

ALVECHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk – Tammy Williams

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD MONDAY 9th OCTOBER 2017 AT 7.00PM

AT HOPWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE, REDDITCH ROAD, HOPWOOD

17/068 Present: Councillors A Humphries (Chair), S Lambert, N Wise, M Ball, A Helmore, A Smith, J Cypher, M Worrall & P Freeman

In attendance: Tammy Williams (Clerk), District/County Cllr C Hotham, PC S Albutt, R Peach (Village Magazine), Ron Rand, District Councillor K Van der Plank and 1 member of the public

Standing orders were suspended to receive an update on latest crime statistics from PC S Albutt (appendix 1). After that a member of the public addressed Council regarding local health provisions (appendix 2).

17/069 Apologies for Absence
Councillor A Willetts (accepted)

17/070 Declarations of Interest
Cllr N Wise – 17/082

Cllr Humphries reminded Councillors that they had all completed a Declaration of Interest document and that as and when Councillors' Interests change they would need to advise the Clerk of a need to update their Declaration of Interests document as well.

17/071 Reports from Alvechurch Ward, District & County Councillors

a. Report From District Councillor Kate Van der Plank, Alvechurch Village Ward

District Cllr Van der Plank began by congratulating the Parish Council on their fantastic job on the Neighbourhood Plan which she noted was a well communicated campaign, great display boards at the Consultation itself and had brought debate to the village.

At Bromsgrove District Council, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Councillors are working together on how budgets are handled; holding officer to account about being more transparent about their budgets as well.

District Councillors also received a training session on Data Protection as there is new legislation in this area. Councillors are also required to register with the ICO and District Cllr Van der Plank reported that the ICO has been in contact with District Councillors who risk being fined £2000 if they are not compliant with the new legislation.

In other areas, District Cllr Van der Plank has been reviewing residents' requests regarding residents only parking on Bear Hill and a disabled bay at that the back of Buckleys Green.

District Cllr Van der Plank reports having an increasing number of conversations with residents regarding health provision in the village.

District Cllr Van der Plank has also been trying to resolve a complaint raised with her about fly posting by estate agents in Alvechurch and she has a meeting with Kevin Dicks about it next week.

Other areas of concern raised with District Cllr Van der Plank are: the state and capacity at the Station car park and the continued closure of the Wiggin Gates.

Cllr Humphries advised Councillors that he had put a call in for a meeting with District Cllr Kit Taylor who is covering Alvechurch South in District Cllr Griffiths' absence.

b. Report from County & District Councillor C Hotham

Mayfield Farm

At the District level, issues with Mayfield Farm are ongoing: recent analysis by Worcester Regulatory Services discovered that there were some levels of unacceptable noise from the Farm but not enough to constitute a nuisance.

Highways & Transport

At the County level dropped kerbs have been installed around the Buckleys to make the area more accessible. With regards to the raised manhole cover between Willowbrook and Birmingham Road, the area has been marked out and will be completed before Christmas. The County Council is trying to find the funds so that the footway, which currently discharges pedestrians into the road by the MUGA, can be continued over the other side of the road as well.

Once data is available from the trial 20mph area in Rubery, Richard Clewer will share that with Alvechurch Parish Council.

ACTION POINT: APC to remind Richard Clewer of their interest in this data.

Work is currently underway to build Worcester Parkway Station which is a brand new train station the other side of Worcester. The intended completion date is 2018 and the station will improve access to London for the region.

Children's Services

County Cllr Hotham reported that this area is in "dire straits" and was deemed unsafe. The Government has appointed Essex County Council to oversee Worcestershire County Council's handling of Children's Services. The Cabinet is looking to outsource the service to try to kick start improvements in the Service.

Budget

The whole Worcestershire County Council budget is looking fairly shaky as a further £6m is needed to be invested into Children's Services which is unbudgeted for and £1.5m for waste management. Furthermore, the £6m investment into Children's Services will likely be a reoccurring investment.

The Auditors cannot sign off the accounts for unspecified reasons.

