

**WOLVERLEY & COOKLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2023, 7.00pm, Cookley School, Cookley**

Present:

Mr R Drew (Chairman)  
Mrs V Bordewich  
Mr J Hart  
Mr M Hart  
Mr B McFarland  
Mr C Nicholls  
Mr C Sherrey  
Mr S Sherrey  
Mr W Southam  
Mr J Wood

West Mercia Police: PCSO Alice Owen - Jones  
County Councillor: Apologies  
District Councillors: Councillor M Hart

169. **Apologies**

Cllr A Carloss due to family commitments, Cllr D Cox due to work commitments, Cllr D Jones due to holiday and County Councillor Ian Hardiman due to attendance at Churchill & Blakedown meeting.

170. **Declarations of Councillors Interests**

- a) Register of Interests: The Clerk reminded Councillors that it is their responsibility to update their register of interests forms as required. If you require a new form, please contact the Clerk.
- b) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature. None disclosed.
- c) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests (Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary) in items on the agenda and their nature. None disclosed.

The meeting will now be adjourned for PUBLIC QUESTION TIME.

A parishioner reported excessive amounts of rubbish along the A449 and enquired whether WFDC could do anything to improve the current situation. Cllr M Hart advised that Beechtree Lane is also inundated with rubbish, both areas have been reported by Cllr M Hart and County Councillor I Hardiman. Cllr Southam expressed thanks to Karin for recently collecting 8/10 black sacks full of rubbish.

The meeting now reconvened to conduct the items of business listed below.

171. **To consider the adoption of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2023 at 7.00pm**

These having previously been circulated it was resolved unanimously to receive and adopt the minutes as a true record of the meeting and these were signed by the Chairman.

**Matters for Discussion / Decision.**

172. **Quarry Planning Application Appeal:**

The Chairman advised the Quarry Appeal Inquiry starts on 28<sup>th</sup> February at Stone Manor Hotel and lasts for 7 days but does not sit on a Monday. Cllr S Sherrey is registered and will speak on behalf of the Parish Council.

173. **Police Report.**

Written Report circulated. PCSO Alice Owen Jones reported;

**CAUNSELL**

Vehicle Crime - Orchard Grove - Police Ref 00009\_I\_26012023 - A white Mercedes Sprinter Van registration similar to KV\*\* DDU has been stolen from the roadside outside an address in this location sometime between 21.30hrs and midnight last night. Tools were inside the van and have also been stolen

**WOLVERLEY**

Anti-Social Behaviour - Sebright Road - Police Ref 00670\_I\_25012023 Over a few evenings this week we have had reports of bricks, stones and food being thrown at properties on the estate. One offender was seen wearing an orange coat and was in the rear garden of one of the properties. We will be checking cctv in the area, but if you have any that can assist us with our enquiries that would be helpful. The timings have been anywhere between 20.30 - 22.30pm

We would also like to make you aware that we have seen an increase in vehicle thefts. We encourage people to be vigilant with their vehicle security and follow the below crime prevention measures in an effort to deter potential thieves:

- Ensure that all the windows and doors to your home are kept locked with keys removed, and put in a place where they can be accessed in an emergency, but cannot be reached by a potential offender
- Install a high-quality intruder alarm

- Please consider your door locks and if necessary replace them with low profile anti snap locks
- Install an exterior security light to both the front and rear of your premises
- Keep your car keys/fobs and valuables out of sight, and make use of a faraday bag to place your keys into, this will help block its signal and prevent thieves from remotely accessing your vehicle.
- Please also ensure any spare keys to your vehicle are also placed in a faraday bag
- Lock your car away safely in the garage, if possible
- Fit a high-quality alarm to your vehicle
- Use extra security systems; immobilisers and visible security locks
- Lock gates, where possible.
- Keep keys on your person when leaving the vehicle unattended
- Secure all doors, windows, the boot and sunroof when leaving your vehicle
- Add additional motion sensor lighting to areas where your vehicles are parked
- For houses with multiple vehicles, make it harder for the car to be taken; park the lesser valued vehicle behind the more expensive one on the driveway

Alice advised people to purchase faraday bags which block signal.

174. **County / District Councillor Reports.**  
**County Cllr Ian Hardiman's Report; Written Report Circulated.**

Lea lane Landslip:

I have not received a further update from The County Council on this issue.  
 I will continue to chase.

A449 / Pedestrian Difficulties:

Further to my Report last month, I followed up on our discussion and requested the introduction of a 30mph temporary limit until the re-configuration works have been completed. I am still awaiting a response on this.

