

Stoke Bliss, Kyre and Bockleton Group Parish Council.

Clerk: Carole Hirst – 07903 377066 – stokeblissgroupclerk@gmail.com

Annual Parish Council Meeting Monday 5th June, 2017 at 7.30pm

At Stoke Bliss and Kyre Village Hall

Present: Cllrs Burgess Adams; Jessica Middleton; Oliver Turner; Terry Powell; Daniel Phillips; Brian Farmer; Michael Bowdler, Jane Williams, Phil Grove (MHDC)

1/6/17 Election of Chairman – Cllr John Burgess Adams was duly elected as Chair to the Parish Council.

2/6/17 Tenbury Transport Trust (Section 106 Tesco monies (£95,500)) Presentation from Caroline Palethorpe.

It is likely that Tenbury Transport Trust (TTT), the local community transport charity, will be the recipient of Section 106 funding as a result of the arrival of a new Tesco store in Tenbury subject to the completion of a business plan in accordance with the original contract between the land owners, local authorities and Tesco.

An integral part of the plan will be to make contact with all villages and their related organisations in the Tenbury & Teme Valley catchment area, in order to establish the need for improved community transport into Tenbury, whether by mini-bus or car. Caroline Palethorpe, of CMP Consult, a local specialist consultant for the community and voluntary sector who has worked with TTT for a number of years has been contracted to collect this information on behalf of the Trust. Caroline has already made contact with a number of Parish Council Clerks within a defined geographic area ensuring that any potential conflict with other community transport organisations is minimised, complimentary not competition is to be promoted.

Caroline has designed a simple questionnaire that residents are encouraged to complete. The questionnaire will be available on the Parish Council website, in the community newsletter and from your local Parish Council Clerk. Caroline will then collect completed forms from the Parish Council Clerk by Friday 23rd June or return to caroline@cmpconsult.co.uk .

3/6/17 Apologies for absence – Cllr Andrew Yarnold, Cllr Ken Pollock (Worcestershire County Council),

Absent – Cllr Charlie Rea, Cllr Peter Basford.

4.6.17 Declarations of Interest – None

5/6/17 Minutes of the last meeting of 6th March 2017 – the minutes of the last meeting were duly approved and signed. Matters Arising Resource Centre – Rose Cottage Enforcement Order. The occupant has still not vacated the property. Cllr Phil Grove

(MHDC) agreed to chase this up with Malvern Hills District Council's Planning Enforcement Officer.

6/6/17 Election of Vice Chairman – Peter Baseford was duly elected as Vice-Chair.

7/6/17 To receive annual reports from Parish Charities

Update given by Cllr Burgess re Henry Morris Charity. Traditionally money has been given to the elderly of the parish. This may move in the near future to giving the money to the church.

8/6/17 A To consider the Council's financial situation and approve the Annual Return (Parts 1 and 2) 2016/17

End of Year Bank Reconciliation 2016/17

opening balances at 01/04/201 940.19

add receipts 4,589.15

sub total 5,529.34

less payments to date 4,123.38

1,405.96

The dates set for the period of exercise of public rights are as follows:

	Date
Announcement	6th June 2017
Commencement	13th June 2017
Ending on	24th July 2017

Copies of the Annual Returns, Schedules for submission to the External Auditor, 2016/17 Bank Reconciliation and Income and Expenditure are all available to view on the Parish Council website

<http://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish/Welcome.aspx?ParishID=68&PostCode=WR158R&Y&Prop=1799&partner=mhc&MarriedTo=0>

The information can also be viewed by contacting the Stoke Bliss, Kyre and Bockleton Parish Clerk during the above period.

The Council resolved to approve the Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities in England Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2017 and it was signed by the Clerk to the Council and the Chair Cllr Burgess Adams , Schedules for submission to External Auditor and the Accounting Statements for 2016/17 year ending 31 March 2017 prepared by the Clerk were also approved.

8/6/17 B To approve all invoices for payment:

To Approve invoices submitted since the 6th March 2017 meeting.