Bordesley Development

The contractors are obliged to have manual control of the temporary traffic lights by the Abbey Stadium and to have spotters out when the queues of traffic in either direction are out of sight. Richard Flannigan got Traffix in but they are still not adequately managing the traffic in either direction at the traffic lights. Barratts don't want the project to overrun. Councillors were advised that legislation is non-existent and unless the Planning Committee gets tough then we are at the good will of the Contractor. Sajid Javid MP is supposed to be raising this in Parliament.

A Councillor raised that Swan Street residents also want Residents' Parking; Cllr Van der Plank responded that Bear Hill residents have concerns about the impact of Simply Fresh on parking outside their homes.

17/072 To Approve the Minutes of the Previous Meeting Held on 10/09/17

The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10th September 2017 were approved by Council and signed by Cllr Humphries.

17/073 Clerk's report including Matters Arising From Previous Meetings and Emergency Expenditure...

a. General Update on Projects

The Community Consultation for the proposed new play equipment at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields finished today at the Library. The process was publicised in The Village magazine, on the AVS Facebook site and our Parish Council Facebook page. It was also on the Parish Council website. The Clerk will report further at the Youth, Sport and Recreation Committee Meeting next week.

Phase 2 of the Street Lighting Project has now begun. A concern has been raised about the new light on Bear Hill which the Assistant Clerk is looking into and the office has asked Prysman about Phase 3 for the budgeting process.

Staffing Committee has reviewed an Equality & Retirement Policy

The Christmas Committee has had its first meeting and has begun making arrangements.

b. Update on the External Audit Process

The Clerk confirmed that Grant Thornton has signed off the Parish Council's accounts for the 2016/17 financial year.

c. A Reminder of the Defibrillator Training Session

Training will take place on 11th October at 7pm at Hopwood Community Centre. So far there are 16 attendees confirmed. If anyone else is interested please email the Assistant Clerk to advise.

d. Update on Providing the Emergency Services With the Gate Code at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

The Clerk has been able to register the gate code with the Fire Brigade and West Midlands Ambulance Service should they require it. West Mercia Police has advised that they cannot retain this information and would cut the lock should it be deemed necessary.

e. Update on the Resurfacing of the Paddling Pool Edges at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

Following the last meeting when we agreed to proceed with Traditional Driveways the Clerk posed the queries raised at the September Meeting to them and they confirmed the following:

- The work is guaranteed for 5 years but the resin would be fine for at least 10 years without an issue
- It is frost resistant and once it has gone off is as strong, if not stronger than concrete and is very hard wearing.
- There wouldn't be any issues accessing the Wiggin with their equipment.
- The job would take 3-4 days to complete and they could start around the end of October
- They have Public Liability insurance for £5m

The Clerk will instruct Traditional Driveways to begin work as soon as possible and a further update will be provided at the Youth, Sport and Recreation Committee.

17/074 Finance & Administration

a. To Receive a List of Invoices for Payment and to Consider any Exceptional Items

The Clerk advised that just before she left the office today she had received an invoice from the Baptist Church in respect of the use of the Baptist Church for the Neighbourhood Plan Consultation for £150. Cllr Humphries proposed that the payment for use of the hall, heating and electricity be increased to £200 and Councillors **agreed** unanimously. Cllr Smith requested an update on the Neighbourhood Plan finances for 11th November

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to provide the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with an updated budget.

Councillors reviewed the list of invoices and approved them. The cheque list was signed by Cllr Humphries.

b. **To Consider Quarter 1 Finances and to Receive an Update on the Quarter 1 Internal Financial Review**

The Clerk advised that Cllr Ball, Internal Financial Controller, had recently carried out a spot check on paper copies of Receipts and Payments, on their associated record on Scribe (Parish Council's Accounting database) and our Banking Reconciliation record and everything checked was fine with no issues arising.

