

# DRAFT

## Great Comberton Parish Council

2022/14

### Parish Council Meeting - Minutes Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022, 7.00pm Village Hall

**Parish Councillors Present:** K Collingwood (Chair), S Hamilton, G Hodgson, S Inglis, A Lavelle & D Wilks.

**Clerk/RFO:** Nicola Harding

**In attendance:** Two parishioners

**1. Apologies:** Received from Cllr Peart and District Cllr Kearsley.

**2. Declarations of Interest:** There were no declarations.

#### **3. Parishioner's Comments & 4. Brailles Orchard**

Two parishioners were in attendance to clarify the existing arrangement involving the annual hay crop and hedge maintenance at Brailles Orchard. There appears to be some miscommunication regarding the history of the site and its use amongst some parishioners. The Chairman confirmed that the Parish Council is happy with the current management of the site, which is rented by the Parish Council from Worcester Diocese and managed by the parishioners in attendance; in turn, currently saving the Parish any grass-cutting expenditure.

A question had been raised previously regarding future options for the potential recreational use of Brailles Orchard by villagers, which would therefore require regular grass-cutting of the field, at a cost. Following discussion at the September meeting of the Parish Council, Cllrs Hamilton, Hodgson & Lavelle were therefore tasked to source costs of such maintenance and Cllr Hamilton had also been in communication with the land managers to support this discussion.

The land managers shared some financial figures in terms of income in making hay off the field, which, given the current increases in fuel costs, see no profit currently made from hay production given the time and effort involved in the process. Predicted costs were shared with members for completing three grass-cuts with one hay collection and six grass-cuts without hay collection per year, and it was confirmed that it would not be financially viable to make hay from only half of the field.

A discussion ensued regarding a potential future arrangement to allow for a hay crop as well as additional recreational use - the terms of such use were shared at the meeting and confirmed as permissible in the existing tenancy agreement. Although an agricultural tenancy is effectively in place, and as such the field is not currently a place of general public access, the annual Flower Show and regular opportunities provided for car parking for occasional village events allow for some existing recreational use. It was noted that some parishioners are unaware that the field can be used, although it is not yet clear how many parishioners would wish to utilise this space further and whether they would be prepared to make a financial contribution towards its subsequent maintenance.

It was raised that given that the precept requirement is soon to be confirmed for 2023/24, any future, additional costs incurred at Brailles Orchard are important to understand in the Council's consideration in agreeing next year's budget. It was agreed therefore, to set out in writing and communicate with the whole village, the likely commercial costs of mowing the field in order to provide recreational use, in addition to gauging likely interest in this option.

The following action was agreed:

*Cllr Hamilton, in co-ordination with Cllrs Lavelle and Hodgson, to provide a draft outline of the likely costs and options in terms of the current and future use of Brailles Orchard, to be circulated, once approved by all Cllrs, to the current land managers ahead of sharing with the village. Responses thereafter to be gauged by the Parish Council for further consideration.*

*Following the meeting, it was agreed to consider this item in more depth at the next full Council meeting, to ensure Cllrs have a unified view ahead of progressing this item further.*

On behalf of the Parish Council, Cllr Hodgson extended thanks to the land managers for their time and efforts in maintaining the field, and the Chairman extended thanks for their attendance at the meeting.

#### **5. Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

Proposed Cllr Hamilton, seconded Cllr Lavelle, all in favour to approve the minutes as a true record.

#### **6. Progress reports from Parish Activities: brief updates:**

a. *Lengthsman:* No updates had been received regarding latest work plans and there were no current issues to report. A request had been forwarded to the lengthsman from the Clerk for receipt of the October timesheet for processing. Once received, payment could be approved and made.

b. *Highways:* Requests to Worcestershire County Council for updates relating to the outstanding queries of fencing at Brailles Orchard, diversions through the village and road surfacing works remain pending.

*Action: Clerk to continue to pursue with WCC Senior Highways engineer.*

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c. *Road safety/CSW*: Cllr Inglis provided latest updates received from The Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), who had confirmed that they are to conduct speed surveys in the area in order to assess the initial feasibility of a Community Speedwatch Scheme. Certain criteria are to be met in order to comply with health & safety requirements for volunteers and members of the public – further contact would be made from the SNT following their findings, but no time scales have been provided at present. Cllr Inglis had shared this update with potential village volunteers.

*Action: Further updates to be circulated to Cllrs/volunteers as received.*

d. *Footpaths/PROW*: There were no updates to report from the Footpaths warden. Cllr Hodgson confirmed he had reported online the broken hand rail on the footpath at Church Street, but there were no further updates at present. Cllrs also noted a stile which had been reported by a parishioner as too high and uneven in the vicinity, and it was advised that the parishioner report this using Worcestershire County Council's online facility. Cllrs noted footpath repairs which had been completed in neighbouring Elmley Castle and as these remain pending in Great Comberton, it was agreed that the Clerk would establish further information from County Cllr Hardman.

