

Honeybourne Parish Council

Locum Clerk: Lynne Yapp – 36 Abbey Road, Pershore, Worcs. WR10 1JP
clerk@honeybourne-pc.gov.uk Tel: 01386 552233

Minutes of the Parish Council Online Meeting

Tuesday 13th October 2020 at 7.15pm

Members Present:

Cllrs: Trevor Askew – Chairman
Cathryn Steward – Vice Chairman
Andy Attridge, Colin Clear, Graham Clelland, Chris Gear, Matt Henson, Heath Jobes, Sylvia Matthews and Graham Taylor

County Cllr Alastair Adams

District Cllr Thomas Havemann-Mart

In Attendance: Lynne Yapp – Locum Clerk / Ruth Waller – Replacement Clerk from 1st November 2020
4 members of the public

352. Apologies - There were no apologies

353. Declarations of Interest:

- (a) Cllrs are reminded of the need to keep their Register of Interests up to date
- (b) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature
- (c) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature
- (d) Dispensations Requests Received:
 - Cllr Henson – Items related to Sports Field & Pavilion – Request to participate in discussion and vote. *Cllr Henson was 'moved to the waiting room' before discussion took place* – Discussion took place. *Cllr Henson rejoined the meeting*
 - Cllr Clelland – Trustee / Committee Member Village Hall – Request to participate in discussion and vote. *Cllr Clelland was 'moved to the waiting room' before discussion took place* – Discussion took place. *Cllr Clelland re-joined the meeting*

Cllr Steward re-capped on the advice from CALC re Cllr Clelland and his position as a Trustee rather than just a committee member, with his obligations and priority lying with the Charity, it was inadvisable for a Dispensation to be granted.

With regard other Cllrs who were also VH Committee members the advice from CALC was as follows:

- Cllr Matthews – Application for Dispensation arrived after the Agenda had been sent out, but the same would apply as for Cllr Clelland as she is also a Trustee
- Cllr Jobes – as the parish council representative on the VH committee, there is no interest to declare
- Cllr Gear – Application for Dispensation arrived after the Agenda had been sent round, but as a paid employee of the VH, a recommendation from CALC that a dispensation not granted and that he should withdraw from discussion and no voting.

OPEN FORUM – *the meeting was adjourned for Open Forum*

- Land for Sale (opposite Co-op), Sycamore Drive – land is an eyesore, with damaged fencing, building materials, weeds and litter. A general feeling was that the fencing should be moved completely, although Cllr Clelland raised the question as to who was responsible in the event of any accident or injury, with Cllr Taylor raising concerns that removal of the fencing would encourage parking on the area of land. The clerk would liaise with the parishioner for contact details
- Traffic Calming, Mickleton Road – parishioner asked if the parish council were paying for traffic calming measures, was there any evidence that the proposed road markings would have an effect. County Cllr Adams reported that the reason this was an agenda item was because the traffic officer went to site and reported back that ‘*dragons teeth*’ were a recommendation made by him.

The meeting was re-convened

354. COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT – Cllr Adams full report had been circulated to Cllrs and is appended to these minutes:

- Worcestershire only had 12 cases of Covid in all hospitals with just 2 in intensive care
- Pedestrian Crossing on Station Road – Western Power installing the electricity on 28th November with some traffic management in place for 3 days, along with the lights and flashing beacon. The anti-skid surface won’t be laid until the warmer weather in 2021. The clerk confirmed that the parish council had been contacted with regard the contribution for costs from the parish council. *Cllr Gear asked for clarification that the pedestrian crossing would not be operational until the ‘anti-skid’ material was down.*
- Use the Lengthsman to keep ditches and gullies clear.
- Planning Committee on 15th October to consider the application for 65 houses off Stratford Road (20/01124) with an officer recommendation to approve the application, despite the Neighbourhood Plan for Honeybourne only being adopted in April, with a need for 50 houses being identified. Cllr Adams felt the density was too high and design poor. Cllr Gear raised the point that the site was not included in the SWDP. Cllr Adam replied that had Honeybourne not had the Neighbourhood Development Plan in place, the site would not have been considered for planning, however, the NDP had identified the site as a potential development site, which the developer took advantage of
- Proposed Western Gas upgrade
- Cllr Clelland reported that there were no white ‘STOP’ lines, on exit from the Co-Op onto Sycamore Drive. Cllr Adams advised that he would investigate this.

355. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT – Full copy of District Cllr Havemann-Mart appended to these minutes

Cllrs Adams and Havemann-Mart left the meeting

356. MINUTES from meeting 8th September 2020 were approved. All in favour**357. PLANNING:**

- 20/01297 – Land South of Blakes Hill – Cllr Clear raised the point regarding the additional traffic the site would generate during the construction phase. It was agreed that a condition be asked for on the planning decision, restricting traffic movements between certain times of the day.

