**Minutes of the Meeting of Rushock Parish Council**

**Held on Thursday, 17th May, 2018 at Rushock Village Hall at 8:45pm**

**Present:**

Cllr. T. Green (TG) (Chairman)

Cllr. L. McCurrich (LMc)

Cllr. R. Hampshire (RH)

Cllr. J. Nicholls (JN)

Cllr. T. Jennings (TJ)

Cllr. G. Wilson (GW)

**Also Present were:**

The clerk Mr. Marcus Hart (MJH), District Cllr. I. Hardiman (IDH), Mr. Malcolm Linney

(local resident) and the lengthsman, Mr. Bill Waldron (BW).

**1. Apologies for Absence:**

Cllr. D. Cutler (DC)

**Apologies were also received from:**

District Cllr. Stephen Williams (SJW)

**2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:**

None.

**3. Public Question Time:**

Malcolm Linney indicated that he would like to raise the matter of the Village Hall and the Chairman used his discretion to permit Malcolm to speak at agenda item 9 and this was unanimously agreed. Malcolm did ask at this point if the Parish Council made a donation or grant to the Village Hall. It was felt that if it was a grant that gift aid at 25% could be claimed. Malcolm also raised the issue of the way the hedges had been cut in Lunnon Lane, in particular his and Richard Hampshire’s. They had been ‘hacked’. It was agreed that MJH would raise this matter with WCC highways. There was a general discussion in respect of this matter.

**4. Minutes:**

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 25th January, 2018 were duly approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

**5. Progress Reports:**

None as everything was covered on the agenda.

**6. County Councillor’s Report:**

County Councillor Marcus Hart had written a report that had previously been circulated and referred to it as follows:-

**Strategic Issues County Wide**

Full Council met on the 15th February meeting of WCC the main business of the meeting was to approve the budget proposals for 2018/2019. There was a 1.94% increase in Council Tax and a 3% increase in its Adult Social Care Precept proposed, in total just shy of a 5% increase. The maximum that WCC could increase by is 6% (3% plus 3%). The increase on a Band D property will be circa £56 per annum. I and the administration are aware that this is quite a bit but we are facing unprecedented financial challenges in both adult’s and children’s social care and the Government has therefore allowed Social Care authorities to levy Council Tax payers to effectively meet the shortfall, something that was previously fully funded by Central Government. The Labour group did not support the budget, but proposed no alternative. The Liberal Democrat and Green Party (2017 group) proposed an amendment increasing Council Tax by effectively the maximum of 3% Adult Social Care precept and 2.94% of general Council Tax, just shy of the maximum 6% increase as an amendment. They also proposed an amendment on how the 5% increase this year was made up, moving to a 2.94% increase in Council Tax and a 2% increase in the Adult Social Care. I did not support increasing Council Tax by the maximum, as I feel that a 4% increase last year and a 5% increase this year with a similar increase planned for next year is quite enough. I also did not support changing the way the 5% increase was made up as that paves the way for a potential greater increase next year. Both amendments were lost by 38 votes to 6, with 9 abstentions. The administration’s budget was approved by 39 votes to 14.

As previously reported, our Children’s Services continues to be a great worry for us as a result of our inadequate OFSTED and we currently have a commissioner appointed to assist with improving our social work practice and outcomes for children. We are now working with Essex County Council and Cabinet has now approved that they will go into an Alternative Delivery Model (ADM), structure and there is a project board set up to see how this will operate.

Cabinet met on 29th March and approved the setting up of a wholly owned company of the County Council. The final decision will be taken by the relevant Government Minister and the DFE. This is going to be a very costly process, but is vital to ensure the safeguard our vulnerable and looked after children across Worcestershire.

Our interim Chief Executive Steve Stewart sadly passed away on 28th March.

Our Chief Executive, Chief Financial Officer and Director of Commercial and Change have now started so our senior management team is now nearly back to full strength.

There was some recent media coverage regarding a CIPFA report into County Council finances. Virtually all of this information was debated in the public domain as part of the budget setting process in that we need to make further savings during the period 2018-2021, with £34 million this year.

