|  |
| --- |
| **The Minutes of the Meeting of the Great Witley and Hillhampton Parish Council**  |
|  |
| **Held via Zoom on 9th September 2020**  |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Present: Chairman**, Cllr F Chapman (FC). |
|  |
|  |
| **In Attendance:** Clerk, J Evans, Cllrs C Shaw (CS), C Dermietzel (CD), A Goodman (AG), C Jones (CJ), B Dallow (BD), A Symonds (AS), and C.Cllr K Pollock (KP) and D.Cllr P Cumming (PC). There were no members of the public present so the meeting would not be adjourned for public questions. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1.** | **Apologies:** Cllrs P Trow (PT) and N Drew (ND) |
|  |  |  |  |
| **2.** | **Declarations of Interest:** None. |
| **3.** | **To consider any Application for a dispensation: None.** |
| **4.** | **Minutes:** Approved and signed, proposed by AG and seconded by CS. |
|  |  |  |  |
| **5.** | **Progress reports:** a:1. FC after many attempts HSBC have confirmed they will send new signatory bank mandate forms through the post. It was agreed that the new four signatories should be FC, BD, AG, and CJ.
2. Earth Heritage Trust have written to say they want to erect some explanation boards regarding the geology of the surrounding area. These will cost in total £5,000 and are looking for financial support from local parish councils. In line with Abberley’s donation it was agreed by a show of hands that £400 would be donated from GWHHPC.
3. Mr Newing’s hedge. Highways have confirmed that it needs cutting back further and more frequently. They will write to Mr Newing regarding this. CJ said he has noticed that it has been cut recently and more than before however it still does not go back to the curb and this still poses a problem for large vehicles. The owners are frequently abroad, and this hedge is left to grow.
4. A new solar panel has been ordered to replace the missing one on the A443 near the Hundred House. ***ACTION:*** the clerk will write to Highways to confirm that they are taking responsibility for the VAS through the village.
5. The noise and nuisance caused by the Pencroft lorries through the village have been reported to Highways. PC reported that an enforcement officer from MHDC will visit the site. It was also reported that glamping yurts have been erected and it was questioned as to their use. Are they for commercial use as the planning application for this has been turned down? BD said there would need to be an application for planning permission to change the use from agriculture to leisure. FC said if they are there for only a couple of weeks then that is allowed but any longer is not. Are they charging a rental rate for their use? BD highlighted that if wet weather returns there will be more concerns about the amount of mud left on the roads by Pencroft. ND will need to pay for road sweeping.

b:1. CS had little to report. The signs warning dog owners to clear up after their dog or they will be fined and ultimately dogs may be banned from Bowen’s Field have been erected. However, it is not thought their presence will deter anyone. It was suggested that park wardens are required to patrol the area. Open Space Legislation confirms an on-the-spot fine of £100 could be issued, or the matter may go to Court in Malvern where the fine would be £1,000. FC said he is happy for CS to appoint 6 marshals. CS said they may not be able to force a £100 on-the-spot fine but could offer a reduced fine of £50 payable to the Parish Council. FC said that photographic evidenced would be required to which CS thought that some people may be reluctant to be photographed and argue against that and the fine. AS asked if we know who is not picking up after their dog? A man with a black dog has been seen and the appearance of new used dog waste bags being left behind. CS said some had been left behind to demonstrate how bad dog fouling has become. This has been done by some well-meaning people, but their methods were deemed to be wrong. It is better to ‘stick and flick’ rather than leaving full plastic bags behind. It has been very unpleasant for mowing the field as the mower cuts and sprays the dog waste around the area which children use and hanging bags in the trees which are in the way of mowing is very unpleasant too. FC asked CS to appoint wardens with identification from the Parish Council and agreed to pay for the high visibility vesbts that would be required which are estimated to cost around £4.50 each.

c.1. The lengthsman continues to be busy.
2. An oak tree branch on the link road opposite the FC’s drive looks as though it may break off and needs attention. Its on land belonging to John Pilling. ***ACTION:*** FC will talk with Mr Pilling regarding this.