- Planning Reforms – Cllrs Askew and the clerk were in attendance at the briefing, and that a draft from the joint councils, Wychavon, Malvern Hills and Worcester City is expected before the end of the week
- Fancutt Site – Cllr Gear had been chasing WDC with regard the fence, and was told that this would remain for several years, after which point soil will flood onto the PRoW, and to resolve the issue with regard the boundary. Cllr Gear is in communication with WDC to try and sort these issues out.
- Stratford Road, Harvard Avenue – an email had been circulated from Rosconn Group. Cllrs had attended the area after the heavy rainfall the previous week and photographs taken of the flooded ditches. Cllrs Askew, Clelland and Gear had met with an officer from WDC. It is unclear as to who owns the land but there were a couple of names and addresses on the application on the planning portal. The clerk would write to them asking them to clear the ditches in the first instance

358. FINANCE:

(a) Schedule of payments for approval had been circulated to Cllrs. Proposed to accept the payment schedule Cllr Taylor, seconded Cllr Henson. Cllr Clear asked for clarification on the payments to British Gas – which the clerk advised was a monthly bill. It was agreed that the

Voucher No.	Payee	Details	Total Payment	VAT Element	Net Payment
DD	British Gas	Electricity Pavilion	36.62	1.74	34.88
1955	Wychavon District Council	Postage - Consultation	148.25	24.71	123.54
1	P K F Littlejohn	External Audit	960.00	160.00	800.00
2	Cheque Cancelled				
3	J Stedman	Clerks salary & Expenses	1,266.84		1,266.84
4	John Hyde	Lengthsman Works	49.80		49.80
1960	John Hyde	Handyman Works	89.00		89.00
1962	Lynne Yapp	Locum Clerks Salary	812.50		812.50
1964	A Wearing	Soil Spreading - Pavilion	500.00		500.00
1965	Limebridge RS	Amenity maintenance contract	1,356.00	226.00	1,130.00
1966	Calum McAlinden	Website - hosting etc	66.00		66.00
1967	A Wearing	Balance Soil Spreading - Pavilion	1,100.00		1,100.00
1968	Poore Prints	Edit & delivery of newsletter	655.00		655.00
1969	Starsign	Covid Signage	107.64	17.94	89.70
1970	Fairview Trading Co Ltd	Soil	857.52	142.92	714.60
1971	John Hyde	Lengthsman / Handyman	130.50		130.50
1972	Limebridge RS	Amenity maintenance contract	1,428.00	238.00	1,190.00
1973	Lynne Yapp	Locum Clerks Salary	862.26		862.26
1974	British Gas	Electricity Pavilion	56.03	2.66	53.37

new Clerk would be asked to provide a breakdown of all Pavilion expenditure. Cllr Jobs questioned the amount that was paid to Poore Prints which Cllr Askew said would be covered later in the agenda.

(b) Bank Reconciliation – this had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. Cllr Jobs asked who 'signed' off the Bank Reconciliation. Cllr Taylor confirmed that he had verified the accounts, but a request made that in future the accounts would be signed off by the Chairman.

(d) Payroll Services – The clerk had obtained 3 quotes from companies offering Payroll Services. PATA were the most competitive of the three, but Cllr Jobs felt that it may be more appropriate to pay a little bit more for a more professional service, with a recommendation we use Clement Rabjohns. A proposal was put forward by Cllr Jobs that we use Clement Rabjohns, seconded Cllr Clelland with no other Cllrs voting in favour. A second proposal was put forward by Cllr Henson, to use PATA, seconded Cllr Taylor – total of 7 Cllrs in favour of using PATA

(e) Village Hall:

- Grant - Cllr Askew reported that £30k that is due back to the parish council from the VH, and circulated notes to this effect to Cllrs prior to the meeting. It appears that the VH are keen to refund back to the PC £30k which was surplus to what was required when the new hall was built, though there may well be VAT implications and more questions need to be asked. It was suggested that a small working group (2 or 3 members) should meet and report back at a later meeting - Cllr Jobes, the parish council representative and Cllr Steward. Cllr Jobes stressed that any discussion should take place between the Chairman of the Trustees and not committee members.
- Office Space - The new parish clerk had asked if office space could be made available to work from in the village hall. Some costs had been put together by the VH committee, based on use on average 6 hours per week (although the new clerk would like the flexibility of 3 mornings/afternoons per week). This had been circulated to Cllrs prior to the meeting. Points raised by Cllrs:
 - The PC should provide ALL the equipment, and is the sole property of the parish council
 - A *Lone Workers* Policy should be in place for the Clerk
 - A trial period, to be agreed between the clerk and Cllr Gear (as the VH employee)
 - Insurance – who is responsible?
 - New clerk asked if the VH would be the registered address as the PC. The proposal is that she covers approx. 9 hours at the village hall with the remainder being carried out at home, and the parish council laptop would be taken with her
 - Storage for files?
 - Archive of old files?