Caunsall Residents' Concerns Ref. Removal of Hedgerows:

I have engaged the expertise of the Arboricultural Officer to investigate claims that the owner of the fields beyond the top of New Road, is removing hedgerows; he intends speaking with the landowner to understand what are his intentions and to ensure removal of hedges is not a part of them.

School Time Parking Issues:

I have collaborated with Parish Council Chairman, Robin Drew to seek a way that parents can be prevented from causing obstruction when they collect their children from school.

Strategic Issues County Wide:

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 co-ordinating our Ukrainian 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 and young people are taking up places in local schools.

The County Council has launched its draft budget for consultation. It is proposing a net revenue budget of circa £400.5million. We continue to face significant pressures in both children's and adult's social care. The Government has listened to lobbying from Upper Tier Councils and has funded an additional £26.3 million pounds to WCC, of which £19.5 million is specifically for children's and adult's social care. We are facing additional pressures of circa £67.9 million, largely down to:-

Pay Inflation (set nationally) £11.6m

Inflation from 3rd Party Contracts £17m

Rebase Budget for Energy from Waste Plant £6.1m

Rebase Budget in respect of one-offs and reserves £2.6m

Adult Social Care Demand Growth £18.5m

Children's Social Care Demand Growth £2.5m

Home to School Transport Demand Growth £2.4m

Legal Services Demand Growth £0.5m

Waste Services Demand Growth £0.4m

Delivery of existing Capital Programme £5.5m  
Investment in Highways and Tree maintenance £0.5m  
Investment in other services £0.3m

The additional £500k in the revenues budget for highways will greatly assist in getting minor tree works and other minor issues done.

Importantly, we are maintaining investment in the parish lengths man scheme and the local county councillor's fund for investment in local highways works and our £10,000 members divisional funding.

We are also investing £3.5m from earmarked reserves for public transport (buses) as it continues to recover from the pandemic.

The Government has capped council tax at 5% overall, 3% for general council tax and 2% for the adult social care precept. We are proposing an increase of 4.94% overall made up of 2.94% council tax and 2% social care precept. This will increase a Band D property's bill in 2023-2024 by £69 per annum or £1.33pence per week. I anticipate by the time the District Council, Parish Council, Police and Fire precepts are added in it will be an increase of circa £100 per year. The Government expects Councils to increase by the maximum. This will mean that WCC's bill will go from £1,396.78 to £1,465.78 for a Band D property. WCC will still be in the lowest quartile for council tax nationally.

We are plugging the £67.9m gap by:-

Government funding £26.3m  
Council Tax additional income £14m  
Earmarked Reserves £5.2m  
Savings, efficiencies and additional income £22.4m  
As at 31/03/24 we plan to have circa £70.4 m of reserves, £56.1 of earmarked reserves and £14.3 of unallocated reserves.  
The dedicated schools grant will increase to £532,608.  
The £400.5m overall budget is made up as follows:-  
Adults and Communities £160m  
Children's and Schools £111m  
Environment and Infrastructure £69m  
Commercial and Change £16.5m  
Chief Executive Unit £3.5m  
Finance and Corporate £40.5m

We will be spending circa 67% of the net revenue budget on vulnerable children and vulnerable adult. This will mean that the majority of our budget is spent on circa 5,000 residents out of a Worcestershire population of circa 600,000 residents. We also have a capital programme of circa £413m, made up of a wide variety of infrastructure projects. Full Council will set the budget on 16th February.

#### **District Councillors Report; Written report circulated.**

##### 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. We have recently reported litter on the A448 between Castle Road and Austcliffe Lane which is very bad at present.

Regarding the K9 Pawfection business in Drakelow Lane, the applicants as you may be aware have appealed the enforcement notice and there has still be no decision from the planning inspector to date.

Regarding Six Ashes, Castle Hill, we have been liaising with officers regarding this enforcement issue and enforcement action will now be taken.

Land at the junction of Sladd Lane and Shatterford Lane has been the subject of a planning application for a dog walking area and this as we write has yet to be determined.

We are regularly liaising with WFDC planning officers regarding continued HGV use on Kingsford Lane going to the Drakelow tunnels site instead of using Sladd Lane which is the official rout and Ian is also taking this up with WCC.

We have been liaising with WFDC regarding additional car parking at Brown Westhead Park due to the excessive cars from the use of the football pitches.

There is no update as yet as to when the 800 homes planned for Lea Castle will be determined by WFDC following the submission of the planning application some months ago.

##### Wyre Forest Issues

A number of larger planning applications are now flooding in for determination on land which has been removed from the green belt now that the WFDC local plan has been approved.

As of 6th February, the doors to Wyre Forest House are unlocked for people just to walk in in normal office hours.