*Action: Clerk.*

e. *Rooftop Housing*: A report had been received from KB – there were no issues to report at present, however a discussion had taken place with members of the Rooftop team who had recently monitored repairs, regarding future communications with the Housing Officer. This was noted.

f. *War Memorial*: The installation of the new stonework took place on 25<sup>th</sup> October. The Clerk confirmed that a completion report and associated documents had been forwarded to the War Memorial Trust for assessment, to fulfil the conditions of the approved grant application. Cllrs noted that several cracks were visible on the cross section, therefore it was agreed to seek clarity from the conservation architect supporting the project and from the Stonemasons who completed the work, for further advice ahead of final payment.

g. *Quay Lane*: The Clerk had made contact with Land Registry to request any updates on the submission prepared to HMRC to establish legal ownership of Comberton Quay, given that this was completed in July. It was confirmed that there is still a significant backlog of enquiries that Land Registry are processing, so a confirmed response is unlikely before September 2023.

h. *Conservation Area Character Appraisal*: Cllr Collingwood had liaised with officers at Wychavon and Droitwich Town Councils regarding the procedure for a future completion of a Conservation Character Appraisal of the Parish. A small working group would survey the characteristics of the village, providing a history, maps, survey findings and review of the current conservation area boundary of the village, which would, in turn, be used by the District Council to produce a written document. This document would be shared at a future village meeting, the purpose of which would provide a degree of protection in future planning applications, to preserve and enhance the significance of the area.

*Action: Cllr Collingwood to provide a written summary to be circulated for comment to Cllrs and shared with parishioners, explaining the rationale behind the proposals.*

## **7. District and County Councillor's reports:**

District Cllr Kearsy had forwarded a report to members which was circulated to Cllrs and shared at the meeting.

In summary, the Parish Council was thanked for their ongoing representations in the planning process, and the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review has now been passed by all four Councils and is published and at regulation 19 consultation. The consultation process has been circulated and published, running from 1 November 2022 and closing at 23:59 on 13 December 2022.

Following further responses received, the Boundary Commission's latest consultation did not acknowledge the full representation from Wychavon, but has kept Elmley Castle, Little and Great Comberton in one electoral Bredon Hill Ward. Although a positive outcome for the Combertons, this is, however, at the expense of parishes situated on the other side of the hill, but the decisions published are now final.

## **8. Planning**

**W/22/01037/CU**: Newfarm House Retrospective change of use from agricultural part track, yard and storage barn for domestic use.

Location: Newfarm House, Russell Street, Great Comberton, Pershore, WR10 3DT

*Planning application withdrawn by the applicant on 20 September 2022.*

**\*W/22/01898/FUL** Newfarm House, Russell Street - change of use of land for domestic purposes and retention of storage barn and container (retrospective) *Comments of objection forwarded on 24 October.*

**W/22/00611/FUL: Lower End Farm** Excavation of three ponds, a flood retention area and a ditch meander in two pasture fields. Removal of condition 3 on planning 21/02258/FUL – *application refused.*

**W/22/01179/HP: Valley House:** Demolition of detached garage and erection of new garage and office/studio – *application approved.*

**W/22/00741/HP: Pool House:** Proposed single storey ancillary accommodation - variation of condition 2 of planning reference number 20/02800/HP – *application approved.*

**Boundary Commission proposals:** Final recommendations were circulated on 16<sup>th</sup> September, proposing a Bredon Hill ward, comprising the parishes of Great Comberton, Little Comberton, Elmley Castle, Netherton, Ashton Under Hill, Beckford, Conderton and Overbury. Proposal for Bricklehampton to remain in a ward with Wick, Fladbury & neighbouring villages.

**SWDP:** Cllr Wilks provided a brief summary of the recent Zoom briefing attended for Parish and Town Councils, outlining the SWDPR and public consultation period. A point was raised that proposed development at Mitton, providing a future housing requirement of 1,000 new dwellings, could local see increases in traffic movements from motorists driving through the Parish to Pershore, raising further awareness of

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ongoing concerns at Eckington bridge. Any comments as a result of the consultation process will be forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate. Attention was drawn to the new policies within the SWDPR, and how it would be necessary in future representations of planning applications to have an understanding of such new policies.