Proposal by Cllr Steward to agree to the clerk using the VH for office space (subject to certain requests above), seconded Cllr Attridge – total 6 in favour pending the above points being rectified. Cllr Clear asked for a point to be minuted, regarding clarification of telephone line, postal address, storage of current files and historic files, agreed by Cllr Henson

- (f) On-Line Banking – this had been previously agreed October 2019 with 4 signatories authorised. The clerk advised that this is something the new clerk sorts out with new address for statements etc

359. ADMINISTRATION / STAFFING / POLICY & DOCUMENTS REVIEW:

- (a) Policy / Document Review – An agreement that a full review is necessary, with the clerk, Vice Chairman and any other volunteers – Cllrs Taylor and Jobes offered to help
- (b) Village Newsletter – Cllr Taylor reported that he had carried out a full review and there was no reason why they couldn't break even, with a lot of work carried out over a 12-month period. Without any grant, a more realistic printing cost and an increase in cost of advertising, the magazine should be able to break even. A discussion is needed between Cllrs Askew, Taylor and Henson – the main emphasis seems to be on the advertisers and the lack of information provided. Cllr Taylor reported that there was a bank account set up. Cllr Matthews felt that the front cover needed improving
- (c) Cllr Email Addresses – From a GDPR perspective all Cllr email addresses should be linked to the parish council rather than an individual. One quote received equated to 80p per email address per annum (from Zoho). The clerk commented that there was a reluctance for some Cllrs to have a designated parish council email account that can't be accessed by family

members / work colleagues. Suggestion made that the situation is raised with CALC with regard the legal position.

360. HIGHWAYS:

- (a) Lengthsman Role – the clerk suggested that the LM could be more proactive, to work alongside and under the guidance of a Cllr. The clerk was asked to send a copy of the 'Works Schedule' issued by WCC to Cllr Askew. Cllr Clelland felt that we needed to get tougher with the LM and encourage him to be more proactive.
- (b) Handyman Role – no requests were made
- (c) Second Handyman Role – previous discussion had taken place with regard a second handyman and agreement made to appoint someone. Cllr Askew proposed that the parish council advertise for a second handyman, seconded Cllr Steward – all in favour
- (d) Signs attached to high properties – following the clerks phone calls to local estate agents, some had been removed but there were still a few that had not. The clerk would chase this up.
- (e) Flooding – it was agreed that this become part of the LM role and responsibilities. The clerk would report blocked stream opposite The Gate Inn
- (f) Traffic Calming
 - VAS Sign – a proposal made by Cllr Steward that this be deferred as there may be more funds coming back into the parish council budget. Cllr Taylor had carried out extensive investigations previously and this information would be made available to Cllrs before the next meeting
 - Dragons teeth – Cllr Adams had asked if the parish council were in agreement to pay £1,000 towards the cost of *Dragons Teeth* and *Beware of Pedestrians* on the Mickleton Road. Cllrs Steward and Henson felt that *Dragons Teeth* had little impact, but Cllr Clelland suggesting that chicanes would be a far better solution, seconded Cllr Matthews – all in favour
 - Speeding – Cllr Gear had been in contact with Community Speed Watch scheme, and that traffic speeds on Western Road was too fast for Community Speed Watch, but Stratford Road would be suitable for CSW. A site visit to be organised with Cllrs Gear and Clelland.

361. VILLAGE AMENITIES

- (a) Leys Playground – To consider expenditure of s106 monies and moving forward. A report had been put together by Cllr Askew, fully supported by Cllr Clelland. Question raised by Cllr Gear regarding the neighbouring parishioners and their future involvement. It was reported that the outcome of the Survey overwhelmingly supported the new play equipment and that we should now move on. Parish Council has already agreed the items, supported by the parishioners from the results of the Survey. Next phase is to go out to tender. There are organisations that will do all the hard work for the parish council – they arrange for all the tenders and report their findings back to the parish council. Cllr Clelland commented that we need to get on with this.
- (b) Opening of Leys Playground – Signage is in place. It was reported there is no obligation by the parish council to clean the equipment as this is clearly covered on the signs
- (c) Pavilion / Recreation Ground
 - Flooring – the clerk had managed to get hold of one company to give another quote but they never got back to Cllr Henson. A proposal made by Cllr Steward that we go with the one quote for £1,345 plus VAT, seconded Cllr Attridge – all in favour, on condition that there has been no price increase.
 - Sports / Recreation Field – Groundworks quote received for £2,250 and the clerk had been unable to get other quotes. Cllr Steward asked if there was any guarantee. Cllr

Henson felt it was difficult to get any guarantee but felt that the quote was reasonable. Proposal made by Cllr Clelland we move forward and accept the quote, seconded Cllr Steward – all in favour

- Use of Sports Field by Honeybourne Primary Academy – this was welcomed by the school with Cllrs in agreement that it was good to see the field used. Cllr Gear reported that the school was in fact using the Leys again. Cllr Steward would report back to the school
 - Seeding the re-instated trenches – It was agreed that the trenches needed re-seeding and would be a handyman job
- (d) Noticeboard Relocation – Cllr Steward had been in touch with the landowners but not heard anything back and would chase them
- (e) Community Legacy Grant -Cllr Henson put a proposal forward to extend pavilion and would create a rentable asset. Concern raised by Cllr Matthews that this would take rental off the Village Hall. A suggestion made that Cllr Henson would speak to Jem Teale (WDC) in the first as we already had a large amount of money previous with the Village Hall. A proposal to be put together and sent to WDC in the first instance

362. MEMORY LANE MEMORIALS - Memorial Fees Enquiry – requests had been received for headstone and additional vases and whether there were any additional fees paid. It was agreed that we charge £150 for the memorial and £150 for 2 vases, proposed Cllr Askew, seconded Cllr Clear – all in favour.

