

BROOME PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Broome Parish Council held on Wednesday 4th May 2022, 8.00pm, Broome Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs. N Norton (NN) (Chairman), D Billingham (DB) (Vice Chairman), A Allen (AA), M Billingham (MB), S Breeden (SB) G Brown (GB) W Edwards (WE).

Also present were: The Clerk Mrs B J Drew (BD), District Councillor Mrs L Jones (LJ). W Waldron (BW), PCSO Nichola Thomas.

1. Election of Chairman: It was proposed by MB, seconded AA, and unanimously agreed that Cllr Nick Norton be re-elected as Chairman.

2. Election of a Vice-Chairman: It was proposed by NN, seconded SB and unanimously resolved that Cllr Don Billington should continue as Vice-Chairman.

3. Apologies: County Cllr. Mr M Hart, District Cllr. Mr I Hardiman.

4. Declarations of Interest and dispensations:

DB and SB in village hall as members of the committee.

5. Public Question time: None

6. Minutes of the last meeting held on 2nd February 2022: These were duly approved and were signed by the Chairman as a true record once.

7. District / County Councillors Reports:

District Councillors Report previously circulated; Cllr L Jones read report.

Local Issues

We have been dealing with the usual routine casework, reporting litter and fly tipping on the main A roads and along the country lanes.

District Issues

Wyre Forest House is still closed to the public as is the Green Street Hub save for dealing with housing and homelessness applications.

Members approved the Council tax for 2022-2023. This includes the 2.23% increase £5 on a Band D property at £229.34 in the District Council's element of Council Tax, as recommended by Cabinet on 8 February 2022, the precepts and council tax increases in the elements of Council Tax set by the following bodies :-

Worcestershire County Council 3.94% (of which 3% is being ringfenced to fund adult social care) £52.95.

West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner 3.94% - £9.47.

Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority 1.96% - £1.72

With the rising energy bills the Government has announced support with a one-off payment of £150 rebate for Council Taxpayers in bands A-D. The Council is urging residents to sign up to the scheme and pay their bill by Direct Debit.

The Councils Budget for 2022-2025 was approved and Capital Strategy for 2022-2032. The Progressive Alliance Budget includes the closing of the Small Business Grant scheme, to end the support of sport and leisure facilities from April 2023 phasing out involvement in Bewdley Leisure Centre and Stourport Sports Club. This was approved by 17 votes to 16!

Members Community funding will be reduced from £1,000 per annum to £500 in the financial year 2022-2023 and Nil thereafter.

The District Council owned units that were being constructed in Unity Park, off Silverwoods Way in Kidderminster are now complete, there are nine units in total and four are under offer, the remaining five are being viewed by perspective companies. The District Council will benefit from the rental income from the units.

Visa applications from Ukrainians who will be living with sponsors in Wyre Forest have been approved by the District Council, this number is increasing daily as further sponsor applications are being approved.

Residents in Council Tax Bands A-D should start to receive their £150 rebate now.

In respect of the WFDC's draft Local Plan, there was a special meeting of Cabinet which approved this on 26th April and then a special meeting of Full Council that same evening to approve or not approve the Local Plan.

The Plan was approved by 14 votes to 13, with 4 abstentions and 2 members declaring interests and not voting. We did not support the plan as whilst we accepted that green belt land would have to be released and the 2 major development sites at Lea Castle and land at Offmore are sensible, we felt that the Progressive Alliance were using a higher number of dwellings per annum than needed and if they had reduced this and the percentage of oversupply, we could have had circa 500-800 less houses over the 20 year period of the plan. This would have seen a lot of the other sites removed. Plan period runs from 2016-2036.

The Gainsborough House Hotel has been commissioned by the Home Office for Syrian refugees.

MB queried why Wyre Forest House is still closed and staff are not back in the office. LJ confirmed this is the case. Agreed Clerk write letter to Ian Miller querying why this is now all covid restrictions have been lifted.

County Councillor Report previously circulated;

Broome Issues

Egg Lane flooding issues are ongoing and long standing. This appears to have gone quiet but I am determined to tackle them.

The pavement on the B4188 from Knoll Hill in the direction of Hackmans Gate is on the list to be resurfaced.

