

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EARLS CROOME PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 26th JULY 2022 AT 7.30 PM AT EARLS CROOME VILLAGE HALL.

PRESENT: Cllr Mark Smith (Chairman), Cllr Penny Green, Cllr Katie Etherington, Cllr Tom Goodwin, Mrs Ann Smith (Advisor to PC), Malcolm Tomkins (Tree Warden) and the Clerk.

1) APOLOGIES

County Councillor Allen, District Councillor Owenson, Cllr Margaret Herbert and Cllr Charlotte Bloomfield

2) PUBLIC: One resident observing meeting with a view to becoming a member. One other resident in attendance. Malcolm asked that if residents had queries in between meetings, should these be directed directly to the relevant Member or via the Clerk. The Clerk asked that issues were raised to her in the first instance so there was a central record of the things raised to the Parish Council.

3) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4) MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th May 2022 were proposed by Penny, seconded by Mark, agreed by all and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

5) MEMBER VACANCY

The Vacancy is widely advertised. A resident was observing the meeting with a view to joining the Parish Council. The Chair advised that a written statement of why they wanted to join the PC and what skills, qualities or particular areas they were interested in would be required ahead of being co-opted at the September meeting.

6) CODE OF CONDUCT

The Members discussed the new suggested code of conduct sent out by MHDC. Penny proposed the code of conduct was adopted, this was seconded by Katie and agreed by all. The Clerk would notify MHDC monitoring officer.

7) REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

County Council Report

Tom read out Martin Allen's report;

Martin has concerns regarding the traffic from the Kempsey arm of the new Ketch roundabout being able to safely access the roundabout.

Martin has secured funding for the Community bus to continue until September 2022 – the clear message is use it or lose it!

Bowfarm and Cemex extraction decision – Delayed.

Ripple East extraction consultation ended, there will be a 2 year extraction being transported by barge.

Martin had insisted upon a vote on the removal of the recommended exclusion zone for the new minerals plan, there is medical research suggested the silica dust is a huge risk to lungs and that a 200M exclusion zone should be in place. However this was voted against by all the Conservative MP's with all other members voting for the exclusion zone.

Further bus reviews and cuts are now a concern with a new Head of Highways being appointed.

Martin is pushing forward to get proper passing bays put in on Quay Lane.

Martin advised that Worcester City would be subject to a boundary commission review in time for 2025 elections.

Martin is talking with Highways dept regarding the continued use of Quay Lane as a diversion route, Mark confirmed he had talked to Martin prior to the meeting and discussed access only signage. A discussion arose amongst members regarding a petition. The Clerk was asked to send details of the road damage and road safety issues being caused by the Quay Lane diversions to try and appeal to WCC Highways to place the diversion via Severn Stoke.

District Council Report

No report had been received from Jeremy.

8) SOUTH WORCESTERSHIRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Mark advised that this was currently delayed. The Clerk thought the consultations were planned for November/December but had only heard this from Wychavon DC and no official notification had been received from MHDC.

9) BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW

Mark advised that the Boundary Commission has completely reviewed the proposed boundaries and ECPC would be included with Upton Town and Ryall in the new proposals.

Mark suggested that a strong objection be submitted as ECPC would not want to be joined with a town as the needs of rural communities are very different from urban needs.

Katie, Margaret and Mark would meet to construct a letter to be submitted by the Clerk to the Boundary Commission in time for the deadline 8th August.

10) BOTTLE BANKS

Mark advised that a resident had notified the Parish Council that the bottle recycling had been removed from the Yorkshire Grey pub car park, upon investigation the Clerk was informed that they can no longer be sited on private property but could potentially be placed on PC land.

The Members discussed the pros and cons of siting the bottle banks at the Village Hall and although it was agreed that the bottle recycling via bottle banks is superior to the doorstep recycling waste collection, there is access to bottle banks at many supermarkets. Members decided that the detriment to residents from noise and broken glass debris vs the one resident request did not make this a viable option.

11) HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Penny reported that the footpath resurfacing work at Orchard Close was now complete

Mark advised that Margaret had once again raised her concerns regarding the narrow road being so close to the ditch just after Emblem Villa – the Clerk was asked to raise this on WCC hub, Members felt a site visit was required.

The diversion of traffic along Quay Lane was discussed. It was noted that the road was sinking at North Quay and pot holes/road breaking up on the junction to Church Lane – the Clerk was asked to report these via WCC Hub. It was discussed the dangers of the larger vehicles mounting the pavements to pass especially as children walk along Quay Lane to catch the school bus!