363. FOOTPATHS/PRoW – Nothing to report

364. CORRESPONDENCE:

- Cllr Askew had received emails from residents regarding trenches that have appeared on The Leys. Cllr Askew had acknowledged. Temporary signs are in place.
- A letter had been received from a resident regarding the missing bollards Bramble Close. The clerk had acknowledged the letter and written to the management company to get these re-installed
- Cllr Matthews had received a phone call regarding whether the parish council wanted a memorial wreath this year. It was agreed that we still have the wreath regardless of whether there is a service. All in favour
- Cllr Taylor referred to a letter he had received regarding the development of land at Stratford Road

365. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION / FUTURE AGENDAS:

- Allotments Payment Procedure – defer to next meeting
- Working Groups – a suggestion to have a finance working group as a positive way forward. A query was raised as to whether a cheque signatory was able to be a member of the working group
- Financial Accounting System – an agreement that the current accounting system was complicated. Cllr Taylor had made enquiries with 3 companies. Scribe had sent Cllr Taylor a ‘dummy’ system, which the new clerk could familiarise herself with. This to be discussed further at the next meeting

366. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 10th November 2020 at 7:15pm

Meeting closed at 10.40pm

Signed _____ (Chairman)

Date _____

County Councillor Report - Honeybourne
Month: October 2020
Prepared by Alastair Adams
Littletons Division, Worcestershire County Council

Dear All,

The Government announced new restrictions on 22nd September to help tackle the rise in Covid-19 cases across the country.

They include:

- workers should work from home where possible
- all pubs, bars and restaurants must be table service only and must close at 10pm from Thursday 24 September
- the requirement to wear a face covering has now extended to staff in retail, staff in hospitality and passengers in taxis
- weddings are now limited to 15 people, funerals remain at a limit of 30 people

Changes have also been made to the exemptions list for the rule of 6.

You can find full details of the changes using the links below:

[New restrictions announced on 22 September 2020](#)

[Meeting with others safely](#)

[Coronavirus FAQs: What you can and cannot do](#)

In Worcestershire we are now starting to see the increasing number of cases of Covid-19 lead to a rise in hospital admissions, although still relatively small numbers.

COVID-19 STATISTICS

At the end of last week (w/e 9th October), there were only 12 people in all of the Hospitals in Worcestershire with COVID, and only 2 in ITU (intensive care).

Official statistics and information are available on the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-track-coronavirus-cases>

Face Coverings on Home to School Transport

In light of the continued and rising increase in community transmission and COVID-19 infection rates, Worcestershire County Council with advice from Public Health have decided to make the wearing of face coverings mandatory on Home to School Transport from Tuesday 6th October.

Children under the age of 11 will be exempt and the Council will follow the same guidance that is in place for Public Transport which can be found on the Department for Transport website
Read Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer travel guidance for passengers
Worcestershire County Council is working with schools to ensure they will have a supply of face coverings for those pupils who do not currently have one and these will be available from school.

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION, HELP AND ADVICE?

Worcestershire County Council website
<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/coronavirus>

NHS Website for information on Coronavirus
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Download the NHS COVID-19 app today
<https://covid19.nhs.uk/>

Financial support for you

If you are struggling financially then the advice is to make a claim for Universal Credit, Council Tax Support and other benefits you may be eligible for.

There is more information on the [coronavirus employments and benefits page](#).

Help paying your Council Tax

If you are of working age and already receiving Council Tax Support, you will get a one off reduction of up to £150. This will be applied automatically to your bill. New bills will be issued in the next few weeks.

You can apply online for [Council Tax Support](#) if you are struggling to pay your bill.

More information is available on our [Benefits and Council Tax page](#).

Even if you are not eligible for Council Tax Support, you still may be able to defer your payments for a short period or spread them over 12 months instead of ten.

Please contact the Council's team by emailing Revenues@southworcestershirerevenues.gov.uk or call 03004 560560 to discuss your circumstances and they will do their best to help you.

Help to find a job

If you have been made redundant, are facing redundancy or are looking for work then the [Worcestershire Jobs Match scheme](#) can help. It has been created to help match businesses struggling to fill vacancies with individuals who have lost their jobs as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak.

We are also supporting the Pick for Britain campaign, to find thousands of workers to help support farmers to harvest fruit and vegetables and help feed the nation.

You can find out more about job opportunities available on our local farms, and other opportunities, on our [Local Job Opportunities page](#).

New Job Support Scheme announced

The Government has announced a new Job Support scheme to help protect viable jobs in businesses facing lower demand over the winter months due to Covid-19.

The scheme will open on 1 November 2020 and run for six months.

Under the scheme, businesses will continue to pay employees for the time they work. The cost of hours not worked, will be split between the employer, the Government (through wage support) and the employee, by way of a wage reduction.