**Rushock Issues**

I have chased WCC highways who tell me that work has been done on Park Lane and Purshall Green Lane by putting scalping down to reduce the gap from the verge to the road.

New Farm Lane has been reported and is on a list for repair, rest assured since my last report I have kept chasing.

I have been liaising with WCC over the cost of the Tourism signs and managed to get the cost down and have contributed £182.59 towards the cost from my devolved highway monies.

I obviously deal with routine highways issues as and when I receive them.

**Wyre Forest Issues**

WCC has considered the future use of the Grange in Kidderminster, at its cabinet meeting on 8th February. It currently has 20 beds used for reablement and rehabilitation for predominantly Wyre Forest residents coming out of Acute hospital services but they need some support before they are ready to go back into their own home. The CCG’s no longer support the funding of this facility to be used wholly in this way as they have been working on a new model of care to give residents this support in their own home. I am delighted that I and the cabinet have persuaded the CCG to retain 5 beds, with the ability to increase to 7, which will directly provide this service to those who are not ready or not able to be supported in their own home. There is also a facility that Wyre Forest residents could use at London Road, near to the Worcester Royal hospital site if the Grange facility is not sufficient. Furthermore, the rest of the Grange site will be developed as a Dementia care unit for Wyre Forest residents and this service will be provided by WCC and they will be investing in this site for Wyre Forest residents. I fully support this decision and it is a ‘win win’ for Wyre Forest residents. I will be watching carefully to see if 5-7 beds is sufficient and raising this with the CCG if it proves not to be.

Some work has now started on the alterations to the A449 on the Worcester Road in Kidderminster, to try and ease congestion. The white line chevrons are due to be removed in May/June time, between the Hoobrook Link Road and the Hoobrook Island.

The Ludlow Road short stay provision consultation has ended and a decision will be made over the next month whether to close this provision. All service users will have their needs met either at a facility in Bromsgrove or Malvern. There are a number of issues with the Ludlow Road facility.

**7. District Councillor’s Report:**

District Councillor Ian Hardiman reported as follows:-

IDH reported on that WFDC was still progressing with the cinema and leisure hub on the former Glades Leisure Centre site.

IDH reported that WFDC was still progressing with a public realm and economic regeneration scheme for Worcester Street.

IDH reported that the legal agreement for the demolition of Crown House was progressing well.

IDH reported that WFDC was looking to build industrial units at Silverwoods.

IDH reported that the Green Street Depot project was progressing and the hub would be moving from Kidderminster Town Hall. WFDC was currently out to tender.

IDH reported that the refurbishment of Kidderminster Train Station should commence soon.

IDH reported that elections for 11 of the 33 seats took place in May and IDH was successfully re-elected. The makeup of the WFDC was 21 Conservatives, 4 Labour, 3 Liberal Democrat, 3 Independent and 2 Health Concern.

**8. Police Report:**

None as there was no representative present.

**9. Rushock Village Hall:**

There was a lengthy discussion in respect of this matter and MJH and TG reported back on a meeting that they had held with Malcolm Linney regarding the trust deed and uncertainty over its validity and over the relationship with the PC as custodian trustees and the management committee. MJH reported that whilst he was not a trustee lawyer he had a general grasp of the issues and had sent a considerable amount of time reading all of the various trust deeds and had taken advice from a trust and conveyancing lawyer.

MJH reported that it was his view that the deed creating the Parish Council as custodian trustees and setting up the management committee was invalid as the remaining 4 trustees, Grenville Wilson, Cyril Savage, Simon Jennings and Garth Weaver had never actually signed to transfer the village hall in trust from them to the Parish Council.