The Clerk was asked to write to Martin Allen to raise all these concerns regarding the use of Quay Lane as a diversion during the roundabout construction.

Margaret had also raised a concern regarding debris building up in the drain opposite Jon Priors old house – Jon used to clear this, the Clerk was asked to highlight it to the lengthsman along with all 6 drains from there to the crucifix and the butterfly drains.

12) PARISH PATHS

Mark advised that there had been no further contact from WCC regarding having a WCC Parish Path Warden.

Malcolm advised that all the paths were clear and he had used approx. half the budget.

Penny asked regarding the stile on the A38 adjacent to Earls Croome Court driveway, that had not been replaced. Malcolm thought it would be replaced with a kissing gate in due course, the WCC policy is to replace stiles with kissing gates as the stiles fail.

13) TREES

Mark advised that Margaret had raised concerns regarding the ash die back, roadside at Marsh Common. Malcolm advised that he had marked the worst trees using the 4 scale grading system and that he would continue to monitor the situation closely.

Malcolm advised that he had applied for some trees from the Queen Canopy Fund.

There was a discussion regarding the trees suggested at the roundabout project. It was thought these were suggested for the northwest side of the roundabout in Ripple Parish. Since the Parish Councils declined to add additional funding, it is thought the trees will be the oaks as first suggested by WCC.

14) LENGTHSMAN SCHEME

It was noted that a number of signs needed cutting out and that a few needed 'knocking' back so they faced the right direction. The Clerk would ask the lengthsman to address these along with the drains.

15) COMMONS

a) Smithmoor –

LEGAL MATTERS:

The correspondence from the solicitor regarding the Land Registry outcome on the access track was discussed. Ann raised an historical case regarding the Village Hall car park, but it was thought to differ due to there being no access through required and the rulings in the Kimber case in 1978 was thought to drive the outcome. The Chairman thought there was no more to be gained and that the ad filum law needed to be adhered to.

MAINTAINANCE: The Chairman lead a discussion on the report from Natural Networks that Margaret had organized and circulated. The advice was thought to be most welcome and encouraging. A decision would need to be made whether to register. It was discussed that for the last few years there had been no capital expenditure and therefore nothing for the Natural Network to fund. The advice regarding staggered cutting, set aside and such forth would really come down to what Steve Coole could accommodate. Tom advised that some advice would be easier for Steve to implement than others and that some would prove to be too costly. The Members asked the Clerk to send Steve the report and ask him what or how much of the advice he thought he could accommodate fairly easily. The members could then discuss this further at the September meeting. (it was noted that the report had advice for each of the commons)

Dunstall – No issues to discuss.

Marsh – Ash die back as discussed.

16) PLANNING

20/01827/FUL Baughton Stud, Smithmoor Common. Enforcement notices served. The Clerk advised that MHDC are waiting on an application for a private use menage, which has already been constructed!

21/01970/FUL Elgar Inn, Worcester Road. Creation of new agricultural access – There had still been no outcome notified.

Bluebell Farm Vision statement – Mark advised the Clerk had sent some pertinent queries regarding who else they are consulting with. Once this information is received this matter can be discussed further.

17) FINANCE

The monthly reconciliation of cash and other monies was undertaken for April, May & June by Charlotte & Penny.

The Chairman advised that the internal audit had been completed and that the PC had received a clean bill of health with no advisories. The report had been published on the website.

Payments made since the last meeting were noted as follows:

Mr A Milward – Lengthsman payment – May	£222.00
Zurich annual insurance premium	£403.39
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary- June (S/O)	£213.36
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance June (S/O)	£20.00

It was proposed by Tom and seconded by Katie and agreed by all to authorize the following payments:

a) Mr A Milward – lengthsman payment – June	£156.00
b) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk salary – July (S/O)	£213.36
c) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Working from home allowance July (S/O)	£20.00
d) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk OPE Jan – Aug	£70.11
e) Mr A Milward – lengthsman services – July	£TBC
f) M J Clemas – internal audit fee	£50.00

Remittance:

WCC Lengthsman re-imburse April & May	£444.00
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Mark advised that with Robin resigning there was a need for a replacement cheque signatory. Penny suggested Margaret as the longest standing member. Katie volunteered should Margaret not wish to be a signatory. The Clerk would prepare the mandate for September's meeting.

18. CORRESPONDANCE

- Resident regarding bottle banks – as discussed under agenda item 10.

19. INFORMATION AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date of the next meeting Tuesday 20th September 2022 at Earls Croome Village Hall.

The Meeting closed at 8:45pm.