

**ALVECHURCH PARISH COUNCIL**  
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Clerk – Tammy Williams

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**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD MONDAY 14<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2019 AT 7 PM**

**AT HOPWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE REDDITCH ROAD HOPWOOD**

**18/126 Present:** Councillors A Humphries (Chairman), M Ball, J Cypher, P Freeman, A Helmore, S Lambert, T Wallis, M Worrall, A Willetts & N Wise

**In attendance:** Tammy Williams (Clerk), Richard Peach (The Village), District & County Cllr C Hotham & one member of the public

**18/127 Apologies for Absence:**  
District Cllrs K Taylor & K Van der Plank  
Cllr R Chima

**18/128 Declarations of Interest:**  
None noted

**18/129 To Receive an Update on the Neighbourhood Plan Referendum That Took Place on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

Cllr Humphries thanked Cllr A Smith and everyone who has helped and guided the Neighbourhood Plan process. It was noted that the outcome of the Referendum was a resounding result and the turnout for the Referendum, which was 36.6% of the electorate, was bigger than the average turnout at the local elections. The Neighbourhood Plan will need to be formally adopted by Bromsgrove District Council in February. It was noted that it would be advisable to hold hard copies of the Neighbourhood Plan and Design Statements in the Parish Council Office for purchase.

**ACTION POINT:** Consider an appropriate charge for these documents.

Thanks were expressed to Cllr Humphries for compiling a press release following the Referendum and to Richard Peach (Village Magazine) for notifying the Parish Council about the proposed resurfacing of Tanyard Lane car park on the day of the Referendum.

**ACTION POINT:** The Parish Council should ask for updates from District Councillors regarding the application of Alvechurch Parish's Neighbourhood Plan in the planning process.

**ACTION POINT:** Alvechurch Parish Council's Planning Committee Members/Office Staff should be well acquainted with the Neighbourhood Plan for future reference in the planning process

**ACTION POINT:** Alvechurch Parish Council's Planning Committee Members/Office Staff should review Decision Notices for references made to the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **18/130 Reports from Alvechurch Ward, District & County Councillors**

### **i. District Councillor Kate Van der Plank**

The Clerk read out District Councillor Kate Van der Plank's report to Council in her absence: "Firstly, huge congratulations to the whole Parish council and the NP steering group not only for the great result in our referendum but also for such a well executed project. You successfully managed to engage the community in inputting to the plan over several years - and to be the first Parish Council in the district to do this. Then, despite our poll being on a cold, damp January, you managed to achieve well over the national average turn out for NP referendums which is an illustration of the effective way you engaged the community in this whole initiative. Great job and congratulations to all of you

Update on other work:

- I have had an increase in complaints from people about pavement parking. I was particularly concerned about an elderly person who needs to use a mobility aid, who some days is unable to leave the house because the pavements around her are blocked. The negative impact of loneliness in the elderly is now widely recognised so if pavement parking is contributing to older residents not being able to leave the house then I think it's something we should be looking at urgently. I'd like to ask if this could be given more thought by the Parish Council and by our county councillor and some actions agreed

- I am still chasing up the request I put in for extra litter bins, including one at the top of Lodge Farm Lane, back in October. I have now elevated this to BDC management as the slowness in response is unacceptable

- I have written to the leader of the council highlighting our concern that the Tanyard Lane carpark was booked for resurfacing on the day of the referendum. I have asked the leader what the current processes are and what improvements can be made to ensure join up across BDC departments and better communications to Parish Councils about planned work. I should get a response at the next council meeting on 23rd and will feed back to you

- I have still had no response from Network Rail following the meeting we had about the car park, despite me writing to them twice now and sending copies of their previous emails promising to contribute to the works. It is very disappointing they haven't even acknowledged the communication and I am considering next steps"

District and County Councillor Charlie Hotham arrived at 19.22.

### **ii. County Councillor C Hotham**

- The Worcestershire Royal Hospital is running at 125% occupancy. Safe levels are considered to be 85% occupancy. A connecting bridge at the hospital is costing millions with no timescale for completion. Operations are being undertaken at The Alexandra Hospital. The ambulance service is stretched.
- Worcestershire County Council has reviewed its budget figures and the County Council now needs to save £50m from an available £100m budget (the remaining £200m budget relates to Children's and Adult Services and is therefore ring-fenced.)
- Massive savings need to be made from front-line services including Library services.
- There is no appetite at Worcestershire County Council to pursue a Unitary Authority.

