

**LITTLE COMBERTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Minutes from a meeting of the Parish Council, held via Zoom on Tuesday January 12th 2021 at 7pm

**PRESENT** – Chairman C Rabbette, Vice Chairman L Haycock, Cllrs S Britten, N Jamieson, A Dermont, and P Morris, County Cllr A Hardman, District Cllr T Rowley and one parishioners

1. **APOLOGIES** – were received from Cllr M Kibble

**OPEN FORUM:** - Two issues for consideration:

- Speeding
- Litter Bin – Memorial Garden

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – None declared

3. **MINUTES** from the previous meeting of November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020 were approved, proposed Cllr Morris, seconded Cllr Dermont – all in favour

4. **PROGRESS REPORTS**

a) Highway Matters

- Lay-by Pershore Road – Cllr Rabbette reported that we are led to believe that residents adjacent to the lay-bye are communicating direct with WCC, and that a letter to the parish council to this effect had been received.
- VAS Sign - Cllr Dermont reported that he had met with WCC Highways who were in agreement with providing a 3m high post and to be re-sited 30-40 metres back towards Pershore.
- Pool Close – After the heavy rainfall, there was initially a lot of surface water in Pool Close, but this was put down to sheer volume and soon drained away.
- Water leak, Elmley Road – Cllr Rabbette reported that after a number of requests to have this investigated, a temporary repair had been carried out by Severn Trent with a road closure scheduled to carry out the permanent repair necessary, though we are not exactly sure as to when this will take place.

b) Footpaths / Rights of Way - The Footpath Warden had reported the issues raised at the last meeting.

Following on from complaints regarding dog fouling the clerk had taken delivery of new signage which would be placed at the worst affected areas.

c) Lengthsman – Cllr Jamieson had nothing to report other than the fact that the LM will be working in Little Comberton on the first and third Wednesday of the month, between 9 and 1pm. Cllr Rabbette reported that there was evidence that he had been active around the village.

d) Planning -

- Fence at Orchard View, Manor Lane – the fencing panels had now been removed and replaced with hedging.
- SWDP – Cllr Rowley reported that WDC continued to meet with Worcs. City Council and Malvern Hills Council as the ‘three advisory councils’. Some alternative sites are being investigated and there will be a consultation period on just these alternatives. As it stands, due to the Covid pandemic, the SWDP timetable is about 12 months behind schedule.
- Minerals Local Plan – Cllr Rowley reported on the Examination in Public was held in December and he gave evidence. The Inspectors report is now awaited. When WCC receive the report, they will be

- asked to make modifications and re-submit. To reiterate the area of concern is the ‘strategic corridor’ between Pershore and Evesham and the impact on neighbouring villages.
- e) BHCG – Cllr Britten had nothing to report with the next meeting scheduled for April. Cllr Hardman reported that Bredon Hill Conservation Group had opposed the proposed Ashchurch Bridge.
- f) Ditches/ Water Courses:
  - Drainage Junction Orchard Drive / Pershore Road – Nothing further to report other than it is hoped this will be addressed in the next financial year.
- g) Village Broadband – Cllr Jamieson reported he had 93 properties who had expressed an interest. He had been in contact with Openreach / WCC, and there is a possibility this could become a ‘group’ project including Great Comberton, Elmley Castle and Bricklehampton. The ‘list’ is now closed, and we are ready to move on to the next stage one BT have done their survey to ascertain detailed costings. Cllr Hardman reported that whilst not 100% sure, the grants should still be available.
- h) Website – Cllr Jamieson reported that he had spent a lot of time on the new village website but was keen to receive suggestions from village residents on new material for use on the site

**5. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT** – Cllr Rowley had already reported on planning issues above and confirmed there were no planning applications which would impact of Little Comberton.

- Covid - WDC are still working remotely. Business Support grants will be rolled out, but they are still awaiting guidance from central Government. Following a meeting with Elmley Castle Parish Council the previous week, it was reported that there was a lot of ‘excess’ car traffic and substantial increase in parking on Main Street – presumably people travelling to the area to walk Bredon Hill. Cllr Rowley will be looking for assistance from outside the area to monitor this with a view to discouraging the ‘visitors’.

**6. COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT** – Cllr Hardman reported:

- Lay-by Pershore Road – further to communication from the residents adjacent to the layby, Cllr Hardman reported that as far as WCC were concerned the layby had been adopted but suggested signage to restrict overnight parking was an option.
- Covid – despite that reports of increasing cases, the rates in over 60’s and over 80’s was showing signs of reducing, however, cases in the Over 40’s was on the increase, and it was felt we are still 3-weeks away from the peak.

**7. FINANCE –**

**(a) Payments for approval / made since last meeting:**

BHCG Sub	744	30.00
Cheque Cancelled	745	
Lengthsman October	746	150.00
Phone Box Light	747	40.00
Dog Signs	748	42.84
Xmas Wine	749	87.81
Clerks Salary	SO	333.08
Clerks Expenses	SO	12.00
Cheque Cancelled	750	
Lengthsman November	751	144.00
Clerks PAYE	752	5.40
Clerks Salary	SO	333.08
Clerks Expenses	SO	12.00

## **2022/03**

(b) Budget / Precept – the clerk had drafted and circulated a draft budget for 2021/22 which had been circulated to Cllrs for consideration. The clerk had also asked for consideration to be given to an increase in paid hours from 28 per month to 32 per month. The draft budget included a proposed increase in the precept of 6.2% which was the same as last year. Regarding the clerks paid hours increase, Cllr Morris proposed approval of this, seconded by Cllr Haycock – all in favour. With regard the budget, Cllr Jamieson proposed acceptance and approval, seconded Cllr Rabbette – all in favour

(c) Grass Cutting Contribution to Church – The clerk reported on advice / guidance from CALC regarding any contributions made to the ‘church’ and the impact this could have on the nominal annual contribution we make to assist with the annual grass cutting costs at St Peters. Further advice is being sourced. In the meantime, it was agreed we leave the £250 paid annually in the budget until this is resolved. Cllr Morris suggested that £250 could be ‘diverted’ from the Street Market profits to cover this if necessary.

