

ALVECHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

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Clerk – Tammy Williams

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

HELD MONDAY 12th MARCH 2018 AT 7.00PM

AT HOPWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE, REDDITCH ROAD, HOPWOOD

17/147 Present: Councillors A Humphries (Chairman), M Ball, R Chima, J Cypher, P Freeman, S Lambert, N Wise, A Smith, M Worrall & A Willetts

In attendance: Tammy Williams (Clerk), District Councillor K Van der Plank, Sally Oldaker (The Village), District/County Cllr C Hotham, PC Simon Albutt, Ron Rand and 5 members of the public

17/148 Apologies for Absence

Cllr A Helmore (accepted)
PC M Hyder (accepted)
District Cllr K Taylor (accepted)
Cllr T Wallis (accepted)

17/149 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Humphries (17/153b & 17/153c)
Cllr Lambert (17/153b)

17/150 To Receive Comments From Parishioners Regarding the Greater Birmingham HMA Strategic Growth Study and to Consider the Parish Council's Response to Bromsgrove District Council

Cllr Humphries addressed Councillors and the members of the public in attendance regarding the HMA Study which has recently been made public by Bromsgrove District Council. It was noted that this is just a study and doesn't constitute a policy for either Worcestershire County Council, Bromsgrove District Council or Alvechurch Parish Council. Members of the public are expected to be asked to express their views to Bromsgrove District Council at a public consultation in the summer.

Cllr Cypher advised that he had read the entire study as well as drawing from the presentation slides provided by Bromsgrove District Council (the presentation was attended by Cllrs Humphries and Smith). Pertinent points included:

- It was noted that 14 Councils had commissioned the report.
- The study identified housing needs not just for Birmingham but for other areas as well
- It identifies land available by 2030 and 2036 and the housing shortfalls at those times
- Currently projected housing densities are 30 houses per hectare in Bromsgrove District; but that might have to go up to 50 houses per hectare
- There is a need to identify what other land is available in the Green Belt i.e Brownfield sites

- The report suggests potential sites in areas of south Bromsgrove, Wythall, Hagley and a new settlement between Alvechurch and Barnt Green that might accommodate significant numbers of new houses.
- It was noted that there are reservoirs, Hopwood dingle, habitats and biodiversity in the area between Alvechurch and Barnt Green and that will preclude houses being built near these sites.
- This study has been carried out before Bromsgrove District Council has completed its Green Belt Review and Alvechurch Parish has adopted its Neighbourhood Plan
- District Cllr Hotham stated that District Councillors expected that a headline number of 61,000 houses would need to be built on the edges of Birmingham; the identification of specific sites was not expected.
- District Cllr Hotham stated that the Green Belt Review will be member led and after that is completed the feasibility of the report should be reviewed.
- District Cllr Hotham raised concerns that by having a consultation in the summer it will give credence to the report and that the report is unhelpful because it imposes sites rather than just suggesting numbers. A Parish Councillor agreed and suggested that talking about the study encourages it to become reality.
- District Cllr Hotham noted that the land around Alvechurch Parish is “top notch green belt”
- It was noted that Sajid Javid MP had suggested that the District should be asking other districts to take on a duty to co-operate to build some of the required houses, such as in Kidderminster and Wychavon. It was also noted that Redditch was designed to take double the number of houses that it has already.
- It was queried what Birmingham was doing to build new houses at the moment and it was noted that there are new houses being built in Sutton Coldfield.
- A councillor added that Birmingham believes that it has enough land to build 51,000 new houses but this leaves a shortfall of 37,000 houses; this might be because of density. Sixty-five per cent of all houses needed can be built on brownfield sites but because of numbers that’s why building on green belt is being proposed.
- It was noted that there are two train stations close together (Barnt Green and Alvechurch) but if all these houses are to be built then capacity on the trains will also need to be an increased and people will need to drive to the stations and where will they park?
- A Parish Councillor stated that the Parish Council should for now, concentrate on its Neighbourhood Plan, which doesn’t recognise development sites, and wait for Bromsgrove District Council to react. Once Bromsgrove District Council has definite housing numbers needed, then the Neighbourhood Plan can be reviewed.

