

ALVECHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

Ground Floor, 1A George Road, Alvechurch, B48 7PB
Tel: 0121 447 8016
e-mail: Clerk@alvechurch.gov.uk

Clerk – Tammy Williams

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD MONDAY 10th SEPTEMBER 2018 AT 7 PM

AT HOPWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE REDDITCH ROAD HOPWOOD

18/055 Present: Councillors A Humphries (Chairman), J Cypher, P Freeman, A Helmore, A Smith, N Wise, M Worrall, A Wallis & A Willetts

In attendance: Tammy Williams (Clerk), Richard Peach (The Village), District Cllr K Van der Plank, District & County Cllr C Hotham and a member of the public

Prior to the start of the meeting the Chairman wanted to record officially the Parish Council's thanks to two people long associated with the Parish Council who have decided to leave at this time: Ron Rand who has been the Parish Lengthsman for over 13 years and Wendy Carney who has provided the Parish Council with over 17 years of fantastic service. Cllr Humphries thanked them both for their years of hard work. Cllr Worrall, Chairman of the Planning Committee, thanked Wendy for all her help on Planning and said that Wendy had been a real help throughout. Cllr Humphries told Council that Ron had been a fantastic help at Picnic in the Park and that when he had had spoken to Ron about vandalism to a sign on Station Road, Ron had solved it by installing a taller post so the sign couldn't be easily reached and the problem was solved!

18/056 Apologies for Absence: Cllrs S Lambert, R Chima and M Ball & PC S Albutt

18/057 Declarations of Interest: None

18/058 Reports from Alvechurch Ward, District & County Councillors:

District Cllr Kate Van der Plank

- Noted that there was an increased perception of crime in the village and had been in discussions with a Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator and the police about resurrecting Neighbourhood Watch schemes.
- Had attended the meeting with the Parish Council and County Council about parking and speeding concerns in the village
- Has had discussions with the Bromsgrove District Housing Trust's director to explore solutions for concerns raised about Hollington Road
- There haven't been any meetings at Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) but it was noted that Universal Credit will be rolled out in September and that the track record for payments beginning is a 10 week delay, not 6 weeks as stated. There will be a meeting at BDC regarding contingency planning.

District Cllr C Hotham

- Residents are having to complete diaries following the Community Trigger meeting for Mayfield Farm and from those diaries it seems that residents are suffering anti-social behaviour. A review meeting for the diary sheets is imminent.
- The Independent Councillors have put forward a motion at BDC that BDC should be abolished in favour of a North and South Worcestershire Unitary Authority. This is in response to concerns about budgetary issues in future years. The motion is to form a cross-party plan to form 2 Unitary Authorities. A Parish Councillor stated that he will ask for this to be on the agenda at the next CALC Executive meeting.

Alvechurch South ward

No report or apologies received.

County Cllr C Hotham

- The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) taking over the Fire Service is now subject to a judicial review and it is likely that the final decision will be taken in 2019. Its therefore unlikely that the PCC will be able to take over the Fire Service in the new year because there are budget implications as they will have already been set.
- The PCC is recruiting 200 new Police Officers.
- There have been no County Council meetings since July.

18/059 To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9th July 2018 & the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting on 23rd July 2018

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

18/060 Clerk's report: Including actions completed since last meeting, report of complaints, emergency expenditure and matters arising from previous meeting, including:

a. Update On Bridge 64 By The Dead Arm Of The Canal

Thanks to everyone involved in pressing the Canal & River Trust to demolish Bridge 64 by the dead arm of the canal, Alvechurch and also to Sarah Brice, Project Manager for the Canal and River Trust for keeping all key stakeholders in the loop on the progress of the demolition of Bridge 64. We understand that the timber from the bridge was recycled into bio-mass. One abutment has remained in place from the bridge and with guidance from Mary Green on suitable planting to improve the appearance of the remaining abutment will be carried out over the Autumn.

b. Update On The Resurfacing Of The Paddling Pool Edges At The Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

The paddling pool edges were successfully resurfaced. Hosking Ground Maintenance then seeded the bank under the willow tree as well as other areas around the Wiggin that required it.

c. Update On The Installation Of An Overhead Barrier At The Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

The Clerk has met with the Contractor and it is anticipated that the overhead barrier will be installed in the next two weeks.

d. Update on Phase 3 of the Street Lighting Upgrade

Phase 3 of the Parish Council's street lighting upgrade has been successfully completed.

e. Update On The Allotments

The Assistant Clerk and the Chairman of the Allotments Association have carried out two monthly random checks of the Allotments. Following those checks, the office has communicated with allotment holders about any issues identified.

