

ALVECHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk – Tammy Williams

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD MONDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER 2017 AT 7.00PM

AT HOPWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE, REDDITCH ROAD, HOPWOOD

17/049 Present: Councillors A Humphries (Chair), A Willetts, A Smith, N Wise, M Ball (from 7.22pm), T Wallis, J Cypher & S Lambert

In attendance: Tammy Williams (Clerk), R Peach (Village Magazine), Ron Rand, District Councillor K Van der Plank and 6 members of the public

Standing orders were suspended for members of the public to address Council regarding the ongoing closure of the gates to the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields. At 7.22pm Cllr Ball joined the meeting.

17/050 Apologies for Absence

Councillor P Freeman (accepted)
Councillor M Worrall (accepted)
Councillor Chima (accepted)
Councillor Helmore (accepted)
County/District Councillor Hotham (accepted)

17/051 Declarations of Interest

None were noted at this point in the meeting, although Councillor Wallis & Councillor Wise did declare an interest in the allotments later on in the meeting (17/066)

17/052 Reports from Alvechurch Ward, District & County Councillors

District Cllr Van der Plank advised that she would notify Cllr Hotham of any matters arising in this meeting.

New Homes Bonus Update

Councillors were advised that none of the three New Homes Bonus applications that had been submitted from the Parish had been approved. As such District Cllr Van der Plank had asked for feedback from Bromsgrove District Council and had been advised that there had been three times as many applications received than usual. There will be another round of New Homes Bonus Grants next year.

Planning

Planning applications of note included an application for additional HGV parking at Hopwood Services and a few others.

Baptist Church

A request for brown signs indicating the Baptist Church has been received.

Residents Only Parking

The District Council is also considering residents' requests for Residents Only parking on Bear Hill which District Cllr Van der Plank supports.

Illegal Signage

A local estate agents has received a warning from Bromsgrove District Council as signs had been illegally sited on the highway.

Hollington Road

Over the summer months there had been an issue regarding the erection of a fence as well as residents complaints regarding anti-social behaviour and children's road safety in the Hollington Road area.

Cllr Wallis advised that the Planning Committee had noted concerns regarding a lack of sufficient parking in the area when they had reviewed Simply Fresh's planning application. Cllr Cypher advised that he had seen a £500 grant opportunity from Bromsgrove District Council.

It was queried if Kit Taylor, in District Cllr Griffiths's absence was being invited to our meetings and Cllr Humphries replied that he would personally invite him to our October meeting to receive an update on the progress of our Neighbourhood Plan Consultation.

The Clerk had received a report from County/District Cllr Hotham in his absence which was read to those present:

"I have little to report other than the meeting we had with Richard Clewer regarding Highways. Worcestershire County Council has been on shut down and the same has been true at Bromsgrove District Council. I am continuing to press for a positive response from Worcester Regulatory Services regarding Mayfield Farm. I have also been informed that work will start on Bittell Farm Road canal subsidence in early October."

Cllr Humphries also advised that Worcester Regulatory Services had re-opened the case regarding noise pollution from Mayfield Farm but not odour pollution. Operations should cease at 9pm but residents say that it has been later. Cllr Smith advised that Ombudsman input is now being sought.

17/053 To Approve the Minutes of the Previous Meeting Held on 10/07/17

Cllr Cypher had queried the content of the Minutes from the July meeting, and Councillors agreed to amend the July Minutes to better reflect the legislation regarding emergency motions. The Minutes were approved and signed.

17/054 Clerk's report including Matters Arising From Previous Meetings and Emergency Expenditure...

a. Office Update

A chain has been fitted for the door but it's already popped out the wall so we will be asking for that to be resolved this week. A smoke alarm has also been added as well as strips to reinforce the fire safety of the doors to the under stairs cupboard and the door to the rear property.

b. General Update on Projects

The following items have been completed since the last meeting:

Wiggin Development Consultation at the Middle School

Lock to Shutter in Committee Room fixed

New doors and windows at Hopwood Community Centre

Defibrillator in situ at Hopwood Community Centre; one of 2 training sessions completed

c. Update on the External Audit Process

The Clerk advised that she had received a query from the External Auditor which the Clerk is working on and will respond tomorrow.

d. Update on the Flooding Reported on Branden Road, Alvechurch

A resident raised the matter of flooding at his property in Brandon Road. The matter was referred to Joseph Baker of North Worcestershire Water Management and he has recently advised that he has spoken with a resident at a property on Snake Lane to gain access from their property to the watercourse that runs through the village. Joseph has also secured some funding for a camera survey and jetting if required to the culvert through Alvechurch. This is likely to take place in October.

