

Parish Council of Alfrick and Lulsley

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held at 19:30hrs on Thursday 22 October 2020.

Under the provisions of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, the meeting was held electronically using ZOOM software.

Councillors and members of the public were advised of access arrangements in advance.

Present: Chair: Cllr B Martin

Cllrs: Ms C Bradley, R Ashton, A G Cooper, A Crockford, G Lowe, G G Messervy-Whiting, E Mutter.

C. Cllr P Tuthill, Dist. Cllrs Ms S Rouse, P Whatley, D Bradley (Parish Tree Warden), G M Brewin (Clerk).

Apologies; T Clarke.

Visitors: none

Public Question Time prior to the formal meeting; None

Reports: County & District Councillors,

County Cllr, P Tuthill reported on the activities of the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS, the Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, the progress on the Southern Link Road and answered questions on WCC activities.

District Cllrs Ms S Rouse and P Whatley reported on the activities of the MHDC during the epidemic emergency noting the progress in renovating the Splash Pool and the financial support for Malvern Theatre.

Verbal reports from; Footpaths Warden and Tree Warden – report attached see appendix -a.

The formal meeting commenced at 20.00

AGENDA

1.

Members' Apologies for absence

The apology for absence from Cllr T Clarke was accepted.

2.

Members' Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest in agenda items.

3.

Confirm the minutes of the last monthly meeting held on 22/09/2020 (circulated in advance)

The minutes had been circulated in advance, were agreed as true record and confirmed by the Chair.

4.

Financial Matters;

Note the following payment made by the clerk under the 'Delegated Actions' procedure since the last meeting.

10/10/20 R Wilks, Lengthsman, Sept. £158.40 inc vat - Noted

The council's bank balance is £36242.76 at 15/10/2020

5.

Planning and Environmental Matters; -

- a) Review status – Clay Green Farm development. There is no information on the possible re-sale of this site.
- b) Cllr Ms C Bradley to report on the Alfrick Pound and Jubilee Spinney projects.
Cllr Bradley's report is attached. see appendix -b.
- c) Consider the Government Directive on Wildlife and Biodiversity. (circulated in advance)
There was some considerable discussion on the implications of this directive and the Chair agreed to join with Cllr Bradley to discuss the details before a further review at the next meeting.

6.

Committee on New Public Facilities.

The Committee Chair, Cllr A Cooper to advise on the latest situation.

For the full report see appendix – b Key points;

- a) We need from the Village Hall and the Tennis Club formal statements that although they support the development of the MUGA, neither party want to have the responsibility of building or running it.
- b) We could only reclaim the VAT if the court is open to all, at all times.
- c) The additional cost of gates on the court, is £681 + vat.
- d) A request for a commitment to proceed with the MUGA at a total cost of £51,131 + vat. The Clerk to write to Grimshaws to agree a payment of £415.00 + vat for a site survey and drawings. (50% of this would be refunded if an order is placed. This was agreed.

d) The work on the MUGA could start as soon as MHDC have agreed to our application for the 106 funding. The next MHDC 106 committee meeting for approval is January, but they can pre-check the application to make it as strong as possible.

e) Children's play area. The preferred supplier is Active Gardens from Leominster. It is for a Toddler tractor and trailer with slide, a twin tower climbing frame with linking clatter-bridge. On its side is a rock wall, net and ladder. The whole area is on a bonded rubber surface. Price is £15,387.20 inc vat.

A request for a commitment to Active Gardens to proceed once the 106 money has been received was agreed.

f) Footpath round the field. We are awaiting a quote from MCB to do this. We have decided the route we think this path will take and it is 330 metres long. We will have this quote hopefully by the next meeting.

7.

Highways and Footpaths. Clerk to report.

Gullies on the Suckley road between Alrfick Pound and Bridges Stone identified as blocked by the Lengthsman have been cleared by WCC Highways

8.

Playing Field. Clerk to report.

MCB Landscapes have completed the work of clearing ditches in a very satisfactory manner. Their invoice is awaited.

9. **Clerk's Report -**

a) Actions from the previous meeting. Knightwick Fencing will be installing the new fence and gate this week.

b) Correspondence received. The Appeal against planning rejection by the owners of Brownings Acre has been upheld.- He will circulate the full document to members.

c) Lulsley Broadband Project; we have completed the list of those asking for FTTP connections and the Govt vouchers total more than is needed to meet the Openreach cost quoted - £90.5k v £82.250k – This makes life easier – no bank account nor Legal Entity is needed. The work is now with Openreach to complete the project. As an additional broadband project is underway, Cllr Messervy Whiting contributed the following information. Suckley were already leading on the superfast broadband spur leading from the White House over Crews Hill down to Workhouse Bank. I undertook to deal with our 20 properties from east of Baston Hall down to Garways. Of these 20 properties, 17 have signed up, of which at least 6 are eligible for the business vouchers. All these details have been with Worcester County Council's superfast broadband manager, who has been most helpful, since August. The subsequent hiatus has been between WCC and the contractor, as at today, we are awaiting a revised estimate.

10.

Items for the next meeting.

At the next meeting it is usual to establish and brief a committee to review the financial situation and propose a budget and precept for the next financial year. The clerk will send the financial situation at the end of October for members to consider in advance of this.

11.

Confirm the date of the next meeting;

Thursday 26th November 2020 at 19:30 hrs. on ZOOM - Agreed.

The meeting closed at 21:05 hrs.

Minutes confirmed.....

appendix -a

Tree Warden's report to Alfrick & Lulsley Parish Council October 2020

I accompanied arboriculturist Jim Unwin when he visited on 13th October to report on the safety aspects of the trees in the spinney and around the playing field. He was also able to advise on the management of the spinney and the playing field perimeter trees. For instance he suggested removing the lower branches of the smaller oaks around the field, otherwise they will tend to take up playing field space in the long term. I await his report.

