

WEOBLEY PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the Weobley Parish Council Meeting held at Hopelands Village Hall, Weobley, HR4 8SN on Tuesday 27th February 2024 commencing at 7:00pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Lorraine Anderson (Chair), Andrew Apps, Chris Breen, Stephen Coleman, Frank Fitzsimmons, Colin Mills, John Simons, Helen Saunders and Helen Quinlan.

IN ATTENDANCE: HALC Clerk– Helen Tinson and 1 member of the public.

1. CONSIDERATION TO ACCESS HALC CLERK COVER FOR THE MEETING:

It was RESOLVED: to access HALC's CiLCA qualified Clerk Cover for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ian Wilkinson.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WRITTEN REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION:

No declarations of interest or written requests for dispensation were received.

4. MINUTES:

It was RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held 23rd January 2024 were a true and proper record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chair.

5. OPEN SESSION

5.1. Police Report: The Police were not present, but a written report had been received:

5.1.1. January's report included a report of criminal damage to a window, a potential wildlife crime and an incident involving a dog dangerously out of control.

5.1.2. February's report included the theft of a motorbike in Burton Wood, an industrial unit broken into (nothing taken) and a further potential wildlife crime.

5.2. Ward Councillor: The Ward Councillor was not present and had not submitted a report.

5.3. Local Residents: There were no matters raised from local residents in attendance.

5.3.1. It was reported that a small parcel of land between Belbeck House and the Vicarage has been sold and that the rest of the field is designated as green space in the NDP.

5.3.2. It was reported that a parishioner has expressed concern about the removal of trees at The Sallies which they felt may have required planning permission.

6. FINANCE:

6.1. Current Bank Balance:

It was reported that the current account balance at 21.2.24 was £37,395.72. The Chairman reported that this includes a payment taken for electricity charges but that a request for a meter reading has been received.

6.2. Payments:

It was RESOLVED: to approve the following invoices for payment:

6.2.1. HALC, Clerk Cover 27.2.24, £314.04 including VAT

6.2.2. HALC, HALC/NALC Subscription Fees 24/25, £1079.45 including VAT

6.2.3. A&T James Fencing Ltd, Rose Garden tabletop installation, £570.00 including VAT

6.2.4. Mary Kenny, Reimbursement of expenses re consumables for public toilets, £9.95

6.2.5. Weobley Village Hall, January Room Hire, £15.00

6.3. Payments made between meetings:

6.3.1. **It was RESOLVED:** to ratify the following payment:

6.3.1.1. Carpenter Goodwin Ltd, Mower Service, £242.16 including VAT

6.3.2. **It was NOTED:** that the following payment had been made (approved January meeting, minute 9):

6.3.2.1. Mole Masters, Pest Control, £650.00

6.4. Donations to the Parish Church:

Members considered recent advice from NALC confirming that Parish Councils are again able to legally donate funds for the maintenance of the churchyard. It was noted that the historical donation had been £500 for churchyard maintenance and £50 for the maintenance of the church clock. It was noted that neither the 23/24 budget and 24/25 budget include expenditure for the church and any donations will need to be taken from a contingency budget or from reserves.

It was RESOLVED: to approve a donation to St. Peter and St. Paul Church of £550.00 from the current budget (23/24), pending confirmation of the General Reserve Balance.

It was RESOLVED: to approve a donation to St. Peter and St. Paul Church of £550.00 from the 24/25 budget, pending confirmation of the General Reserve Balance.

7. PARISH MAINTENANCE:

7.1. Parish Lengthsman 24/25:

Members considered a proposal to engage a second Lengthsman alongside DC Gardening Services Ltd to carry out smaller jobs in the parish. Qualifications, experience and hourly rate were discussed. Members suggested that the duties of the Village Maintenance Operative could be incorporated into this role.

It was RESOLVED: to offer the role of second Lengthsman to Glen White, from 1 April 2024 to 31st March 2025, with an assessment after three months.

It was RESOLVED: that Cllrs Anderson and Fitzsimmons arrange a village assessment with Mr. White.

7.2. Works to be undertaken by Lengthsman:

Members considered tasks to be allocated to the Lengthsman. No works were identified. A query was raised concerning water not draining from the ditch through the play area. It was noted that this has been assessed by the Locality Steward, who was due to speak to the landowner. It was noted that the S106 money left over from the Rose Garden has been allocated to improving drainage on the playing field. The Locality Steward has suggested that the investigation take place once current water levels have dropped.

