



Council members Alvechurch ward: P Freeman, A Helmore, S Hornsby, A Humphries,
S Lambert, M Worrall, N Wise
Hopwood Ward: S Lewis, A Willetts
Rowney Green & Bordesley Ward: S Baxter, J Cypher, T Wallis

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD MONDAY 10th FEBRUARY 2020, 7pm
AT HOPWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE, REDDITCH ROAD, HOPWOOD**

Present Councillors M Worrall (Chairman), A Humphries (vice-Chairman)
S Baxter, J Cypher, P Freeman, A Helmore, S Hornsby
S Lambert, S Lewis, T Wallis, A Willetts, N Wise

In attendance District Councillor Annette English
Sally Oldaker (The Village)
Clerk: Mrs J Smailes

Minute Taker Support Officer: Gill Lungley

20/016 Chairman's welcome

The Chairman introduced Mrs J Smailes, the new Clerk and thanked the interview panel for their work sifting through the applications and interviewing applicants.

20/017 Apologies for absence

None – all members present

20/018 Declarations of interest

None

20/019 Dispensation request(s)

None

20/020 Open Forum

Standing Orders were suspended and members of the public were invited to speak.

a) Members of the public: None present

b) Ward / division councillors:

i) District Cllr for Barnt Green & Hopwood ward & County Cllr for Alvechurch division, Charlie Hotham, had sent apologies for missing

this meeting, and a report which was read out by the Chairman. The report included reference to:

- Bromsgrove DC has published the result of the 'call for sites' which had resulted in many sites being offered for development;
- Worcestershire CC has proposed a 1.99% council tax rise and 2% for adult social care whilst Bromsgrove DC has suggested an increase of £5 per Band D property.
- WCC is continuing to work on plans to improve safety at the Weatheroak Hill / Brockhill Lane / Watery Lane crossroads.
- the current consultation regarding proposed improvements to the A38 through Bromsgrove, part of which refers to changes at the junction with School Lane, Lickey End.

- ii) District Cllr for Alvechurch South, Annette English spoke about:
 - Cleaner, Greener Alvechurch: recent meetings, new faces and intention to set up a new website. There will be a stand at the Party in the Park, a swap-shop in the library and focus on upcycling and recycling.
 - At the Bromsgrove DC meeting on 22/01/2020 there was discussion on the future use of the market hall site (in Bromsgrove).
 - The Lickey & Blackwell Pc and Cofton Hackett PC Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted.
 - Bromsgrove DC is to adopt land for which no one else takes responsibility.

c) Reports from support organisations: None

20/021 Approval of minutes of previous meeting

The draft minutes of the meeting held 13/01/2020 were put for approval: after amendments were proposed and not disputed to -

- a) minute number 20/014 – reference cover by Support Officer - to change the word 'would' to 'may'.
- b) minute number 20/004(b) 3rd bullet-point relating to 'Post Office (Simply Fresh)' it was to be made clear the comment about the chimneys was a reference to the former Post Office site at 1 Bear Hill whilst the Simply Fresh proposal relates to the building next door to it at 14 The Square.
 - the minutes were approved and signed.

20/022 Clerk's Report

- **Post Office:** no response from the Post Office regarding the request to re-open the post box outside the old Post Office. Members are keen to meet with PO representatives to discuss lack of progress with planning permission for new premises. Members expressed delight for the temporary provision of a mobile post office on a Friday afternoon but that it was not enough for the needs of this village. **It was agreed** to arrange a meeting with PO representatives and members of the parish council.
- **Information sign at Wiggin Memorial Playing Field: it was agreed** to delegate authority to the Clerk, working with two councillors, to order and install the information sign and accompanying 'no dog' notices.
- **Grant application to Police and Crime Commissioner:** there had been no response from any of those contacted to review the draft application and so **it was agreed** the Clerk would submit the application.

20/023 Finance and Administration

- .1 **Receipt of the list of invoices for payment authorisation.**
Received and noted.
- .2 **Note all items of expenditure and income for January 2020.** Noted
- .3 **To note the most recent bank reconciliation:**

A	Cash in hand 01/04/2019		134,974.68
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2019 – 31/12/2019		138,819.07
			273,793.75
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2019 – 31/12/2019		147,105.78
	Cash in hand 31/12/2019 (per cash book)		126,687.97
B	Cash in hand per bank statements as at 31/12/2019		
	Cash	100.00	
	30-day account	75,341.06	
	Deposit account	53,596.20	
	Current account	3,750.00	
			132,787.26
	Less unrepresented payments		6,099.29
			126,687.97
	Plus unrepresented receipts		0.00
	Adjusted bank balance		126,687.97

The adjusted bank balance matches the cash book when A = B.

- .4 **To consider the report and related attachments tendered by the Clerk / RFO concerning monetary/financial resource requirements for 2020/21**

The Clerk averred she was keen to introduce improvements to the council's governance along with more efficient office IT equipment and maintenance and an improved website, which would have cost implications. Additionally the proposed change of bank account (January 2020) was not recommended and the existing arrangements at Lloyds Bank should be revised.

It was put to the vote and **agreed** by all members to suspend opening an account with Unity Trust Bank.

It was put to the vote and **agreed** by all members for the Clerk to address the situation with the Lloyds bank accounts to provide for one current account and one deposit account.

The Clerk was thanked for her input and hard work preparing for this meeting.

- .5 **To consider the budget recommendation from Finance and Resources Committee and to derive and set the precept for 2020/21 therefrom**

The Clerk explained the 'Policy - Budget – Precept' process and provided figures relating to tax-base calculations for 2020/21 with one of the options being that put forward by the Finance and Resources Committee which recommended a precept of £129,210. This translates to a Band D contribution of £64.60 per year and is an increase on last year of £4.83.