17/151 Reports from Alvechurch Ward, District & County Councillors

a) District Cllr K Van der Plank

Cllr Van der Plank stated that the most pertinent item was the Growth Study. No further reports were provided.

b) County Cllr C Hotham

County Cllr updated Councillors of the following:

- Worcestershire County Council (WCC) had passed its budget;
- Sadly, WCC’s Interim Chief Executive, Steve Stewart had unexpectedly passed away
- A meeting between County Cllr Hotham, Cllr Humphries and County Cllr Ken Pollock regarding issues at Alvechurch Train Station had been held.
- A consultation letter has been sent to residents on Bear Hill, Alvechurch in respect of Residents Parking Permits. Unfortunately, these have been sent to the wrong address. It was noted that a copy wasn’t sent to the Clerk to the Parish Council.

District Cllr K Van der Plank left the meeting at 19.46

17/152 To Approve The Minutes:

a) To Approve the Minutes of the Previous Meeting Held on 12/02/18

The Minutes were **agreed** and signed by Cllr Humphries

b) To Approve Amendments to The Minutes of The Parish Council Meeting Held on 11th September 2017

In referring to the Interests Declared at the September 2017 meeting, it was noted that the minute reference that related to the Agenda Item where Councillors declared an interest was quoted originally as 17/066, when it should have been 17/065. Councillors approved the amendment and Cllr Humphries wrote the amendment on to the Minutes, signed and dated it.

17/153 Clerk's report including Matters Arising From Previous Meetings and Emergency Expenditure...

a. To note that Bromsgrove District Council will clean the bus shelter in front of the Red Lion Public House

The Clerk advised Councillors that a monthly clean of the bus shelter in front of The Red Lion will now be undertaken by Bromsgrove District Council's Environmental Service team. It is recommended that a waste pipe is installed at the back to allow rainwater and their waste water to drain out. The Clerk advised Council that she will look into getting some quotes for consideration in due course.

b. Update on the supply issue with certain street light replacement bulbs & the Phase 2 & 3 Street Lighting Upgrades

i. Supply Issue

The Clerk reported that a meeting will be held between Prysmian and Cllr Humphries and the Clerk to receive an update on supply issues with SOX lights.

ii. Phase 2

An instruction has been sent to Western Power to disconnect and remove the street light at the bottom of Latimer Road. The Clerk confirmed that the street lights identified as requiring an upgrade on Snake Lane and in The Gaunts were upgraded on 7th March.

iii. Phase 3

With regards to Phase 3, Prysmian has confirmed that they have been granted permission to dig up the verge on Ash Lane to investigate the state of the cables to potentially reinstate the former street light there. Once this has been completed then Prysmian will quote for our Phase 3 Upgrade of street lighting.

c. Update on the referral of the proposed new dog bin at Lodge Farm Lane to Bromsgrove District Council

The Clerk confirmed that the photographic and written evidence of the discarded dog poo bags around Lodge Farm Lane had been emailed to District Cllr Taylor and he will ascertain BDC will supply a dog poo bin in the vicinity.

d. Update on the Parish Council's feedback to Worcestershire County Council regarding their Proposed Prohibition of Waiting at any Time Order on Station Road and Around its Junction With Latimer Road

After the last meeting, the Clerk emailed a response to Worcestershire County Council as follows:

Prior to considering the proposed Prohibition of Waiting at any Time Order at Alvechurch Parish Council's February Parish Council Meeting, directly affected residents were provided with a copy of the Order to enable them to review and comment accordingly. At the Parish Council's February Meeting, Councillors considered residents comments received, as well as their experience of the issue and concerns raised with the Parish Council previously. The Parish Council agreed in general terms with the Prohibition of Waiting at any Time

Order however it would also ask Worcestershire County Council to take a careful look at the consequences of this Order on parking around the area and in conjunction with a Station Travel Plan and requests from some local residents for permit parking.

e. Update on the proposed attendance of the Safer Roads Partnership at a Parish Council Meeting in respect of their monitoring of speeds on the A441 through Hopwood

The Clerk advised that this had been deferred to a future Parish Council meeting in the early summer.

f. Update on the meeting held with Ruth Bamford, Bromsgrove District Council and Sally Everest, Worcestershire County Council regarding the traffic management issues associated with the Weights Lane Housing Development, Redditch

The main points of the meeting were summarised as follows:

- The pre-planning assessment of the traffic management by Highways Engineers was not robust enough
- Onsite traffic management was made more complicated by issues with installing utilities to the site which involved more work within the road
- Temporary traffic light management and the use of spotters by the contractors was poor
- Worcestershire County Council is looking to employ a specialist officer to look at developments like this in the future
- Worcestershire County Council has apologised.

g. To note the date of the Internal Audit review for the 2017/18 financial year

The Clerk advised that the Internal Auditor will be undertaking the Internal Audit on 27th April 2018.

h. To note the Clerk's response to a resident's queries regarding a Parish Councillor's Declaration of Interest in Planning matters

A resident contacted the Parish Council to enquire about a Parish Councillor's interests in respect of some Planning applications. The Clerk has responded to the resident. Councillors should refer to the SLCC flowchart for guidance on declaring interests or speak to the Clerk if there are any concerns.

i. To note the change to the Meeting Schedule in May 2018 for the Planning and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council dates

Due to the bank holiday at the beginning of the month, the Planning Meeting has been moved to **Wednesday 9th May**. The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will be on **Monday 14th May**. Please can councillors update their diaries accordingly.

j. To note that there was a leak at Rowney Green Pavilion and to receive an update on the plumbing at Hopwood Community Centre

The caretaker reported that there was a leak emanating from the pipework in the kitchen at the Pavilion following the bad weather. The clerk has arranged for Wythall Heating Services to fix it on Friday (will be done by the meeting). This constitutes emergency expenditure. Also, the Finance Committee considered quotations to bring the external tap and the disabled toilet taps up to date with current legislation and to install a water heater for the ladies and the disabled toilets because the water heaters in there no longer produce hot water and finally a temperature limiter to the hot water produced. Wythall Heating Services are booked in for 30th April to 1st May.

k. To note a referral to Worcestershire County Council regarding the state of the grass verges along George Road, Alvechurch following residents' complaints

Following comments on Facebook and a direct request from a resident to us regarding the verges on one side of George Road where there is little off-street parking, the Assistant Clerk has referred this to WCC for remediation and consideration

l. Update regarding the payment of Councillors' Expenses

Please can all Councillors wishing to submit an expenses claim do so by Friday 16th March for a cheque to be raised at the F&R Meeting

m. Update on Outstanding items

Outstanding Action Points from previous meetings include:

- The Clerk's letter to the proprietor of the Red Lion Public House regarding fly-posting on their fence adjoining the entrance to Tanyard Lane Car Park,
- The provision of a map of to Cllrs Ball, Smith and Humphries to carry out a review of our lighting stock
- CALC Minutes to be circulated to all councillors
- Arrangement of the Christmas Lights Committee Meeting
- The Assistant Clerk asking WCC to advertise road closures on social media

17/154 Finance & Administration

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

The Clerk updated Councillors on the Invoices listed. Councillors approved the payments and Cllr Humphries signed the cheque list. The cheques were signed after the meeting.

b. To consider the Parish Council's decision to pay a grant to St Laurence Churchyard Group following the recent receipt of NALC's Legal Topic Note L01-18 – Financial Assistance to the Church

The Parish Council had previously approved the payment of a £500 grant to St Laurence Churchyard Group in the 2018/19 financial year, as it has done for many years. However, since making that decision NALC has issued a Topic Note regarding Financial Assistance to the Church which had been sent out in the CALC Newsletter on 1st February 2018. In essence, the summary of the Topic Note advises that NALC believes that the 1894 Act which states Parish Councils can't make contributions for anything that relates to Church property, land or buildings overrides Section 137 of the 1972 Act that states that Parish Councils can; this is because the 1894 Act provides a Specific Restriction and Specific Restrictions override General Powers which is what the 1972 Act provides Parish Councils. However, the summary in the Topic Note states that the Government disagrees with this and it feels that restrictions of the 1894 Act do not override the provisions in later Acts of Parliament which enable Parish Councils to make contributions to churchyards. As there is uncertainty around this area, NALC asks Parish Councils to consider whether it is prudent to take a course of action that it cannot be certain is legally valid? CALC also advises that in addition to going through an expensive and time consuming court action to clarify this, the External Auditor *could* ask us to confirm what grants we've made and if they were of an opinion that we shouldn't have made the contribution then they *could* make an advisory note against the accounts or they *could* qualify the accounts and in the worst case scenario raise a Court Order to rectify the accounts.

