

SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

Held on Monday 11th JANUARY 2021 at 7.15 pm

Present: Cllr P Whatley, Cllr R Hill, Cllr A Lewis, Cllr C Luton, Cllr P Griffiths,
Cllr L Devenish, Cllr J Green (via phone)

In Attendance: Mrs D Taylor (Clerk), Dist Cllr S Rouse, Co Cllr P Tuthill

Apologies: Cllr R Hooper, Cllr A W Huband

One member of the public also attended the Zoom 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. Cllr R Hill declared a pecuniary interest in item 16(a) – Planning Application No 20/01918/HP – erection of a portal framed garage at Stonehouse, Longley Green, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5DU

No requests had been received by the Clerk for any Dispensations relating to items on the Agenda. (Sec 33 of the Localism Act 2011)

Cllr P Whatley informed the Council that as District Councillor he would not vote or express any opinion on Planning Applications in case they had to be sent to MHDC Northern Area Planning Committee. He would, however, Chair the meeting.

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

Report from County Councillor - Co Cllr P Tuthill reported to the Council. A new Chief Fire Officer had been appointed starting at the end of March this year. Worcester Royal Hospital was having to cope with a dramatic increase in Covid cases and the situation was becoming pretty dire. Work on the Southern Link Road was going well, and plans were being considered to raise the level of the roundabout at Powick to avoid flooding. The County Council had been fixing their £30M budget for the coming year with the emphasis again on Social & Welfare Services throughout the County. A number of Suckley Drains/Highways issues would not be resolved until the new budget/funding in April this year. On behalf of the Council, Cllr P Whatley expressed disappointment with the delay. Cllr Tuthill reported that WCC Highways was making some progress re trialling a combined drains map using their own and Ringway's map information. He would send Cllr P Whatley a copy of the trialled map so far. Hannah Davies at WCC Highways now had a copy of the Suckley Parish drains map. However, the Clerk agreed to go ahead with a request for a copy of the WCC Map via Freedom of Information regulations.

Report from District Cllrs – Dist Cllr Sarah Rouse reported to the meeting. Most of her time and that of the other District Cllrs was devoted to responding to Covid community problems in the district, especially dealing with a wide range of Government Grants cascading down from central Government. The Minor Injuries Unit at Malvern Community Hospital had been temporarily closed and staff relocated to Worcester Royal Hospital. The District Council needed to set a budget for 2021/22, bearing in mind that no income had been received in the past year from car parking charges. Despite Covid work, the Council was still rolling out the revamp of the Splash and Priory Park, and looking at a regeneration plan for the Town Centre.

Lengthsman - The Clerk reported on the activities of the Lengthsman during November & December 2020. In November the Lengthsman had cleared gullies of debris, mud and leaves from Whitehouse Cross Roads to Blackhouse Lane; Acton Road to Longley Green & Birchwood; Cleared gullies of mud & hedge trimmings, and cleared flooding along Mousehole, and Whitehouse Cross Roads. In December he had cleared gullies of mud, silt and debris, and cleared flooding where possible, along Acton and Knightwick Roads; Suckley Road Longley Green; Blackhouse Lane; Mousehole to Acton; and generally checked all round the parish to clear flooding after heavy rain. Cllr R Hill suggested that as there were particular hot spots in the Parish needing regular attention all year round, a monthly maintenance programme could be compiled, together with the Lengthsman, leaving some flexibility for emergency situations. The Council agreed with this suggestion. Cllr R Hill agreed to draft a list for comment and meet the Lengthsman to discuss this.

Footpaths – The Clerk reported that as requested she had written to the Countryside Department regarding using Metposts or perhaps all metal signs for footpaths. She had circulated the e-mailed response from Jon White the Senior PROW Officer which stated that the department had tried using all metal signs but people did not like them. He also requested that any damaged signs be reported to the department for replacement. The Clerk had received a complaint that the metal gate to Footpath 647 near to Holloways entrance had been padlocked. Helen Philpotts our Footpaths Warden was dealing with this.