d.1. FC has spoken with two planners and a Silk from his old Chambers who all said, ‘wait and see’. MHDC have been consulted by the Government and a meeting on 7th October is planned. The Government want a speedier planning procedure, but no one knows what will happen. PC is concerned by what he has read. At the start people still had a voice but as the numbers of houses developed increases it is feared their voices would be overlooked. They might lose the chance to have a say what is built in green areas. FC said we will not be able to challenge the density or style. PC agrees and said that developers are ‘banking’ land and that if those areas were built on there would be less new housing required. BD asked whether pressure could be put on this land to be used for new developments. The example given was land ‘banked’ by large supermarkets e.g. Tesco, Asda. Also, high streets could be looked at as our shopping habits have changed leaving high streets with empty premises. It was noted that the Hundred House is a case in example. 18 dwellings in total have been developed and 3 years on only 1 is occupied.
 |
|  |  |  |  |
| **6.** | **CALC:** The 2020/21 Pay Award has been agreed and in summary it is an increase of 2.75% with an extra day’s holiday for those with less than 5 years’ service. This agreement is backdated to April 2020 and applies to the clerk. |
| **7.** | **District and County Councillors’ Reports:** PC reported that MHDC has been quite this month with little to report. In other local matters:1. The displaced manhole cover at Abberley has been reported to WCC who have added it to their list. KP has registered it with Highways and it appears on their system although there has been no progress to report to date.
2. 5 Stourport Road Regulatory and Planning departments have been running around in circles in a joint effort to sort this issue out. FC said that planners should treat this as a sorting site as it could no longer be called a garden anymore. The neighbours are suffering from noxious fires and noise and vermin so they will be happy to have it sorted once and for all.
3. BD discovered that the Witley Park footpaths and bridle paths were taken out of operation in 1957. Could they be reinstated? The Kew Garden Quarter Sessions and old Parish Council Minutes will be researched to help get these closures revoked. FC said it would be helpful if the footpath from Witley Court to the end of the lane at Bank Lane, Little Witley through to the Martley Road could be reopened.

***(20:15 the Zoom meeting expired and a new one was started. CS did not re-join)***KP joined the second Zoom meeting and his report was circulated and is attached to these Minutes: [..\REPORTS\K Pollock 5.09.09.20 report.docx](../REPORTS/K%20Pollock%205.09.09.20%20report.docx) FC said that speeding through the village continued to be a problem. |
|  |  |  |
| **8.** | **Planning:** Robin Croft application had been circulated prior to the meeting and supported. |
| **9.** | **Finance:** All paid invoices and remittances received were circulated and approved prior to the meeting. The Bank Reconciliation balances, and the Budget Comparison were circulated. The clerk requested a new laptop. The original one was bought using the Transparency Fund and is almost 5 years old and is running terribly slow with keyboard letters wearing out. It was discussed and agreed by all that a new laptop could be purchased, and the clerk will make enquiries as to whether the old one could be accepted in part-exchange. |
| **10.** | **Correspondence for Information:** An enquiry came in from a parishioner who would like her mother’s ashes buried in her family plot at the old village church which is now the Scout Hut. The Reverend Ted offered his number and said would be happy to accommodate her request. |
|  |  |  |  |
| **11.** | **Clerk’s report on Urgent Decisions made under delegation since the last meeting:** FC apologised that some of his emails have not included being sent to the clerk. He will try and include the clerk on all email discussions and decisions which are acceptable in lieu of a meeting. |
| **12.** | **Councillors’ reports and items for future agenda:** FC said we should start to have a plan in progress for the inevitable national mourning of either Prince Philip and/or the Queen. BD suggested that the Village Hall flag should be flowed at half-mast. The clerk wondered if a memorial bench may be purchased for the village. During this discussion AS found the protocol, online, for a death of a member of the Royal Family and will circulate it amongst the parish council.CJ asked whether the village hall could be used for the next meeting but is was thought this would not be possible as the R rate of the COVID-19 virus was rising again. FC said we would look at the situation again 2 weeks prior to the next meeting.CJ asked PC if he knew who had been burning frequent bonfires in Little Witley as a parishioner of Little Witley has made a complaint. PC said it had been particularly bad during lockdown, but it is hard to pinpoint where it is coming from. CALC published guidelines regarding reducing the number of garden bonfires to be lit especially during lockdown as the virus was attacking respiratory systems.AG thanked Fraser Evans who has been mowing Bowen’s Field for the last 2 years. He has now left to go to University. |
|  |  |  |  |
| **13.** | **Date of next meeting:** It was agreed by a show of hands that the next meeting will be held via Zoom or at Great Witley Village Hall at 7.30pm on Wednesday 11th November 2020. |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |
| The meeting closed at 20:50pm |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Signed …………………………………….. Date …………………………………….. |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | Chairman |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**GREAT WITLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**09.09.20**