e. To Note the Updated Financial Regulations/Standing Orders and Related Office Requirements

Councillors were advised that following the recently agreed amendment to the Financial Regulations, an updated version was provided to them during the meeting.

f. Update on the Defibrillator at Hopwood Community Centre

The defibrillator was installed and a training session completed for some Councillors, a member of the public and the Clerk and an article was in The Village Magazine. The defibrillator was also registered with the West Midlands Ambulance Service. Since then the Assistant Clerk has arranged an evening training session rolled out by the West Midlands Ambulance Service to take place on 11th October at 7pm. 15 attendees have confirmed they will attend so far.

g. Update on the Doors, Windows and Shutter at Hopwood Community Centre

The shutter to the Committee Room was fixed and then the windows and doors were installed. Thanks to the Caretaker for his help in fixing the broken shutter lock and to Cllr Worrall for getting the doors and windows installed.

h. Update on the Installation of the Cycle Racks at Alvechurch Train Station

Following the announced change of franchise at Alvechurch Station, Cllr Worrall emailed London Midland for an update on the installation of the cycle racks and also to advise that the wildflower gardens had been mown again. London Midland responded stating: "We are still progressing with the cycle facility and we are just concluding the tender process. It's taken a little longer as the tender included equipment for four other locations that we are installing cycle facilities. Delivery of the shelter and racks will be in around 10 weeks but we will complete the ground works prior to delivery to enable them to be fitted straight away.

The wild flowers cut back was an unfortunate mistake by our contractor, having been informed that it was to be left. They have been re-briefed and we shouldn't have the issue again.

I will be touch once I have some firm delivery and install dates for the cycle facilities."

i. To Note The Letters Sent in Respect Of Consultations on Local Rail Infrastructure, Health Provision and West Mercia Fire and Rescue Governance

Letters have been sent to the Police & Crime Commissioner regarding the Consultation on West Mercia Fire and Rescue Governance on 21st July; The Transport Strategy Team regarding Worcester County Council's Rail Investment Strategy Consultation on 3rd August and to Mr S Trickett regarding NHS Developments & Future Service Planning & Provision for Residents of Alvechurch Parish on 14th August. Thanks to Cllr Cypher for all his hard work in putting together these responses.

j. To Note the Change of Date for the Next Youth, Sport and Recreation Committee

Cllr Humphries emailed Council to request that the next YSR meeting is brought forward to 16th October to enable the consideration of the Grounds Maintenance Tendering applications. The Parish Council website has been updated accordingly.

k. Update on the Contracts for the Hire of Rowney Green and Hopwood Playing Fields

Pete Gwilliam has signed the updated contracts to hire the playing fields at Rowney Green and Hopwood.

I. Update on Re-Surfacing of Footway Between Willowbrook and Birmingham Road

Cllr Worrall advises that fortuitously he bumped into a Worcestershire County Council Contractor marking out areas that will be concreted in the grass area around the inspection chamber. Subject to a budget being approved, then additional work to raise the existing path where the two inspection chambers are located on the footway, will begin in January 2018. However, APC's request to extend the footway as it currently discharges walkers into the road was not on the Agenda at WCC, despite it being raised by us on previous occasions. Cllr Worrall has asked County Cllr Hotham to intervene on our behalf.

m. Update on the Staffing Committee

The Staffing Committee is going to meet on Friday 22nd September to finalise the Clerk's contract, look at APC policies and review staffing generally.

n. Update On Reinstating Lighting In The Bus Shelters In Alvechurch

Cllr Worrall has asked an electrician to review the electrics in the bus shelters to advise the current state of them at a cost of £40. It is expected that quotations for consideration will be brought to the October meeting.

17/055 Finance & Administration

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

Councillors were provided with two cheque lists: one advising of cheques issued over the summer recess and the other cheques to be issued this month. The Clerk notified Council that our SLCC membership had expired and that the annual membership cost is £177 but provides a library of information that the Clerk had accessed frequently as well as the ongoing training that the Clerk is undertaking. Also, the Clerk reported that during her ILCA studies it had become apparent that the latest Arnold Baker publication was required, costing £73.60 + postage instead of £92.00 as a result of our affiliation to the SLCC. Finally, we have received a letter from Npower advising that we owe around £456.53 for last year's Christmas illuminations. However, Npower has supplied a series of credit and debits notices rather than an invoice which the Clerk needs to review first and therefore a cheque for Npower will need to be signed out of the meeting.