It was put to the vote and **agreed** by all members to issue a precept demand for the financial year 2020/21 of £129,210.00.

20/024 **To discuss and appropriately comment on the proposal to introduce 20mph speed limit through Alvechurch village centre as put forward by the Worcestershire County Council**

There was a general welcome to WCC's preparedness to consider the speed reduction scheme, but two issues of concern were put forward:

- i) The area covered was less extensive than requested, and
- ii) The Parish Council had not been expecting to contribute funding.

It was agreed to meet with WCC Highways officers to clarify the proposal.

20/025 **To be aware of the public consultation relating to the proposal to restrict waiting on Station Road, Alvechurch and provide comment if thought necessary.**

Cllr A Humphries declared 'a conflict of interest' as a resident of Station Road. WCC had advised the parish council that Station Road residents had been consulted directly rather than via public notice attached to lampposts. Members agreed to the suggestion of further wider publicity via the parish council's website and Facebook page.

Having been invited to contribute to the discussion District Councillor Annette English believed the reason for the proposal is not to provide a solution to the railway station car park but to address a road safety issue.

Whilst there was no vote on this matter, there was no obvious dissent to the Chairman's statement that the scheme should progress as outlined.

20/026 **To consider/approve the Scheme of Delegation Policy in order to expedite outstanding matters including:**

- a) Discussions with the Post Office with regard to siting of a post office outlet in Alvechurch and re-opening of the Bear Hill post box.
- b) Approval of purchase of new signage for Wiggin Memorial Playing Field
- c) Progress of Police and Crime Commissioner grant funding request
- d) Meeting with Cheryl Welsh, centres Manager for Bromsgrove district
- e) Progress appointment of and work with website provider on new website to include allocation of parish council specific email addresses for all council members
- f) Upgrade of IT equipment, if necessary, to enable shared working in the office
- g) Review of finance software to allow for better reporting procedures.

It was agreed to approve the Scheme of Delegation Policy and the outstanding matters a – g above would be managed via delegation as outlined in the policy.

20/027 **To note:**

a) Committee meetings held –

- .1 Christmas Arrangements Committee meeting held 16/01/2020: Cllr S Lambert reported. Draft minutes circulated.
- .2 Finance and Resources Committee meeting held 20/01/2020: Cllr T Wallis reported. Draft minutes circulated.
- .3 Planning Committee meeting held 03/02/2020. Cllr M Worrall reported. Draft minutes circulated.

b) External Bodies –

.1 Party in the Park: Cllr N Wise reported. The event will be held 09/05/2020 with VE 75 theme and any funds generated will benefit the council's Youth, Sport and Recreation Committee and Alvechurch Village Green.

.2 Alvechurch Almshouses: Cllr M Worrall (no news to report)

.3 Alvechurch Grammar School Trust: Cllr S Lambert (no news to report)

.4 Alvechurch Village Hall: Cllr N Wise commented on the installation of new railings where completion is expected soon.

20/028 **To note correspondence received**

Members consented to receipt of email correspondence such as the regular updates and newsletters from WCALC, BDC, WCC.

20/029 **Around the parish – Alvechurch, Bordesley, Hopwood and Rowney Green members to comment on matters of interest or for consideration at future meetings.**

Bordesley: Cllr S Hornsby – asked about the order for new footpath lighting.

Hopwood: Cllr S Lewis – the phone box has been adopted by the police and painted blue. The fact that its door is missing has been reported to the police.

Cllr M Worrall asked about progress with a pedestrian crossing here.

Rowney Green: Cllr Wallis – has heard rumours that a change of use is being proposed for Bordesley Hall.

20/030 **To consider closing the meeting to allow for discussion of confidential matters relating to staff *Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s1***

Members of the public left the meeting.

20/031 **Staffing Matters**

a) To be notified of the situation relating to staff illness and action to be taken.

It was agreed to authorise the Clerk, working with the Chairman of the Staffing Committee, to appropriately address the situation.

b) To note the implementation of office/protocol measures

The Clerk's protocol for members' interaction with the council office was noted along with an awareness of the shortcomings of the office layout where it is difficult to hold any discussion or meeting without disturbing office workers. Partitioning of some form would be welcomed.

c) To consider and approve staffing restructure

The Clerk outlined a revised staffing structure which could include a finance assistant, contracting out payroll*, increased hours for the assistant clerk and the appointment of a minutes clerk. Office core hours are 9am to 4pm which with attendance at council and committee meetings would likely incur TOIL (time off in lieu) hours.

* A payroll provider was named which caused Cllr S Baxter to declare an interest as chairman of NALC which benefits from a relationship with the company.

d) To consider / approve the purchase of requisite IT equipment (hardware / software) and support contract.

The Clerk outlined reasons for wishing to upgrade the office equipment – currently using home-based software rather than office-based, no back-ups are being taken, there is no maintenance contract, linked network or shared drive

and poor broadband speeds. The cost relating to two computers, the back-ups and software would be £7,790 through contacts used where previously worked. Additionally a second phone line would be required. Cllr Baxter asked for all actions to comply with the council's procurement policy.

It was agreed to authorise the Clerk to progress this matter.

The Clerk and Support Officer left the meeting at 10pm to allow for further discussion on the above; Cllr N Wise agreed to record the salient points.

20/032

Date and time of next meetings

- Youth, Sport & Recreation Committee 17/02/2020, 7pm
- Planning Committee 02/03/2020, 7.30pm
- Ordinary Parish Council 09/03/2020, 7pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chairman, Alvechurch Parish Council 09/03/2020

DRAFT