## **18/131 To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

The Clerk stated that some Councillors had noted some typing errors in the minutes but these were non-material and had been updated accordingly. A further query had been received but the Clerk checked her notes and spoke to the District Councillor concerned and it was agreed that the Minutes were correct. The December 2018 minutes were then **approved** by Council and signed by the Chairman.

**18/132 Clerk's report: Including actions completed since last meeting, report of complaints, emergency expenditure and matters arising from previous meeting, including:**

a. Update on Highways Matters

A meeting between the County Council and Parish Council representatives remains outstanding.

b. Update on the Emergency Plan

Following a meeting between Cllrs Cypher and Lambert, the Clerk and Rebecca Pritchett (North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies & Resilience Manager), Cllr Cypher has updated the Emergency Plan and the Clerk will email Councillors with a copy to review.

c. Update on the Finlay Church Memorial Garden

The Clerk has written to Penny Church and Andy De Comyn regarding Council's request that the lovelock tree undergoes a safety inspection prior to installation

d. Update on the Letter to BDHT Regarding Parking Concerns on Newbourne Hill, Rowney Green and Also to Note a Resident's Complaint Regarding Parking Issues on Newbourne Hill

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council, to date, has not received a response from a letter sent on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018 to the Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust regarding the impact of parking in the Newbourne Hill area of Rowney Green when the garages are replaced with a new bungalow. The Parish Council will chase up a response with the intention of arranging a meeting with BDHT about this.

Also, a Newbourne Hill resident complained to Cllr Smith, which was then passed on to the Clerk, regarding inconsiderate parking on Newbourne Hill by users of the football pitches.

The resident noted that residents are reluctant to go out on the weekend because they can't park near to their homes on their return and residents are fed up by the inconvenience. This will be noted on a future agenda for discussion.

e. Update on the Station Car Park

A meeting has been arranged for 30<sup>th</sup> January between Cllrs Humphries and Worrall and Worcestershire County Council to review the feasibility study on the station car park. Also, an agent regarding land close to the station has contacted the Parish Council, but the Parish Council has advised that a response will be issued once the County's Feasibility Study results have been received.

f. Update on Playground Equipment Safety Checks at Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields

The training from Sutcliffes regarding play equipment safety inspections has been rearranged for next week. They will also be replacing some play equipment parts which are showing wear and tear.

g. Outstanding Items: ROSPA inspection of Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Budget against Expenditure report, Tender exercise for street lighting, ROSPA Inspection, signage costs, tree quotations

Cllr Humphries advised that he had just chased up the letter to BDHT and had received an apology for the delay in responding but the Asset Manager and Chief Executive will be in touch shortly.

**18/133 Finance & Administration**

a. To Receive A List Of Invoices For Payment And Consider Any Exceptional Items

The Cheque List was reviewed, approved and signed by the Chairman of the Parish Council.

b. To Consider Quotations to Carry Out Water Safety Risk Assessments

The Clerk advised that it was nearly two years since the risk assessments were completed at Hopwood Community Centre and Rowney Green Pavilion. The guidelines state that these should be repeated every 2 years or if significant plumbing modifications had been undertaken which was the case at Hopwood Community Centre. A Councillor queried the necessity to use external contractors to compile these reviews and whether it could come under the risk assessments that we have in place already. The Clerk replied that she had

undertaken training and knew that this was a legal requirement. In addition, only a suitably qualified contractor would be able to compile the schematic drawings required, make recommendations, carry out testing if necessary and identify dead legs in the system which can be an issue.

It was noted that Council had committed to pursuing this at the December meeting but the Clerk was outstanding some information at the meeting which precluded making a final decision. The Clerk had provided Council with five quotations in respect of the risk assessment process, costs for testing, annual contract for regular checks and staff training. In the first instance, Council **agreed unanimously, subject to the confirmation of the relevant legislation that necessitates these checks**, that Qube Environmental could undertake risk assessments at Rowney Green Pavilion, Hopwood Community Centre and the office and undertake any necessary testing at a cost of £738 + vat (plus the cost of any testing). Next steps regarding whether to outsource regular checks or undertake them by Council staff will be considered upon receipt of the report and costings from Qube Environmental.