Dates are now set for hedge planting around the field: Sat 7th Nov 2-4 pm and Sun 29th Nov 10-12 am. We will probably need to split into more than one team because of Covid 19 restrictions and Trevor Smart has agreed to be one of the team leaders.

appendix -b

Reports for meeting 22/10/20

Biodiversity enhancement of the playing field

It is intended for a volunteer group to remove woody debris left after the digging out of the ditches and to trim low-hanging branches from the perimeter trees ready for the hedge planting. The woody debris and risings to be placed as a habitat pile in a suitable place on the perimeter.

As part of normal maintenance, new and existing hedges to be trimmed in rotation every two years such that at least one length is left every year for berries and wintering or hibernating invertebrates (some of which as has happened in recent years).

The following are proposed and to be discussed alongside final decisions being made on the detail of the new public facilities.

When the exact route of the new path is known, as well as the positions for the outdoor adult gym equipment, it is suggested that the earth removed for the footings be dumped in two heaps in unused corners of the field near the ditches or hedge, to be landscaped for the construction of a bee/butterfly/beetle bank preferably one to be south-facing (refer to WWT/WCC Biodiversity Enhancement Assessment report) and the other for a children's rough play area. The soil for the wildlife bank should be of low fertility so could be stony or sandy

The areas left between the new path and the ditches or existing old hedges to be allowed to remain rough and tussocky for wildflowers and pollinators and strimmed annually in August/September.

It is suggested that most of the enhancement work is carried out by volunteers including children so no cost to the PC.

There may be the possibility of the involvement of local Plant-life, Bug-life, Bumblebee Conservation, Butterfly Conservation and other wildlife groups perhaps with the aid of their volunteers and with grants being available for advice, especially if the work offers educational opportunities.

Spinney

We held our first autumn working party on Sunday October 11th, starting at 10am. The group was restricted to 6 people, working in separate areas and at 2m 'social' distances. We made good progress in clearing nettles, brambles, saplings and other unwanted scrub, especially on the route of the new path, continuing the work carried out in early spring before the COVID-19 lockdown. The piles of brash that had been left in the Scaffs' field were burnt there. Nick Denley dumped a large pile of wood chippings on the edge of the field (many thanks) and a start was made to spread the chippings on the new path as mulch and to make a surface covering. Cleared material from the Spinney will be used to create habitat piles around the edge.

Appendix -c

Report of 106 group meeting

We met again on Tuesday via zoom, and I am sorry to have to advise that another original member Matthew Warne has resigned from the committee as he is moving back to live in Worcester. As I reported at the last meeting we have been able to appoint Dawn Ratchliffe, who is extremely helpful to the group.

We had some response to the flier we sent out about our proposals, one by email and all the others gathered by Geoffrey in the pub.

From those it was decided that we need to obtain from the VH and the tennis club a letter stating that although they support the development of the MUGA, neither party want to have the responsibility of building or running it. The VH are content with the lease to the PC. The tennis club will use the new facility, but cease to exist as a separate entity.

We have also found out from MHDC that we could only reclaim the VAT if the court is open to all, at all times. (I will cover this later).

Since the last meeting of the PC, we have obtained from Grimshaws the additional cost of gates on the court, and this is £681 + vat.

At this point I want to ask the PC for a commitment to proceed with the MUGA at a total cost of £51,131 + vat. I also would like the Clerk to write to Grimshaws and say that the quotation is acceptable to us and for us to agree a payment to Grimshaws of £415.00 + vat for a site survey and drawings. (50% of this would be refunded if an order is placed.

Children's play area. We have now got a better quote from a company called Active Gardens from Leominster. It is for a Toddler tractor and trailer with slide, a twin tower climbing frame with linking clatter-bridge. On its side is a rock wall, net and ladder. The whole area is on a bonded rubber surface. Price is £15,387.20 inc vat. Then it is our hope when we have had these two items done, raise further funds and extend the space to include an all inclusive roundabout. (They are happy to add anything in the future). We also would like your agreement to write to Active Gardens and say that the quote is acceptable, and that we will now apply for the 106 money and advise as and when it has been received.

Footpath round the field. We are trying to get a quote from MCB to do this. WE have taken a trundle wheel round the route we think this path will take and it is 330 metres long. However, in some points it comes very close to the football pitch, within a metre/metre and a half. Therefore, we feel that in the interest of health and safety we need to have the same, or similar, bonded rubber surface on the path to avoid injury and possible insurance claim. Using it also does away with the need for shuttering as it lies quite happily within the hole dug. They will also take into account the fact that the pathway has to take the weight of a tractor when grass and hedge cutting, so they will calculate the volume of stone needed, and therefore how deep the trench has to be. At the same time, we will also get them to dig out the area for the children's play area, and stone that as required by Active Gardens. We will get this quote hopefully by the next meeting.

The work on the MUGA could start as soon as MHDC have agreed to our application for the 106 funding. This we have commenced preparing, but the next MHDC 106 committee meeting for approval is January, but they can pre check the application to make it as strong as possible, and I want to be able to use that facility.

Regarding work in the field. I would not want to do anything during the winter, as it is already quite wet, and it would cut up badly. I will check with MHDC if we can add these items to the application, but not spend them until April/May. It may be we have to apply at the following meeting.

As I said earlier, to be able to qualify for the VAT refund the items all have to be Open To All. We had originally wanted to put a lock on the gates to avoid vandalism, and have a booking system, and those not resident in the village would pay a hire fee. We will now have to reconsider how we operate the MUGA, and we will discuss with the likes of Gt Whitley and Martley what they do. However, nothing is insurmountable.

Thank you.