Councillors debated the Topic Note and it was felt that the lack of clarity left us with a dilemma therefore Councillors asked the Clerk to contact Worcestershire CALC to clarify who exactly in government stated that they disagreed with NALC's legal view. It was also agreed that this matter could be raised at the St Laurence Church's upcoming PCC meeting.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to speak to CALC for further clarification and bring this back to the May Parish Council Meeting.

c. To consider a resident's request to paint the street light column 1 on Snake Lane and to consider the Parish Council's stance on the colour of its street lighting columns as and when they are replaced in the future

The Clerk advised Councillors that a member of the public had requested that street light column 1 on Snake Lane be painted green as per the Parish Design Statement and also in keeping with the street lights further down Snake Lane and on Tanyard Lane. The Clerk advised Council that the green street lights on Snake Lane and Tanyard Lane were Highways lights owned by Worcestershire County Council; the Parish Council's lights were grey. Cllr Smith advised Council that the Parish Design Statement states that fencing has to fit in with the looped look of fencing in the village centre, that the village centre itself has to be a soft looking centre and that street lights should be cowled but the Design Statement doesn't mention what colour street lights should be. It was noted that the Neighbourhood Plan documents will need to be reviewed to add finer details and this could be discussed

and potentially added at a later date. Councillors debated this particular request and a Councillor proposed that this light should not be painted green as it sets a precedent that any or every Parish Council street light should be painted and this is a financial commitment that the Parish Council wouldn't be able to meet. Six councillors agreed, 3 councillors abstained and 1 councillor disagreed. **The motion was therefore carried not to paint this street light green.** Currently all future street lights outside the village Conservation Area should be grey; the Conservation Area would be an exception but the matter of the colour of future street lights could be debated again at the May Parish Council Meeting when the next street lighting upgrade will be considered.

d. To Note Progress On General Data Protection Regulation Requirements

It was noted that The Clerk will attend the CALC Meeting on 14th March with Cllrs Cypher and Humphries where there will be an update on GDPR from Bromsgrove District Council

e. To consider adopting a Complaints Procedure based on the CALC's Model Complaints Procedure

The Clerk provided Councillors with a Complaints Procedure. Council **agreed unanimously** to adopt this.

f. To consider the Tendering document for the new play equipment at The Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

Bromsgrove District Council had provided the Parish Council with a Scoring Matrix for the forthcoming Tender for new play equipment at The Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields. Councillors debated the weighting for the scoring for each category. The following scoring was proposed:

Price	15%
Functional Value	40%
Product Value/Range	20%
Added Value	5%
Warranty/Guarantee	20%

9 Councillors **agreed** and one Councillor **abstained**. The motion was carried.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to forward the agreed Scoring Matrix to Bromsgrove District Council.

g. To consider quotations received for undertaking a survey of the trees and also quotations received to pollard the Willow tree at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

Three quotations to pollard the Willow Tree and four quotations to carry out a tree survey at the Wiggin were received.

With regards to pollarding the Willow tree, from the quotations received Councillors debated whether to instruct one of two companies on a cost basis: 5 Councillors voted to instruct Hopwood Tree Services and 4 Councillors voted to instruct the other company. It was therefore **agreed** that Hopwood Tree Services would be instructed to pollard the willow tree at £550 + VAT.

With regards to carrying out a tree survey, again there were two companies' quotes in particular that Councillors debated. Eight Councillors were in favour of instructing Acorn Group and 1 Councillor was in favour of instructing the other company. It was therefore **agreed** that Acorn Group would be instructed to undertake tree surveys at the Wiggin at a cost of £1470 + VAT.

17/155 Committees/Sub Committees/Working Parties

1. Reports from Committees and Minutes Circulated Since the Last Meeting

a) To receive an update from the Youth, Sports & Recreation Committee Meeting held on 26th February 2018

It was noted that the Youth, Sport and Recreation Meeting was well attended by members of the public. In particular, Finlay Church's Memorial Garden was discussed and it was noted that Phillip Aubrey was undertaking the planting either side of the paddling pool and that Andy de Comyn had installed the stepping stones. Penny Church had suggested an artificial memorial tree with lovelocks attached. Penny Church and Andy de Comyn to provide the Parish Council with further details. Please see Minutes for full details of this meeting.

b) To receive an update on the Planning Meeting held on 5th March 2018

It was noted that five plans had been reviewed and the Parish Council had objected to one of those plans, the proposal from Hopwood Services as it contravenes green belt policy. See Planning Minutes for further details on the plans considered at this meeting.

c) To receive an update from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group regarding the draft Plan's conformity requirements

It was noted that the Steering Group is awaiting advices from Bromsgrove District Council and then the Parish Council will then be able to formally submit the Neighbourhood Plan to Bromsgrove District Council.

d) To receive an update from the Hopwood Play Equipment Working Group

It was noted that this Working Group was comprised of local Hopwood Mums as well as Parish Councillors. Currently the mums are working on a survey of local people of what equipment they would like to see at the Playing Fields.