The Labour/Independent/Green led Council are currently consulting on their draft budget. They are proposing increasing council tax by the maximum 3% which is £6.88 per annum or 13p per week. This will mean an increase from £229.34 to £236.22 for a Band D property. WFDC is circa 12% of the overall bill.

As a Conservative Group we support the modest council tax income as it will help fund services and the Government expects us to increase by the maximum.

The Cabinet have frozen car park charges for 2023-2024, the first time they have done so in the lifetime of this 4 year council, as they have previously increased by at least 5% per year.

They are proposing reinstating the community leadership fund of £1,000 per councillor, which is used for the ward councillor to support good causes/projects in their ward. It was £500 for 2022-2023 and they were phasing it out but we and the Conservative Group opposed this and they have now changed their kind and are proposing reinstating it in full.

They are proposing increasing the cost of staffing to the base budget and creating policy officer posts to increase 'corporate capacity' to the sum of £199,000 pa. We oppose this and feel that this will not benefit the general public and they should not have lost such corporate capacity over the last 12-24 months with the loss of such experienced senior officers. We are proposing increasing front line officers that will benefit our residents, 2 further environmental protection officers, a further civil enforcement officer and further money for parish councils to support bin emptying and litter picking and further resources for litter picking amongst a number of other proposals.

The Council continues to try and divest its assets, trying to dispose of Stourport's Sports Club and Bewdley Museum. It has just transferred 3 parks in Kidderminster to the Town Council, St Georges, Baxter Gardens and Broadwaters.

Work on the £2.4m HLF project for Brinton Park has still yet to begin.

Work on the £20m Future High Streets Fund for Worcester Street has still yet to begin on the ground in earnest but as I type this there is a planning application to demolish certain buildings in Worcester Street at Tuesday evenings WFDC Planning committee and by the time of this meeting this application will have been determined.

Work to redevelop the former Crown House site has still yet to begin.

We are pressing for this work to commence and for the redevelopment and regeneration of Kidderminster town centre to commence, including the former Glades site.

The levelling up fund work has commenced as the staff at Kidderminster Town Hall have now vacated as the work to refurbish this building takes place over the next 2 years thanks to the successful bid from the Government's levelling up fund.

Full Council will set the budget on 22nd February.

Cllr M Hart advised of a report from a resident in Cookley of faeces deposits, Environmental Officers have been made aware.

175. **Code of Conduct.**

Cllr J Hart advised that this has been adopted by Wyre Forest District Council and also by several Worcestershire Parish Councils. It becomes effective from 1<sup>st</sup> May. It was proposed Cllr J Hart, seconded Cllr B McFarland and unanimously agreed to adopt the new Code of Conduct.

176. **Financial Matters:**

a) **To agree the schedule of cheques to be signed.**

Cllr C Sherrey advised that the street lights replaced on Bridge Road and Castle Road had cost more than a standard replacement as traffic measures were needed. The schedule of cheques to be signed were unanimously approved.

82	Mrs B J Drew (Salary January 2023 including backpay)	1651.96
83	Lorraine Neal (Lengthsman)	161.70
84	CANCELLED	
85	Glasdon (2 x Gateways - Stourbridge Road)	1407.16 plus VAT
86	Worcestershire County Council; Street Light replacements Bridge Road	7470.07
	Street Light replacement Shrubbery Close	1377.86
	Street Light Replacement Clee Road	1377.86
	Street Light Replacements Westhead Road	4133.59

	Street Light Replacements Castle Road	15,793.70	
	Street Light Replacements Caunsall Road	12,509.14	
	Parish Initiative Quarter 3	3722.10	46,384.32
87	Worcestershire CALC (Training)		30.00
88	Stan Wall & Son (Timber) Ltd (Removal and disposal of damaged bus shelter)		180.00
89	Mrs B J Drew (Stationery)		17.59
90	D M Payroll Services Ltd (Payroll)		90.00

- b) **Progress with On-Line Banking.**  
Completion of application in progress.

177. **Contracts:**

Cllr S Sherrey reported that he, Cllr C Sherrey and Cllr D Jones had met with all three contractors to review contracts for 2023/2024 and all meetings had successful outcomes.

Grass Cutting - Proposed a 10% increase in pricing as Mr Basketfield received no increase last year.

Lengthsman - Proposed a 5% increase in pricing.

Bin Emptying - Proposed a 5% increase in pricing.

There are no changes required to contract wording.

Cllr S Sherrey reported that a visit is required to look at where Mr Dale stores the two 1100litre bins as a concrete base may be required and need to be funded by the Parish Council. Also a bin review needs to be undertaken to identify any rotting bins. Cllr D Jones will liaise with Mr Dale.