Local Police – Cllr R Hooper had circulated the Jan – December 2020 Police Crime/Incidents Stats to all the Cllrs. There were 401 incidents across all the 11 parishes covered. Suckley had 4 incidents of theft, 1 each in February, March, May, July 2020; 1 incident of anti-social behaviour in July 2020 and 1 in December 2020.

01/21 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Parish Council Zoom Meeting held on 9th November 2020 were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr A Lewis and seconded by Cllr L Devenish.

02/21 HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS

The Clerk had circulated an update to Cllrs re Parish Highways issues still outstanding up to the end of December 2020 which had also been sent to Co Cllr P Tuthill and Hannah Davies at WCC Highways. Hannah Davies had e-mailed the Clerk on 11th January with a response. As previously reported, some of the issues would not be resolved until new funding in April 2021 and a number of problems had not been resolved due to confusion over the exact map locations. The Clerk to circulate this response to Cllrs.

03/21 VAS CAMERA

The Clerk reported that as requested the VAS had been moved to opposite the Nelson pub on 28 December 2020 for one week. It then moved back to Alfrick. No stats were yet available. A new battery was on order via Alfrick Parish Council. The Clerk had e-mailed PC Paul Kennedy at West Mercia Police re speeding issues in Suckley, especially along the Knightwick Road. He had forwarded this on to PCSO Martin Butcher, who had in turn sent the e-mail to Safer Roads Partnership for evaluation.

04/21 CHARITY REPORTS

- (a) **Brookes Memorial Fund** - The Clerk had forwarded an e-mail to Cllrs from Bryony Gaskell, the new administrator of the Brookes Memorial Fund. After some discussion, it was agreed that Bryony be invited to attend the next PC Zoom meeting on 8th March. The Clerk to obtain a copy of the latest set of Accounts, and to compile a list of questions from Cllrs regarding this Charity to send to Bryony before the meeting.

05/21 COMMUNITY

- (a) **Superfast Broadband** – Cllr P Whatley reported on his total disbelief and outrage regarding the actions of BT OpenReach over the FTTP deal for Longley Green after two years of negotiation. He had been informed on 26th December 2020 by Worcs CC that OpenReach had decided to supply FTTP to 10 premises in Longley Green and nearby on a commercial basis (out of the 10 only 4 had expressed an interest in FTTP). On 5th January 2021 he received confirmation that Open Reach’s decision meant that those 4 properties (2 business and 2 domestic properties) had to be taken out of the grant-based scheme. This left the business case for Longley Green short of £20K grant funding and therefore unviable. He had sent a letter round to all interested parties in Longley Green explaining the situation and of his withdrawal from any future dealings with BT OpenReach. Reporting on the Crews Hill Scheme - Cllr L Devenish wanted to know what was happening with the funding for Broadband. She and Cllr A Lewis had now been given a ludicrous scheme by BT OpenReach – five times more expensive than the original, and the new scheme didn’t include the properties that had signed up to the first scheme. She would be e-mailing MP Harriet Baldwin with her complaints.
- (b) **Parish Information Pack** - Cllr A Lewis reported that she had struggled to get up to date information for the Information Pack due mainly to Covid restrictions. The Council agreed with Cllr A Lewis that rather than trying to rush things through, it would be better to wait a while longer to get a good result.
- (c) **Second Defibrillator at The Bruff** - The Clerk had e-mailed Cllrs regarding an approach made by Adrian Biggs, the Centre Manager at the Bruff re joint funding of a second defibrillator. This would mean there would be a defibrillator at each end of the Parish. A discussion took place regarding not only the initial purchase/ownership of the second defib but also the ongoing maintenance costs and location on the Bruff site. Cllr R Hill agreed to speak to Adrian Biggs about this proposal and report back to the next meeting.