Following a query raised by members of the Allotment Association at the June YSR Committee Meeting about the use of weedkiller at the Allotments, the Clerk contacted BDC for advice and as a result, wrote to all allotment holders advising that ideally plots would be maintained organically but if weedkiller is to be used this should be no stronger than those available on the high street. The Allotment Association has decided to take over the management of the bank accounts.

f. Update On The Meeting With Sajid Javid MP

The Clerk and the Chairman of the Parish Council met with Sajid Javid MP in August and items on the agenda included highways and speeding, policing and crime in the Parish and the Neighbourhood Plan/BDC Local plan. Sajid Javid MP expressed that he would support the installation of a temporary fixed speed camera on the A441 through Hopwood to reduce speeds on the road which have been consistently above the permitted speeds recorded by the Safer Roads Partnership.

g. Update On Cracks In Tarmac And Raised Manhole Covers Between Willowbrook And Birmingham Road, Alvechurch

Cllr Worrall has asked County Cllr Hotham and Highways to review and deal with cracks that have appeared in the new footway surface and thanks are sent to all those at WCC who have pulled out all the stops and resolved this. Also, when the work was carried out before Cllr Worrall had asked the raised manhole covers that are in the grassed verge to be made safe as well and Cllr Worrall has chased up the progress of this.

h. To Note The Parish Council's Communication To Worcestershire County Council In Response To Congestion Along The A441, Bordesley As A Result Of A Temporary Road Closure

Recently, there was traffic backed up almost to the bypass island due to temporary traffic lights for utility work/repairs in the pavement outside the new housing site. It was reported that no monitoring of the queue of traffic on the Bordesley side and only approximately 15 cars on the Sainsbury side!

The Chairman reminded WCC of the Parish Council's discussions with them previously about the impact on local people personally and local businesses and a Highways representative subsequently came out and advised that the lights were being manually controlled as required on the permit (it was for another water connection)

i. Update On The Temporary Parish Lengthsman Arrangements And To Note Future Arrangements For A Permanent Position

The Clerk has spoken to Neil Hosking about undertaking temporary Lengthsman duties pending the recruitment of a permanent Lengthsman.

j. Update on External Audit process

The Responsible Financial Officer has received a request from the External Auditor for confirmation of uncashed cheques at the end of the financial year. A final response from the External Auditor is expected by the October Parish Council meeting.

k. To Note The Parish Council's Request To The CALC Executive Meeting For Clarification On The Payment Of Grants To Churchyard Groups

The Clerk wrote to the St Laurence Churchyard Group after the July meeting advising the Parish Council's decision. Subsequently Cllr Cypher has asked CALC via the CALC Executive Meeting agenda to seek clarification on the payment of grants to churchyard groups

l. Update On The Graffiti At The Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields And Other Parts Of The Village

Sadly, a significant amount of graffiti was daubed over the play equipment and other items in the Wiggin. Thanks to Cllrs Smith and Humphries for resolving this by asking BDC to clean up the graffiti. The Parish Council has also referred this to the Police and subsequently further graffiti with the same tag has been daubed in the village.

m. Update On Work To Be Carried Out To The Flagpole And A General Tidy Up Of The Village Green Prior To The Remembrance Service

The Clerk has instructed Flagpole Express to clean and service the flagpole and supply and fit a new union flag. We are advised that this work will be carried out on 7th September. Also, Alvechurch Parish Council was nominated by the County Council to receive a day's free labour by Ringway Engineers to undertake some general maintenance work in the Parish...in preparation for the centenary commemorations for World War One, Ringway will concentrate their efforts on cleaning the bench and replacing damaged bricks to the wall on the Village Green with the potential for other projects to be covered in that day as well. A meeting is to be held this week with Ringway to finalise the details.

n. Outstanding Items: An Annual Review Of The Parish Council's Policy On Flying Drones On Its Playing Fields

Last year, we decided to review the Parish Council's policy on flying drones at its playing fields in one year's time. Due to the summer recess and the urgent items arising for this meeting, the Clerk will delay this until October meeting to review it then.