This would have triggered first registration with the Land Registry and this appeared not to have happened. GW present at the meeting indicated that he could not remember, what if anything was signed as it was in 2011 and that Garth Weaver ‘sorted it all out’. It was unanimously resolved that the Parish Council would delegate to the clerk MJH to instruct a firm of solicitors to remedy the legal position to ensure that the 4 remaining trustees transfer the village hall to the Parish Council and on even date become custodian trustees and set up the management committee. MJH advised that this was likely to cost anything between £1000-£1500 plus VAT plus disbursements. It was unanimously resolved for the Parish Council to pay these costs on behalf of the trustees, Parish Council and Village Hall Committee.

**10. Localism Grant:**

TG reported that we hoped that the tourism signs would be installed imminently. The £750 WFDC allocation of 16-17 had paid for this and the Parish Council still had to decide how to spend the 17-18 allocation in accordance with keeping the Parish clean and tidy.

**11.Beacon Lighting:**

This is ongoing and would be considered further at the next meeting.

**12. Smartwater:**

TG reported on the meeting with Michael Simpson, the Smartwater co-ordinator for West Mercia Police on 22nd March at 7:30pm in order to do a presentation to parishioners and answer any questions. TG reported that 14 parishioners attended. TG stated that we need to get 42 properties on board in the Parish in order to secure a 70% uptake which would entitle us to signage in the parish. The packs would cost £8.90 and it was agreed to order 42 packs, which would cost £383.80 + VAT including the delivery charge. It was unanimously resolved and confirmed that the Parish Council would subsidise 50% of the cost for Rushock residents. It was agreed that we would advertise this offer in the Parish Magazine.

**13. PCC Survey:**

The draft response had previously circulated by TG and it was unanimously resolved to approve it and for MJH to submit it.

**14. Planning:**

One actual planning application since the last meeting for an extension at Clattercut House, application number 18/0197/FULL, which the PC objected to and WFDC refused on 08/05/2018. It was unanimously resolved that TG, JN and DC would be the planning sub-committee for 18-19.

**15. Highways:**

JN reported on the work that BW had done for his last invoice.

There was a general discussion on highways and lengthsman’s matters and the Parish Council were very grateful for the work BW had done.

**16. Footpaths:**

TG informed the PC that the PPP grant application had been submitted for 2018-2019.

TG reported that numerous footpath signs that are falling over or that have disappeared can no longer be replaced by ourselves as the work has been contracted out by WCC to Ringway. TG said that a number of signs were in a dangerous condition. MJH agreed to further take up this matter and ascertain the cost of this by Ringway and the rationale for this.

**17. Finance:**

The financial spreadsheet was duly circulated and it was in accordance with the bank statements. The current bank balance was £8,828.85.

The following were approved for payment:-

\*\*£125.00 DM Payroll Services Ltd. for DPO

\*\*£1400.00 Green Waste Recycling Services for Park Lane

\*\*£750.00 WCC for tourism signs for Rushock Church

\*\*£108.00 Chemquad Weed Control for grass cutting and strimming

\*£25.00 Printserve for 2017-2018 end of year submission.

\* £10.00 Four Square Magazine for Clerk’s copy.

£55.00 Diane Malley for internal audit.

£92.65 Annual CALC and NALC subscription.

£55.00 Bill Waldron for Lengthsman’s Payment

NB \* = retrospectively approved but under £200 delegated powers. \*\* Already approved at a previous PC meeting but for noting as now paid.

**18. CALC and Other Meetings:**

TG reported that there was a chairman’s meeting held on 15th February, 2018 at WFH.

**19. Minutes from Neighbouring Parish Councils:**

These had been previously circulated.

**20. Correspondence:**

The clerk circulated the schedule of correspondence and presented the correspondence to the meeting. A number of items had already been discussed and the schedule was duly noted.

**21. Agenda items for future meetings:**

Superfast Broadband

Beacon Lighting

Parish Localism Fund

Village Hall

**22: To note the dates of the next meetings:**

All at 7:30pm at Rushock Village Hall.

Thursday, 20th September, 2018

Thursday, 29th November, 2018

Thursday, 24th January, 2019

Thursday, 16th May, 2019

Thursday, 19th September, 2019

Thursday, 19th November, 2019

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Signed………………………………….. (Chairman)

Dated……………………………………