

ALVECHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk – Tammy Williams

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD MONDAY 10th JULY 2017 AT 7.00PM

AT HOPWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE, REDDITCH ROAD, HOPWOOD

17/035 Present: Councillors A Humphries (Chair), M Worrall, A Helmore, M Ball, T Wallis, J Cypher & S Lambert

In attendance: Wendy Carney (Assistant Clerk), R Peach (Village Magazine), Ron Rand, District Councillor K Van der Plank, Richard Hall and several members of the public

Councillor Humphries started the meeting by introducing Richard Hall, Public Affairs Manager, The Post Office who gave a brief update on the transfer of the Village Post Office to new premises (see appendix).

17/036 Apologies for Absence

Councillor R Chima (accepted), Councillor A Willetts (accepted), Councillor A Smith (accepted), Councillor N Wise (accepted).
Tammy Williams – Clerk (accepted)

17/037 Declarations of Interest

None were noted at this point in the meeting,

17/038 To Approve The Minutes Of The Previous Meeting Held On 8/5/17

The minutes of the meeting held 12th June were agreed and signed

17/039 Reports from Alvechurch Ward, District & County Councillors

District/County Councillor C Hotham advised he had offered his apologies and sent the following report:

There are continued ongoing problems and serious complaints about noise and smell from Mayfield farm. An official complaint letter has been drafted regarding noise and this will be sent to BDC in the near future. This adds to the letter of complaint re smell which was rejected by BDC in October. Other potential mechanisms of complaint are being investigated. It seems that Worcestershire Regulatory Services are considerably under resourced which could explain the lack of action. This is particularly annoying when BDC latest accounts show that the council under spent by around a million pounds last year.

At the county level there is much concern re looked after children and the poor performance of WCC being in special measures. A recent interim report from OFSTED detailed insufficient progress had been made, which is worrying.

The proposed takeover of the fire service by the Police and Crime Commissioner is also causing much anxiety. I think it is true to say that this suggestion is being rejected by all

parties in both WCC and Hereford Council and I also believe by Shropshire and Telford. The four councils have commissioned an independent review of the suggestion.

Councillors discussed the smell which was exacerbated by the heat over the past weeks which had permeated the whole of Hopwood resulting in many residents' complaints and was confirmed by some of The Councillors.

The Chairman took the opportunity at this juncture to advise that due to further complaints received re Mayfield Farm he would like to add the matter to the meeting for full discussion.

To enable this discussion the Chair would raise the matter as an emergency motion, asking if all Councillors are content to debate the issue.

There was a brief discussion during which Councillor Cypher believed that to discuss the matter this way was contrary to NALC guidelines as the public would not have had the Statutory 3 days notification of the discussion and those that wish to comment may not have been given the chance to attend and that as such he would abstain from the decision.

The Chair responded advising that as this was a matter that needed to be dealt with urgently, he had spoken to a CALC trainer who advised that the matter could be raised as an emergency item and the Chair proposed the motion whereby APC asks WRS to formally reopen the case

The matter was put to the vote with 6 in favour and 1 abstention. The motion was **Agreed**

The matter was then fully discussed.

A Councillor believed that understaffing resulting in Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) not being able to fulfil their obligations was not enough to justify the lack of progression and that the matter should now involve Sajid Javid (MP).

Standing orders were suspended to allow the District Councillor and members of the public to speak.

A member of the public reported that in their 25 years of residence there had always been a problem with Mayfield Farm, they had raised the issue with WRS without success. The resident implied that there were other means of dealing with the issue other than contacting WRS which they would speak to the Council about privately.

The Lengsthman Ron Rand a resident of the Parish for 45 years also advised that this had been going on for most of his residence.

The Chair said that historically the Farm had produced significant agricultural smells (when it was a pig farm) but that now the operation had become industrial with noises and smells typical of an industrial process. The farm was turning into a rendering factory. A second vote was taken on the motion to request WRS reopen the Mayfield Farm case...it was unanimously agreed that the APC should do this.

Standing orders were resumed and District Councillor Van der Plank addressed the floor.