Worcestershire CALC (Membership) £294.07 including VAT 3rd April 2017 cheque 00416

J.P. Moore Lengthsman- £118.00 21st April 2017 cheque 000415

Gill Lungley (CALC Training expenses) - £22.50 – 31/3/2017 cheque 000414

To approve Invoices to yet to pay

Parish Council Websites - £140.70 – Received 25 May 17 (Initial Payment for new website production)

INTERNAL AUDITOR – Diane Malley £85.00 – Received 22 May 17

PAYE and Clerk to pay GROSS £747.55 (HMRC and pay split to be confirmed but require 2 cheques)

Clerk Expenses March, April and May 2017. £101.78

All the above payments under 8/6/17b were approved.

8/6/17 Reports from County and District Councillors

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT - Presented by Cllr Burgess Adams on behalf of Cllr Ken Pollock

1. County Council affairs

The new council met for the first time on the 25th May and approved various formal appointments. The new Chairman is Anne Hingley, the new deputy chairman is Brandon Clayton and the leader of the council remains Simon Geraghty.

Simon has confirmed his Cabinet of ten people, the maximum allowed, with this inclusion of a new portfolio of education and skills. This has gone to Marcus Hart, whose highways portfolio is now held by Alan Amos. I retain the economy and infrastructure portfolio, but lose responsibility for skills to Marcus.

We also approved the appointment of an interim Chief Executive to replace Clare Marchant who leaves at the end of June. He is Steve Stewart, who has held the post of chief executive in a number of northern councils, including Northumbria and York. In the former he was in

charge of the conversion from a two tier to a unitary council, and led an authority which was one of only three in the country with an “outstanding” rating for their children’s safeguarding.

One of Mr Stewart’s principal jobs will be to see how we can carry the council forward on the reducing budget that we expect to be available. He will be on a fixed term contract, paid the same as the current chief executive, and we expect him to be in place for between 6 and 9 months. During that time, the council will be considering the nature of the job, and whom we might wish to appoint on a permanent basis.

2. Tenbury Developments

A new pattern of behaviour is developing in Tenbury to take account of the arrival of Tesco’s supermarket. It is clear that other retailers are suffering some loss of trade as the balance shifts. It would be my hope that this will not mean any existing businesses ceasing to trade and I sincerely hope that there will be an expansion of trade overall, benefitting both shoppers and retailers alike.

At a time like this, rumours abound and I would hope that only confirmed facts are discussed by town councillors, to avoid unnecessary alarm. I have heard one serious rumour that proved untrue and I hope that no-one will pass on unsubstantiated comments that might be to the detriment of the town overall.

There has been continuing controversy over the bus stop’s move. I have written a letter to the Advertiser, seeking to explain that it will prove beneficial overall. This is based on the fact that the bus stop will be occupied for about 3% of the time, so that for the vast majority of the day, there will be more space for traffic on Teme Street and accessing the Tesco car park.

I trust that the grass growth will by then prove adequate for the overflow car park to be in use during the Tenbury Music Festival on Saturday 17th, when I hope the town will be overflowing with people enjoying the entertainment. At such times, the new car park should relieve the problems of parking in the normal car parks.

3. Velo Birmingham Bike Race

Following a meeting between the organisers and Council officers, CSM Active have until the middle of the month to prepare mitigation plans to satisfy the concerns of residents and businesses along the route of their 100 mile cycle race. The route comes through Stoke Bliss and will close the B4214 between the Sutton turning and Bromyard, as well as the B4204 from Sutton to Clifton and Martley.

At that time the political leadership in Worcestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council will make a decision about the closure of the roads along the route. If we are not satisfied that the mitigation measures are adequate, we will not permit the closures, and the event will be cancelled or will have to take place over open roads. The latter could be assisted by extensive marshalling but would not in effect cancel for the day all business for many enterprises and confine many people to their homes.

MHDC Report for Annual Council Meeting – Presented by Cllr Phil Grove.

