

**WOLVERLEY & COOKLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council**  
**Held at Cookley School, Cookley on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 at 7.00pm**

Mr D Cox (Chairman)  
Mr R Drew (Vice Chairman)  
Mrs V Bordewich  
Mr A Carloss  
Mr J Hart  
Mr M Hart  
Mr D Jones  
Mrs L Jones  
Mr B McFarland  
Mr C D Nicholls  
Mr C Sherrey  
Mr S Sherrey  
Mr W Southam  
Mr J Wood

County Councillor: Apologies  
District Councillors: Mr M Hart, Mrs L Jones  
West Mercia Police; Apologies

207. **Apologies.** Apologies were received from County Councillor Ian Hardiman due to illness and West Mercia Police.

208. **Declarations of Councillors Interests**

- a) Register of Interests: Councillors are reminded to complete and need to regularly update their register of interests.
- b) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature. Councillors A Carloss, L Jones, C Nicholls, J Wood, W Southam on potential quarry, Lea Castle Farm from advice received from WFDC Solicitor.
- c) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests (Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary) in items on the agenda and their nature. Councillor B McFarland on potential quarry following election literature. Councillor D Cox on Quarry following advice from WFDC Solicitor.

The Chairman welcomed members of the public and invited questions. Please see notes after the minutes.

**Matters for Discussion / Decision:**

209. **To discuss Planning Application 19/000053/CM: Proposed sand and gravel quarry with progressive restoration using site derived and imported inert material to agricultural parkland, public access and nature enhancement at land at Lea Castle Farm, Wolverley Road, Wolverley.**

Councillor McFarland proposed the Parish Council oppose this planning application and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor M Hart addressed the Council and advised I rise to speak in respect of the quarry and am sure I speak on behalf of the 6 Wolverley Councillors here this evening. Myself and the Six Wolverley Councillors met last Thursday to discuss and consider the contents of the application. I should stress that we did not discuss or agree how we were going to vote as it is essential we reach our own conclusions when the application is considered, which if course is this evening.

Indeed, as some members of the public will no doubt be aware it is absolutely essential that when considering planning matters, we do not pre determine our view that is to say that we keep an open mind prior to the planning application and not say whether we are for or against something until we have actually considered the formal planning application. We feel it is absolutely essential that we have behaved in this way as you elect us to represent you and it is vital that we are your voice and that we can represent you and speak on your behalf as opposed to disenfranchising you and that is why we have not been a part of any action group, attended any marches or meetings against the quarry as had we have done so we would have been deemed to have been tainted and had a biased view.

After coming up for nearly 2 years of waiting here we are and so now it is entirely appropriate for us to give our view. I of course also sit on WFDC's planning committee and they too are a statutory consultee and will be considering the matter at their planning committee meeting on 21st April and anything I say is my pre-disposed view on the information and facts as I see them so far.

Having considered the planning application and non-technical summary, it is my considered view that we should be minded not to support the quarry. Whilst we would all recognise the need for quarry's to extract minerals and indeed fully support the County Council's need for a properly adopted waste and minerals plan, I feel that the proposed location of the quarry is completely inappropriate development within the green belt and that there are not very special circumstances to justify it and therefore my view is that it should not be supported in principle.

The entire site lies within the heart of the green belt and I feel that the adverse effect on the openness of the green belt would be immense and not justifiable. There will be at least 600 houses on the former Lea Castle Hospital site, with the Progressive Alliance's plan proposing a further 800 houses on the greenbelt. This development will have a major impact on the green belt and this area of the Parish and I feel that the Quarry will have a negative effect on the cumulative impact of the green belt and will have a significant environmental impact on the ecology of the area.

We are exceptionally concerned regarding the substantial vehicle movements that the quarry would bring, 77 HGV's 154 HGV's and 22 cars per day on the applicant's own assessment and whilst acknowledging that the vehicle movements would be confined to A and B

roads, feel that this area of the network is already very busy at peak times, which will become busier as houses are developed on the Lea Castle Hospital site and therefore do not feel it could cope with the additional traffic a quarry would bring and also have concerns that some vehicles would wish to access the site from driving from the Wolverley village direction.