## 9. Finance

### a) Current Balances at 25<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Current Account:	£3,347.95
Business Account:	£1,771.18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£5,119.13</b>

### b) Payments to report:

*GCS&SC: Outstanding Jubilee expenses	£50.00
Salary (Sept & Oct 22)	£561.16
Expenses (Sept & Oct 22)	£24.00
Expenses: Ink	£17.97
B Arrowsmith: Sept LM tasks	£156.00
B Arrowsmith: Oct LM tasks	£156.00
Stonemasons of Worcester: Balance of works	£1,350.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2,315.13</b>

c) Bank reconciliation & Budget review: 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 – documents were forwarded to Cllr Hamilton for checks and verification and were signed and approved as accurate to the meeting.

d) Draft Budget: 2023/24: The Clerk and Cllr Hamilton had discussed current balances, predicted income and expenditure for the remainder of this financial year and figures for consideration for a draft 2023/24 budget and resultant precept request. The Clerk produced and circulated supporting notes and a financial review to update members, in addition to current guidance regarding potential contested election costs and recommended legal reserves. Currently, it is predicted that there will be a likely reserve of £6290 carrying forward into the 2023/24 financial year, which positively, would maintain the current £6000 earmarked reserves for unforeseen legal and general maintenance costs. Final tax base figures are yet to be released from Wychavon District Council to allow for an accurate calculation of precept requirement, but at this stage, Cllrs considered and discussed the following, potential areas of expenditure in the next financial year:

- Conservation Area Character Appraisal: Minimal costs may be incurred in terms of copying charges and village hall hire.
- Brailles Orchard: Any potential costs incurred in the future maintenance of Brailles Orchard could be taken out of reserves for a year, to be balanced from the following year's precept demand, as any costs are unlikely until Autumn 2023.
- Elections: An approximate figure of £800-£1000 has been advised from the local authority and Worcestershire Calc to earmark for a potential, contested election in May 2023. This was not included as a draft expenditure figure in the outline 2023/24 draft budget as this would significantly impact upon the precept demand, and in this eventuality, would therefore need to be financed through the Council's legal reserve. This is already at the top end of that recommended by the Practitioner's Guide, the statutory Instrument governing Council finance.
- Bredon Hill Conservation Group: As it is believed that the group is no longer in operation, it was agreed to remove this as a line item in the draft 23/24 budget.
- Parish defibrillator: The Clerk drew attention to potential costs which would need to be earmarked towards future battery and pad replacements – *Action: Cllr Inglis agreed to liaise with JR to establish expiry dates for confirmation.*
- ICO Data Protection Fees: Attention was drawn to this fee which is currently paid annually, requesting confirmation that this is a definite requirement payable by a small Parish Council.  
*Action: Clerk to enquire and confirm.*

*Proposed Cllr Inglis, seconded Cllr Hamilton, all in favour, to approve the payments presented, in addition to the current draft 2023/24 budget recommendations. The virement of existing funds from the 2022/23 miscellaneous/contingency, subscriptions and training budgets to address the final £560.00 expenditure to be incurred towards the War Memorial repairs, was also agreed. The grant funding from the War Memorial Trust remains pending @ £1690.00*

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## **10. Broadband**

Western Power had reviewed the pole reported and removed the overgrown ivy. Cllr Hamilton has requested Airband get in touch with WPD in order to clarify if an additional connection is now possible given the ivy clearance. Another road closure is planned for 23-27<sup>th</sup> January, with expected completion of Airband works by February 2023.

## **11. Correspondence**

- *Worcestershire Children's First:*  
Persore Area Review consultation findings and recommendations were presented to Worcestershire County Council Cabinet on Thursday 27 October 2022. The papers for Cabinet are now live and can be viewed online on the Worcestershire County Council website.  
[Read Cabinet paper for meeting on Thursday 27 October 2022](#)

In summary, the paper recommends that Cabinet agrees a commitment to support a collective change of age range to align schools in the Persore Education Planning Area (EPA) to a single, two-tier (primary and secondary) system of education. This decision is subject to a number of conditions including confirmation of a successful business case to HM Treasury by the Department of Education, which proposes funding an expansion at Persore High School to accommodate all Year 7 Persore pupils being included in the Schools Rebuilding Programme. If the conditions can be met, and decisions for change are made, the earliest date changes to First Schools will start is September 2024, with all changes being implemented in September 2025.

- *Wychavon District Council:*  
The Budget request letter has been received regarding the 2023-2024 financial year. The total budget requirement (i.e. grant of £242.00 + precept) must be agreed by the full Council and signed by the proper officer, to be returned no later than *Friday 27 January 2023*.
- *Wychavon District Council:*  
Details of the Trees Call to Action Fund had been received (emailed 26/9/22,) regarding a new project that will enable communities and landowners to access funds for tree planting and hedge planting. The project team will be visiting parishes to discuss planting opportunities and how to apply for grants for planting new green spaces that can benefit the environment, reconnect people with nature, and support wildlife. Any interest in funding for your own land or the local area email [Liz.Etheridge@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:Liz.Etheridge@wychavon.gov.uk), or contact 07843 813944.

## **12. Councillor's reports and items for future agenda:**

Cllrs Hamilton, Hodgson and Lavelle are to meet informally with an Allens Caravans representative – further updates to follow.

## **13. Date of Next Meeting:** Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 7.00 pm

Signed .....

Date.....

**Chairman**