(d) Village Hall lease – Cllr Morris reported that he had now received the Deeds from the solicitor, some going back 200 years. He is in the process of summarising the documents and will circulate this to Cllrs. Also to confirm that the Insurance for the VH will be in the joint names of the VH committee and Parish Council in order to resolve the issue with shared ownership of the old building and the newer extension

**8. HEALTH & SAFETY** – Nothing to report, but Cllr Morris commented that the Village Pantry look after the VH very well, as does a village resident who keeps a close eye on the building. He also reported he had been contacted with regard the possibility of using the VH as a Covid testing centre, although there was nothing to suggest this was going ahead but just a preliminary enquiry with ALL village halls in the County

**9. VILLAGE SIGNS** – Referring to a previous request by Cllr Jamieson to look at improved WCC village signs, the clerk reported that she had not followed this through but would make enquiries

### **10. DOGS :**

- Dog Fouling Signs - The clerk reported that she had just taken delivery of a new supply (different design) of dog fouling signs and they would be distributed where necessary
- Out of control dogs – the clerk had received reports of dogs (one owner) that were causing problems within both Little and Great Comberton. Specific details of dog breed, name and vehicle registration number had been passed on but it would appear this was not a local resident but someone who travelled to the area for dog walking, and there was nothing else we could do as we had no name and address of the dog owner, despite enquiries being made
- Waste / Litter Bin – Memorial Garden – since the issue of the Agenda for this meeting, the parish council had received complaints regarding the amount of dog waste that is being deposited in the litter bin at the Memorial Garden. The parish council, in the past has tried to discourage use of the bin for this purpose, but legislation / guidance has changed allowing the bin to be used for any purpose, and that includes dog waste. For those kind volunteers who look after the Garden throughout the year, and the visitors that the Garden attracts, it is extremely unpleasant when the bin is overflowing and the ongoing smell during the summer months. Whilst not being able to make a formal decision on the matter until the next meeting, it would seem that the most appropriate course of action would be to remove the bin altogether to include discussion re a dog waste bin in Wick Road.

### **11. CRIME:**

- Neighbourhood Watch – Nothing further to report from the NW co-ordinator

## 12. CORRESPONDENCE:

- To consider response to parishioner following an email sent to the Clerk regarding possible enforcement issues in Little Comberton – The clerk had contacted the residents identified, and also made enquiries with WDC Enforcements to establish if there were any enforcement issues. From the information received and passed on, it would appear there are no reasons to take any further action.
- To consider response to parishioner following an email which was sent to Chairman 4<sup>th</sup> November regarding the Parish Councils response on the Planning Reforms Consultation - Cllr Haycock reminded the council, that the parishioner who sent the email, felt that the parish council did not fully address the views of the village. Cllr Haycock reported that the response to the consultation was drafted by Cllrs Rabbette and Haycock jointly after careful consideration of the consultation document. The 'draft' was circulated to ALL Cllrs for consideration and comment prior to submission, and no issues, concerns or amendments were received. Cllr Haycock said that where possible, we do consult with parishioners if this is deemed necessary and where time allows, but also added that even when consulted unfortunately not every villager will always agree to the response given by the parish council. Cllrs were invited to comment whether a review of the process followed was needed, and all agreed that the process followed was sufficient.
- An email had been received from a parishioner, asking for an explanation of an email that was sent to those on the village email list, following an incident of dog waste being left on a Cllr's driveway – Cllr Haycock reminded the parish council of the series of events that led to the reason why the email was sent out. There was no message or communication explaining why dog mess had been left, although the clerk did receive an 'anonymous' letter after the event. The parish council are fully aware of the series of events and were in full agreement that the email which was sent out back in August was the right thing to do. Cllr Jamieson commented that he felt saddened that in a small village community, people don't talk to each other, and that the actions taken were totally inappropriate and the response, collectively from the PC was correct and the right thing to do.  
It was agreed that this should now be the end of the matter.

## 13. ITEMS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION / AGENDAS:

- **Brexit and Rural Communities** - Cllr Dermont commented on the massive changes to agricultural payments following Brexit and the impact this may have on English rural communities and local farmers. Without subsidies (previously paid by the EU) it has been estimated that 42% of farms may no longer be viable and that the calculation of subsidies to farmers (now funded by the UK Govt) are going to change considerably over the coming years. Cllr Dermont felt that as a parish council, we should encourage communication with local farmers, tactfully and being supportive of the impact these changes may have on them, and to offer support where possible. Cllr Haycock shared the same concerns and was happy to work with Cllr Dermont with this. There were a number of ways forward and Cllr Rowley suggested that maybe Pershore College may be able to help. Cllr Haycock suggested that a first step would be to compile a list of local farmers and landowners.
- **Wick Road, Road Sweeping** - Cllr Jamieson asked if the 'surplus loose gravel / stone' on Wick Road could be 'swept' and transferred to the 'passing bays' in Wick Road – the clerk would liaise with WCC
- **Phone Kiosk / Library** - It had been reported to the Parish Council that the 'library' at the phone kiosk seemed to be turning into a 'drop off' point for a large number of books / magazines – and whilst the parish council fully supported the need for this facility (particularly at the moment), there was concern that it was being inundated with too much reading material to be beneficial. Cllr Morris reported that he and his wife were happy to sort the kiosk on a monthly basis, but for residents to be aware that this was not a 'dumping' opportunity and to consider any reading material left.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021