[Find out more about the Job Support Scheme.](#)

Support for businesses

The Council's new business support programme, **Here2Help Business** is live http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20807/here2help_business

It is a £3m programme designed to assist local Worcestershire Businesses to recover, adapt, develop and support future resilience as lockdown measures reduce

Also see the Government website www.businesssupport.gov.uk which has details of all the support available to businesses.

Highways

To keep up to date on the roads affected see

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20602/roadworks_in_worcestershire

Or look at the national roadworks website below, and type in Honeybourne in the top right box to search.

www.roadworks.org

1. **Back Lane Pebworth to be closed between Front Street and Friday Street for carriage repairs/patching in week commencing 26th Oct.**
2. **Stratford Rd Honeyboure Road Closure** - 2/11/20 for Bridge inspection by Network Rail
3. **Speed limit in Ullington** – at the moment the speed limit through Ullington is 60mph, but there is a good argument to reduce this to 40mph. I had a meeting in July with West Mercia Safer Road Partnerships and WCC Highways and they agreed to re-look at the speed limit and will be doing a traffic speed survey in the next few months.
4. **Honeybourne pedestrian crossing on Station Rd** –Western Power Distribution will be installing the electricity supply from 28th November 2020 for 3 days. It is hoped the lights and flashing beacon will also be erected before then. The anti-skid tarmac cannot be laid until early 2021 in the warmer weather. Tina McLaughlin will be approaching the Honeybourne Parish Council for their £16,000 contribution towards the cost of the pedestrian crossing.
5. **Traffic Calming – Mickleton Rd** - Would the parish council be willing to pay for Dragon teeth before the 30mph speed limit in Mickleton Rd? If so ,cost approx. £1000, let me know and I'll get it organised. And secondly the suggestion is to install "Beware of pedestrians" signs at 2 locations on Mickleton Rd

As always, if you have any issues on any Highways matters, please report it on the WCC website

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/homepage/98/report_it

Also remember a photo of the Highways problem is as good as "a thousand words" so always take a photo where possible.

REMINDER to clear all brooks, gullies and ditches and gullies before winter flood season – a reminder to all land owners and Parish councils to check all ditches, gullies and brooks NOW to ensure no obstructions that could make things worse in flood situations.

Do you want faster Broadband? - If so, read about the Rural Gigabit Connectivity Voucher Scheme at the end of my report where you can claim up to £1500 per residential property to get 100Mbps

20-01124-OUT Planning Application (65 houses off Stratford Street) to be heard at the Planning Committee 15th October - I am gobsmacked that the planning officers are recommending approval of the 65 houses on the above application.

In my personal opinion I think 65 houses is too many, the density is too high, and the design is poor. Also I have concerns on flooding and traffic.

It is going to planning committee next Thursday 15th Oct. I have spoken to Thomas Havemann-Mart, District Councillor and he will be attending the planning committee via Zoom and he will be asking the committee to reject the officers recommendation.

Proposed Western Gas Network Upgrade Project by National Grid

The County Council has been approached by the Government - Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in relation to the above project for a new proposed gas pipeline measuring approximately 9 kilometres in length running from Wormington Compressor site in Gloucestershire (just south of Worcestershire) to Honeybourne Above Ground Installation site. In addition the project includes works to the existing Honeybourne Above Ground Installation and temporary construction compounds. The project is at an early stage in its development.

County Council Divisional Fund

- Bretforton Allotments – grant requested for a strimmer.
- Honeybourne Harriers – grant for portable flood lights so the youngsters can continue training on the Honeybourne Sports Field during the dark evenings.
- Pebworth In Bloom have applied for a grant to help cover the cost of the bedding plants and hanging baskets planted around the village.

If you run a community organisation that needs a little support to buy equipment or some essential service, then please apply for a Divisional Fund by contacting me.

Your County Councillor, Alastair Adams can be contacted on adams.pebworth@gmail.com or mobile 07725 979 277 or www.alastairadams.org

Here is the update on the Broadband - The Rural Gigabit Connectivity Voucher Scheme – up to £1500 per residential property

The UK government has a voucher scheme to help communities upgrade their phone and broadband infrastructure to "full fibre", if they currently receive less than 100Mbps.

To date (September 2020), 950 premises, including small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) in Worcestershire have secured over £2.2m worth of Government's vouchers towards the cost of installing full fibre gigabit-capable (100 Mbps+) broadband through the Gigabit Voucher Schemes. This means that well over 2,200 premises have already benefitted from this scheme just in Worcestershire alone. Over 150 more projects are already set up and at various stages of getting formalised.

Rural premises with broadband speeds of less than 100Mbps can pool the vouchers worth up to £3,500 for each SME and up to £1,500 per residential premise to support the cost of installing new gigabit-capable connections that more than double their broadband speeds.