We are also concerned about the noise and disruption to local residents of both Wolverley and Cookley as the site borders a number of residential properties. The independent noise assessment undertaken by the applicant's themselves shows that the calculated noise level in many locations is very close to the suggested noise level Site Noise Limit.

WFDC's own response to the Waste and Minerals Plan had concerns regarding the visual impact from various areas of the Parish and the Environmental Impact Assessment raises issues in respect of bats, badgers and there is an ecological impact with the loss of trees, some subject to TPO's.

I should say many residents have made contact to express their concerns and we are certainly very grateful for everyone doing so. Whilst of course, being mindful this is temporary, it will be for at least 10 years and whilst we can only consider this application, who knows if consent were to be granted whether a future application came in to extend its life and also there are concerns regarding restoration and again whilst not a material planning application, comments have been raised with us about if granted, how rigorously conditions would be enforced.

We of course have to balance all of the pros and cons and should recognise that there would be some financial benefits to the Parish in terms of job creation but when you balance the positives against the negatives it is certainly my opinion and I suspect that of my colleagues who will no doubt add their own comments that negatives clearly and demonstrably outweigh the positives and I therefore feel that we should formally submit a response to WCC that Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council do not support planning application 19/000053/CM for a sand and gravel quarry at land at Lea Castle Farm, Wolverley, Worcestershire, as I do not feel that the location is acceptable in principle and therefore do not feel it necessary to comment at this stage on what conditions might be imposed to mitigate these concerns.

Councillor C Sherrey supports everything said and is opposed to the Quarry Application. He wished to stress to the Public it is definitely not a "done deal". There are various quarries that are not in residential areas, this application is surrounded by houses, schools, businesses and many residences will be affected.

Councillor J Hart supports rejection of this application, there are five schools in close proximity to the site, 154 planned vehicle movements per day. We need to look after our children.

Councillor R Drew is totally opposed to the application. The independent ecological assessment clearly states a long-term impact to wildlife, also impact on hedgerows and various trees to be removed. The independent noise assessment undertaken by the applicants themselves shows the calculated noise level in many locations is very close to the suggested site noise limit with several properties within 1 dB of the site noise limits. No noise assessment was undertaken at Heathfield School or First Steps Nursery both directly opposite the site. There are real concerns for the safety of children that walk along B4189, the wall along there has areas collapsed and leans at angles and any vibration from the Quarry may cause it to collapse.

Councillor S Sherrey fully supports rejection. He has additional concerns over on-site monitoring of the site which sits with the operator therefore would be self-monitoring, A local liaison group - what purpose or powers do they have? where is the external contract monitoring coming from? WFDC or WCC Regulatory Services? They are both overstretched. What about non-performance, will there be any penalties, conditions should be legally binding, it would require a detailed programme of external monitoring.

Councillor V Bordewich agrees with all said and opposes the application for a quarry.

Councillor D Cox has served for 20 years at Cookley School and could not support any application that will affect the children in the Parish.

Councillor B McFarland will not vote as per advice from the Solicitor and reported that unfortunately no Councillor from Cookley can vote on this application.

He re-iterated as before concerns over adverse effect on green belt, HGV movements, Safety, Noise, Ecological Impact, Dust and Pollution, possible extension to application, infill with imported material.

Councillor S Sherrey seconded refusal of the application and this was unanimously agreed by all six Councillors.

210. **To consider the adoption of the minutes of the meeting held on 4th February 2020 at 7.00pm. (minutes previously circulated).**  
These having previously been circulated it was resolved unanimously to receive and adopt the minutes as a true record of the meeting and these were signed as such by the Chairman.

211. **To welcome West Mercia Police representative and receive report.**  
PCSOs Nicky Merson / Becky Ruston gave apologies. Written report had been circulated;

## **WOLVERLEY**

DRAKELOW LANE - Theft of horse rugs, wheelbarrows, tools

WARDLE WAY - Ford Fiesta stolen without keys - located after car chase in Kinver where it had been involved in accident

SHATTERFORD LANE - Orange Mountain Bike stolen from roof rack of a car parked in this location

## **COOKLEY**

A449 COOKLEY - Car parked in gateway whilst tending to horses had window smashed and a purse stolen