Councillors were content with the payments listed on the Cheque List and Cllr Humphries signed the cheque lists provided.

b. To Consider a Standing Order in Respect of Staff Salary Payments

Two Councillors signed a standing order to be sent to the bank in respect of salary payments.

c. To Consider Quotations Received to Improve the Slabbed Area Around the Paddling Pool

Although the Clerk had contacted many builders and three had been out to inspect the job in question, only two quotations had been received. Councillors reviewed these quotations and **agreed** unanimously that we would proceed with the quotation from Traditional Driveways to install a resin stone finish in buff around the paddling pool and to repair the bad cracks in the concrete wall at a cost of £4100.00. This would need to come out of the Contingency fund as there was no budget assigned for this work.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to clarify the warranty period and also the frost protection of the product.

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

The Assistant Clerk had provided Councillors with a briefing note and details of some possible new bollards and lock covers for the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields. In order to find more information out prior to making a decision this item was deferred until October Meeting

ACTION POINT: Councillor Humphries to contact CALC to ask other Councils how they protect their playing fields. **The Clerk** to provide the Parish Lengthsman with details of the research for his consideration and comments.

- e. To Consider Switching Energy Supplier For Our Unmetered Street Lighting Supply
This item was deferred until October meeting pending quotations.

17/056 To Consider Progress on the Neighbourhood Plan and the Final Pre-Submission Public Consultation Stage

It was noted that work on the Neighbourhood Plan had taken 5 years to process and in part because we have had to wait on Bromsgrove District Council to publish its Local Plan in that time period. As the Neighbourhood Plan nears completion, a public consultation will be held at the Baptist Church on the 5th, 6th and 7th October 2017. This will be the last opportunity for parishioners and organisations to respond to its content before it is sent to Bromsgrove District Council and to an independent examiner next year. Our Neighbourhood Plan, if adopted at a later referendum, will be a legal document that developers will have to refer to as we cannot preclude more housing within the next 13 years and will therefore be in the community's interest to have a Plan. Standing Orders were suspended for a resident to query why their field was mentioned on a map of possible development sites. It was confirmed that Bromsgrove District Council has completed a land assessment and that was why the site was on there.

The Neighbourhood Plan will feature in the next Village Magazine. This next 6 week Consultation Period will just be the latest opportunity for residents to comment on the policies listed in the Consultation document; the Steering Group has consulted with the public since day one and their feedback has helped shape the policies over the year. Councillor Humphries finished by thanking Cllr Smith for leading all the work on the Neighbourhood Plan over the last 5 years.

17/057 To Consider Alvechurch Parish Council's Involvement in a Local Bus Scheme With Lickey & Blackwell and Barnt Green Parish Councils

Councillors were advised that Cllr Humphries and the Clerk were invited to a meeting at Barnt Green Parish Council Office by Cllr Hotham who has instigated the possible new bus scheme. As yet no details or costs have been agreed but it has been suggested that BARN would run a service that loops between Lickey, Blackwell, Barnt Green, Alvechurch and Rowney Green. The Parish Councils would be responsible for recruiting a volunteer driver to drive the bus. The bus journey would be chargeable and any shortfall in the cost of running the service and the revenue raised would be divided between the three parish councils. Councillors noted that the 182 service does a similar route and one Councillor suggested that the Parish Councils push for greater funding from Worcestershire County Council for concessionary funding. It is expected that there will be subsequent meetings on this in the forthcoming months.

17/058 To Consider Christmas Decoration Improvements and to Consider Forming a Working Group

Councillors were advised that there had recently been some meetings with Cheryl Walsh who works for Bromsgrove District Council/Wyre Forest to promote village centres. Cheryl had suggested that Alvechurch has a proper Christmas light switch on. It was noted that Barnt Green's Christmas lights were partly funded by the village businesses and that last year Thomas Bros Funeral Directors, Alvechurch had agreed to contribute towards our Christmas tree in the village centre. The Clerk advised councillors that Steve Hopkins who puts up our lights had advised that we would need new lights for the Christmas tree this year and the Clerk had been provided with some costs. Cllr Humphries advised that he and the Clerk would be meeting again with Cheryl Walsh imminently.

Cllrs Wise, Lambert, Willetts, Van der Plank and Humphries would form the working group
ACTION POINT: The Clerk to organise a working group meeting. **Cllr Willetts** to confer with Thomas Bros Funeral Directors regarding their contribution to this year's Christmas Tree.