Additionally, from September 2020, Worcestershire County Council is investing £1m to step up its drive to get high-speed broadband out to the most rural parts of the county. The funding will 'top-up' the Government's existing Gigabit

Broadband Voucher Scheme, to help people in hard-to-reach locations get a fast, reliable broadband service. The funding will be used to match the level of funding available under the GBVS, so that eligible businesses can now apply for up to a maximum of £7,000 and eligible residential properties up to £3,000. **But hurry - The Rural Gigabit Connectivity Voucher Scheme will only remain open for new applications until March 2021 (or until the £200m funding runs out).**

The following Frequently Asked Questions focus on use of the Rural Gigabit Connectivity Voucher to support 'community schemes' facilitated by 'Openreach', as this has been the most frequently used operator by communities to date. In Worcestershire 'Airband' have also been proactively working with communities to access vouchers across Worcestershire and a number of other suppliers are registered with the Government to access vouchers. If after reading the below, you have questions about other operators please contact the team or visit: <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>

Frequently Asked Questions (and answers):

What is a community scheme?

1. Community projects aim to upgrade everyone on ageing copper lines or low speeds off fibre to the cabinet solutions to full fibre broadband to your premises. Enabling you to get any broadband speed of up to 1,000 Mbps (1Gbps) depending on a chosen package. This will essentially future proof your network for many generations to come, part of a national network, with all maintenance the responsibility of Openreach.
2. The upgrade could cost you nothing, thanks to UK government funding. But requires individual households and businesses to come together as a community. It may even increase your property value through access to this future proofed network.
3. Once your community project is organised, all you need to do is to respond to one email from the government to confirm your "Gigabit Voucher" (<https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>). Then Openreach take care of everything else.
4. Following the upgrade, dependent on package chosen, you should not have to pay any more than you do now for broadband. If you are with BT, Zen, TalkTalk or soon SKY then you simply call them after the infrastructure upgrade has been completed and renew your broadband deal. If you are with any other telephone/broadband provider, in the short-term you will need to switch to one of the providers offering FTTP packages: <https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/fttp-providers> . **So please take this into consideration if entering into new 12 or 18 month contracts in the next few months, as upgrading is part of the voucher requirement.**

Aren't government grant schemes like this complicated to apply for?

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have worked very hard to make this "micro" grant as easy for communities as possible. As a result, all that is required is a simple spreadsheet for the community or a community lead to fill in (logging the details of who want to be a part of the scheme).

What exactly is happening?

Superfast Worcestershire is supporting proactive communities to set up projects to get Openreach to upgrade the old copper network with fibre all the way to the property. Upgrades are delivered through "Openreach Community Fibre Partnerships" and deliver ultrafast future-proofed broadband. You don't have to pay anything towards this upgrade and shouldn't have to pay any extra for your telephone / broadband service.

What will this upgrade cost me?

If there is sufficient demand in your area NOTHING.... We will do our best to advise you to allow your community to get the scheme delivered and get it fully funded through the Rural Voucher Scheme. Every home is eligible for a £1,500 voucher (plus up to a further £1,500 top up from September 2020) and every business run from home is eligible for a £3,500 voucher (plus up to a further £3,500 top up from September 2020). The cost of your new telephone/broadband subscription should remain the same, it may be cheaper or occasionally a few pounds more for a much, much improved service. It is worth remembering that you will be paying the same for a telephone and broadband service that is CONSIDERABLY more reliable, consistent and faster. Should there be a gap, after all grants are secured, there may be a need for a small contribution from the community. Alternatively, we can work with a supplier to review scope or come up with a better alternative.

Will my monthly cost go up after a Full Fibre upgrade?

The cost of your new telephone/broadband subscription should remain the same, it may be cheaper or occasionally a few pounds more for a much, much improved service. It is worth remembering that you will be paying the same for a telephone and broadband service that is CONSIDERABLY more reliable, consistent and faster.

I'm not too fussed about broadband, why should I care?

There's a genuine community dependency with Openreach Community Fibre Partnerships. Every home is eligible for a £1,500 voucher (plus up to a further £1,500 top up from September 2020) and every business run from home is eligible for a £3,500 voucher (plus up to a further £3,500 top up from September 2020). Some properties cost a few hundred pounds to upgrade and some many thousands, or even tens of thousands. But with the right scale of project and combined vouchers, whole communities can be upgraded. Even if you are not that bothered about an upgrade, you would be helping homes, families and businesses in the area that desperately do. Additionally, the requirement for full fibre networks is only going to increase. Proving this infrastructure now protects for the future, increasing both the value and appeal of homes.

Who are Openreach?

Openreach build and maintain telephone cables, ducts, cabinets and exchanges;

Do I need to upgrade with BT?

NO, not at all. You can upgrade with any provider selling fibre to the premises service using Openreach's infrastructure: <https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/fttp-providers> .

What is full fibre?

Broadband to the vast majority of properties involves fibre to the cabinet in your street, then copper between the last stretch from the cabinet to your house. This is called "Fibre to the Cabinet". Some properties have "Exchange Only" lines, meaning copper runs all the way from the exchange to the property.

Full Fibre is when the connection from the exchange all the way to your property is fibre. This enables you to receive any speed of broadband up to 1,000 Mbps (1 Gigabits per second).

Currently, only c. 9% (September 2020) of Worcestershire premises have access to this fully future proofed infrastructure.

Where can I learn more about Openreach Community Fibre Partnerships?

<http://communityfibre.openreach.co.uk>

Where can I learn more about government funding for Full Fibre?