District Councillor Van der Plank gave the following report.

a) Fire Risk Assessments – in light of the recent fire at Grenfell Tower, District Councillor Van der Plank had been in touch with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) to check whether any Fire Assessments had been carried out. All buildings were fully compliant and also have fire alarms which have all been checked. She explained that she was impressed with the actions taken by BDHT they had reassured her that Risk Assessments had taken place and that all residents had received correspondence informing them of their actions.

b) Disabled ramps/dropped kerbs – District Councillor Van der Plank and been advised of a wheelchair user whose chair had tipped over by Swans Length which had prompted her to meet the resident and check pathways in Crown Meadow which she found to be poor for a wheel chair user. She and District Councillor Hotham had met with Highways and agreed to drop 4-5 kerbs initially.

It was asked whether they had also considered the towpath which also causes a problem with wheelchair user access – did the residents want to take that area up as well?

It was also noted that parked cars around the village were also a problem District Councillor Van der Plank advised that two less abled people had been verbally abused by other drivers when parking in disabled bays.

It was advised that parking enforcement had been asked to keep their eye on the disabled bay issue.

It was noted that Worcestershire County Council (WCC) allowed parking on the pavement as opposed to some other councils' and that it is something that District Councillors would like to address.

c) Flytipping – this issue has escalated in the area and needs to be addressed. BDC Environmental services have been asked for CCTV to be placed at known spots – this has gained mixed reviews and there is currently no funding.

It was noted that there is a need to encourage people to report suspicious behaviour. There had been successful prosecutions with hefty fines.

d) Bonfires – District Councillor Van der Plank had received several complaints about bonfires and had circulated leaflets encouraging neighbour consultation first, the matter can then be taken further if anyone wants. It was agreed that the leaflet was a good resource.

Standing orders were suspended to hear from a member of the public at their request and agenda item 10.1 was brought forward to allow them to speak.

17/ 040 To consider residents complaints and queries, as received: Agenda item 10.1 as above. A number of Hopwood residents' have requested improved play equipment at Hopwood Playing Fields and also raised the state of the footways and the lack of crossing across the A441 in Hopwood.

The resident raised the question of the lack of play equipment at the Hopwood playing fields and the need for a crossing on the A441 to allow children to cross safely. It was noted that District Councillor Hotham has been in discussions with Highways about the installation of a crossing.

The resident also commented that there are three parks in Alvechurch and that the equipment at Hopwood has only 4 swings and a slide which gets very hot in the warm weather. It would be nice to have better equipment at Hopwood especially as the Centre often holds birthday party events where the children use the outside space. It was thought that better equipment would help promote the venue and is there anything that can be done about funding. The resident was prepared to help with raising funds. The meeting was also advised that the Co-op will support local groups in finding funding.

With regard to the state of the equipment at Hopwood it was advised that all PC equipment is checked annually by RoSPA.

District Councillor Van Der Plank pointed out that the school buses stop on the A441 for pick up and return from the high schools adding extra sway to the need for a crossing.

It was advised that the Safer Roads Partnership has been monitoring traffic on the A441 for the past 12 months. It was noted that District Councillor Hotham would be keen to press the crossing issue further with County.

Action point: The Clerk to be advised of the residents wish to be involved with sourcing funding towards new equipment for the next financial year...and be invited to the next YSR Committee meeting.

Standing orders were resumed

17/041 Clerk's report including Matters Arising From Previous Meetings and Emergency Expenditure...

a. Update on Knotweed Eradication Programme at the Wiggin Playing Field

The knotweed at the Wiggin was sprayed on 19th June. The letter to the owner of the adjacent land was sent by Recorded Delivery....to date we have not received a response.

b. General Update on Projects

1. Hopwood Floor (and kitchen) completed
2. Hopwood doors and windows – order placed
3. Routine Legionnaires Testing at Hopwood CC & Rowney Green Pavilion – completed, initial report finds no water related defects...just recommends some Hot Water signs and a logbook. Full report awaited
4. Quotes for improving the surface around the paddling pool at the Wiggin – started
5. Defibrillator – was installed last week
6. Street Lighting Phase 2 – order placed to begin

c. Update on Column 3 Street Light, Tranter Avenue, Alvechurch

We have been advised that Prysmian has received advice from HSE enabling them to attend to metal street lights using a ladder but not concrete street lights. They have informed us that they will fix this one as soon as they can.