17/059 To Receive an Update and Consider Next Steps Regarding Phase 2 of the Street Lighting Upgrade Project

Prysmian has advised that they are in the process of completing the works to Phase 2; however there are two lights that are presenting issues: one in someone's front garden but which Prysmian has said they will now liaise with the homeowner to gain access to the street light. The other involves concerns regarding a damaged wall leaning against the street light. The office is working with Prysmian regarding the best way forward on this then we will write to the homeowner regarding the matter. In the meantime, Prysmian is carrying out the work on the other street lights identified as part of Phase 2.

17/060 Committees/Sub Committees/Working Parties

1. Reports From Committees and Minutes Circulated Since Last Meeting

a. To Receive an Update From the Youth, Sport and Recreation Committee to Include:

i. To Receive an Update From the Wiggin Development Working Group and to Consider the Consultation Process

The Clerk advised that a consultation has been carried out at Picnic in the Park and at the Middle School in July. The Library has confirmed that we can post our Consultation there. The next steps are: review the consultation results from the Middle School, put together the boards to go up in the Library and the Lounge. The Library will have a poster up for two weeks and the Lounge was agreed would be a one day consultation.

ii. To Consider Advertising the Football Pitch at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields to Football Club

Pete Gwilliam has advised the Clerk that due to the lack of facilities at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields his football teams no longer wish to use the pitches. The Clerk advised Councillors that the Parish Council has received plenty of enquiries regarding our pitches. It was **agreed** that the next steps would be considered at the next Youth, Sport and Recreation Committee Meeting. It was noted that this pitch was suitable for players up to 9 years old only.

ACTION POINT: Clarify if the toilets at the Cricket Club would be available to players using the pitch

b. To Receive an Update on the Planning Meetings Held on 7th August and 4th September 2017

Please refer to Minutes for these meetings that can be viewed on the Parish Council website or at the Parish Council office.

c. To Receive an Update on the Highways Meeting Held on 9th August 2017

Councillors were advised that in particular, ongoing discussions had taken place regarding traffic calming measures in and out of the village. Highways has assured us that data cables will be laid at each end of the village and the TRO is being completed to reduce the speed along The Holloway.

d. To Receive an Update on the Finance & Resources Meeting Held on 31st July 2017

Please refer to Minutes for this meeting that can be viewed on the Parish Council website or at the Parish Council office.

e. To Consider the Vacancies on Planning, Youth, Sport and Recreation, Finance & Resources Committees and the Representative Vacancy on Campaign to Protect Rural England and the Lounge Committees

Cllr Humphries asked Councillors to let the office know if anyone would like to take up a role on any of the above Committees. The Clerk advised that the Assistant Clerk would particularly appreciate an additional member on the Planning Committee for quorum purposes.

f. To Receive an Update From the Health Working Group

It was noted that Councillors Cypher, Freeman, Humphries and Lambert and Ann Overs meet periodically to review health matters in the Parish.

At the latest meeting, Councillors had discussed that Northwood and Alvechurch had made itself a single entity by deregistering the Alvechurch Practice with the CQC. It was also noted at the last meeting that the CCGs are being reorganised under the Sustainability and Transformation Plans and concerns were raised regarding

Alvechurch, which is in Worcestershire but faces into a practice that is in Birmingham and how these proposed changes to CCGs might affect Alvechurch Practice patients. Cllr Cypher took away the one action point from the meeting which was to write to Mr Trickett, CCGs Accountable Officer to raise our concerns about this together with the fact that Alvechurch residents will attend different practices in the area and receive different services to patients at Alvechurch Practice. It was also noted that the Practice still doesn't have a PPG.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow a resident to comment on the ongoing issues with getting an appointment at the Practice, the PPG and also concerns about the Practice's request to use the Patients Forum on Facebook as a communications method.

Standing Orders were then resumed.

Councillors were advised that the Parish Council can only get involved in Health Matters at a Neighbourhood Plan level. It was queried whether Worcestershire County Council had any input in Health Matters and it was advised that their responsibilities in this area relate to social care only; a GP's practice is a private business. From a Neighbourhood Plan perspective, it is hoped that if Alvechurch Parish has to accommodate another 200 houses between now and 2030, that we'd like to also get a new medical centre to accommodate the increased number of patients.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to chase up a response to the letter sent to Mr Trickett

ACTION POINT: The Health Working Group to invite District Cllr Van der Plank to their next meeting

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

This item was deferred.