<https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/rural/>

Am I eligible for the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme?

All premises classified as 'rural' are eligible for £1,500 (residential) and £3,500 (business) vouchers, as long as your current broadband is below 100Mbps. You can refer to [Defra's rural / urban classification](#) for an indication whether your area is classed as 'rural'. These amounts can be 'topped up' from Sept 2020. This is true even if you have benefitted from a £350 "Better Broadband" voucher in the past for 4G, satellite or fixed wireless services. In order to qualify for a voucher grant, you must take a new broadband connection. In addition, it must at least double your current broadband speed. The contract for service that you enter into with your chosen supplier must be for a minimum of 12 months.

What qualifies as a business?

"Businesses" include any micro/small/medium business or organisation (e.g. charity, voluntary organisation) and any sole trader registered at their home address. But does not include those working from home employed by large companies/organisations. Vouchers may only be used for eligible connections at premises from which you actively trade or (in the case of residential beneficiaries) reside. This may be your registered office and/or trading address(es) in the case of SME beneficiaries.

What do I have to do?

It depends, how proactive and actively involved you want to be. If you do not have a 'community lead' then you will need to identify one or consider stepping into the role yourself. If you are considering being a community lead or are unsure if there is a community lead in your area contact the Superfast Worcestershire team at superfast@worcestershire.gov.uk. If you have a community lead then requirements on you are very limited, other than respond to contact from your local 'community lead' confirming interest and providing some basic information upon their request. You will also need to respond to an email sent by the UK government confirming your interest. This allows Openreach to receive your voucher funding when the infrastructure is built. No voucher funding comes to you directly.

What am I committing to?

Your only commitment, once the upgrade is complete, is taking out a 12-month broadband subscription with your chosen telephone/broadband provider: <https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/fttp-providers> . The broadband package you take has to be 30 Mbps or faster and must at least double your current broadband speed. After this initial 12-month contract you have no other commitments or tie-ins. Even if you are a business – you can simply upgrade to the cheapest fibre package. At present, the cheapest broadband service is approximately £23 month, including line rental. You can look at other options and consider cashback deals too.

Can I stay with my current telephone / broadband supplier?

If you are currently with any of these providers: <https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/fttp-providers> , then yes. Following the infrastructure upgrade you just need to call your provider and get a new deal, even if you are part way through your contract with them, they can simply upgrade you. If you are with any other supplier, you will have to honour your contract, although they may allow you to terminate early.

If you are with anyone else (such as PlusNet, EE, Virgin Media, TalkTalk, SSE or Post Office) then you will NOT be able to stay with them at the moment. However, these providers could become available over the coming months and years. Some, including SKY and Vodafone have already announced their plans for FTTP.

How does this compare with other solutions?

Full Fibre / Fibre to the Premise is the ultimate broadband solution. It is not affected by weather like copper or wireless/mobile services and its speed is practically unlimited. Full Fibre is faster, cheaper, more reliable, more stable and more consistent than any other broadband solution be this fixed wireless or mobile/4G. All properties should get a Full Fibre upgrade in the next 5 to 15 years if government ambitions are realised. Openreach Community Fibre Partnerships guarantees your upgrade much sooner, within 12 months.

Will my current service be disrupted during the upgrade?

No. Your current telephone/broadband service over your old telephone line will continue to work before, during and after a full fibre upgrade.

When this goes ahead what will I see happening in the area?

Openreach engineers will install new cables along the road, in underground ducts or pole-mounted overhead, then new fibre cables will be run directly to your house. You will get a small box installed inside your house, similar in size to your current telephone socket. Planning and surveying is likely to take 3-6 months, followed by the actual build.

When will this upgrade happen?

The process of generating interest in the community and getting quotes and a fixed price, can take around 1 to 3 months. After that is complete, suppliers will aim to upgrade your infrastructure within 12 months of your project being formalised. Once your infrastructure build is complete, your community will be notified, and you will be able to place an order with your chosen service provider.

What happens to my current telephone line, and once upgraded can I go back to using my old line?

Your existing copper telephone line will be left in place for now. After your initial 12 months commitment to getting a 30 Mbps or faster broadband service, you could choose to go back to slow copper broadband. Though we can't think of any reason why you would want to!

Will this involve digging up my garden?

It is unlikely. Running new cables to your house is likely to follow your existing route and existing ducting or overhead lines.

Will I have to change my phones, phone number or house wiring?

No. You can continue to use your existing phone handsets, telephone number and internal wiring, but ensure you discuss this with your chosen supplier.

Will I need to buy any additional equipment?

No, once you upgrade your package, your service provider will send you a new router. Nothing else will be required.

What is the voucher top up scheme all about?

From September 2020, Worcestershire County Council is investing £1m to step up its drive to get high-speed broadband out to the most rural parts of the county. The funding will 'top-up' the Government's existing Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme, to help people in hard-to-reach locations get a fast, reliable broadband service. The funding will be used to match the level of funding available under the GBVS, so that eligible businesses can now apply for up to a maximum of £7,000 and eligible residential properties up to £3,000.