06/21 FINANCE - The following cheques were approved :-

- Proposed by Cllr C Luton and seconded by Cllr L Devenish
- (a) **Gen Fund** – D W Taylor, Clerk’s expenses November/December 2020 - £47.65;
R Wilks – Lengthsman October 2020 - £187.20 (paid, but to be approved);
R Wilks Lengthsman November 2020 – 172.80; R Wilks Lengthsman December 2020 (to be advised); SPACE BFG Account – Donation from Co Cllr P Tuthill via Suckley PC Account - £200 (paid, but to be approved); HMRC PAYE – Oct.Nov/Dec 2020 - 388.80; VAT Refund to Playing Field Account via Suckley PC Account - £85.00
- (b) **Playing Field** – Npower – Direct Debit - £45.90
- (c) **Accounts to 30th November 2020** were approved. Proposed by Cllr P Griffiths and seconded by Cllr R Hill
- (d) **Clerk’s Salary Review - 2021/22** - Clerk to be upgraded to 2020 SCP Grade 26. This equates to gross £685.96 per month (annual gross salary £8,231.60). Proposed by Cllr A Lewis and seconded by Cllr L Devenish.
- (e) **Precept 2021/22** - After consulting the forecast budget options/spreadsheets e-mailed to Cllrs, the Council agreed to keep the Precept for 2021/22 to the 2020/21 level of £14,309.00 (i.e. no increase). Proposed by Cllr P Griffiths and seconded by Cllr J Green.

07/21 PLAYING FIELD

- (a) **Bin emptying/replacement** - Cllr C Luton reported that Paul who mowed the Play Area had agreed to empty the bins. She was looking into the cost of replacement bins to be fixed off the ground onto posts, and perhaps one fixed to the wall of the Pavilion.
- (b) Fencing – Cllr C Luton had obtained a quote of £645.00 + VAT from Duncan Reynolds for erecting 6 ft wooden posts (with 2ft into the ground) and stock netting. There would be gap in the fencing to allow buggies etc. through, but it would not be wide enough to allow cars to be driven onto the field. The Council agreed with Cllr C Luton that this was a very reasonable quote and to go ahead with it. Proposed by Cllr P Griffiths and seconded by Cllr R Hill. Cllr C Luton also reported mole activity again on the Playing Field.

08/21 RISK ASSESSMENT

Cllr P Whatley had been undertaking the Risk Assessments as Cllr J Green was in a Covid high risk category. Nothing adverse to report at the moment.

09/21 SUCKLEY CHURCH

Cllr A Lewis reported that thanks to the now completed central heating, the Church had been a warm place to be over Christmas. Funding was now available for a sink and cupboard in the tower. The next phase would be the installation of a toilet and a small kitchenette. Cllr L Devenish reported that new stacking chairs had been ordered. Cllr A Lewis confirmed that the Church was open for private prayer only.

10/21 SUCKLEY SCHOOL

Cllr L Devenish reported that the new Head Teacher Helen Field had sent her an e-mail giving some personal and career background information and an update following the school closure. A catch up curriculum had been put together, and the Thrive nurture room had been moved into the previous staff room and was being decorated and furnished. The next project would be outdoor provision for Early Years. The Forest School area had also been well used. An Open Morning was held on 3rd October following Covid 19 restrictions, with a further Open Evening planned for 16th October. The School has 84 pupils on the roll and she was looking for a new intake in September of 12 pupils. The school only had 12 hours to prepare for the national lockdown, but thanks to the support from Local Trusts and Charities the school was able to purchase 3 laptops for families who did not have remote access. The school was open for vulnerable children and children of key workers, with numbers attending varying from day to day, the highest being 19. The Autumn term proved difficult with adjusting to new Covid safe guidelines, and with this recent lockdown staff were working long hours to provide remote learning.

11/21 PLANNING

As Cllr R Hill had declared a pecuniary interest in the following application, he left the meeting. The Council considered the application :-

- (a) App No: 20/01918/HP
Location: Stonehouse, Longley Green, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5DU
Proposal: Erection of a portal framed garage.

The Council considered this application and had no objections to it. The Clerk to notify Malvern Hills Planning Department.

For information only:-

- (b) The Nook, Birchwood, Storrige, Malvern WR13 5HA. Ref No: 20/00544/HP
Proposed removal; of garage and 2 porches. Erection of garage, single storey side extension and two storey extension. Change existing dormers to pitched. MHDC has **Refused** this application.
- (c) Threshers Barn, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5DW. Ref No: 20/01397/LB. Proposed installation of replacement windows and patio doors to southern elevation only. MHDC Planning has **Approved** this Application.

12/21 MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDA -

None raised

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 8th March 2021 (via Zoom)

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