**ACTION POINT: The Clerk** to confirm the legislation relating to Legionella Risk Assessments

**ACTION POINT: The Clerk** to ask other Councils what approach they take to Legionella Risk assessments via the CALC Newsletter

### **18/134 To Consider Arrangements for the Christmas Light Switch On in 2019**

It was noted that the Chairman had contacted the Bromsgrove Town Crier regarding the switch on of Alvechurch Christmas Lights in 2019 and his only remaining date was Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December. The Town Crier hadn't confirmed his rates in his emails.

**ACTION POINT: The Chairman** to clarify any costs associated with the Town Crier switching on the lights and **the Clerk** to add this to a Parish Council agenda for consideration once these costs have been clarified.

**ACTION POINT: The Clerk** to arrange a Christmas Committee meeting.

### **18/135 Committees/Sub Committees/Working Parties**

#### **a. Reports from Committees and minutes circulated since last meeting**

##### **i. To Receive an Update From the Planning Committee Meeting Held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

It was noted that the update from the Planning Committee had been deferred at the December Parish Council meeting therefore this update also related to the 3<sup>rd</sup> December Planning meeting. Council was provided with a brief outline of the types of applications considered (see Minutes for further details). The new Assistant Clerk attended these meetings. It was also noted that there had been an appeal hearing regarding the Land to the South of Karenswood at Hopwood, but this hearing had been adjourned until 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019 due to missing information.

**ACTION POINT: The Assistant Clerk** to request an update from Bromsgrove District Council's Enforcement team regarding Roberts Corner, Alvechurch

##### **ii. To receive an Update from the Alvechurch Library Working Group**

Council was advised that there will now be two separate meetings with County Council representatives regarding the future of Alvechurch Library: one with Alvechurch First and Middle School and another with Alvechurch Parish Council and other key stakeholders. County Cllr Hotham noted that delays in arranging meetings were due to the number of public consultation events taking place across the County, that there was a tacit acceptance that Alvechurch Library should be reclassified as a Tier 3 Library and that we are aiming for it to be further regraded as a Tier 2, as then there wouldn't be much of a notable difference in the service provision. Cllr Hotham also commented that it was good that the meeting with the school is taking place before the meeting with APC and key stakeholders as we would be aware of the financial position. Other comments made included:

- If the County Council should decide to "walk away" from Alvechurch Library then it would likely still be liable for the building costs due to the PFI Contract
- Concerns about Middle School children using the Library unsupervised.

- It was stated at the Members Briefing that there would be an easy read version of the Consultation for children to respond to but this doesn't actually exist.
- Essex County Council has a great online questionnaire for its Library consultation process, whereas Worcestershire County Council's version is considered to be complicated.
- Worcestershire County Council stated that they had consulted with the schools that share the same site as Alvechurch library but during the Consultation session on 21<sup>st</sup> December, school representatives stated that they hadn't been consulted.
- It was queried whether the school had produced a document confirming how it uses the Library
- It was noted by Worcestershire County Councillors at the Community Consultation on 21<sup>st</sup> December at Alvechurch Library that this was the best attended consultation to date.
- Finally, it was noted that Minutes from the Public Consultation Meeting had not been made available yet.

**ACTION POINT:** Chase up Minutes from the Public Consultation at Alvechurch Library

## **b. Reports From Representatives to Outside Bodies**

### **i. To Receive a CALC Update**

It was noted that the December Area Meeting was brilliantly attended and Cllr Steve Colella (Hagley Parish Council) had contacted Parish Councils for feedback on this issue.

Age UK (Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest branch) had attended to advise that they offer a free advice service, home maintenance service, day care, and activities to counteract loneliness amongst elderly residents. This branch of Age UK is keen to talk to Parish Councils.

Gill Lungley spoke on the importance of training and stated that she hoped Parish Councils had a training budget following the May elections.