There is no doubt that local government is going through an unprecedented period of challenge and change. Malvern Hills District Council is not immune from them. By 2020 we will have lost 60 per cent of our government funding – that's more than £4million – and we still have a financial black hole to fill totalling some £1.45million by 2020/21.

We haven't helped ourselves in our recent past. When Phil Grove took over as leader in 2015 we were, let's be frank, in a mess and close to a laughing stock. We had become a toxic brand with the public, with the media feasting each week on our latest self-inflicted wound. It was clear that we had to rebuild our reputation.

Maybe part of the reason for that toxicity was because, for many of us, it's a road on which we don't wish to travel. It's a road filled with difficult decisions and potential cuts to services. That's not something we came into politics to do, but while the Conservatives are the ruling party we are not going to allow the future of this district to be mortgaged - it means too much to all of us who call it home.

However, we haven't thrown our arms up in despair and given up. Difficult times can often be a blessing in disguise. They disrupt conventional thinking, they force us to be bold, to be imaginative, to do things differently. And that's exactly what we have been doing since May 2015. We've been holding up a mirror to ourselves and asking is this really it, or can we do better?

The answer, of course, is that we can do better, we have, and we will continue to do so. Let's just pause for a moment and look back on some of those difficult decisions we were brave enough to take and what we have achieved as a result.

We entered into a shared chief executive arrangement with neighbouring Wychavon. We were told we were sacrificing Malvern Hill's identity, that we'd lose all control, that we would reduce this council to a satellite authority. However, the doom mongers were wrong, just as we knew they would be.

We now have a first-class chief executive who is providing strong, effective leadership and helping to give this council a clear direction. A recent independent review by the Local Government Association found the new arrangement was delivering significant benefits for council taxpayers and improving efficiency and service delivery.

We've reduced our senior management team to cut costs and protected the frontline services on which people rely. Instead of cutting services to our residents when staffing shortages or budget cuts have hit home, we've looked to share them with neighbouring Wychavon. This means we can go on delivering rather than taking the easy option of saying 'we're sorry there's no money'. They're not just back room functions either! For example, our housing team provides a valuable, but often hidden away, service. We are proud of the fact that since April 2012 we have prevented or relieved the threat of homelessness for more than 1,200 households in this district. We are determined this council will continue to protect and support the vulnerable and those in need, whatever the financial constraints under which we are working.

We're also waging war on waste. Cutting down on unnecessary expenditure, transforming services so that they work more efficiently. We're making use of technology so we are more accessible to our residents while saving money. We are reducing the number of buildings we need. All of this has saved £5 million since 2010 and has helped us protect key front line services. In fact, only 1.5 per cent of our budget savings have come from service reductions, something, of which, all of us should be incredibly proud.

Residents are recognising this too. Sixty-seven per cent of them now say we are doing a very good or good job. This is the second highest in Worcestershire, and we have achieved our highest ever value for money score too. But it's not all about money. It's also about continuing to improve life for everyone that lives, works or visits our beautiful district, and on that score we are succeeding too.

We laid the foundations for all this with the creation of our Five-Year Plan. A blueprint for how we are going to tackle the huge challenges facing our district and setting out clear priorities as a commitment to our residents.

There are almost 30 actions in that plan and every one focuses our limited resources on those things that impact on every aspect of our lives, our communities, our health, our environment, the local economy and jobs. We believe we are the only council in the country that has a five-year plan like this and the benefits of this long-term planning are already paying off.

The plan is only 12 months old and already we have made huge progress. We've delivered another 64 affordable homes and are just 100 short of our target for building 400 by 2020.

Our leisure centres have received more than 340,000 visits and received substantial investment in new facilities as we strive to encourage more people to get active. We raised awareness of self-harm – a significant issue in parts of our district – to more than 1,300 young children through a theatre production. This has been shortlisted for a Local Government Association award. Even more rewarding is the fact that we know of at least one young person who was self-harming and who came forward as a result of this project and is now receiving support.