18/061 Finance & Administration

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

A query was raised regarding the payment to Bullivant Media and the Responsible Financial Officer advised that this was a newspaper advert for Assistant Clerk vacancy. The cheque list was reviewed and approved by Council.

b. To consider the adoption of policies as proposed by the Finance & Resources Committee at the meeting on 23rd July 2018:

i. A Model General Data Protection Regulations policy

This policy was **approved and adopted** by Council

ii. The Scheme of Delegation to the Clerk to be included in the Standing Orders

This is a model scheme and was reviewed by Council. It was noted that there isn't an equivalent list of delegations for Councillors as no individual Councillor can act on behalf of Council. The Scheme of Delegation was **approved and adopted** by Council.

iii. The updated NALC Model Standing Orders

The updated Standing Orders were **approved and adopted** by Council.

iv. The updated Financial Regulations

The Clerk noted that following the provision of updated Standing Orders she had reviewed the Financial Regulations that the Parish Council had already adopted. It is therefore noted that the Financial Regulations had been reviewed.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to add these to the Parish Council's website.

18/062 To receive an update on the installation of the new play equipment at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields and to consider:

a. If, and what, measures might be taken by the Parish Council to discourage owners from letting their dogs enter the children's play area at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Field

It was noted that there had been one or two snagging issues but overall the play equipment was excellent and the Parish Council had received lots of positive comments with the play area clearly being well used throughout the summer months. Thanks were expressed to all those involved in choosing and overseeing the installation of the play equipment. It was noted that the Parish Council had conducted a very good consultation and the remit had been successfully delivered and will be a wonderful asset for the community for years to come.

It was also noted that during the consultation many comments had been received including the lack of toilets at the Wiggin, the need to improve the footpaths but no one had mentioned the need for fencing around the play equipment. Nonetheless, since the play equipment had been installed there have been many comments, mainly on social media, made about the need to discourage dogs from entering the play area potentially by installing a fence around all or part of the play equipment.

Cllr Cypher proposed the motion: Does the Parish Council want to discuss if and what measures should be taken to discourage owners from letting their dogs enter the children's

play area at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Field and Council **agreed unanimously** to discuss this.

Councillors debated extensively the issues including whether there should be a blanket ban on dogs in the Wiggin, how do you define where the play area is, what a "risk" is (advice from ROSPA has been sought but not yet received) and do we need to review our existing risk assessment for the playing field. Whose responsibility is it to keep a dog out of the play area: the Parish Council's or the dog owner's and how can the Parish Council police any restrictions made. It was also noted that the Parish Council had been advised at the outset that Section 106 monies couldn't be used to improve infrastructure such as paths, so fencing would not have been allowed either as the funds had to be used to purchase something of tangible benefit/improvement for the Playing Fields. **Standing orders were also suspended** to allow a member of the public to speak to Council as well about this matter. **Standing orders were resumed.**

During the debate it was noted that it would help if dog owners had somewhere they could secure their dogs, if say, a parent had brought their dog and child to the park and the Clerk advised that it is possible to purchase posts for this specific purpose which could be concreted in away from the play area and the nearby seating. Cllr Cypher had also provided Councillors with a picture of a large sign installed at another play area which clearly defined users' and Council's responsibilities and Councillors felt that this was a very good first stage solution to this situation.

It was **agreed** that Council would like the Clerk to look into the costs of a large metal framed sign such as that example provided, some dog posts and some smaller signs to be installed along the path from the car park to the play area. The wording of the sign should be based on the wording on the example provided and to also include that dogs should only be secured on the posts provided.

b. Installing additional bins, potentially recycling bins at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Field

The Clerk advised that she had intended prior to the new play equipment being installed to look into purchasing new bins for the Wiggin as this provision is limited and rubbish if left, not in the bins. Also, a member of the public had requested that the Council considers having recycling bins as well. A councillor raised concerns that this would necessitate the Caretaker having to sort through what had been put in a recycling bin.

