

## **SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING** **Held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> MAY 2021 at 8.00 pm**

Present: Cllr P Whatley, Cllr R Hill, Cllr A Lewis, Cllr C Luton, Cllr P Griffiths,  
Cllr L Devenish, Cllr R Hooper

In Attendance: Mrs D Taylor (Clerk) One member of the public attended via a phone link

**Election of Chairman** - Cllr Robin Hill was elected as Chairman. Proposed by Cllr P Griffiths and seconded by Cllr L Devenish. Cllr P Whatley (who was standing down as Chairman) congratulated Cllr R Hill on his appointment. Cllr R Hill thanked all the Cllrs for their support, and thanked Cllr P Whatley for putting in such a huge amount of work for the Parish Council in addition to his District Council duties.

**Apologies:** Dist Cllr S Rouse

**Election of Vice-Chairman** – Cllr J Green was elected Vice-Chairman. Proposed by Cllr P Whatley and seconded by Cllr A Lewis.

(a) Cllrs were reminded of the need to complete/update their Register of Interests  
(b) Declaration of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) in items on the Agenda – or -  
(c) Declaration of Other Disclosable Interests in items on the Agenda falling within the terms of para 12(4)(b) of the Code of Conduct. Nothing Declared.

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

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

The member of the public present (by phone) thanked Cllr P Whatley for all his hard work for the parish and congratulated Cllr R Hill on his appointment as Chairman.

**Report from County Councillor** - No Report available

**Report from District Cllrs** – the Council noted the District Cllrs report as presented to the Annual Parish Meeting. Like all Councils, MHDC's activities had been dominated by Covid, but the Council also had to deal with two major flooding events. Council Meetings had been hosted via Zoom and You Tube. The coming year would be tough with unemployment levels likely to rise further. The MHDC Independent Group had allocated £500K to fund a "get well" plan for the whole district, focusing on attracting viable long term jobs to the area. Locally, the Independent Cllrs had campaigned for road maintenance improvements and better facilities. One of the most positive features of the past year had been the community response to the pandemic. The Good Neighbour Scheme had been highly effective.

**Lengthsman** - The Clerk reported on the new combined timesheet/invoice system being brought in by WCC Highways in relation to the Lengthsman Scheme, with a code for each allocated task under the Scheme. So far, the Lengthsman had not sent in a timesheet/invoice. The Clerk and Cllr R Hill to liaise with the Lengthsman over coding details and future tasks.

**Footpaths** – No Report from the Footpaths Warden, but the Clerk had received a number of footpath stile/signpost problems discovered by Cllr A Lewis (and copied to Helen Philpotts). The Clerk to send Cllr A Lewis a footpaths map so the locations could be highlighted for onward transmission to the Countryside Department.

**Local Police** – No report from Cllr R Hooper as she had not received any stats from Martin Butcher. The Clerk to contact neighbouring Parish Clerks to find out if they had received any figures.

**The Chairman re-opened the Meeting**

**30/21 STANDING ORDERS -**

The Council noted the Model Standing Order (adopted September 2018)

**31/21 CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Council noted the Code of Conduct (adopted July 2020)

**32/21 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Council noted the Financial Regulations (adopted September 2016)

**33/21 RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Council noted the Risk Assessment Schedule prepared by the Clerk and circulated to all Councillors. Included in this schedule was Insurance cover which was not due for renewal until October 2021.

**34/21 NOMINATION OF COUNCILLORS**

Councillors were nominated to various posts as follows :-

**Election of Councillor responsible for Planning:-**

Cllr Mrs P Griffiths

Proposed by Cllr L Devenish  
Seconded by Cllr P Whatley

**Election of Council Representatives on Charities:-**

**John Palmer Educational Trust –**

Cllr L Devenish  
&  
Cllr A Lewis

Proposed by Cllr P Whatley  
Seconded by Cllr C Luton  
Proposed by Cllr L Devenish  
Seconded by Cllr C Luton

**Suckley Charities –**

Cllr A W Huband  
&  
Cllr P Whatley

Proposed by Cllr P Griffiths  
Seconded by Cllr L Devenish  
Proposed by Cllr C Luton  
Seconded by Cllr A Lewis

**Alfrick Educational Charity –**

Cllr L Devenish  
&  
Cllr A Lewis

Proposed by Cllr C Luton  
Seconded by Cllr P Whatley  
Proposed by Cllr L Devenish  
Seconded by Cllr C Luton

