

# **SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**Held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 7.00 pm in Suckley Parish Church**

**Present:** Cllr R Hill (Chairman), Cllr P Whatley, Cllr C Luton,  
Cllr A Mansell, Cllr H Ormerod, Cllr R Hooper

**In Attendance:** Mrs Lynn Butler (Clerk)

Five members of the public attended the meeting.

### **01/23 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from:

Cllr P Griffiths, Cllr L Devenish, Cllr A Lewis, County Cllr K Hanks, District Cllr S Rouse

### **02/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**(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.**

No declarations of interest were made.

### **03/23 GRANT A DISPENSATION**

**To consider written requests from Councillors to Grant a Dispensation (Sec 33 of the  
Localism Act 2011) relating to items on the agenda.**

No written requests had been received by the Clerk.

### **04/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**The Chairman then adjourned the Meeting for Public Question Time/Participation  
(including planning applicant/s or their representatives)**

- (a) Planning - there are no planning items on the agenda, so there was no public representation on this subject.  
Mr Steve Gray asked if there had been any response on the speeding petition recently submitted to Worcesterhire CC. Clerk advised there hadn't but that Cllr Hanks would be asked for an update.  
Mr Roger Luton expressed his concerns on recent co-options. He questioned 'secret ballots' undertaken on two occasions and whether they had been carried out correctly. He had consulted someone with twenty years experience. Cllr Whatley corrected Mr Luton that he is factually incorrect and that procedure was correctly followed. Mr Luton was advised by the Chairman and Cllr Whatley to contact the monitoring officer at Malvern Hills DC if he wished to pursue the matter further.

- (b) **Report from County Councillor** - Co Cllr K Hanks had e-mailed a report to the Clerk, which the chairman read to the meeting:

**The County council budget for 2023/24 is at the draft stage and the budget will go through scrutiny and then finally be approved in February at full Council Meeting. Draft outline below:**

Overall WCC budget £400.79 million vs £373.19 million in 2023/24.  
£27.7 million increase in the net budget from last year which will be funded by £14.1 million net increase in council tax income, £8.4 million increase in business rates and £5.2 million net use of reserves.

Proposed uplift of 2.94% and 2% uplift in adult social care levy, so total increase of **4.94%**, less than the 5% permitted by central government. This would put band D council tax @ £1465.78. Worcestershire are 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest place in the country out of all County Councils without fire in the data set. We have now received our Provisional settlement from Government and County Council is around £8 million better off than originally expected and we are able to produce a balanced budget in 23/24.

**Notes on budget:** Public transport – council is proposing £3.5 million from earmarked reserves in 2023/24 to support public transport as it recovers from the pandemic. Our cabinet member for Highways has started a consultation process, with a December meeting in Malvern – Parish Council members, indeed all residents are welcome to be included in these meetings.

The cost of inflation is having a significant effect on the price of new projects and highways maintenance is running much higher than the headline CPI rate, so it is proposed to add a further £2.5 million to the financing of the capital programme. All promised work will be ring-fenced.

County Council Members Fund enables smaller but important things to be done in communities. It was due to end in 2024, but additional funds will be allocated to end in 2025.

**Divisional Fund:**

An application has been submitted for a tennis net £98.94, tennis net posts £334.48 and a basketball hoop £459.99 for Suckley Playing fields. All prices inc. VAT. Total £744.51 ex VAT, payable to Suckley Parish Council.

In 2022/2023 I have also funded Suckley Forest School rain proof garments and defibrillator cabinet

Further applications for divisional fund will need to be for 2023/24 from April 2023.

**Visit Worcestershire:**

This is now under the remit of Worcestershire County Council, and I would like to mention that any events taking place in Suckley, may be featured on the site without charge.

**Boundary Review for County Council:**

The process has started and looks as if the total number of divisions, 57, will remain the same.

**Highways:**

The wall on Blackhouse Lane is being monitored weekly by engineers who are looking to implement the best structural remedy.