COOKLEY PRIMARY - Tools and money stolen from Forest School Shed

NR TO ANCHOR PH CAUNSALL - Landrover Discovery stolen without keys

LIONFIELD ROAD - Ford Fiesta broken into with attempt made to steal

NEW ROAD CAUNSALL - Burglary - offenders walked into a house (door closed but not locked) and stole 2 x sets of car keys and a wallet. Homeowner saw male in hallway who then ran to a waiting car outside

NR TO CANAL CAUNSALL - car parked in layby had window smashed and a bag with £80 cash stolen

EMPTY property on Riverbank Cookley - reports of items being stolen from the property

212. **To receive Councillors Reports;**

District Councillor Marcus Hart reported;

Wolverley and Cookley Issues

We have been dealing with the usual routine casework, reporting litter on the main A roads.

We have had a meeting with both Paul Round and Richard Jennings on 26th February to discuss a number of outstanding planning and enforcement issues.

In respect of Wolverhill in Wolverley Village, no planning application has yet been received and we are advised that the owners are not minded to make one. WFDC will therefore have to consider what enforcement action to take which will be a balance as they advise that if there were to be an application it could be potentially supportable for approval from an officer perspective.

In respect of the Cookley stable block issues in Austcliffe Lane and adjacent to the A449 Richard says that some applications are starting to come in now and some may well be supportable from an officer perspective. A 6 metre buffer zone for the site is required and also in respect of the gateway access onto the A449 as officers would not want this access to be used as it is dangerous so close to the bend. Obviously any applications will come before the Parish Council for consideration in the first instance in the normal way.

Regarding Motor X on the land adjacent to the A449, on Lea Castle Equestrian Centre and Court Farm, Lisa is leading on this on behalf of the 3 of us but again, the 3 of us discussed this at our meeting with Paul and Richard. In essence, we would be very grateful if members of the public would keep as accurate logs as possible and as to which parcel of land it refers to so that when activity exceeds the 14 days in any one calendar year action can be taken. Officers have advised that there is no formal planning permission required for the land use at Court Farm as the activity has been undertaken for circa 10 years and also due to the topology of the site it is not felt all of the ramps have been man made. Provided therefore, there are no more than 14 events per year this is acceptable in planning terms and is permitted development.

Regarding the Lea Castle Equestrian site, Mr Strong has been advised to restore the land back to how it was as the ramps are clearly man made and he has told WFDC officers he will do so. We will ensure that officers keep a close eye on this.

We continue to receive communications from local residents articulating their concerns regarding the proposed quarry at land at Lea Castle. We are acknowledging all of them.

We have notified residents in parts of Wolverley and the overwhelming majority of Cookley via a leaflet regarding the Quarry Planning application and how they can comment on the application.

This matter will be debated by WFDC's planning committee on 21st April 2020 at 6pm at Wyre Forest House.

We are aware that approximately 6 residential dwellings and 2 businesses were flooded in Wolverley Village overnight on 15th and 16th February. Lisa visited the area on our behalf to meet with locals.

WFDC and WCC have acted swiftly to assist with residents and businesses regarding support and offering a 3 month 'holiday' from council tax and bulky waste collections were offered free of charge to take away flood damaged furniture and other items. Sandbags have also been made available.

Lisa has liaised with WFDC to ensure a number of street nameplates in Cookley have been replaced because they were old or damaged. New nameplates have now been installed.

Wyre Forest Issues

Kidderminster Train Station

Work on the £4,000,000 transformation and redevelopment of Kidderminster train station continues. The station forecourt has recently been demolished.

## Local Plan

Full Council at WFDC met for an extraordinary meeting on 20th February where the Local Plan was approved by 19 votes to 14, with all 14 Conservative members voting to oppose the plan in its current form, challenging the soundness on the basis that there is more development in the green belt than necessary and that very special circumstances are not made out as a figure of 276 dwellings per annum is being used as opposed to 248 which is the objectively assessed housing need figure and therefore this is contrary to the PPG.

The preferred options plan was supported by the 8 ICHC councillors, 5 Independents, 3 Liberal Democrats, 2 Labour and 1 Green Councillor. The major implication for this parish is the additional 800 houses at Lea Castle, which would take this overall development to 1400.