That's why we do what we do - that's the difference this council is making to real lives.

We've helped 114 businesses to survive and grow through start-up and business grant programmes and supported the creation of 12 apprenticeships to help our young people develop the skills they need to succeed in the future. We've launched a new series of walking routes in the Teme Valley and the revamped Visit the Malverns website will go live soon to help broaden our appeal as a visitor destination which is so important to towns like Tenbury.

That's on top of all the other day to day things for which we are responsible. In the last year alone we have offered advice and support to 635 rural and business crime victims, dealt with

657 planning applications, emptied more than 300 litter bins every week, secured more than £180,000 of investment in new open space and community facilities and investigated more than 260 environmental crimes such as littering and fly-tipping.

That's just a flavour of what we do. But what is clear is that every single one of those things makes a difference to the lives of our residents. If we stop doing them the district will be a poorer place in which to live.

And we're able to keep doing them because we took that difficult decision to start this journey. We refused to continue to lurch from crisis to crisis and we've looked ahead. We saw the challenges coming and brought the future into the present. We are dealing with them now rather than waiting until they get so great that we are left contemplating the unthinkable.

We know there's uncertainty regarding Brexit and that will filter down to us at local level. While full business rates retention offers us an opportunity, it will also bring with it financial risk and extra responsibility to be financially viable while the cuts keep coming. Changes to the New Homes Bonus scheme have already worsened our financial position by some £200,000 and the government has signalled more to come with austerity continuing into the next Parliament.

What does this mean for us? It means we have to keep looking ahead, to keep planning and being bold and brave enough to take difficult decisions. The only problem is those decisions will be even harder in future as we've done the easy ones.

We've already come face to face with one of those decisions in the form of the switch to fortnightly waste collections. We know residents value a weekly collection and we've done more than every other local authority in Worcestershire to protect them.

Unfortunately the figures no longer stack up and the choice we were presented with was clear. Protect weekly collections or adopt a slash and burn approach to every other service. That would jeopardise everything we have been building over the last two years. The price

for keeping weekly collections would have been to have to turn round to people and say 'we're sorry, we can't keep your community clean and tidy', 'we're sorry we can't support business's to create jobs or invest in the future of young people'. It was too high a price, so that's why we took the decision we did.

Because we're on a journey our success is defined not only by where we end up, but by what we do along the way. How we transform this council, how we make it fit for the future is important. What we continue to deliver and how we rise to every challenge and leap every obstacle is critical.

That determines our success and we won't allow cheap, political point scoring to derail us. Because that's where the danger lies. If we stop the journey, if we turn back and say this is all too hard – that's when things go wrong. We know where we are going, we know what we want to achieve and we will get there, as long as we never lose the ability to hope, to dream and imagine a brighter future for Malvern Hills District and the huge area it represents.

Cllr Burgess thanked Cllr Phil Grove for the report and the Council resolved that the report be accepted.

9/6/17 Clerks Update

A Asset Register- The parish council's position of poor record-keeping and lack of awareness of transparency requirements would indicate it is likely to 'fail' at audit leading to a qualified audit opinion. On the Parish Council's Insurance it states that we are currently insuring assets of: street furniture £20,000; Gates and Fences £7500; Play Ground Equipment £40,000; War Memorials £20,000; Mowers and Machinery £5,000 and sports equipment £5,000. We are required to keep an Asset Register and currently do not have one. Councillors discussed this and could recall that the Parish Council owned bus shelters at Sweet Green Stoke Bliss and Netherwood Manor. Also there are War Memorials at Bockleton and Stoke Bliss Cross Farm. Moving forward the Parish Council need to ascertain whether we do own assets, create a register of assets and adjust the insurance accordingly. Currently under the 2015/16 audit the Council declared it had no assets. An asset register will be formulated once this has been ascertained and/or the insurance policy amended. By removing this section of the insurance policy we would save upto £76 per year.

