

# SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Tuesday 21st JANUARY 2020 at 7.00 pm in Suckley Village Hall

Present: Cllr P Whatley, Cllr J Green, Cllr R Hill, Cllr A Lewis, Cllr P Griffiths,  
Cllr C Luton, Cllr R Hooper

In Attendance: Mrs D Taylor (Clerk), Mrs Helen Philpotts (Footpaths), Co Cllr P Tuthill

Apologies: Dist Cllr S Rouse, Cllr L Devenish, Cllr A W Huband

Two members of the public attended the meeting.

**Declaration of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) or other Disclosable Interests falling within the terms of para 12(4)(b) of the Code of Conduct – None Declared. No requests had been received by the Clerk for any Dispensations relating to items on the Agenda. (Sec 33 of the Localism Act 2011)**

### **The Chairman then adjourned the Meeting for Public Question Time/Participation**

A parishioner attending the meeting raised the question of the speed limit approaching the White House Cross Roads along the Knightwick Road, which in his view was too high, and asked if the Council had any recent speeding figures. Unfortunately the Clerk did not have any recent VAS stats as there had been downloading problems with the Alfrick team who were now in charge of this. However, the VAS would be moving to Suckley on 9<sup>th</sup> March. Cllr P Whatley pointed out that the Council had consistently argued this point with WCC Highways who were adamant that the national speed limit in force (60 mph) was safe and adequate. The Council would keep raising this issue with WCC Highways and the Police. The Clerk to write to the landowner re removing more of the hedge on the eastern side of the Cross Roads to improve the sight line.

**Report from Co Cllr -** Co Cllr P Tuthill reported to the meeting. The Ambulance Service had been rated as the best service in the country. It had taken back the running of the 111 service and had recruited 130 medically qualified staff to assess and help people using the service, which in turn would take pressure off the A & E Departments. Despite Reports from inspections by the CQC re both Redditch & Worcester hospitals over the last 5 years, Worcester Acute Hospital was still in special measures. A new Fire station had been opened in Kidderminster, together with a training centre. Two compact fire engines had been purchased to negotiate narrow and difficult access roads. A new £6M roads programme on an asset management basis for 2020/21 was in place, together with a further extra £6M for 2021/22. The new programme would focus on unclassified roads. An extra £4M for 2020/21 would be earmarked for improved footways. A £10M budget for 2020/21 would tackle major congestion hotspots throughout the County. The Passenger Transport Budget currently totals £30M, but will be increased in 2020/21 together with the bus subsidy currently at £1.8M. More than £1M per year will be allocated for dealing with broken gullies. Cllr P Whatley thanked Co Cllr Tuthill for his suggestion that WCC Highways should review the system for jetting drains in Suckley and adjacent parishes, and have regular jetting programmes in place. Blocked drains causing flooding were becoming a major issue in Suckley, particularly in the Autumn and winter months.

**Report from District Cllrs** – The Chairman (as Dist Cllr) reported to the meeting. The MHDC 5 year plan was now in a final form, majoring on carbon capture, reducing emissions and becoming carbon neutral. Finances look to be in good shape, but the Council is under constant pressure from Central Government taking money back bit by bit, for example MHDC would be losing bonus money for new homes. The business rates system will be changed from 2021, but Councils do not yet know what this will mean. A revamp of Priory Park in Malvern is being planned, and the Splash complex will also benefit from funding to make it more efficient and more appealing. The Boundary Commission would be meeting next week to review the number of Council sizes/District Councillors in the Malvern Hills area. The Chief Executive of Malvern Hills District Council Mr Jack Hegarty would be retiring in July 2020.

**Lengthsman** - Cllr J Green reported that all was okay with the Lengthsman.

**Footpaths** - Helen Philpotts reported that she had dealt with footpaths issues (trees blocking paths) forwarded to her by the Clerk from Peter Hibbert. Path 678 and path 685. The problem reported on footpath no 565(C) where the stile was missing a bottom step and was unstable was being fixed. A replacement gate from the WCC Countryside Dept was ready to be delivered, but there was still an ongoing issue regarding ownership of the field gate between Lower Grove Farm and Grove Hill. The Clerk to contact Jon White at the Countryside Dept asking him to investigate.

**Local Police** – Cllr Rosemary Hooper reported that stats for the Police Neighbourhood area of Kempsey & Alfrick for 2019 revealed 301 reported crimes. Suckley figures were 1 ASBO and 1 burglary/dwelling.

### **The Chairman then re-opened the Meeting**

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2019 were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr J Green and seconded by Cllr P Griffiths. The Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019 were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr C Luton and seconded by Cllr A Lewis.