The drains along the A450 at Barnett Hill to Broome has now been inspected with the camera. There are two broken connections and work is schedule for 13th June for this work to be done under traffic control.

As I reported last time, the dead Elm trees at the property Claremont adjacent to the A450/Hackmans Gate have been inspected. A letter has now been sent to the landowner to ensure that they are regularly inspected as they are on their land. Paul Green advises that they are not immediately a safety issue hence they haven't asked for their removal.

Wyre Forest Issues

The Quarry at Lea Castle, Wolverley, has still not been determined yet but I understand it may be going to go before the WCC planning committee later this month.

BD confirmed it is going to committee on 24th May and the meeting will be webcast.

The planning application in Blakedown for an 89 space car park has now been submitted. This is certainly dividing public opinion.

Strategic Issues County Wide

The County Council has been heavily involved in the response to the Coronavirus pandemic working with our other statutory partners.

Worcestershire has a fantastic website Here2Help which is a community action response to Coronavirus. There is also a dedicated phone number 01905 768053 for those without access to the internet. There is now a Here2Helpbusiness scheme as well. (simply google Here 2 Help Worcestershire and it comes straight up.)

Here2Help is now also coordinating our Ukranian Refugee programme working with the 6 District Councils. We now have several hundred refugees in the County and a number of families have now come to the Wyre Forest.

WCC received £1.6 million from central government to support free school meals and fund holiday activities over the school holiday periods.

Full Council met and set the final budget at its meeting on 17th February.

General council tax was increased by just .094%, the social care levy was increased by 3%, 1% for this year and 2% which WCC chose not to levy last year so this can be levied this year, so in simple terms overall council tax increased by 3.94%.

The maximum it could be increased by under Government rules is 5%. In money terms, 3.94% is £52.95 per annum on a Band D property which will mean the County Councils portion of the bill will be £1,396.78 compared to £1,343.83 last year. Remember that WCC make up 70% of your overall council tax bill, with WFDC being about 12%, your PC's share 1% and Police and Fire making up the rest.

The net revenue budget increased from circa £355 million in 2021-2022 to £373 million in 2022-2023. The gross budget is over £1 billion.

We have had additional monies from central government this year to tackle pressures in adults and social care, a further £6 million in social care grant and a one off what is called a 'services grant' of £4.4 million, of which £1.4 million is to fund the new national insurance levy but this is still £3 million net.

We are also predicting an increase in council tax income of circa £11.3 million from the increase, 1% is worth about £2.8 million and circa £2.7 million from council tax buoyancy (new properties being built and occupied) and circa £1 million from the collection fund (ie more people coming back into paying council tax). Therefore adding everything together WCC is circa £30 million better off than in 2021-2022. That said there still are final pressures in social care and frankly unless the grant continues to go up substantially from government they will remain but the additional funding this year is very welcome and will go some way to alleviating the immediate pressure. Overall those pressures amount to £44.2 million so there is a gap of £14.2 million to be plugged by use of some reserves, £2.7 million, £8.1 million of income and efficiencies and use of some adult social care external funding of £3.4 million.

We have also had substantial grants to use for our Covid -19 response.

We have a large capital programme and through the period 2020 to 2024 it is proposed to spend £439 million.

So what are we spending your money on, well £155 million in our People Directorate (Adult Social Care, Public Health, Communities, Libraries, Countryside Side Service, Registration Service etc...), £109 million in Worcestershire Children First, (Children's Services, Social Care Placements, Education, SEND etc...), £57 million in Economy and Infrastructure (Highways, Waste Contract, Trading Standards, Public Rights of Way, Major Projects, Passenger Transport) and £55 million on Corporate services, (Finance, Legal and Democratic Services, Administration, Buildings and Property Management, Interest on Debt ie paying for the borrowing on capital schemes and many other things.

In broad terms we spend circa £260 million of the £373 million net revenue budget on vulnerable adults and vulnerable children, this is circa 70% of our budget.

We agreed spending an additional £12 million in both 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 on road resurfacing and a further £4 million in both 2022-2023 and 2024 on pavement resurfacing.

We have also created a pot of money, £500,000 in both 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 to fund small scale schemes such as creating new pelican and zebra crossings.

We agreed that there will be an uplift in the budget for Parish Lengths man of 15% which is very good news as this budget has not increased for about 12 years.