7.3. Works to be reported to Herefordshire Council:

Members considered correspondence from a parishioner concerning double yellow lining at C1095 Hereford Road entrance to Castlemead HR4 8TG and white lining at the junction with the Hereford Road C1095 junction with C1094. Members also considered T-junction marking at Garnstone Drive Estate HR4 8TH junction with C1093 Gadbridge Road, and further correspondence from a parishioner concerning water flooding at the Dairy Farm in Meadow Street, B4230, splashing onto the pavement and damaging the mortar in the wall causing a public safety issue. It was noted that this had been reported verbally to the Locality Steward but should be followed up by a report on the website.

It was RESOLVED: to report all matters to Herefordshire Council via the web portal.

7.4. S106 Highways Funding Proposals:

Members considered proposals for a traffic calming scheme circulated in a report ahead of the meeting. Herefordshire Council have developed a scheme which incorporates the area by the schools, Hereford Road and High Street to the junction of Back Lane to fit the current S106 budget of £87,762.94. The proposal for Hereford Road and High Street (inc Market Pitch to the junction with Back Lane) is for a full traffic calming package much like that already installed in Gadbridge Road, including:

- 150mm white edge lining throughout
- Buff carriageway markings with 30mph roundels where the 30mph repeater signage is located,
- Buff carriageway patches without 30mph roundels where any sections of street lighting are in place,
- Village gateways at the 30mph terminal location where the limit changes from derestricted to 30mph with potential 'dragon's teeth'
- Existing local lining refresh if budget allows

There is potential to not install buff patches down on the main High Street / Market Pitch due its conservation status.

The proposal for Burtonwood (road by the school) includes:

- New '20mph when lights flash' installations along the road to encompass both sites. This package would include solar powered flashing 'wig-wags' with signage stating '20mph when lights flash' (this is a voluntary limit that does not need expensive TRO's)
- Buff carriageway markings with 30mph roundels,
- Potential 'dragons' teeth' markings,
- 150mm edge of carriageway lining
- Refresh of any existing school zig-zag lining and red backed 'SLOW' carriageway markings
- Existing local lining if budget allows

It was noted that the proposals do not mention Back Lane but it was acknowledged that HC have identified proposals that they believe to be the most effective within the constraints of the budget and giving priority to the most urgent areas. A query was raised about whether the developer of Garnstone Drive was required to have moved the 30mph limit. It was understood that HC's Senior Highways Project Manager has spoken to ADL Ltd concerning the TRO on Gadbridge Road and had undertaken to investigate with HC about what could be supported now and what can be delivered within budget. Members considered the current 20mph trial in Pembridge and wished to minute their aspirations to introduce a 20mph limit through Weobley.

It was RESOLVED: to accept the current proposal, pending some fine tuning (8 in favour, 1 against).

It was RESOLVED: to continue to pursue extending the 30mph limit.

It was RESOLVED: to investigate whether moving the 30mph limit at Garnstone Drive was a condition of planning.

7.5. Public Rights of Way (PROW) and Footpaths:

Members were informed that the Parish Footpath Officers have carried out work to the entrances of WX40 and WX63 around the kissing gates. Members were asked to consider the purchase of a Post Drill Auger at a cost of £180, a Wrecking Bar at a cost of £30.50 and a Fence Post Whacker at a cost of £50.00 for use by the Parish Footpath Officers when replacing posts. It was noted that HC are producing a record of all Parish Footpath Officers.

It was RESOLVED: to approve the expenditure of £260.50 for equipment as noted above, pending confirmation of capacity within the budget.

It was RESOLVED: to enquire if the PC should issue a letter of authorisation alongside the letter issued by HC.

7.6. Maintenance of Public Toilets:

Members noted that one volunteer currently maintaining the public toilets resigned last month and the other is currently unwell. There has been no response to an advert placed in the January and February issue of the Magpie (parish publication) and members were asked to consider paying for cleaning support.

It was RESOLVED: to approve the principle of paying for the cleaning of the public toilets.

It was RESOLVED: that Cllrs Anderson and Apps will produce an advertisement, research appropriate rates of pay and assess the budget to identify funds.

7.7. Tree Warden Planting Proposal:

Members considered a tree planting proposed by the Parish Tree Warden. It was reported that an offer of free fruit trees has been forwarded to the school.

It was RESOLVED: to approve the following:

- Bell Square: 3 x new Amelanchier 'Ballerina' to replace existing dead and decaying trees;
- Opposite Doctors Surgery: 5 x Ornamental Cherry 'Prunus Rancho' to replace dead willows;
- School Turning Circle: 1 x Ornamental Cherry (white) 'Pyrus Chanticleer' - new tree.

It was RESOLVED: to liaise with the Locality Steward to seek permission from Highways and Landowners.