Councillors were provided with details of the Quarter One Finances and the Clerk's Supporting Notes which the Finance & Resources Committee had reviewed at their July Committee Meeting. Councillors didn't raise any concerns during the meeting and can always contact the Clerk if any queries arise.

c. **To Consider Quotations Received in Respect of New Bollards at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields**

The Clerk provided Councillors with details of two possible bollards to replace one at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields and thanked Ron Rand who had researched and found one of them. Councillor Worrall proposed that the Parish Council purchase the Removable Bollard in yellow for £198 and Councillors agreed unanimously.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to purchase and have installed the new bollard

The matter of the continued closure of the Wiggin Gates was raised and it was noted that the gates might be opened once the bollard has been installed and that a meeting could be arranged to survey the opinions of the Meadow Lane residents.

d. **To Consider Switching Energy Supplier For Our Unmetered Street Lighting Supply**

This item was deferred until November meeting pending quotations.

e. **To Request Chairs of Committees Consider Budget Plans for Their Committees for the 2018/19 Financial Year**

The Clerk reminded the Chairs and their Committee Members that we will be reviewing the budget for the 2018/19 financial year in November and any budget plans should be submitted to the Clerk before 31st October for consideration. It was also noted that the Parish Council will be writing to local organisations shortly to advise them to submit any grant applications to us by the November Finance & Resources Committee Meeting.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to write to organisations who have applied for grants recently and also to publicise it on our Facebook page

17/075 To Consider Progress on the Neighbourhood Plan and the Final Pre-Submission Public Consultation Stage

Cllr Smith advised Councillors and those attending the meeting that the final consultation had been undertaken at the Baptist Church and was well attended. Two hundred local residents signed into the Consultation in what was a relatively short period of time. Cllr Smith thanked Cllr Humphries for setting up the display boards and storing them prior to the Consultation. It was noted that the Consultation period is for 6 weeks in total and runs until 17th November 2017. Cllr Smith has notified Bromsgrove District Council that the Consultation Event has been done. Steering Group members will meet to review comments made about the Neighbourhood Plan and to make necessary alterations as well as finish off work on the Evidence Base and Executive Summary and then the next step will be to send the updated document to Bromsgrove District Council to review and hopefully they will recommend that it is sent to the External Examiner.

It was also noted that the documents will be available at the Library for residents to review at leisure but these should be kept behind the desk and should not be removed from the Library as the documents are still in draft form and will be subject to change once this final consultation has been completed. The documents are also available to download from the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan websites.

17/076 To Receive an Update Regarding the Cycle Racks at Alvechurch Station

Cllr Worrall advised that he had contacted London Midland for an update on the cycle racks and was informed that the work is scheduled to be completed by the end of November 2017.

17/077 Committees/Sub Committees/Working Parties

1. Reports From Committees and Minutes Circulated Since Last Meeting

a. To Receive an Update From the Planning Meeting Held on 2nd October 2017

See Planning Minutes for further details of planning applications considered at this meeting. Cllr Worrall advised that Dale Birch, Bromsgrove District Council, will be providing Planning Committee Members with training at their November Planning Committee Meeting.

Standing Orders were suspended to enable District Cllr Kate Van der Plank to provide an update on the planning application for the new Simply Fresh shop in the village. A Simply Fresh representative, the Conservation Officer and a Bromsgrove District Council Planning Officer are discussing the application and are looking for a compromise; it was also noted that the original Planning application did not mention that a Post Office Counter will be sited in the shop. Cllr Van der Plank noted that there are a number of issues with the application as is but these must be weighed up with the community need for a Post Office counter in the village.

A Councillor asked District Cllr Van der Plank if the application is going to be refused if she can call it in so that the Parish Council can make representations.

b. To Consider the Future Role of the Community Safety Forum

Cllr Humphries referred to PC Simon Albutt's presentation at the beginning of this meeting where he stated that he is going to try to co-ordinate all the different Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in the village and Cllr Humphries suggested that perhaps the Community Safety Forum could work with them on this. Cllr Humphries recommended deferring this item until the November Parish Council Meeting by which time Cllr Humphries will have spoken to PC S Albutt about this.