**The Hill Trust - Cllr R Hill**

Proposed by Cllr A Lewis  
Seconded by Cllr P Whatley

**Election of Council Representatives on the  
Playing Fields Committee –**

Cllr P Griffiths

Proposed by Cllr R Hill  
Seconded by Cllr P Whatley

Cllr J Green

Proposed by Cllr P Whatley  
Seconded by Cllr L Devenish

Cllr C Luton

Proposed by Cllr R Hooper  
Seconded by Cllr A Lewis

**Election of Council Representative on Worcs CALC  
Area Committee –**

Cllr R Hill

Proposed by Cllr A Lewis  
Seconded by Cllr P Griffiths

**Election of Councillors with special responsibilities –**

**Police - Cllr R Hooper**

Proposed by Cllr P Whatley  
Seconded by Cllr C Luton

**NHS - Cllr A Lewis**

Proposed by Cllr P Griffiths  
Seconded by Cllr C Luton

**35/21 CHARITY ACCOUNTS (to be noted)**

Charity Accounts received by the Clerk and circulated to all Councillors – Alfrick Educational Charity – Suckley Charities – John Palmer Trust. Accounts yet to be received – The Hill Trust (Village Hall) - Brookes Memorial Fund – Accounts not available until after 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021 meeting.

**36/21 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Parish Council Zoom Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr P Griffiths and seconded by Cllr A Lewis. The Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021 were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr P Griffiths and seconded by Cllr L Devenish.

**37/21 HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS**

The Clerk had circulated an update to Cllrs re Parish Highways issues still outstanding up to 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021, including the response from Hannah Davies WCC Highways and the Lengthsman's comments. 10 issues remained outstanding but WCC Highways had made some progress. Over half of the remaining issues had been placed on a priority list for action

### **38/21 VAS CAMERA**

VAS Suckley stats from 15<sup>th</sup> February to 28<sup>th</sup> March 2021 had been circulated to Cllrs by the Clerk. These showed that the highest rate of speeding was along the Knightwick Road by the Village Hall and Church Lane. It was noted that the cost of replacing the VAS camera with perhaps an alternative flashing sign would be in the region of £3K. Cllr R Hill suggested that the Council look at what could be done about the level of speeding at the next meeting in July.

### **39/21 CHARITY REPORTS** – no further reports

### **40/21 COMMUNITY**

- (a) **Parish Information Pack** - Cllr A Lewis reported that the situation remained on hold, waiting for normal times to return.
- (b) **Second Defibrillator at The Bruff** - The Clerk reported that she had spoken to Adrian Biggs the Centre Manager at the Bruff. Following this conversation she had received an e-mail confirmation that The Bruff owners would purchase and take responsibility for the future maintenance of the second defibrillator. The defib would be installed in the porchway at the Bruff with signage from the road, and should the Parish Council agree to donate £300 towards the purchase cost, it would be available for parishioners to use. The Council agreed to a donation of £300.00. Proposed by Cllr P Whatley and seconded by Cllr P Griffiths. The Clerk to liaise with Adrian Biggs re timing and payment.
- (c) **Memorial Site – The Old Quarry** - The Clerk had circulated a “mock up” of the proposed Portland Stone trough to contain the memorial poppies. A quote for the total cost of the trough, including the engraving “Lest We Forget” totalled £825.00 plus VAT = £990. A very generous anonymous donor had offered to pay 50% of the cost (minus VAT) with the Council purchasing the stonework at full price and reclaiming the VAT. The net cost to the Council would be £412.50. The Clerk to check that this quote was still valid. The Council approved the stone colour which would darken with age. Cllr P Whatley proposed that the Council accept this very generous offer and proceed with the purchase. This was seconded by Cllr P Griffiths and unanimously endorsed by the whole Council who asked the Clerk to convey their thanks to the anonymous benefactor.

### **41//21 FINANCE** - The following cheques were approved :-

- Proposed by Cllr P Griffiths and seconded by Cllr A Lewis
  - (a) **Gen Fund** – D W Taylor, Clerk’s expenses March/April 2021 - £87.50; Clerk’s salary adjustment for new rate of pay for April - £30.10, plus £11.69 underpayment of previous salary (NatWest Bank’s mistake) – total £41.79; R Wilks Lengthsman – March 2021 - £57.60 (already paid but to be approved); R Wilks Lengthsman April 2021 – to be advised. Marion Griffiths – payroll services 2020/21 - £80.00; The Hill Trust – hall hire 2018-2020 £350.00; Worcs Calc Fees 2021/22 - £401.96
  - (b) **Playing Field** – D Reynolds (DJR Farm services) – fencing - £810.61 (already paid but to be approved)
  - (c) Agreement to the payment of annual allowance to J Green of £288.00 in respect of supervision of the Parish Lengthsman’s activities and weekly inspections of “at risk” items (Local Authorities Members’ Allowances (England) Regulations 2003. Proposed by Cllr R Hill and seconded by Cllr P Griffiths
- Grants/Donations –**
- (d) Suckley PCC – maintenance of graveyards – 2021/22 - £250.00. (an increase of £50.00 from 2020/21) Proposed by Cllr C Luton and seconded by Cllr P Whatley
  - (e) Suckley Playing Fields – £1,000.00 Grant for 2021/22. Proposed by Cllr A Lewis and seconded by Cllr P Griffiths

- (f) **Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021** were approved. Proposed by Cllr P Whatley and seconded by Cllr A Lewis. These to be signed and dated by the Clerk & Chairman.