In some cases, the voucher amount was not enough to pay for the infrastructure upgrade. This top-up funding means many more schemes can be funded, providing this future-proofed connectivity to thousands more homes in the most rural locations which are otherwise unlikely to get it for many years.

The funding for the vouchers in the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme with Worcestershire County Council's Top Up will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis until the end of March 2021, when the scheme will close. **So hurry and set up your scheme today!!**

So, just to re-cap:

1. Register your community with Openreach: <https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/community-fibre-partnerships> . Please note other suppliers may offer similar schemes – you may want to consider these too, e.g. Worcester based Airband: <https://www.airband.co.uk/community/suggest-a-project/> .
2. You will be asked to add premises you want to include in your community project.
3. Openreach will provide an initial quote (normally within 10 days). You will be asked to check the premises as Openreach may tweak the premises list (if some premises are e.g. served by a different exchange).
4. Once you agree the project scope, Openreach will provide the final cost (it is likely to take 1-3 months).
5. Once you are waiting for the final quote – don't waste this time and establish the demand for the improved service across your project area.
6. Once you have the final quote and sufficient demand – you will be asked to share it with Openreach.
7. DCMS will then review your premises (voucher list) and send you and email asking to confirm your interest.
8. When all vouchers are confirmed - this effectively ringfences the funding for your community.
9. Lastly – if you are able to raise 30% above the final quote – you may be able to proceed without the need to sign the contract with Openreach. The 30% buffer will be used as risk mitigation only. If you cannot raise 30% above the quote, your community will be asked to sign a contract with Openreach. In order to do it – you may have to set up a Community Interest Group (CIC).
10. Lastly – you may want to contact Superfast Worcestershire team on superfast@worcestershire.gov.uk, as we are aware of over 150 projects across Worcestershire and we may be able to point you towards a community lead in your area.

As always, if you have any issues on any Highways matters, please report it on the WCC website

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/homepage/98/report_it

Also remember a photo of the Highways problem is as good as “a thousand words” so always take a photo where possible.

Update on flooding

Back in February I had a good meeting with the farmer upstream of the Gate to look at installing a flood plain on his land which I believe if built will stop the flooding at the Gate cross roads. I had another good meeting on 21st August with him and the officers from WCC and WDC on site. We have organised a survey by the council of the land, and there was a lot of positive comments made to help the farmer and the village in making this flood plain a reality.

County Council Divisional Fund

- Offenham Cricket Club- grant request for a contribution of £500 towards a new mower – grant approved.
- Pebworth In Bloom have applied for a grant to help cover the cost of the bedding plants and hanging baskets planted around the village. Due to COVID 19 the “Open Gardens event” in Pebworth was cancelled which had an adverse effect on the funding of PIB. Normally PIB raise a significant amount during this event by offering teas to visitors, but this year no teas means no funds!

If you run a community organisation that needs a little support to buy equipment or some essential service, then please apply for a Divisional Fund by contacting me.

Your County Councillor, Alastair Adams can be contacted on adams.pebworth@gmail.com or mobile 07725 979 277 or www.alastairadams.org

Honeybourne parish report October 2020 We are all being asked to download the NHS test and trace app. The app allows people to report symptoms, order a coronavirus test, check in to venues by scanning a QR code and it helps the NHS trace individuals that have coronavirus. Wychavon will be administrators of the £500 self isolation test and trace payment to those that are on certain benefits and need to self isolate. Anyone wishing to make a claim is being asked to fill out a form on the Wychavon website they will then be contacted and asked for the required documentation to receive the payment. I have spoken with engineering about the water retention in the ditches and they advise me that they have visited site with reps from the parish council and the parish will pursue the various land owners re ditch clearing and maintenance. For anyone that may be interested in the numbers of EU citizens applying for settled status (to stay and continue living and working) the stats for Wychavon are as follows; In Wychavon 6,150 applications have been made, 5,780 have been completed with 3,460 people being given settled status and 2,230 pre-settled status. The majority of applications have come from Polish (2,280), Romanian (1,400) and Bulgarian (1,000) nationals. Worcestershire Zero Waste Week Next week is Worcestershire Zero Waste Week. The focus will be on trying to encourage people to return their former habits of reduce and reuse as across the county, there is concern about the levels of general waste we are collecting continues to be above normal levels – in other words pre-lockdown habits have not been restored. Between April and August, we have collected more than 700 additional tonnes for recycling, but we have also collected 1,176 tonnes of extra waste compared with 2019. Some of this is due to misconceptions that charity shops aren't available for donations or that severe restrictions are still in place at Worcestershire's HRCs, so people are throwing away otherwise salvageable items. The campaign will focus on promoting that HRCs are open and operating relatively normally, promoting the fact charity shops are open and taking donations, general tips on reusing and reducing and continuing to raise awareness about the range of items that can go in the green bin. On average, each bag of waste thrown away contains 1 or 2 items that could have been recycled. As always if there is anything I can look into for the parish or do to help please just let me know. Kind regards, Tommy. Your District Councillor, Thomas Havemann-Mart can be contacted on Thomas.HavemannMart@Wychavon.net or mobile 07817 873 054