## **18/136 To Consider Residents' Complaints and Queries, as Received**

### **a) A Request From a Local Business for an Ongoing Parking Issue on Bear Hill, Alvechurch to be Resolved Either by Installing Appropriate Signage to Confirm the Area is Not a Parking Bay or to Convert it Into a Parking Bay to Provide Additional Parking in the Village**

The Clerk advised that there is an area at the bottom of Bear Hill between a yellow hatched area and parking bays in front of the Village Hall. This area is not designated as a parking bay though it looks like one. Residents have received parking tickets for parking there. The Clerk has raised this with Enforcement and is hopeful that this matter is now resolved. The Clerk has also spoken to the Highways Representative to ascertain if this space can be marked out as a parking bay to prevent the issues arising in the future.

## **18/137 Around the Parish – to Consider Developments and Issues Raised by Councillors Present as they Relate to Hopwood, Rowney Green, Bordesley and Alvechurch**

### **a) Hopwood**

The state of the footways from Hopwood to Roberts Corner remain in a shocking state. The Clerk recalled that this had been raised for three years at least and no improvements to these footways had been made in her time in the role and the Clerk suggested that the Parish Council could consider writing to the County Council officially to request that these footways are resurfaced. The Clerk also noted that when June Griffiths was County Councillor she had stated that it was the County's policy to improve footways linking settlements with schools and this route was regularly used by Hopwood residents accessing the First and Middle Schools in Alvechurch.

**ACTION POINT:** The Clerk to add the consideration of writing to the County Council to formally ask for these footways to be properly resurfaced at the February meeting.

A Councillor noted that Council had stated that it would review again the possibility of reinstating a street light at the end of Ash Lane, Hopwood. The Clerk advised that Council had approved a budget for a further upgrade programme in the 2019/20 budget and this street light could be considered again as part of that process.

b) Alvechurch

A Councillor noted that the County was in the process of improving footways in and around Crown Meadow and that it appeared that Alvechurch village gets the attention of County Highways more so than those outside Alvechurch. County Cllr Hotham stated that if Parish Councillors undertook an inspection of local footways and passed on findings of poorly maintained footways to him, he would pass it on to Ian Bamforth at Worcestershire County Council. A Councillor noted that the cut through between Withybed Lane and Withybed Close was in a poor state of repair and had clearly been “patched up” regularly. It was noted that there is a different budget for footway improvements to that of roads.

Thanks were expressed to Bromsgrove District Council for completely tidying up Swans Walk.

**ACTION POINT: Councillors** should pass on any findings of poorly maintained footways to the Clerk.

**ACTION POINT: Cllr Worrall** to contact Cllr Hotham to ascertain the criteria that meant Crown Meadow’s footways were resurfaced over other footways in the parish.

**ACTION POINT: The Clerk** to obtain confirmation of the completion of the knotweed treatment programme on the land to the rear of 1A Birmingham Road.

**ACTION POINT:** Any Councillors/office staff who pass Branden Road, please could they notify Cllr Worrall of any signs of water leaks

**ACTION POINT: The Clerk** to chase up the filling of potholes at the Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields car park.

c. Rowney Green

- i) A Councillor noted that it now transpires that a Highways assessment would need to be undertaken first if the grit bin, which the Parish Council had agreed to fill with grit at the December meeting, was intended to be located on Highways land. An assessment wouldn’t be needed if a location on private land could be found instead.
- ii) A Councillor noted that he had recently spoken with Western Power about BDHT’s planning application to build a bungalow where garages are currently located off Newbourne Hill, Rowney Green. Western Power’s sub-station was incorrectly located on the plans submitted to the planning authority and Western Power didn’t believe that it had received a request to move the sub-station to a different part of the plot. Furthermore, Western Power advised that they have an easement which provides them with a 3-metre-wide access across the site to enable them to access the sub-station with a digger if necessary. It was felt that this would come up when the land is sold for development.

d. Bordesley

Nothing noted.

e. Weatheroak Hill

Nothing noted.

**18/138 To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of agenda item 13 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.**

Council **resolved** to exclude the Press and the Public.

**18/139 To Receive and Consider an Update on Staffing Arrangements**

The Clerk provided Councillors with an update on the staffing arrangements at the office. Cllr Humphries expressed thanks to Cllr Willetts for her assistance with this.

**18/140 Date and time of next meeting:** the next meeting will be the Parish Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 7pm at Hopwood Community Centre, Redditch Road, Hopwood

This meeting ended at 8.54pm.

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