It was **agreed** that the Council was unable to provide recycling facilities at its Playing Fields at this time but it would purchase another bin to be installed at the top end of the path towards the play area but away from the benches. The new bench will need to be installed on a concrete slab and raw bolted down.

18/063 To Consider The Adequacy Of The Current District Council Representative Arrangements Of The Alvechurch South Ward

It was noted that a letter had been sent to District Cllrs J Griffiths and K Taylor in July regarding the representative arrangements of Alvechurch South and no response had been received which was felt to be disrespectful to the Parish Council. The essence is that the ward isn't getting a good service from the District Council: there are no updates on issues arising such as Cadent gas closing Swan Street for a protracted amount of time, Bordesley traffic management issues to name a few. Back in 2014 the Parish Council had written to the County Council about a similar concern and this was copied into the District Council then. The Clerk advised that it might be advisable to copy in the Monitoring Officer into any correspondence sent. **Standing orders were suspended** to allow District Cllr Hotham to speak who advised that the Parish Council could consider personally raising the matter at the next Full Council meeting. **Standing Orders were resumed.**

It was also noted that all District Councillors get a Members' allowance. It was proposed that a letter be sent to the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council and copied to District Cllrs J Griffiths and K Taylor. The letter will be circulated to all Councillors for comment prior to sending out.

18/064 Committees/Sub Committees/working parties

a. Reports from Committees and minutes circulated since last meeting

1) To Receive An Update From The Finance & Resources Committee Meeting Held On 23rd July 2018

- Cllr T Wallis was elected as Chairman of the Committee at the last meeting
- The committee reviewed the budget to the end of June
- It reviewed the Parish Council's Reserves policy
- The Parish Lengthsman requested reimbursement of costs arising to his vehicle and to replace some equipment which was deemed not to be costs that could be settled as part of the Lengthsman Scheme as he is a self employed contractor. Instead the Committee said that it would be happy to review the Lengthsman's hourly rate to ensure it was in line with other local Parish Councils, although these do vary around the County.

2) To Receive An Update From The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, To Include:

- The Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to BDC, BDC ratified it and it has gone off to an Independent Examiner. This process takes about 4-6 weeks to complete.
- All representations made to BDC about the plan have been shared with the Steering Group. It was noted that there are quite a few developers looking at sites around Alvechurch.
- BDC has reviewed the Neighbourhood Plan policies and has advised that there isn't anything to be unduly concerned about.
- BDC has suggested that the referendum for the Neighbourhood Plan is scheduled between November this year and the early part of 2019.
- The Steering Group requests that all Parish Councillors help promote the referendum and the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan for Alvechurch Parish.
- If the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted then it will need to be reviewed again when BDC reviews its local plan.

2.1) To Consider Extending The Role Of The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group To Include BDC's Local Plan Review And To Consider APC's Response To The Issues And Options Proposed

Councillors **agreed unanimously** to extend the role of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to include BDC's Local Plan review.

It was noted that the Steering Group hoped that parishioners would join the Steering Group in the next stages of its development.

BDC has asked the Parish Council if we would like to have an event to update parishioners on the Issues and Options proposed. The Parish Council **agreed** that it will support BDC to put on an exhibition in Alvechurch to include an update on the Neighbourhood Plan.

3) To receive an update from the Planning Committee Meetings held on 23rd July, 6th August & 3rd September 2018

Cllr Worrall advised Council about the planning applications reviewed at the above meetings. The minutes relating to these meetings are available on the Parish Council's website.

3.1) To consider the draft letter to BDC raising concerns regarding planning issues

A draft letter had been composed and circulated to Councillors for consideration. Council **agreed unanimously** that the Planning Committee's letter should be sent to Bromsgrove District Council raising concerns about planning issues.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to issue the letter on Council's behalf.

Cllrs Van der Plank and Hotham left the meeting at 9.14pm.

4) To Receive An Update From The WW1 Remembrance Working Group

It was noted that that the Community Choir will be holding a Peace Concert. The arrangements for the service on 11th November have been finalised; the Community Choir will sing a song from War Horse at the service.

It was noted that the road closure for the service will be carried out by Headway at a cost of £195.