b. To Consider Committee Membership for the Planning Committee

The Clerk advised that the Assistant Clerk had emailed Councillors to see if anyone would join the Planning Committee as she was concerned about quorum if there were a couple of Committee Members absent at a meeting / some members had an Interest in any applications being considered. Cllr Ball noted that it would therefore be best practice if Committee Members notified the Assistant Clerk if they had an interest or were going to be absent as early as possible. Cllrs Cypher and Wise had offered to join the Planning Committee and Cllr Cypher added that this would be on a part-time basis, i.e at least one meeting every 6 months or as and when required. Councillors **agreed** unanimously that Cllrs Wise and Cypher should become Planning Committee Members.

c. To Receive an Update From the Christmas Arrangements in Alvechurch Working Group and to Consider the Proposed Christmas Decoration Improvements and Christmas Arrangements

Cllr Lambert advised that she had been nominated as Chair of the Committee. Cheryl Welsh, Bromsgrove Centres Manager, and covers many village centres in our area, also attended the meeting to assist us with the planning and advertising elements. It is intended that Christmas Lights on the Christmas Tree will be switched on by Joanne Malin, Midlands Today & BBC Hereford & Worcester presenter, and this will take place on 1st December 2017. It is hoped that we will be able to get village businesses involved with the Christmas arrangements and celebrations as well. Cheryl's team is designing a poster advertising the Light Switch on for us. The timing is yet to be agreed but the Working Group is contemplating the timing of parents and children at school pick up, shop opening times and also people coming home from work. The Community Choir will also be there to sing carols and it was noted that it may also be necessary to hire a PA system. There will be a best-dressed shop window competition and the winner will be presented with a plaque and children will be able to hunt for Reindeer pictures in the village shops with a chance of winning a prize at the end. Councillors were advised that Thomas Brothers Funeral Directors had made a donation towards the Christmas Lights and thanks were sent to them for this. A councillor queried if the Picnic in the Park Committee were going to make a contribution from

this year's Picnic in the Park profits and Cllr Wise advised that the Committee felt that it couldn't this year because they hadn't raised funds on this basis but the Committee were considering raising funds to improve the Christmas lights next year.

Councillors were provided with prices for three sets of Christmas lights for the Christmas tree ranging from to £980.40 to £1254.00; it was noted that Turnocks, whose lights were the cheapest of the three options, were on a first-come, first served basis and therefore we may have to look elsewhere if they were no longer an option. Councillors therefore **agreed unanimously** that the Working Group be provided with a budget of £1254.00 to purchase Christmas lights. Councillor Cypher noted that as the Working Group now has a budget it must now be called a Committee.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to review the budget for Christmas lights for this year and make sure the Terms of Reference now refer to this as a Committee.

2. To Receive Updates from Outside Bodies

a. To Receive a CALC Update

Cllrs Humphries and Cypher represented Alvechurch Parish Council at the last CALC meeting. Other local Parish Councils confirmed that they wanted to continue to share experiences at CALC Meetings and discuss these with Bromsgrove District Council as matters arise. Catshill and Hagley Parish Council representatives came forward as Chairs and Vice Chair of these meetings until the next Annual General Meeting. At the meeting, the Fire Service gave a presentation on the free fire checks that they can offer elderly people in the area and Mike Dunphy, Bromsgrove District Council, gave a presentation on the Green Belt Review. Cllr Karen May, Bromsgrove District Council, stated that the Green Belt Review needs to start as soon as possible for the review to be ready by 2023 as planned.

17/078 To Consider Residents' Complaints and Queries, As Received:

a. A Resident's Request Regarding Dog Management at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

The Clerk advised Council that she had taken a telephone call from a distressed resident whose dog had been scared by another dog at the Wiggin and as a result it had run off home across Red Lion Street. The resident's concerns were that the dog was off the lead and didn't recall and whilst the resident didn't think it was necessary for all dogs to be on the lead at the Meadows, she did feel that that the Parish Council should have a sign up on the gates to advise dog owners that any dog owners unable to control their dogs would be prosecuted. The Clerk advised that she would look into what the Parish Council could feasibly do and raise it with Council. The Clerk advised that she had discussed the matter with PC Simon Albutt who advised that in the case of dog to dog attacks it's a civil matter; if it's a dog to human attack then it becomes a police matter. It was **agreed** that this appeared to be an isolated incident but if there were several incidents then the Parish Council would review its policy then.