There will be an additional £1 million for drainage including small schemes to support flood alleviation.

Each county councillor will be allocated £22,500 in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 to spend on capital local highways schemes. I have spent all of mine on resurfacing pavements and this additional money will allow me to get even more done.

We are also allocating an additional £1.1 million to extend for a further 2 years the Councillors Divisional Fund allocating each County Councillor £10,000 per annum to spend on projects and community organisations within their electoral division

In terms of school funding whilst we still are one of the more poorly funded areas and the Government has not yet changed how the formula works nationally, the quantum of cash is at least going up nationally which translates into more money for Worcestershire pupils. Under the

parameters of the National Funding Formula which Worcestershire uses, there will be a minimum increase per pupil of 2%.

The dedicated school grant has increased from £371 million in 2021-2022 to £383 million in 2022-2023 (this is for mainstream schools) and the Higher Needs Block (this is for special school funding and SEND) has increased from £68.5 million to £75.5 million which is a step in the right direction but there is still a substantial overspend in special needs which needs addressing.

There is much more I could say but these are the highlights.

The CQC and Ofsted have published their report following their reinspection in the latter part of 2021, further to their 2018 inspection that found serious weaknesses in 12 areas relating to SEND. The reinspection has confirmed that an appropriate level of improvement has been made in 8 out of 12 of the areas. The areas still of concern, which WCC and Health are already addressing relate largely to integration in mainstream schools, the appropriateness of an individual's placement and the quality of their ECHP and the interface and liaison with parents and carers.

8. Police Report:

Written Report previously circulated;

236_I_31032022 – watery Lane – Op Prospero An elderly female has been contacted by an unknown male claiming to be from the financial conduct authority stating his name was mark Edwards. The male wanted her to go to Morrisons to get google pay gift cards to the value of £375, once she had got these he would be coming to her home address to collect them. Thankfully she was not convinced by this male and hung up.

00445_I_01042022 – Barnett Hill – Theft . A white/grey transit van has driven up the yard and taken several items. 3x unknown males were seen loading items into the van.

00401_I_25042022 – Egg Lane- Theft – sometime between lunch time and 19:00hrs on 22/04/2022 unknown persons have cut a piece of barbed wire fence to gain access to a field and stolen 2 ewes.

Nichola advised that in the last 2 days there have been reports of suspicious males taking pictures of cattle in field around the Shenstone area. They do have an agricultural operation coming up.

9. Planning Report:

The Planning Spreadsheet had been previously circulated. Clerk reported on Planning since last meeting:

22/0104/HOU 10.02.2022 LOWOOD, BELBROUGHTON ROAD, HACKMANS GATE, BROOME:
Garage conversion (after partial demolition), rear extension and first floor extension with (partial) hip to gable.

The Parish Council has no objection to this proposal subject to Planning determining that the proposed increase in size does not breach planning regulations. (Pending Decision)

22/0114/CLP 14.02.2022 MANOR HOUSE FARM, HACKMANS GATE LANE, BROOME:
Erection of boundary walls, pillars and gates.
FOR INFORMATION ONLY (Approved - 24.03.2022)

22/0329/HOU 20.04.2022 THE WOODLANDS, WORCESTER ROAD, CLENT:
Erection of detached garage building after demolition of existing building.

22/0364/FUL 03.05.2022 MANOR HOUSE FARM, HACKMAN'S GATE LANE, BROOME:
Change of use of land and erection of proposed ground mounted Solar Photovoltaic (Solar PV) array.

The Planning Sub Committee was agreed to continue as DB, GB, AA

10. Lengthsman Update:

BW reported cleaning out footpath down from Palethorpes property.

MB advised of dangerous tree – he will contact owner. WE advised of problem with black silt – this will be investigated.

Clerk advised despite increasing financial pressures, WCC have increased funding for 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 to £2204.32. Signed contract has been received from BW.

11. Footpaths Warden Update:

WE would still like to step down from Footpaths Warden role. Clerk continues to advertise in Broadcast magazine.

The portal has been updated following last meeting.

Stiles in Mr Lampard's field, 506c – 507 unsafe stile have been done, top of watery lane stile collapsed (by end cottage) WE will put on portal, Sign at 503d Broome Lane still awaiting action, 501c sign pending Highways, 512c sign needs checking.

