

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EARLS CROOME PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 19th SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 7.30 PM AT EARLS CROOME VILLAGE HALL.

PRESENT: Cllr Mark Smith (Chairman), Cllr Penny Green , Cllr Margaret Herbert, Cllr Ian Wilson, Cllr Giles Steiger, Malcolm Tomkins (Tree Warden), Ann Smith (Advisor to PC).

In attendance: County Councillor Martin Allen & Nikki Nicholson (The Clerk)

1) APOLOGIES

District Councillor Owenson, Cllr Tom Goodwin & Cllr Charlotte Bloomfield

2) PUBLIC

One resident in attendance, nothing to raise.

3) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

4) MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th July were proposed by Margaret, seconded by Ian, agreed by all and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

5) REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Martin gave a summary of the following report on **COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS**

ON DEMAND BUS

I and Cllr Tom Wells are still waiting for WCC to arrange another meeting so we can find out if the new service will run to these locations, Worcester Royal Hospital, Harefield House, Worcester. Tesco's, Aldi, or St Peters Garden Centre. I will keep you informed of any changes. Cllr Adams is now expecting a relaunch to be announced.

QUAY LANE NORTH

I have been informed that the footway is to be reconstructed between 20 September 2023 to 27 September 2023. This work will take five days.

QUAY LANE PASSING BAY

21/07/23 I met Tanya and ECPC onsite and it was agreed that Passing Bay Number 1, which is closest to the A38 is to be requested to be made into a proper passing bay.

I am still waiting for news on the request.

EXTRA VASS POLE

During the visit on 21/07/23 we agreed the location of the southern pole.

Tanya to arrange installation. I have been informed that this work has now been done. Members confirmed the pole was in-situ and being used.

BOUNDARY REVIEW WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

I have been told that there will not be any changes to the County Divisions within the MHDC area. The numbers now all balance or are close enough that no change is needed.

This is the link to the boundary review:

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/worcestershire>.

DIGAWAY

26/07/23 I sent you the decision notice for the 2021 Digaway application.

Also re application OD1026210 Digaway & Clearaway Contractors Ltd, on 23/08/23 I forwarded you an email from WCC stating that this did not fall under them, and they are not consulted and would not comment on the matter. This matter falls on the Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency. I am trying to contact someone from the DVSA to get any extra information I can on this matter.

The Clerk confirmed that as she understand it only local landowners can comment on Vehicle licencing applications.

DEFFORD MILL RE SITE VISIT 04.08.2023 COUNTY COUNCIL AREA

It was agreed that Tanya would look at getting a taller pole installed in place of the existing pole, at the bottom of Red Dee Farm drive pointing into Defford Mill.

Also, Tanya is going to look a having a sign installed on a pole by Dunstall Farm Entrance showing that Defford Mill is 300 yards further on. Cllr Adams advised he had now received the costings of the signs discussed at the site meeting and they totalled circa £1700.00 he would have to choose between funding this or the formalisation of the passing bay at Quay Lane, members agreed their priority would be the Quay Lane passing bay and thought that Brightwell's the owners of the Defford Mill site should be asked to pay for the signage.

At the entrance to Defford Mill, there are some signs erected that have not been installed by WCC and may be on their land. Tanya is going to investigate, and if need WCC will ask that these signs are removed from the verge.

As for planning enforcement, this is now in the hands of MHDC and Cllr David Harrison.

MINERAL EXTRACTION CALL FOR SITES

I have emailed you an email I received stating that due to changing positions in Government they Call for Mineral Sites has been postponed.

DISTRICT COUNCIL

DEFFORD MILL MHDC AREA

I have been in contact with Enforcement at WCC, who have said that there is no license that they can enforce. Following that information, I have handed the case over to the head of Planning at MHDC; Cllr David Harrison and he has now contacted Dewi Hammond who is the head officer at MHDC in charge of planning enforcement.

PLANNING MATTERS

Although not directly in your area the Meadow Close, Baughton planning application was refused. I thought both Jeremy and I had enough lawful points to ensure this application failed.

A planning application for Post Office Lane, Kempsey, that went to appeal has been rejected, although the Planning Inspector said that MHDC does not have a five year land supply. I found the reasons for the rejection very interesting and I have saved the planning officers comments for future consideration.

Because the SWDPR is to go to the Secretary of State before the end of this month the lack of a 5 year land supply will not matter as much because the SWDPR will have enough weight to stand on its own.

Also, I am aware of a planning application 23/00725/FUL Dog Field. I am waiting for the Planning Officers report before deciding where to proceed. I would respectfully remind you that planning applications can only be refused if there is a Lawful Planning Reason why it should be turned down.

Although not in your area, I though you would be interested to know about these planning applications.

- a. Furrow Close – This was to go before this month Southern Planning Committee, but the meeting has been cancelled.
- b. 70 Homes off the Welland Road, Upton Upon Severn – I have no more news at present.

As for 20/01827/FUL Baughton Stud, Smithmoor Common. I have not heard anything further at the moment. It was noted that sadly the owner of Baughton Stud was believed to have been killed in an accident on Friday evening.

Mark asked Martin if he could find out the purpose of the square boxes installed next to the road on the approaches to the A38 roundabout – it was thought these were monitoring but Martin would get clarification from WCC Highways.

Penny advised that visibility at the A38 roundabout when looking right Pershore to Upton was not good currently.

6) WCC Boundary review

Mark advised that ECPC had submitted comment that they were happy with the proposal for the current boundaries to be retained.

7) HIGHWAYS MATTERS-

Mark advised that the letter regarding a car parking in the passing bays had been put on hold until the resurfacing work was completed. Penny said she thought the letter was no longer required, nobody was parking in the bays anymore.