d. Update on Lone Working Arrangements at the Parish Council Office

The landlord has consented to the Parish Council finding a way to restrict entry into the office via the front door – to be discussed with the Landlord's contractor. The police have supplied two personal alarms as well. The Landlord is also installing fire doors to the rear of the office and to the under stairs store area. He is also going to install electrical fire alarm systems to both the flat and the office.

e. Update on the Phase 2 of our upgrade to street lighting

The office have submitted a Purchase Order to instruct Prysmian to begin work on Phase 2

f. Update on the external audit process

Grant Thornton has acknowledged receipt of our submitted pack in advance of the deadline and the Notice to Exercise Public Rights is on our website and also on the office window.

g. Update on the defibrillator at Hopwood Community Centre

Craig & Charlotte Saving Hearts Organisation installed the defibrillator on 6th July it is to the right hand side of the front door of Hopwood Community Centre. Training is taking place on 13th July and an evening in August still to be confirmed. The Village Magazine has been invited to publicise it.

h. Update on the heater/cooling system at the office

The office staff reported that during the very hot weather we had in June, the system installed in the office also did a brilliant job of pumping out cold air. A big improvement on last year! Thanks were extended to the Council

i. Update on District Councillor June Griffiths

APC had been advised that District Councillor June Griffiths is making a positive recovery and that any issues can continue to be raised with District Councillor Kit Taylor.

j. Update on vacancies for Planning, Youth, Sport & Recreation & Finance & Resources Committees

Councillor Smith has stood down from Planning, YSR & F&R to concentrate on the Hopwood ward and as such there is a vacancy on these committees. Councillors were asked to advise the office if they are interested in joining any of the vacant posts.

k. To note that Bill Ulyett will attend September's meeting to update us on The Lounge

Bill Ulyett has advised that he will be attending the September meeting in order to update us on projects at the Lounge and also, how the Parish Council's grant is being spent.

l. Update on the Doors and Windows at Hopwood Community Centre

Cllr Worrall has met with Howard Yarnold regarding the doors and windows at Hopwood Community Centre. The windows will now be top hinged to make them less of a hazard to people walking on the path round the building, with the exception of the Committee Room

where they will be side-hinged to provide a fire exit in that area. The Clerk will arrange for a locksmith to fix the broken lock on the shutters to the Committee Room prior to the windows being installed. The threshold to the fire doors will be reduced in line with current safety standards and to reduce the current trip hazard resulting from the difference in floor height following the installation of the new floor.

m. Update on the re-surfacing of the paddling pool edges at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

The Clerk has contacted two builders so far to arrange quotes to improve the paddling pool edges.

n. Update on the Village Green

A group of volunteers are working on the Village Green with planting. They have requested some compost to improve the soil and Ron Rand has offered to obtain this for them and remove green waste for compost.

o. Update on the Bollards at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

This item will be deferred to Finance & Resources

17/042 Finance & Administration

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

The cheque list was confirmed and signed.

b) To sign new standing orders for staff salaries

New Standing orders for the Assistant Clerk and Caretaker were signed.

c) To consider the costs and outcome of newly laid floor and fitted kitchen at Hopwood Community Centre

Councillor Worrall gave brief update on the replacement floor at Hopwood Community Centre. The maintenance on the floor had entailed taking out the old kitchen and extending 4 internal doors and architraves. In taking the kitchen out it became apparent that it would be more cost effective to install a new kitchen, taking us £105 over our combined £6000 budget and emergency expenditure limit of £750.

d) To consider an amendment to the Emergency Expenditure Limits stated in our Financial Regulations

It was proposed that the Emergency Expenditure limit is increased from £750 to £1000. In view of the extra costs incurred on the flooring at Hopwood which Councillor Worrall explained had resulted in the works going over the budget by £105 over our combined £6000 budget and emergency expenditure limit of £750. It was **Agreed** unanimously that the Emergency Expenditure limit be increased to £1000

e) To consider the request to install new benches by the bus stops in Hopwood

At the last meeting, it had been raised in Residents' Queries about the benches in the bus stops at Hopwood, it was queried whether they could just be painted but it was noted that one bench had sunk and would cause difficulties for the less abled.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow Ron Rand to speak.

The meeting was advised that there was also a bench at Roberts corner that was in need of paint or repair and that he could paint them as temporary fix if the Council so wished.