Clerk will send link to all Councillors for WCC interactive map showing footpaths and their numbers.

12. To nominate Councillors to Worcestershire CALC Area Meetings:

Clerk advised meetings are every three months and are often very useful. It was agreed Clerk and Chairman attend and if any other Cllr wish to go let clerk know.

13. To review the model Code of Conduct: The Model Code of Conduct was noted.

14. To review the adopted Financial Regulations: The Financial Regulations were noted.

15. To review the Standing Orders: The Standing Orders were noted. The model Standing Orders are used by the Parish Council.

16. To approve the Risk Review Log: The Risk Log was discussed, agreed and signed by the Chairman.

17. To note the Insurance Requirements: The Insurance Renewal had been circulated and it was agreed to proceed as per previous cover.

18.. To review GDPR documentation: All completed and on the website.

19. To review Internal Audit Report:

Clerk had circulated the report which was noted.

20. To review Fixed Assets Register:

2 Benches

Parish Council Noticeboard

Village Gateways

VAS sign and bracket

Phone Box

The computer equipment has been removed as it is unfit for purpose.

It was agreed to amend the sum for the gateways from £1,000 down to £271.20. DB had confirmed actual cost.

21. Financial Matters

i) To discuss progress with new bank account.

The Parish Council are changing accounts to Lloyds Bank. DB initiated this as he currently has an account with them which makes it easier. Currently DB and MB are set up as signatories and they can set up and authorise payments, both must authorise for a payment to go through. BD is not yet set up as Treasurer, the form has been completed tonight and will be sent off tomorrow. We need to proceed to get Clerk on board then adjust access with Clerk to enter payments only and any 2 Cllrs to authorise. Other Councillors can be added. Council agreed for DB/MB to enter payments in the short term until BD has been added. The first instalment of the Precept has been made into the new account.

ii) To consider bank reconciliation and bank statements since last meeting.

The financial spreadsheet was duly circulated, and it was in accordance with the bank statements. The bank balance as at 31st March 2022 was £14,172.29(Community Account) and £954.14 (Business Money Manager Account).

iii) Approved schedule of Accounts for Payment.

Already Paid;

Mr W Waldron (Lengthsman January 22)	£45.00
S Breeden (Plaque)	£34.00
Mr W Waldron (Lengthsman February 22)	£30.00
Print Serve (Payroll)	£25.00
Mrs B J Drew (Expenses to 31st March 22)	£81.95
Mr W Waldron (Litter)	£360.10
Mr W Waldron (Lengthsman March 22)	£120.00
Broome Parish Council (Transfer to new account)	£2,000.00

For Approval;

DM Payroll Services Limited (Internal Audit)	£60.00
Worcestershire CALC (Annual Subscription)	£241.71
Broadcast Magazine (Grant)	£40.00
BHIB (Insurance)	£261.79
Flag	£69.60

iv) Adoption of the Accounts and Approval of Annual Return.

It was unanimously agreed to approve the accounts for the year 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022, firstly (a) certificate of exemption (b) the annual governance statement and (c) the annual accounting statements.

v) Clerks Pay Review.

NN/DB to undertake.

22. Vehicular Activated Sign.

There was much discussion on the various options for signs. Clerk to establish if the portable SID with slow down legend beneath can be manually adjusted, if not they agreed to proceed with option 1

portable 20/30/40 with slow down legend beneath.

23. Queens Platinum Jubilee.

SB suggested the possibility of a new bench to commemorate the platinum jubilee at top of Redhill Farm lane pointing towards the bridleway. Clerk to ascertain if this is Highway land or private.

Coffee morning in June falls on Jubilee, Thursday 2nd June.

GB is opening field on Sat 4th June for villagers for a picnic and raising funds for Teenage Cancer Trust.

24. To discuss Worcestershire CALC New Website.

Clerk reported on new website, if Councillors require direct access to members page please let BD know.

25. Correspondence.

Noted

26. Councillor Reports.

None

27. Agenda items for future meetings.

Notify the Clerk.

28. Date of Next Meetings.

Broome Village Hall

7th September 2022,

7th December 2022.

Meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....