assistant Clerk starting employment.

18/088 To Consider the Staff Pension Arrangements

The Clerk provided Councillors with details of the staff pension arrangements.

18/089 Date and time of next meeting: the next meeting will be the Parish Meeting on 12th November at 7pm at Hopwood Community Centre, Redditch Road, Hopwood

This meeting ended at 9.52pm.

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

DRAFT