#### **42/21 APPROVAL OF ANNUAL AUDIT for Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

##### **(as an Exempt Authority)**

- (a) The Council resolved that as the income or expenditure of the Council was less than £25k p/a the Council met the criteria to be considered an “Exempt Authority” and did not have to forward a full Annual return to the External Auditors. Proposed by Cllr R Hill and seconded by Cllr P Griffiths. However, the Annual Return did have to be completed and signed, and posted onto the Parish Council website. The statement of exemption was signed by the Chairman and the Clerk to be forwarded to the External Auditors.
- (b) **Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement** (signed by the Chairman and the Clerk)  
Proposed by Cllr R Hill and seconded by Cllr P Griffiths
- (c) **Section 2 – Accounting Statement** (Signed by the Chairman and the Clerk)  
Proposed by Cllr R Hill and seconded by Cllr P Griffiths

#### **43/21 PLANNING**

For Information only –

- (a) App No: 20/02039/HP  
Location: Rundell, Longley Green, Suckley, WR6 5DU  
Proposal: Single storey rear extension with internal & external alterations and balcony terrace to rear  
MHDC Planning has **APPROVED** this application, subject to conditions.
- (b) App No: 20/0206/FUL  
Location: Tundridge Stud, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5DR  
Proposal: Erection of a commercial storage building for use in connection with Tundridge Stud  
MHDC Planning has **APPROVED** this application, subject to conditions
- (c) **APPEAL** Ref J/J1860/D/20/3265360 – The Nook, Birchwood, Storridge WR13 5HA. The Appeal has been **DISMISSED**

#### **44/21 PLAYING FIELD**

Cllr C Luton reported on the results of the RoSPA Safety Inspection which had resulted in an overall risk rating of low. Duncan Reynolds and Cllr J Green would be fixing the bolt problem on the seesaw Rocker and Duncan would be mowing the pitch again shortly. She would be sorting out the mole problems which had re-appeared. She was looking at the cost of replacing the bins on the Playing field with fixed bins having an internal liner, rather than a bin bag.

#### **45/21 RISK ASSESSMENT**

Cllr C Luton had been had been undertaking the Risk Assessments on the Playing Field and Cllr R Hill checking all other risk areas whilst Cllr J Green was in a Covid high risk category. Nothing adverse to report at the moment.

#### **46/21 SUCKLEY CHURCH**

Cllr A Lewis thanked the Council for their increased donation for the maintenance of Suckley Church graveyard and referred back to her Annual Parish Meeting report. Along with all other churches, Suckley had struggled with the unprecedented and challenging situation. By 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020 restrictions had been eased and Churches were allowed to choose whether they opened up for private prayer. Suckley decided to remain closed, but to open on a Saturday and two days per

week from 25<sup>th</sup> July. Attendance numbers had been restricted, with face masks being mandatory and no singing allowed. New ways of worship had been found via Zoom and Streaming, with Suckley Good Neighbourhood Scheme facilitating the provision of digital devices to help those who otherwise would not have been able to remain in contact. The tree of Light shone out again in December 2020 with a full sized tableau in the churchyard. The church now had underfloor heating and smart stacking chairs. The next target would be the all-important toilet and kitchen facilities.

#### **47/21 SUCKLEY SCHOOL**

The Head Teacher Helen Field had sent the Clerk an extensive report for the Annual Parish Meeting. This covered the school year during the pandemic, with the children in “class bubbles” and adapted classrooms. During the second full closure the children received remote learning, but the school remained open for critical worker and vulnerable children with numbers up to 25 pupils. As part of the recovery curriculum the school had a whole school project based on the book “Here We Are” by Oliver Jeffers. The Forest School activities were also increased. School assemblies were held via Zoom. In November the pupils discussed the importance and meaning of Remembrance and held a minutes silence at 11.00 am raising a total of £218.64 for the Poppy Appeal by selling their artwork. In December the school entered into the Worcestershire & West Virtual Cross Country and also competed in the Christmas Card Design at Latimer Court, with one of the pupils coming second with her “Kittens” card design. In March the school completed a Spring & Farming project.

#### **48/21 MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDA**

None requested.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45 pm

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at 7.00 pm in Suckley Village Hall  
(unless advised otherwise)**