Margaret advised that the drains outside the Church were solid and she had reported this to the WCC Hub for remedy.

Margaret advised that the horse/child warning sign had been knock out of shape. She had pictures and would report on the WCC Hub.

Margaret advised that the Kinnersley turning sign post had been knocked back into the hedge. She had pictures and would report this onto the WCC Hub.

Ian advised that there were boy racers using the A38 roundabout for 'drifting'. The Clerk advised that this should be reported to 101 or online. The Clerk advised that she had sighted speeding and antisocial driving as the top police priorities in Earls Croome's SNT Charter agreement, with theft from outbuildings being third priority. Margaret advised she had experience a theft of decorative stones but had not reported it. Mark suggested even if not claiming insurance all crimes should be reported in case there is a pattern so police can follow up.

8) DEFFORD MILL

As discussed under County Councillors report.

9) PARISH PATHS

Malcolm advised that he had been and done another cut back of the BOAT.

Malcolm advised that he was aware of a local access forum, a group set up to enable increased public access to the countryside. Malcolm advised that he would attend to see if the forum can assist in getting some long awaited works moved forward. One example is the footpath behind the hall, that Malcom cuts and is well used but not considered an official footpath and not included on the definitive map.

10) LENGTHSMAN SCHEME

There were no additional duties for the lengthsman.

Penny advised that ongoing issue of brambles overhanging the pavement from No5 Orchard Close had not been addressed and was dangerous.

Malcolm advised that Earls Croome Court had not addressed the trees/hedges opposite the Church.

11) COMMONS

The Clerk advised that she was liaising with Peter Hill at MHDC to investigate regarding the link to the by-laws that wasn't working on the commons signage. Peter had confirmed that the by-laws do have to be enforced by MHDC and he was investigating how to correct the link/signage, but currently could not locate a copy of the by-laws!

Margaret advised that she and Malcolm had surveyed all three commons and presented a report summarising all findings with works required for the next few years.

Some of the key point were discussed as follows and the Clerk would liase with Steve Coole to get the works done in return for the hay.

- All hedges taller and wider less clear where boundaries were.
- Western boundary of Marsh Common, Croome Estate need to clear their ditch.
- Ditch on Eastern side of Marsh Common sides have been mown by Steve.
- Suggestion to remove some of the ash die back to allow oak saplings room to grow.
- Oaks in the middle of Marsh Common were well managed but lower branches could do with cutting back.
- The visibility for Steve getting machinery off the A4104 onto the access lane was noted as dangerous.
- It was noted that a resident was helping themselves to wood from the common, it was discussed that permission should be sought and that Malcolm should be able to have the wood in return for his free services helping manage the trees on the commons. Should the situation continue the clerk would be asked to write to the resident concerned.
- It was noted that there were a number of National Grid poles on the commons and the clerk would circulate the Wayleave information to check that the PC was receiving the correct Wayleave payments for all the poles.
- There was a need to cut back the brambles at the entrance gate to Smithmoor Common.
- There is a flimsy fence making cutting and maintaining the ditches on Smithmoor Common difficult and members discussed removing the fence to allow Steve to cut and maintain the ditches.
- The pollarded willows at the bottom end of Smithmoor common needed cutting back/tidy up – The Clerk confirmed that this work had been suggested by Steve as required and that he would do in return for this years hay crop.
- It was noted that there was some ragwort seeding at the bottom end of Smithmoor.
- A roadside hedge on Common land near Stonehall Cottage needed a good cut back – members asked the clerk to request Steve cut this back when he was hedge cutting this autumn.
- It was noted that due to the size of machinery Steve was accessing the triangle on the top end of Dunstall Common over the ditch which could lead to the area being accessible and perhaps a gate /lockable barrier was required.

- A hollow Poplar tree in the boundary hedge of Dunstall House unclear who's responsibility but maybe needed a survey or removal. Penny would try and ascertain ownership.

12) PLANNING

23/00815/FUL Hollybeds Farm, Worcester Road, Earls Croome. Erection of agricultural building – No Objection.

Dig-Away Clear-Away operator's licence – discussed in County Council report under agenda item 5.

13) REVIEW STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

It was noted that the Standing orders and Financial regulations hadn't been reviewed since 2018. Mark advised that the clerk would review the Financial regulations and would circulate for members to review prior to sign off in November's meeting.

It was suggested that all members be involved in reviewing the Standing Orders. They are there to govern the Councillors. Penny offered to review the current set against the CALC model ones and she would highlight any changes needed/suggested before circulating to all members to review.

14) FINANCE

The monthly reconciliation of cash and other monies was undertaken for July & August by Charlotte & Penny.

Payments made since last meeting:

Mr A Millward – Lengthsman services – July	£221.00
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary- August (S/O)	£233.77
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance August (S/O)	£20.00
Mr A Milward – Lengthsman Payment – August	£182.00

To review and authorise the following payments:

a) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk salary – September (S/O)	£233.77
b) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Working from home allowance September (S/O)	£20.00
c) Mr A Milward – lengthsman payment – September	£TBC
d) MHDC – uncontested election fee	£50.00
e) Mr A Milward – Lengthsman payment – October	£TBC
f) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk OPE	£28.80

Remittance:

WCC Lengthsman reimburse July £182.00

18. CORRESPONDANCE

Cemex regarding extension of Ryall Quarry – Mark advise that Cemex had asked to meet with him as the Chair to discuss the extension. Members all agreed for Mark to attend and report back.

19. INFORMATION AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 14th November 7.30pm at Earls Croome Village Hall.

The Meeting closed at 9.10pm.