- (c) **Report from District Cllr** – Dist Cllr P Whatley reported to the meeting: District council activity has been fairly quiet over the Christmas period. The ‘Levelling Up’ by central government will add funding to district councils - £1.1 million to MHDC based on new homes built. The planning process will be looked at so there is more control over houses built. Targets will be given which conflicts with planning policies. This will probably bring uncertainty to South Worcestershire and the development plan. There will be balanced budget for 2023/24. The council tax increase for MHDC will be considerably less than the increase for the County Council.
- (d) **Lengthsman** - The Clerk reported that during November and December gully clearance of grates and general clearance of vegetation had been undertaken by the Lengthsman. Areas of work were Suckley Station, Church Lane, Acton Road, Grittles End Suckley/Mousehole, Suckley road to Acton, Birchwood, Blackhouse Lane and Longley Green. Flooding has been cleared in Birchwood, Longley Green Road and Mousehole
- (e) **Footpaths** – Helen Philpott reported there is a broken grate which needs replacing. She will look on the drains map to identify its number. Cllr Mansell has offered to help clear a blockage but it may need some equipment to do so.
- (f) **Local Police** – Cllr R Hooper reports that in December an unexploded grenade has been unearthed in the garden at Rectory Cottage. The bomb Squad attended but thankfully it turned out to be inactive. There has been some minor damage to a parked car in Longley Green.

### **The Chairman re-opened the meeting**

#### **05/23 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022 were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr H Ormerod and seconded by Cllr A Mansell  
The Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> December 2022 were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr H Ormerod and seconded by Cllr A Mansell

#### **06/23 PLANNING**

There were no planning applications.

#### **07/23 HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS**

Nothing to report

#### **08/23 VAS DETECTOR /SPEEDING**

The speeding statistics up to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022 compiled by Richard Ashton have been circulated to all Cllrs. and were noted by the Council. The second VAS camera is still for sale. There continue to be vehicles which exceed the speed limits especially by the village hall. Police to be advised of the parish councils concern for safety. Are there other traffic calming measures which could be considered, for example reducing speed limit to 20 mph, removing white line, speed humps but these could bring another danger. Highways to be contacted.

## **09/23 CHARITY REPORTS**

- (a) Brookes Memorial Fund - Report not available
- (b) John Palmer Trust – Accounts have been received for 2021. They meet once a year normally in October. Accounts for 2022 will be forwarded as soon as they are available.

## **10/23 COMMUNITY**

- (a) **Parish Map Board** - Cllr Ormerod has produced an initial report which has prior to the meeting has been circulated to councillors. He suggests contacting existing subjects to see if they would still wish to be included and Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to see if any funding is available.  
The Chairman suggested locations be split into two parts: Businesses, which come and go meaning the map board quickly becomes out of date and fixed features eg White House, which have a longer lifespan.  
Cllr Ormerod was asked by the Chairman to take this project onto the next stage and contact those who could be potentially interested. Cllr Ormerod asked if private houses would want to be included? Cllr Whatley advised that listed building are in the public domain. As long as properties are visible from the road they could presumably be included.
- (b) **Village Hall** - Cllr Hill reported that work has started, electrics have been disconnected but the overall works are running behind. There's to be a meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023 to review progress and determine if any additional work is needed.
- (c) **Classic Vehicle Event on Playing Field** - Mr S Grey suggested the date could be Coronation weekend otherwise nothing further to report.
- (d) **Suckley Nine Mile Run** – Cllr Luton reported that she had spoken to Sarah Cubby at Malvern Buzzards and they will do a run starting and finishing at the Hop Shed. The route to be discussed at their next meeting in February and will likely be nine mile or five kilometre run and open to anyone.
- (e) **Small Society Lottery** - Mr Gray reported there was no appetite for a lottery at present but that the next council may have a different approach.
- (f) **King's Coronation celebrations** – There is to be a meeting on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 7pm in Suckley Church to discuss any ideas or if any villager is interested in organising an event. Date to be promoted in the Sphere and any social media.
- (g) **Village Hall wall hangings** – an email has been received from Cllr Lewis. With the current building works in the village hall, there is a portrait of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and a Roll of Honour requiring a new home. Ownership of these items could be difficult to establish but it was suggested the Roll of Honour be relocated in the church and the portrait be relocated into the archive cupboard along with other items from the hall.
- (h) **Glass Bottle Banks** – notice received from Malvern Hills District Council that the current bell shaped bottle banks are to be replaced with a 'wheeled bin solution'. This should happen during January. Cllr Whatley explained the bell shaped vessels are difficult to collect. The wheeled bins can be collected by a standard lorry so easier for MHDC to manage.