ACTION POINT: Cllr Humphries to invite PC Simon Albutt to our next meeting to provide Council with his views on this matter

2. To Receive Updates From Outside Bodies:

i. To Receive a CALC Update

Councillors were advised that the next meeting to be held on 13th September and is a make or break meeting as recently attendance numbers have dropped and it has been asked if Bromsgrove Parish Councils wish to continue with the CALC meetings. Cllrs Humphries and Cypher will be chairing the next meeting. It was noted that Alvechurch Parish Council has benefitted from a lot of advice from CALC over the last two years.

17/061 To Consider Residents' Complaints and Queries, As Received:

a. A Resident's Email to the Safer Neighbourhood Team, Copied Into the Parish Council, Regarding an Alleged Dumped Car on Snake Lane

It was noted that the car was later moved.

b. Letter to The Village Magazine, Copied Into the Parish Council, Regarding Horse Ownership and Planning Obligations in the Parish

Councillors had been provided with a copy of the letter and notes from Rowney Green Association, sent to the Parish Council by the resident in question and with the Association's permission to distribute to Councillors. In addition, the resident had since emailed the Clerk to ask for Parish Council & district support in a series of matters. Councillors debated the matter including whether there should be more horses and fewer cars on the road, the lack of hygiene concerns relating to horse poo, the long history of horse ownership in Rowney Green and the need for a road sweeper versus the solution of a good rain storm and the traffic calming measure that horses bring to roads. It was suggested that the Parish Council could ask Highways for a Horse sign to be erected. Nonetheless, Councillors were minded to discuss the matters raised with the District Council and District Cllr Van der Plank asked to be included in these discussions as well.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk and Cllr Humphries to compile a response to the resident.

- c. A Resident's Request to Repaint the Bench at the top of Snake Lane/Bear Hill
The Clerk advised that Cllr Helmore had taken some pictures of the bench for Council and that the Clerk had inspected the bench which seemed in good condition overall but in need of having the lichen sandpapered off and repainting to maintain it.
ACTION POINT: The Clerk to ask Stuart Elder to quote to repaint the bench

- d. A Resident's Concerns Regarding A Damaged Tree on the Verge, Ash Lane, Hopwood

The Clerk advised that the office had sent a request to Bromsgrove District Council to send their Tree Officer out to inspect it and Cllr Smith confirmed that they had already done so and had confirmed that it is a diseased tree and it will be taken out.

- e. A Resident's Request for a Street Light to be Reinstated on Ash Lane

Councillors advised that there used to be a light in situ years ago but it had been sited very close to the road and it was taken out. Concerns were raised that reinstating a street light might be contrary to Parish Council's longstanding policy but it was felt that it related to installing new lights whereas this was replacing a former light. Cllr Smith confirmed that he had spoken to other residents on Ash Lane who had confirmed that they would support the light being reinstated as there are only three "dim" lights on Ash Lane.

ACTION POINT: The Assistant Clerk to ask Prysman to quote to reinstate this light and then for Council to consider whether to include in Phase 3 of our Parish Street Lighting Upgrade

- f. Residents Concerns Regarding the Closure of the gates at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

It was agreed that Councillors had reviewed this matter at the beginning of the Meeting.

- g. Resident's Concern Regarding Illegal Parking in the Disabled Spaces in the Village

It was noted that the matter had been raised with the Parking Enforcement Officer who had advised that additional patrols were taking place in Alvechurch at the moment.

17/062 Around the Parish

Due to time constraints, this item was deferred.

17/063 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.

17/064 To Consider Financial Arrangements With Regards To The Knotweed Eradication At The Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields, Alvechurch

Councillors were advised that Cllr Smith and the Clerk had recently met with the contractor treating the knotweed on the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields. Councillors considered next steps regarding the financial arrangements regarding the treatment.

17/065 To Consider Contractual Arrangements With Regards To The Allotments, Alvechurch

At this point in the meeting Councillors Wise and Wallis declared a personal interest in this matter. Councillors were updated on contractual arrangements regarding the allotments.

17/066 To Receive an Update on the Grounds Maintenance Tendering Process and to Consider Setting Up a Working Group For The Process

The Clerk updated Councillors on the Grounds Maintenance Tendering process. Cllr Humphries will assist the Clerk with the opening of the Tenders on 3rd October at 2pm. Furthermore, Cllrs Humphries and Smith with the Clerk will review tenders received in advance of the next Youth Sports and Recreation Committee Meeting.

17/067 Date and time of next meeting: The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday 9th October 2017 at 7pm at Hopwood Community Centre, Redditch Road, Hopwood.

This meeting ended at 10.10pm

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

DRAFT