At full council on 26th February, the Progressive Alliance approved their budget by 19 votes to 14. The Conservatives opposed it primarily on the basis that too much emphasis was placed on Localism but if town and parish councils did not take on services then they would simply cease. We felt that more should be done to reform the council, make it more efficient and grow our income more rather than simply cutting services. We did not support the budget and proposed an alternative set of proposals which were defeated by 19 votes to 14.

Council tax is going up by 2.33% which is a £5 per annum increase on a Band D property. WFDC's share of the bill overall is 12% and a Band D will be £219.34.

The precepting authorities set their council tax increases for 20/21 as follows:-

WCC	3.99%
WFDC	2.33%
Police	3.94%
Fire	1.96%
W and C PC	15%

The independent remuneration panel (IRP) has met and its recommendations were considered at the 26th February meeting of full council. With the exception of the Chairman of the Audit Committee where the special responsibility allowance was proposed to be increased from £1,156 to £3,469, all of the other allowances were to remain the same. The back bench basic allowance that all 33 councillors receive is £4,626 per annum or £89 per week subject to tax and national insurance in the normal way. Whilst there were a variety of views on the report, not least the substantial increase for the Chairman of the Audit Committee the recommendations were unanimously approved on the basis the panel was independent and councillors wanted to take this issue away from being a 'political football' and this followed the previous very clear support for the previous recommendations in 2014.

The returning officer also presented an elections report on the 12.12.19 General Election.

The Progressive Alliance have now changed their mind and will not be making any changes to the governance structure of the council, retaining the cabinet system despite indicating they were conducting a review on the basis to changing to a committee system.

Councillor D Jones reported on motocross activity in woods where Badgers are. This will need to be monitored and may need reporting to Police and RSPCA.

County Councillor. Written report previously circulated;

## Wyre Forest Issues

Work on Kidderminster Train Station continues, with changes to the forecourt taking place. The station has recently been demolished.

WCC highways have now started work on the Churchfields site with the creation of the spur road off the island which will take traffic out of town. This coming week there will be disruption as one of the lanes is closed to facilitate the work.

The additional funding for the Hoobrook island has now been agreed as part of the budget and we should see this scheme commence this year to tackle this major congestion hotspot in Kidderminster.

## Strategic Issues County Wide

As stated in last month's report, Worcestershire County Council have now approved their budget strategy at their meeting on 13th February and are increasing Council tax by 1.99% and having an adult social care levy of 2%.

The net budget for 2020/21 will be £346million, compared to £330million in 2019/20.

Alongside meeting increased demands for providing social care, the County Council remains committed to the economic growth of Worcestershire. The budget will focus on a programme of improved infrastructure and development for the County.

## Local Issues

Lea lane Landslip:

I am informed that a site meeting was held recently with WCC's contractor and BT Open Reach, discussing the proposed works due to the BT infrastructure here. The current works proposed are:

- . Divert the BT Cable further into the road, to allow the slip to be stepped while works are happening.
- . Construct a working platform at the bottom of the slope.
- . Cast a reinforced concrete foundation, and install concrete "Lego" Blocks to approximately 3metres height.
- . Fill behind the wall, reinstall the safety barrier and reinstate the road.

Unfortunately, there will be a delay to the works starting, due to resourcing issues with the service diversion on behalf of BT. The new proposed start date for the works is 16th March 2020.

The Crescent: Following further residents' concerns regarding the outstanding road repair and trees overhanging, impeding vehicles, I have asked to meet the Highways Engineer this Thursday to urge attention to these issues.

Wolverley, Damaged Bridge: I am continuing to press for the unsound wall of this bridge to be rebuilt.

Wolverley, Franche Rd/ Fairfield Lane Junction Yellow Lines: I am pleased to report that these lines have been installed and hopefully will ensure safe and clear access by the buses.

Cookley, Barriers at the Bottom of the walkway from Austcliffe Park have now been repositioned to allow safe access and egress of disability scooters.

213. **Financial Matters: Accounts for Payment - agreed the following schedule of cheques be paid;**

73	Worcestershire CALC (Training)	40.00
74	BT Payphones (Adopt Kiosk)	1.00
75	Mrs B J Drew (Salary February 2020)	880.47
76	Mrs B J Drew (Stationery)	7.99
77	T & A Dale (Lengthsman Fee)	704.70
78	Wolverley & Cookley Matters	350.00

214. **Parish Council Representative for Sebright Educational Foundation.**

Following resignation of Councillor Cox it was unanimously agreed Councillor B McFarland be appointed as his replacement.