b. A Resident's Concerns Regarding the Upgraded Street Light on Bear Hill

The Clerk advised Councillors that part of Phase 2 of the Street Lighting Upgrade was to refurbish a street light on Bear Hill. A resident nearby has complained that the light is now higher and is shining directly into a bedroom as well as being out of keeping with the conservation area. The Assistant Clerk is liaising with Prysmian to ascertain if the light can be painted black and cowled. A Councillor asked whether the Conservation Officer had been consulted and another Councillor stated that the Conservation Officer gives advice on planning applications, not on street lighting. Councillors discussed the purpose of highways lighting versus street lighting and what types of street lights should be installed in the Conservation Area.

ACTION POINT: The Assistant Clerk to liaise with Prysmian to discuss our options to resolve this situation

c. A Resident's Request for the Parish Council to Install Another Dog Waste Bin Along the Canal Towpath

The Clerk advised Councillors that she had received an email from a resident who queried why we had two dog waste bins on the canal side by side rather than at separate sites. The

Clerk confirmed to the resident that this was due to the following reasons: that the Canal and River Trust had declined to install another bin elsewhere due to funding and because they need to install bins in other areas first; that the contractor who empties our bins stated that he would empty a second bin for free if it was sited next to the existing Towpath bin and also because the contractor had expressed concerns about the proximity to suitable parking if a bin was installed elsewhere. Therefore, the Parish Council had taken the decision to site the second bin where it is.

17/079 Around the Parish – To Consider Developments and Issues Raised by Councillors Present:

a. Alvechurch

Councillors noted that they had received complaints about the temporary lights on Callow Hill due to gas pipe maintenance; members of the public noticed that no work had been undertaken for some days and when the lights failed, there wasn't any notice advising who to contact to resolve.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to raise this with Richard Clewer, Highways Representative Also, during the Neighbourhood Plan Consultation, some residents had expressed that they didn't think there were sufficient signs in Alvechurch reminding drivers that it is a 30mph limit through the village.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to raise this with Richard Clewer, Highways Representative

b. Rowney Green

A Councillors advised that discussions were continuing regarding the number of horses in and around Rowney Green. The Rowney Green Association has asked for a Horse sign for the Highways.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to ask Richard Clewer, Highways Representative for Horse signs for Rowney Green

c. Hopwood

Councillor Smith asked County Councillor Hotham if there was an update on the works to be carried out to safeguard the verges (between Hopwood island the motorway island). Standing Orders were suspended to allow County Cllr Hotham to reply that he would look into it for us.

d. Bordesley

There was nothing to report for Bordesley

17/080 That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Councillors **agreed** to this motion and members of the public and press left the meeting to enable the following items to be discussed.

17/081 To Receive an Update on the Financial Arrangements With Regards The Knotweed Eradication At The Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields, Alvechurch

Councillors were updated on the latest steps taken regarding payment for the knotweed treatment programme.

17/082 To Consider Contractual Arrangements With Regards To The Allotments, Alvechurch

Councillors were provided with an update on the contractual arrangements regarding the allotments in Alvechurch. It was also noted that all plots were now let.

17/083 To Receive an Update From the Staffing Committee Meeting Held on 22nd September 2017

The Clerk advised that the Staffing Committee had agreed an Equality Policy and were working on a Retirement policy that was compliant with current legislation. The Clerk had also reviewed her Contract and this had subsequently been signed by the Clerk and Cllr Humphries. The Staffing Committee reviewed staff pensions and also the current staffing arrangements.

17/084 To Receive an Update on the Grounds Maintenance Tendering Process

The Clerk updated Councillors on the Grounds Maintenance Tendering process. It was noted that Cllr Humphries and the Clerk had opened all Tenders received by 2pm on 3rd October. Cllrs Humphries and Smith with the Clerk will review tenders received on 16th October and compile a list of questions to be sent to the Contractors concerned.

17/085 Date and time of next meeting: The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday 13th November 2017 at 7pm at Hopwood Community Centre, Redditch Road, Hopwood.

This meeting ended at 9.42pm

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

DRAFT