B Delegated Powers (payment of invoices between meetings; respond on planning applications). It was resolved that invoices that require payment between quarterly meetings should be processed by the Clerk filling in cheques and sending them to the Chair of the Council who will get them authorised and forward them to the Debtors. Members were

reminded that when sent planning applications for a response that they should reply to the correspondence even if the response is “no objection”.

C Annual Parish Council Meeting - Paragraph 7(1) and (2) of schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires the parish council to hold an annual meeting every year, “on such day in May as the parish council may determine...”. The meeting may not be held in June. In a year which is a year of ordinary elections of parish councillors, the annual meeting of a parish council shall be held on, or within fourteen days after, the day on which the councillors elected at that election take office, and in any other year on a date in May to be decided by the Parish Council. Councillors agreed to move the meetings to August, November, February and May and to hold them on the 2nd Monday in the month to comply with this.

Annual Parish Meeting -The annual parish meeting is a meeting of the electors of the parish. It is usually called by the Chairman of the Parish Council, and he or she presides at the meeting if present. According to paragraph 14 of schedule 12 of the 1972 Act, “The parish meeting of a parish shall assemble annually on some day between 1st March and 1st June, both inclusive, in every year.” The annual parish meeting and the annual council meeting can be held on the same day, one immediately before the other. In 2017 this has not taken place and it was duly noted that next year this must be re-instated.

D Transparency Funding 2016/17. The Clerk applied for and has been awarded Transparency funding for a Computer, Printer and Microsoft Office Software to enable the Council to comply with the Transparency Code. The Council approved for the Clerk to purchase this equipment.

E Website Update – on 1st June 2017 the Parish Council was awarded funding from the Transparency Fund 2017/18 for a new website and funds for Officer time to work with design company to develop and maintain this until 31/3/18. The Council will need to precept for future officer time to maintain the website which is estimated at 4 hours per month. Work will commence straight away and we hope to go live on July 1st 2017. Any Councillors with High Resolution jpg pictures of the villages should send them to the clerk to go on the website.

G Budget (Precept) Moving Forward. The Precept moving forward will be determined at the November meeting and will be determined following a budget prepared by the Clerk to the Parish in line with guidelines set out by CALC.

H Resignation of Cllr Chris Rodgers from the parish of Stoke Bliss. WFDC receive no requests for an election and therefore the Council may co-opt a new Councillor for Stoke Bliss. Councillors should also consider co-opting for the other vacancies within the parish council which are 2 further vacancies Stoke Bliss, Kyre 1 vacancy and Bockleton 1 Vacancy.

The Council approved that the Clerk’s report be accepted.

10/6/17 Planning Matters

Birchley Farm Court, Bockleton Rd, OLDWOOD 17/00526/HP Extension to existing building. 2 no. windows, new porch, removal of chimney and existing garage. No update received.

Sallings Farm, Middle Common, Bockleton. 16/00113/FUL. Erection of 4 no. broiler rear buildings with assoc. feeder bins, hardstanding, highway access, attenuation pond and boiler storage building. Application Approved but may be subject to a judicial review.

1 Foxall Cottages Bockleton 17/00584/FUL – a site meeting to be convened on Thursday 8th June at 5.30pm for Parish Councillors to discuss and view this application.

Pensons Barns 16/01389/ planning application Approved.

11/6/17 Correspondence – Cllr Chris Rodgers submitted his resignation on 11th April 2017. This has now gone through the due process with Malvern Hills District Council and they have replied to say an election is not necessary and that a Councillor can be co-opted onto the Parish Council (see item 10 H above).

12/6/16 Items of business for future consideration-

Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and Risk Assessment policies have been drafted and will be put to the November meeting for adoption.
VAT update. The Clerk has now made a claim for past 3 years to recover VAT paid.
Lengthsman invoice from 25th March not paid as per April's bank statement.
The Clerk to check the May bank statement when this arrives.

13/6/17. Date of Next Meeting. (August 14th 2017 at 7.30pm, Stoke Bliss Village Hall)