### **01/20 HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS**

- (a) Outstanding repair for drain cover – Blackhouse Lane. Clerk had chased this up with Hannah Davies yet again. Ref: 636955. *(Hannah Davies (HD) stated that this work had been done, but this was not the case so a further reminder had been sent by the Clerk – HD had requested the Clerk to send in a new report – new Ref 817848)*
- (b) Sign for Longley Green (opposite the bus shelter). *(Clerk has e-mailed Hannah Davies about this twice. Clerk to continue to chase).*
- (c) Blocked drain No 57. (Acton Beauchamp Road) Clerk had reported this to WCC Highways Ref: 688543. *(Hannah Davies reported that this was jetted on 29<sup>th</sup> May – Lengthsman has inspected and it is still blocked – e-mail sent to HD by the Clerk and HD has requested a new report – now sent – see below)*
- (d) Cllr P Whatley had reported a flooding issue at the bottom of Birchwood Road to WCC Highways - Ref 681084 *(Hannah Davies reported that this was jetted on 29<sup>th</sup> May). This was re-reported by Cllr P Whatley – new Ref No 7923618 – inspected on 10/12/19. WCC Highways reported that the drain was clear on inspection – see below)*
- (e) Drains 111 and 112 (opposite Wells Cottage) Reported to Lengthsman for clearance and inspection. Lengthsman has now reported back that the brick headwalls were damaged on both drains. *(Clerk reported this to Highways Ref 743662 – who responded that it was not a safety issue. It was not reported as such. Lengthsman checked again and*

- reported that water was running clear but pipework blocked to drain nos 107 and 108 in the vicinity causing flooding across the road. Clerk has reported this to WCC Highways – see below)*
- (f) Fence at the lower car park/field at the Bruff in need of repair. *(Clerk reported this to Highways Ref 787833 – e-mail from Highways dated 01/08/19 – map and photo have been sent to the repair section – Hannah Davies would be chasing re action on this – Clerk had sent in a further request for a progress report, but so far no response from HD)*
  - (g) Blocked drain/ditch at Stocks Cottages. *(Clerk reported to the previous meeting that Jack Adams was taking action to serve a Section 25 Notice on BT. He has been in contact with BT who have agreed to carry out the necessary works by the end of November. Clerk contacted Jack Adams – BT was behind schedule, but it should be resolved by the end of January)*
  - (h) Failed Drains on Sindons Mill Lane (C1140), Cllr P Whatley had reported this to WCC Highways Ref 786353. *(HD had asked for specialist investigatory contractors to visit and clarify any issues)*
  - (i) Flood Defence Drain – Woodland Road area *(Cllr J Green had inspected and Lengthsman to deal with this)*
  - (j) Grit Bin – Suckley Crossroads – this bin had been damaged. Cllr J Green/Clerk to liaise re the purchase of a new bin in view of ice issues at Stocks Crossroads. Proposed by Cllr R Hooper and seconded by Cllr C Luton.
  - (k) Drains reported to WCC Highways by Clerk in need of jetting (some re-reported as above) – Drain Nos 16/17 and 20 Birchwood Lane. Drain Nos 42/43 and 53 and 57; Drain Nos 107/108; Drain No 138; Drain No 59; gully at the entrance to Bramble Cottage (near to Stocks Cottages) but no number on our drains map, it may be on private land.
  - (l) Clerk to report blocked Drain No 58 (opposite Suckley Court). A complaint had been received that the Lengthsman had been seen digging out drains and by digging a trench to divert the water this had flooded onto the landowners property. Lengthsman to be reminded that although the Council appreciated his efforts to prevent the road being flooded, he was not allowed to dig out drains (unfortunately!)
  - (m) Clerk to report ice hazard at Stocks Cross Roads/4-5 metres into Sindons Mill Lane due to water across the road – this had been reported back in 2017 and after numerous investigations by WCC Highways had apparently been fixed in March 2019. Ice warning signs needed.

### **02/20 VAS CAMERA**

Alfrick & Lulsley Parish had taken over the scheduling and stats analysis for both parishes. Unfortunately no VAS stats were available for Suckley as there had been downloading problems with the camera. Hopefully these had now been overcome by the Alfrick team. The VAS camera would be in Suckley from 9<sup>th</sup> March.

### **03/20 CHARITY REPORTS**

- (a) **Suckley Charities** - Cllr P Whatley reported that money had been given to Suckley School for Key Stage 1.
- (b) **Brookes Memorial Fund** - The Clerk reported that Mr Brooks the Fund Administrator, had e-mailed to say that Mr Andy Wood one of the Trustees, would attend the PC meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> March. The Clerk to write to Mr Brooks outlining the information the Council required.