5) To Receive An Update From The Highways Meeting Held On 5th September 2018 And To Consider Making A Formal Request To Worcestershire County Council For A 20mph Zone Through Alvechurch

Cllrs Van der Plank, Worrall, Ball, Hotham and Humphries met with two County Council Highways representatives to discuss speed limits through Alvechurch, Willowbrook Road (cracks in the footway and raised manhole covers), parking in Alvechurch and gully cleansing in Hopwood. It was noted that there was a lengthy discussion about removing double yellow lines to increase parking availability however it was noted that due to technical reasons, double yellow lines could only be removed in a limited area so that only two more parking spaces would actually be created. Other parking options were explored including introducing a permit system to park in the Tanyard Lane car park overnight with a time limit for non-permit holders and to review the parking agreement in place for the Sports & Social Club car park.

Cllr Ball led a proposal to reduce the speed limit through Alvechurch to 20mph and persuaded the Principal Traffic Management Engineer from Worcestershire County Council to draw up a draft proposal for speed limits in the village for Council consideration at a later date.

It was agreed that a Highways meeting for the Parish would take place on a quarterly basis.

6) To Receive An Update From The Picnic In The Park (PIP) Committee And To Ratify The Date For The 2019 Picnic In The Park Event

It was **agreed unanimously** that the PIP Committee could hold its annual PIP on Sunday, 26th May 2019.

7) To Receive An Update From The Hopwood Play Equipment Working Group With Regards To The New Homes Bonus Application And Next Steps For Raising Additional Funds

It was noted that the Parish Council had received confirmation that the Hopwood Mums' application, supported by Alvechurch Parish Council, for a New Homes Bonus grant had been approved for £10,000. Cllr Cypher advised that he, the Clerk, one of the Mums and her daughter had blown the Panel away when they had attended their Panel interview and thanks were sent to BDC for granting this amount of funding. The Working Group is feeling very positive about raising the remaining funds needed having received £3000 from County Cllr Hotham's divisional funding, around £1,000 raised at PIP and £5000 from the Parish Council. It was noted that BBC Hereford & Worcester is looking for community stories for their radio shows and the Parish Council will write to them as well as writing again to local businesses and seeking other funding opportunities. It was hoped that The Village magazine could help to raise the profile of the fundraising activities.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to seek permission to send the letter sent to the Panel to The Village magazine.

8) To Remind All Committees To Consider Their "Wish List" To Be Included In The Budgeting Process For The 2019/20 Financial Year

The Clerk asked all Councillors to consider projects that could be costed and considered as part of the budgeting process for the 2019/20 financial year.

18/065 To Consider Residents' Complaints And Queries, As Received:

a. A Resident's Concerns Raised About The Speed Of Traffic Travelling Down Meadow Lane, Alvechurch

A resident had contacted the Parish Council regarding the speed of vehicles travelling up and down Meadow Lane. It was suggested that perhaps a sign depicting Children at Play could be installed but it was queried where this would be situated.

ACTION POINT: The Chairman to raise this in the quarterly newsletter.

18/066 Around The Parish - To Consider Developments And Issues Raised By Councillors Present As They Relate To Hopwood, Rowney Green, Bordesley And Alvechurch.

a) Alvechurch

A councillor advised that a resident had asked for the dog bin and litter bin situated near to the bus stop and play area to be moved as they can smell unpleasant. The Clerk advised that these belong to BDC.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to refer this request to BDC's Environmental Services Team Leader

At this point in the meeting, it was agreed to move on to the next agenda items in order to progress the meeting.

18/067 To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of agenda items 13 & 14 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.

18/068 To Consider The Parish Council's Staff Pension Arrangements

The Clerk advised that she had updated staff members but hadn't written to them formally yet and so this item was still outstanding.

18/069 To Receive An Update On The Recruitment Process For The Assistant Clerk Role And To Consider The Terms And Conditions Of The Role

Council **agreed unanimously** that if necessary, the Assistant Clerk could be contracted to work 30 hours per week.

18/070 Date and time of next meeting: the next meeting will be the Parish Meeting on 8th October at 7pm at Hopwood Community Centre, Redditch Road, Hopwood

This meeting ended at 9.50pm.

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