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT**

1. **Flooding**

I trust that you will all have heard about the award of £4.895 million towards the construction of a flood barrier scheme in Tenbury Wells. This is part of the massive amount of money allocated to seek to solve flooding problems across the country, including an additional amount of up to £30 million in the Severn Valley, to overcome the periodic flooding in the river basin. The official announcement contains the following comments on our local area:

*In****Tenbury Wells and the Severn Valley****, two flood schemes will protect nearly 3,000 homes in areas which were badly affected by last winter’s floods, and protecting and creating more than 22,000 jobs along the Severn Valley. This will be supplemented by an additional scheme combining natural flood risk management, tree planting and habitat creation to reduce flood risk and capture carbon throughout the Severn Valley.*

There is a requirement for some local funding, and the Worcestershire LEP has been able to allocate £0.5 million to fill the gap, this being the maximum the EA will allow, amounting to 10% of their commitment. In addition, the projects must be regarded as “shovel ready” meaning they must be able to start soon, and in consequence that the work must be completed by the end of the next financial year.

Those of you who have studied the plans will know that there may need to be some revision or improvement to make them satisfactory, but in general, this is a very welcome announcement. You may know that Harriett Baldwin, our local MP, has played a major part in persuading Defra to fund this need, and her adjournment debate clearly helped to ensure Tenbury was included in the list of approved schemes.

A large group of local representatives, including Harriett, met last Friday, 4th September, and discussed the detailed design of the flood barriers, while touring their full extent. We need to get on with the scheme quickly and be sure we can cover all likely costs with the grants available.

1. **Local Matters**

Schools returned last week and next, and we have to hope that all the dire predictions of problems prove unduly pessimistic. The news media are concerned to tell us the figures for positive test results, but rarely put that in context of the numbers of tests carried out. They also more or less ignore the very small number of people needing to go to hospital and the even smaller number of people succumbing to the disease.

From the latter two figures, one would draw some hope that the whole pandemic is under control or coming to a close. That said, the Government has decided on further restrictions on meetings from next Monday, and we have t hope these will not be in place for very long.

Meanwhile, on a more pedestrian level, the government is keen to support more walking and cycling in the country. This was first stimulated by the problems of using public transport in London, but it has been translated into a national drive to improve facilities for walking and cycling everywhere.

In that regard, you may be interested in the reply from my colleague Alan Amos to a question put to him in advance of tomorrow’s full council meeting. It indicates that some discussion on the County’s policies has been ill-informed.

Contrary to the opinion of some people, the policy of the county, as promulgated in LTP4, is to support active travel and we are investing 11% of out transport budget in these areas. What we have not done is implement a lot of temporary measures with cones and one-way systems, not to mention closing roads altogether, to help active travel.

You may be aware that in several places, this sort of action has been severely criticised for penalising local businesses in favour of larger stores, and also making life more awkward for disabled people. It is difficult to strike the right balance, but caution is sensible in responding to changing circumstances.

1. **Speeding in Great Witley**

There has been continued debate over speeding in the village and the adequacy of our footways alongside the carriageway. I do not have any new information on the speed measurements, but would be interested to hear of further comments on how the situation for pedestrians can be improved.

**Cllr Ken Pollock**

**Cheltenham,**

**Gloucestershire,**

**GL50 2BZ**

**09.09.20**