### **11/23 FINANCE**

The following cheques were approved :-

(a) **Gen Fund:**

Broadwas Village Hall - £100 for Children's Christmas Party

R Wilks £504 – Lengthsman Nov 2022

D Taylor £208 – backdated salary April-Sep 2022

L Butler £1,909.46 – salary £1,828.60 & expenses £80.86 Oct to Dec 2022

HMRC £508 - Oct to Dec 2022

All payments approved. Proposed by Cllr Luton, seconded by Cllr Whatley

(b) **Playing Field:**

Carol Luton £74.78 - reimbursement for playing field repairs

Paul Nightingale £175 – mowing & maintenance March to Oct 2022

EDF £63.65 (17 Sep to 14 Dec 2022)

WaterPlus D/D for Oct & Nov - £6.98 x 2

All payments approved. Proposed by Cllr Whatley, seconded by Cllr Luton

(c) **Funding Requests for consideration:**

Suckley School – notice board

The notice board has previously been repaired but further repairs would not be cost effective. As the board is in a good location and there are multiple users it would be appropriate for the parish council to make a contribution and the school seek further contributions from other organisations.

£200 was agreed on proposal of Cllr Whatley, seconded by Cllr Luton.

(e) **Budget and Precept for 2023/2024**

Budget for 2023/24 was previously circulated. It was unanimously agreed that the precept for 2023/24 should remain at the same amount as the current year namely £14,309.

### **12/23 PLAYING FIELD**

Cllr C Luton reported she has sourced a basketball hoop, tennis posts and net to be funded from County Cllr Hanks' Divisional fund. The hoop is from another company and is more robust and has more backboard. There could be a small price difference to original quoted figures but the invoice will be to the Parish Council to enable reclaim of VAT. Cllr Luton's son has kindly offered to install the items, without charge. Proposed by Cllr Whatley, seconded by Cllr Mansell that Cllr Luton purchase the basketball hoop, tennis posts and net

### **13/23 SUCKLEY CHURCH**

Cllr Lewis was not at the meeting but had sent a report to the clerk:- The weekly Wednesday Warm Welcome has begun and is going well and is appreciated and growing (slowly). Huge thanks to Cllrs Rouse and Whatley who have helped us with the set-up and heating costs. The annual Ceilidh is at 7pm on Saturday January 28<sup>th</sup>. Tickets are on sale at Suckley PO or from me. All welcome! Toilet and kitchen are progressing – but far too slowly!

### **14/23 SUCKLEY SCHOOL**

School numbers are currently looking healthy and there has been significant interest in Reception class for September 2023. Open day was well attended and there have been lots of enquiries. Confirmed numbers for September will be available in April. Christmas was celebrated with the community with real-life audiences for the first time in a while. Damaged waterproofs used for Forest School have been replaced with donated funds from County Cllr Hanks' Divisional budget. The children have been provided with curriculum experiences including external visits and workshops. Unfortunately we were not successful in attaining The Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) which is an annual bidding round for schools to apply for capital funding. Despite being unsuccessful the hope is to expand one of the classrooms by adapting internal structure without extending outwards. Currently at surveyor stage and more information due soon.

### **15/23 RISK ASSESSMENT**

Cllr C Luton reported no risk assessment problems with the Playing Field and sports equipment, including the skate board facility.

Cllr R Hill reported no negative inspections for the bus shelters, trees in quarry, or the map board.

### **16/23 MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDA**

Nothing identified

Meeting closed at 20:35

**Date of next meeting – Parish Council Meeting on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023  
at 7.00 pm in Suckley Parish Church**