215. **Consultations:** Noted

- a) Worcestershire Pollinator Strategy
- b) West Mercia PCC Road Safety Strategy

216. **Planning Applications for Consideration: -**

PC No WFDC No/Details

3449 19/0724/RESE: Additional Planning Addendum

Reserved Matters following outline consent 17/0205/Outl for approval of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of scheme involving 600 homes, public open space and infrastructure on phases A, B,C,D, E and F.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to Recommend Refusal.

In the original outline permission (17/0205/Outl) the applicant stated the main site access is proposed from Park Gate Road and a Secondary access proposed from The Crescent with a series of traffic calming measures including bus barriers. This was supposed to be dealt with at the Reserved Matters application.

The Parish Council still have serious concerns over highways Issues which have not been addressed. The vehicular access point from The Crescent WILL be a main route in and out of the site and cannot serve access to 600 houses. It is a narrow residential road currently serving only 39 properties. As stated previously the Transport Assessment states that only 10% of traffic movement is predicted through The Crescent which is ridiculous, any traffic heading towards Wolverhampton, Dudley etc will use this access and also traffic using the local amenities of Cookley village.

The Parish Council note in the Planning Addendum that Worcestershire County Council objected to the Reserved Matters application and the response from the applicant is that a Transport Statement has been submitted. The Parish Council have

not seen this. In addition the initial proposals approved in the outline permission for a series of traffic calming measures appear to have been ignored.

The Parish Council are extremely disappointed that the provision of affordable housing on the site has now been reduced to meet the minimum requirements , 15% Affordable Housing Units plus 5% additional AHP funded Affordable Housing rather than the 40% originally stated.

3459 20/0091/HOU: Single storey side extension at 34 The Crescent, Cookley.

Recommend Approval

3460 20/0106/Full: Retrospective change of use to mixed agricultural and equestrian use, erection of stable building and retention of store/tack room and mobile shelter at Plot F, Wolverhampton Road, Cookley.

Recommend Refusal adverse effect on openness of the greenbelt.

3461 20/0113/TCA: Fell 1 x Whitebeam, 1 x Sycamore and reduce 1 x Beech to balance aesthetics of the crown at Sinkers Cottage, The Shortyard, Wolverley.

Recommend Approval

#### **Parish Matters for Update Only - no decisions required**

217. Clerks Report (Clerk). Local Plan, Support to flood victims, CALC Training Update, Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth, Flag Flying Ceremony to honour Armed Forces.
218. Update on Cookley and Caunsall Neighbourhood Plan / Wyre Forest Community Land Trust. (DJ/JW) CLT has been established.
219. Update on Metal Bridge (DJ) Ian Hardiman gave update, Clerk circulated, favoured option 2 to refurbish current bridge.
220. Update on Wolverley Memorial Hall Lease. (MH) The Parish Council solicitor is in contact with the Memorial Hall Solicitor and they are sorting out the lease,
221. Update on Lengthsman Scheme. (RD/WS) RD 43.5 hours work completed this month therefore he cannot do any more work in March. Councillor Nicholls would like a breakdown of how many hours worked in Cookley and how many in Wolverley.
222. New Issues / Items for Next Meeting. None
223. Dates for Meetings:  
Worcestershire County Council Spring Parish Conference - 18th March 2020.  
Wyre Forest Area CALC - Thursday 19th March 2020
224. Date of Next Meeting - to confirm the date of the next meeting which is scheduled for Tuesday 7th April, 7.00pm, Wolverley Church Hall.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.10pm.

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Chairman - 7<sup>th</sup> April 2020

#### **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME:**

A parishioner advised of the Public meeting being held on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March and asked if Councillors could please attend. They also commented they didn't like the article in Wolverley & Cookley matters. The Clerk advised that this had to remain factual and not show any opinion so as to not predetermine views.

Another resident stressed that all residents should be encouraged to do an objection.

A resident said the low turnout at the meeting is not reflective of the opinion of the residents and hopes that it is not a "done deal".