Standing Orders were resumed

It was agreed that costs for the replacement or re painting should be investigated and reported back at the September meeting.

Action: Clerk/Assistant Clerk to make further enquiries into costs to report back at Septembers meeting.

f) To consider reinstating the lighting in the bus shelters on Red Lion Street, Alvechurch
Ron Rand has requested that the lighting is re-installed in an effort to reduce the number of people choosing the bus stops to urinate in. He had advised that the electrics are in place to do this having been switched off a number of years ago to reduce costs.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow Ron Rand to speak.

The meeting was advised that the fittings for the lights are still in place and covered by a plate. It was thought that having lights in the shelters would deter the offenders from using the shelters to urinate.

Councillors were in favour of the suggestion. It was queried whether they could have light sensors on. The Assistant Clerk advised the Chair that this would probably incur a charge by Npower as with the street lights. It was **agreed** that running costs and the current electricians need investigating. Councillor Worrall advised he would be quite happy to assist

Action point: Assistant Clerk/Councillor Worrall to make enquiries.

g) To review the Parish Council's work to date with emergency planning and to consider next steps in completing and publicising a Community Resilience plan for the Parish. Councillor Cypher had proposed that the Council should continue with this work particularly in light of recent events. Parishes need to identify shelters for use in emergencies – potential hazards in Alvechurch may involve flooding, fire or accidents. How do you alert the people in such incidents? There are benefits with the use of Social Media. The Council needs to see where they are in the scheme such as with the flooding by the river Severn at Kempsey. Councillor Cypher is prepared to start discussions with Redditch and Bromsgrove District Councils.

It was suggested there is a need to look at vulnerable homes in terms of evacuation and what buildings can be used, such as The Village Hall or the Ark.

Councillor Cypher said the whole plan needs updating.

The Chair thought it was a good idea to bring it up again and was happy for Councillor Cypher and Councillor Lambert to deal.

Councillor Worrall agreed with the Chair that the Council were glad for Councillor Cypher to take on the task.

Standing Orders were suspended for Ron Rand to speak

He advised that he would like to help with the project.

Standing Orders were resumed.

17/043 To note progress on the Neighbourhood Plan

In the absence of Councillor Smith, Councillor Worrall advised the meeting that the Neighbourhood Plan can now see the light at the end of the tunnel and gave a brief update on progress. County and District Council's had seen the document and in view of their comments an informal meeting has been arranged. He advised that Councillor Smith is doing a sterling amount of work on the project to which Councillor Humphries agreed.

17/044 To receive an update on the recent meeting at Alvechurch Station

Councillor Worrall had met with the County Council, Network Rail and London Midland. County Council had advised that there was money available for bike stands at the station. London Midland had made a bid for the new operating franchise, which if they win they would be keen to help promote the station.

The suggested area for installation was near the steps, there would also be CCTV near the proposed site. A shelter has also been considered, Councillor Worrall described the two proposed shelters, one was a timber clad build and the other was perspex with a metal frame and asked if Councillors had a preference. Views on preference were tied and due to the time constraints and there not being another Parish Council meeting until September, Councillors' would allow The Chair Councillor Humphries and Councillor Worrall to make any decision.

It was noted that in London Midland's submission for the franchise it involved Station enhancement and it was hoped should they win the bid that the car park situation might be reviewed

It was noted that double yellow lines had been painted at the entrance to the station and along the access road to the car park, this raised concerns that problems from flooding and high demand in general would cause drivers to park on neighbouring roads. The lack of disability parking was also noted.

17/045 Committees/Sub Committees/working parties

Reports from Committees and minutes circulated since last meeting

.1 To receive an update from Youth Sports & Recreation Committee meeting held on 19th June

a) To receive an update from the Wiggin Development Working Group and to consider the consultation process

The Clerk has been in discussions with Mr Snell, Head of Alvechurch Middle School who has agreed to run a consultation at the Middle School next week.

b) To receive an update on the Planning Meeting held on 3rd July 2017

Councillor Worrall updated the meeting advising that only three applications were consulted on and there were no objections, one applicant had attended the meeting. There was then a brief discussion at this meeting on the plans for the Precinct, it was noted that the proposed improvements were in keeping with the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillors agreed that there was need for continuity with business and residents. It was questioned that now the Planning Committee is down by one member was there a need for a replacement; it was advised that there had previously been problems in getting a quorum when there were only six on the Committee a quorum in this case being three.

c) To receive an update on Highways matters to include:

Bordesley roadworks....The lights had been moved from Weights Lane nearer to the Abbey Stadium, and were two way rather than three way.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow Richard Peach, Editor of the Village magazine to speak.