The Lengthsman has asked for an additional hi viz vest which was approved.

It was unanimously agreed that all contracts be renewed on the above basis.

178. **Unsafe Walking Routes - Wolverley CE Secondary School.**

The Chairman reported that as a parent of a child in 6<sup>th</sup> form he had received a Parent mail email from Bryn Thomas on January 20<sup>th</sup> encouraging parents to apply for free bus passes as Worcestershire County Council had done a safer walking routes to school survey and deemed all safer walking routes to Wolverley CE Secondary School to be unsafe. The County Council also highlighted a lack of safe crossing in Blakeshall Lane.

The County Councillor and three District Councillors were not aware of this and likewise the Parish Council had not been notified.

The Chairman reported that this raises a lot of very serious concerns.

Not all children want to catch a bus, for many it is more convenient to walk, chat to their friends and play on their phones on the way to school, it is also beneficial to health and wellbeing to walk. There are currently no services available from the new developments at Lea Castle, Sion Hill and Weavers Chase. The Parish Council and village of Wolverley would not want any additional buses travelling through, it is already too dangerous and congested and also what would the cost be to the taxpayer to provide all these free passes?

Cllr M Hart is appalled that all routes have been deemed unsafe and will expect WCC to carry out an assessment as a matter of urgency to put in the infrastructure needed to make the routes safe. Additional buses are simply not the answer.

All Councillors agreed with comments made and it was unanimously agreed that the Parish Council write to Mr Paul Smith at Worcestershire County Council and copy in Mr J Hobbs, Mr M Rouse and Mr B Thomas with concerns.

179. **Elections 4th May 2023.**

The Chairman advised that all voters will now need photo id to vote in the upcoming elections in May 23.

The Closing date for delivery of nomination papers is Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April and the publication of statement of persons nominated no later than 4pm on 5<sup>th</sup> April. Clerk will obtain packs and distribute.

180. **Kinver Neighbourhood Plan Consultation.**

Cllrs V Bordewich and S Sherrey had read the documents and it was proposed by Cllr Bordewich that the Parish Council support Kinver's Neighbourhood Plan. This was agreed.

181. **Bin - Highfield Road, Cookley - License for moving.**

The Clerk advised that if the bin outside a property is moved to the grass verge a licence needs to be applied for and displayed for 28 days and the Parish Council would need to fund the cost of a pole to put the bin on. Cllr J Wood will see if there is an alternative suitable location.

182. **Book Exchange/Ex Telephone Box, Caunsall – treatment for damp roof.**  
The Caunsall Book Exchange renovated by local residents has damp patches appearing on the roof which will affect the books. It was agreed damp proof paint be purchased and passed to Mr and Mrs Atkin who are happy to undertake the work.
183. **Bus Shelter Hayes Road, Wolverley.**  
The Bus Shelter was recently damaged and when assessed was deemed unsafe and was removed. Police and Insurance were notified. It is covered under Insurance and a new shelter will be installed.
184. **Change of Date – May 2023 Annual Meeting.**  
The May meeting date needs to be changed due to the King's Coronation and Elections. The new date is Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023, 7pm at Wolverley Church Hall.
185. **Planning Applications for Consideration: –**
- | PC No | WFDC No/Details   |
|-------|---|
| 3657  | 23/0014/TPO: Pinus Sylvestris (Scots Pine). Removal of 7 pines at rear and side of property number 23, re-plant 3 Redwoods at 23 Wildmoor Road, Wolverley,<br>Recommend Approval subject to comments from Arboricultural Officer. |
| 3658  | 23/0015/HOU: Single storey side extension at 18 Fairfield Lane, Wolverley.<br>Already approved.   |

**Planning Decisions:**

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 22/0443/OUT | Refusal – Cedar Wood, Lea Lane, Cookley  |
| 22/0946/HOU | Permit – 9 Shrubbery Hill, Cookley       |
| 22/0969/CLP | Permit – Tregarron, Lowe Lane, Wolverley |
| 22/0968/HOU | Permit – Tregarron, Lowe Lane, Wolverley |

**Parish Matters for Update Only – no decisions required.**

186. Clerks Report. (Clerk) Noted.
187. Update on Community Speed Watch. (Clerk) Only 1 person come forward.
188. Update on Lengthsman. (RD/WS) Nothing to report.
189. New Issues / Items for Next Meeting. (All) King Charles III Coronation.
190. Date of Next Meeting – to confirm the date of the next meeting which is scheduled for Tuesday 7th March 2023.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.50pm

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Chairman – Cllr R Drew