#### **04/20 COMMUNITY**

- (a) **New Parish Information Pack** – Cllr C Luton to obtain quotes for the more expensive folder and let the Clerk know.
- (b) **Super Fast Broadband** - Cllr A Lewis reported that the Alfrick/Suckley Parishes Broadband project did not appear to be raising enough support, due to the cost. Cllr P Whatley reported that the Longley Green Open Reach Broadband project had quoted £85 for most properties, but a high number of properties in the quotation had nothing to do with Suckley and other properties had been missed off the list. He would be seeking an improved quotation.
- (c) **Village Green** - The Clerk confirmed that after checking her files and looking at the Land Registry, the Parish Council did not own the Village Green. However, the “inhabitants of Suckley have a customary right to indulge in lawful sports and pastimes on the land “ (dispute hearing in 1977).
- (d) **Defibrillator** - Cllr A Lewis reported that the battery had failed on the defibrillator over the Christmas period and it had not been fit for action. She had renewed the AED electrode pads and replaced the battery (at no cost to the Parish Council) and would be keeping a record of all renewals for future reference. She was concerned about the temperature in the cabinet which was too cold. A clasp on the cabinet had been broken, and a plastic flap needed replacing.
- (e) **Potential projects** – CCTV & New Lighting at the Playing Field (see 06/20 below). Memorial Stone at the Old Quarry - Cllr C Luton to obtain a quote for painting the lettering on the Memorial Stone.

#### **05/20 FINANCE**

- (a) The following cheques were authorised for payment :- Proposed by Cllr P Griffiths and seconded by Cllr A Lewis.  
**General Fund** – Clerk’s expenses Nov/Dec 2019 - £44.06; Lengthsman November 2019 - £345.60; Lengthsman December 2019 - £273.60; HMRC PAYE – Oct/Nov/Dec 2019 - £327.80; VAT refund to Playing Field Account - £198.62 (up to 31/03/19); Nelson Inn Room Hire for 11/11/19 - £30.00  
**Playing Field** - P Nightingale – mowing Playing Field park area Mar-Nov 2019 - £160.00 (paid but to be approved); A Cross – Mole Control services - £120.00 (paid but to be approved).
- (b) **Accounts to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019** were approved. Proposed by Cllr R Hill and seconded by Cllr C Luton.
- (c) **Clerk’s Salary Review – 2020/21** - Cllr P Whatley explained to the Council that NALC had restructured the old SCP salary bands in April 2019. The Clerk should be upgraded to the new SCP 25 (replacing the old SCP 31) starting in April 2020. This equated to £648.26 per month gross – annual gross salary of £7,779.20. This salary increase was approved. Proposed by Cllr P Griffiths and seconded by Cllr C Luton.
- (d) **Precept 2020/21** – All Cllrs had been sent a copy of the proposed Precept for 2020/21 compiled by the Chairman & Clerk. After a discussion of the figures, the Council agreed to a Precept of £14,309 (the same as 2019/20) i.e. no increase for the coming year. Proposed by Cllr R Hill and seconded by Cllr J Green. Clerk to inform MHDC.

#### **06/20 PLAYING FIELD**

Cllr C Luton reported that the Playing Field Pavilion had been broken into, damaging the door. A temporary repair had been made. This brought into question CCTV being installed, but after some discussion this was left as an option for future consideration. Cllr R Hill suggested that a

steel door and frame would be the most suitable replacement. Cllr C Luton and Cllr R Hill to look into this. She had received complaints about lighting on the all weather pitch, as one light was out of order, and about the surface of the all weather pitch. The cost of having to use a cherry picker to replace the one light was £360.00; the cost of replacing all the lights depending on watts/lumes was £800 + VAT up to £1,940 + VAT (which included fitting but not the cost of the cherry picker). As far as the all weather pitch was concerned, it was reaching the end of its life. A guide price for replacement would be in the region of £130-£143K plus VAT. Cllr C Luton suggested that the all weather pitch needed to be cleaned, cleared and swept on a regular basis, initially 1 – 2 hours per week and then about once a fortnight, and she was looking into how best this could be achieved.

#### **07/20 RISK ASSESSMENT**

Cllr J Green reported that all risk assessment forms had been completed – no problems (other than those raised re Playing Fields)

#### **08/20 PLANNING (for information)**

- (a) App No: 19/01743/HP  
Site: The Knowle, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5DJ  
Proposal: Single storey rear extension to replace conservatory.

This application has been **APPROVED** by MHDC Planning Dept.

#### **09/20 SUCKLEY CHURCH**

Cllr A Lewis reported that the floor heating should be ready to use very shortly. A meeting would be held in March to review and re-organise funds for the kitchen part of the project. The Ceilidh held on 18<sup>th</sup> January had been a great success.

#### **10/20 SUCKLEY SCHOOL**

A Report had been sent to the Council from Mrs Marshall, the Head Teacher. Numbers remain positive and the school continues to thrive with a good reputation. September numbers not yet known, but should be available in March. The building is currently sound and well maintained – the school has applied for a fund to increase the size of the smallest classroom. Church Lane and parking are an ongoing concern particularly as so many people drive large family vehicles. The use of the school bus has increased which requires parking space for two buses each day. The school is grateful for the improved access to the church via the path.

#### **11/20 MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDA**

New/updated Code of Conduct

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 7.00 pm in Suckley Village Hall**