He advised that there is still a problem and, spotters were not attuned to the traffic conditions, it was particularly bad on 10/07/17 around 3 pm.

Standing orders were resumed

It was noted that Richard Flanagan was arranging a site meeting. There were concerns that spotters attentions were elsewhere and not on the traffic situation, the spotters were also on the bridge so could not see the Bordesley island and any traffic backed up that far.

Action: Councillor Humphries will write to Richard Flanagan and any further issues are to be diarised.

.2 To receive updates from Outside Bodies

a) To receive an update on the June Worcestershire CALC Meeting

Councillor Cypher gave a brief summary of the recent CALC meeting, the main points being:

i. **Training** – it was questioned whether Councillors are taking up any training. There is a new awards training scheme with an award as part of it for Councillor participation.

Action: Councillor Humphries to ask the Clerk to put training back on the September Alvechurch Parish Council meeting.

iii. **Consultation Police and Crime Commissioner** – Government of the Fire Services would like the services to exist as they do now.

It is the intention to get rid of Committees to be replaced by the Crime Commissioner, which would save £4 million. This proposal has proved to be unpopular.

It was proposed that Council and District Councillor Hotham combine views, with Councillors Cypher and Humphries to consolidate thoughts for submission of the Consultation. **Agreed**

17/046 To consider residents complaints and queries, as received:

.1 A number of Hopwood residents' had sent in requests for improved play equipment at Hopwood Playing Fields and also concerns regarding the state of the footways and the lack of crossing across the A441 in Hopwood – this topic was discussed at minute no. 17/040 above.

.2 A resident's query regarding the lack of football posts on the football pitch at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields. An email had been received from a member of the public requesting that the goal posts be reinstated at the Wiggin football pitches in time for the summer holidays. They had been advised that the goal posts belong to the football club contracted to use the pitch and that also at this time of the year, the pitches are being rested. It was confirmed that the original posts were in Ron Rand's barn and that they would not now comply with regulations.

.3 Residents' request for a reduced speed limit along Old Rectory Lane.

A letter was received from two residents on Old Rectory Lane regarding the volume and speed of traffic along Old Rectory Lane. The residents noted that the lane is popular with walkers, runners and cyclists and that the road is used as a "short cut by motorists whose prime desire is to get from A to B as quickly as possible". A recent accident on the M42 had resulted in a large number of drivers coming off, following their sat navs which took them down the lane. The residents have requested that the single track lane be reduced to a 10 mph speed limit and designated Access Only. The Clerk had referred the letter to County Councillor Charlie Hotham.

.4 A resident's request for overgrown verges to be cut back, particularly in the vicinity of the bus stops on either side of the A441 in Hopwood.

Councillors were advised that Highways had notified the office that the hedges and verges all the way up to the Birmingham border should be dealt with by the end of the week

17/047 Around the Parish - to consider developments and issues raised by Councillors present as they relate to Hopwood, Rowney Green, Bordesley and Alvechurch.

Rowney Green, Gravel Pit Lane, it was noted that the trees adjacent to where there is a 30 ft drop along a dangerous edge on the lane are overgrown exacerbating the danger.

Councillors suggested that a marker is needed to identify the danger. It was agreed that this matter should be put to District Councillor Hotham and Richard Clewer of Highways to investigate. One suggestion was for ARMCO barriers similar to those on the bypass.

Alvechurch It was reported that several areas in the Parish in particular Willowbrook, Blythesway and Oaktree Close were becoming unsightly with overgrown weeds against the kerb edge.

Action: The Assistant Clerk to notify the relevant Authority supplying photograph's of the areas of main concern.

17/48 Date and time of next meeting: The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday 11th September at 7pm at Hopwood Community Centre, Redditch Road, Hopwood.

This meeting ended at 9.20pm

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