ACTION POINT: The Responsible Financial Officer to advise the best ways for any donations to the fund to be made

e) To receive an update from the Picnic in the Park (PIP) Committee to include:

i. To receive an update on the accounts from the 2017 Picnic in the Park

Cllr Wise provided Council with copies of the audited accounts and the audit sheet. Councillors had an opportunity to review these documents and there were no queries from Council on the accounts. Cllr Wise advised that £650 had been raised for The Lounge which equated to £100 more than last year.

f) To consider a request from the PIP Committee to contribute some of the profits from the 2017 PIP event to the Finlay Church Memorial Garden at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

Councillors **agreed unanimously** that up to £650 could be contributed to the Finlay Church Memorial Garden. The family had expressed a wish to purchase a bench.

g) To consider the PIP Committee's request to make contributions from some of the profits of the 2018 Picnic in the Park to local causes rather than for the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

Councillors **agreed** unanimously that the profits from the 2018 Picnic in the Park could be split as follows: 50% to The Lounge; 50% to the Hopwood Play Equipment fund. It was suggested by a Councillor that 50% of the profits made should be donated to "Children related activities" in the future.

ACTION POINT: Cllr Wise to advise the PIP Committee that 50% of profits should be donated to Children related activities in the future (the other 50% will continue to be donated to The Lounge.)

Cllr Wise also updated Council that the PIP Committee would like to have a Birds of Prey display at the event. Councillors **agreed** to this subject to receipt of Public Liability Insurance.

17/156 Around the Parish - to Consider Developments and Issues Raised by Councillors Present as They Relate to Hopwood, Rowney Green, Bordesley and Alvechurch

a. Bordesley

None raised.

b. Hopwood

A Councillor advised that the No Right Turn sign at the end of Ash Lane on to the A441 is broken. It was also requested that a roundel notifying drivers that they cannot turn right on to the A441 also be painted on to the road.

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to raise this with County Highways

c. Alvechurch

Cllr Worrall stated the following:

- There is still fly-posting around the village
- Investigations are still underway about drainage issues on Branden Road
- Local residents have expressed gratitude about the footway improvements between Willowbrook and Birmingham Road. There remain some raised manholes along that stretch and Cllr Worrall will raise this with County Cllr Hotham

- Cllrs Worrall and Humphries continue to push for improvements to the station car park; it was noted that there are quite a few stakeholders who all have the same interest in the station car park and it is hoped that West Midlands Railway needs to co-ordinate it.

d. Rowney Green

It was noted that PC Simon Albutt came to the Rowney Green Association to raise points about crime and crime prevention in the village. PC Simon Albutt will also be in attendance at the History Day at Rowney Green Peace Hall. There have been two burglaries of late and since then a Whatsapp group has been set up to report suspicious circumstances with other residents. This was considered to be a prime example of communities helping themselves with the whole village coming together to report any concerns.

It was also noted that the Rowney Green Association had asked the Parish Council for extra grit bins and snow clearance and Councillors expressed that this would be considered in the next funding round. It was also noted that a farmer assisted with snow clearance around Rowney Green and a Councillor suggested asking Worcestershire County Council's Highways department to arrange for this to be done in Lower Rowney Green

ACTION POINT: The Clerk to add increasing the number of grit bins in Rowney Green to the Finance & Resources Agenda for consideration. **The Clerk** to ask Highways if Lower Rowney Green could also be included in their snow clearance arrangements.

17/157 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.

17/158 To receive an update on the Staffing Committee Meeting held on 16th February 2018

Councillors considered the current staffing arrangements for the office.

17/159 Date and time of next meeting: the next meeting will be the Annual Parish Meeting on 16th April 2018 at 7pm at The Baptist Church, Alvechurch

This meeting ended at 9.53pm

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