8. DRAINAGE:

Members received a brief report from Cllr John Simons on the Weobley Flood Alleviation Project. Cllr Simons is researching options to reduce the flow of water run off currently overwhelming drains. He plans to visit a similar scheme in Wellington shortly and will report to council in due course.

Members noted the 'Drainage Issues Locations Report' of all drainage matters reported to HC/BBLP. A parishioner reported flooding opposite Whitehill House and was assured that this has already been reported to Welsh Water and BBLP. It was suggested that members approach the Locality Steward to establish if the PC can address any of the outstanding drainage issues using the Matched Funding available from HC as part of the Lengthsman Scheme.

Concerns were raised about potholes obscured by flood water on Gadbridge Road which were considered dangerous to cyclists and pedestrians.

9. PLANNING:

Members considered responding to the following applications to be determined by Herefordshire Council:

9.1. 240423/K: Land at Garnstone Park adj. Hereford Road (C1095) Weobley, HR4 8SW. Works to Trees in a Conservation Area.

Members considered the application noting the Ash trees are infected by Ash Dieback disease and the Oak and Beech are in close proximity to the scout hut. There were no objections raised.

It was RESOLVED: to support the application.

9.2. 240168/FH and 240169/L: The Old Grammar School, Hereford Road, Weobley, HR4 8SW. Further rear single storey extension.

Members considered the application and whilst it was recognised that the extensions may overwhelm the original property, they are not seen or overlooked and therefore no objections were raised.

It was RESOLVED: to support the application.

10. ROSE GARDEN:

Members were informed that the stone tabletop completes the planned work. All invoices totalling £23,143.19 have been sent and acknowledged and will be reimbursed in due course. The balance of the Open Space S106 money will now be released and used to improve drainage on the playing field.

11. VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE:

Members considered appointing a Parish Council representative for 2024/25 to replace Cllr Helen Saunders who has been appointed Hall Manager and will be receiving remuneration. Therefore, under the Hall's Deed of Trust, she can no longer be a member of the Hall's Committee of Management who are Trustees.

It was RESOLVED: to appoint Cllr Frank Fitzsimmons as the PC Representative on the Village Hall Committee.

12. PLAY AREA:

Members noted the minutes of the last Play Area Committee meeting. The play area has reopened following essential maintenance and all closure notices have been removed. It was reported that a portaloo has been ordered from Three Counties Portaloo Hire for 24 weeks from Easter to the beginning of the Autumn term. The portaloo will cost £532 plus VAT for the season, and will be serviced weekly.

It was RESOLVED: to ratify the hire of the portaloo.

13. LIBRARY AND MUSEUM:

Members were informed that the damp issues at the Library and Museum have returned. Previous work has been carried out to resolve water ingress from the chimney, but it appears that damp is rising from underneath the building. It was noted that there is a culvert approximately 20m long underneath the building. A CCTV survey last year identified collapsed masonry in the middle section of the culvert but yielded insufficient information to determine a solution. Members considered seeking grant funding to carry out further investigation and remedial works.

It was RESOLVED: to approach the Ward Councillor and seek support from within HC.

14. WEBSITE:

Members received a report concerning the recruitment of a volunteer website manager to maintain the village site, www.weobley.org. Two expressions of interest had been received for the vacancy. One applicant has a background in web management and is based in the village and it was proposed that this applicant is engaged on a three-month trial basis with a view to continuing indefinitely if all parties are happy to continue. It was noted that Cllr Apps will continue to maintain the Parish Council and Village Hall sites.

15. INFORMATION SHEET:

Members noted the information sheet which included the HALC Training Schedule. Interest for a group training session was expressed, and to use one of the free places for the current year for Cllr John Simons to attend the 'Grass Roots' training on 14/3/24.

16. CLERK RECRUITMENT:

Members were informed that HALC have received one expression of interest and hope to receive an application in due course.

17. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA:

- 17.1. West Mercia Police Community Charter: to identify top three community issues.
- 17.2. Asset Register.
- 17.3. Reimbursement of expenses (scalpings) to Parish Footpath Officer £62.40 including VAT.
- 17.4. S106 Update.
- 17.5. Play Area Update:
- 17.6. Resurfacing/Pothole repairs Bell Square Car Park.
- 17.7. Recruitment of Parish Tree Warden.
- 17.8. Lengthsman 24/25 Update.
- 17.9. Set date for Annual Parish Meeting.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

- 18.1. Parish Council Meeting: Tuesday 26th March 2024.
- 18.2. Annual Parish Meeting: Deferred to next meeting.

Meeting closed 9.00pm.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____