

Great Comberton Parish Council

Parish Council Meeting - Minutes Wednesday 4th January 2023, 7.00pm Village Hall

Parish Councillors Present: K Collingwood (Chair), G Hodgson, S Inglis, A Lavelle, H Peart & D Wilks
District Cllr E Kearsy, County Cllr A Hardman

Clerk/RFO: Nicola Harding

In attendance: No parishioners

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Hamilton.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

3. Parishioner's Comments

There were no parishioners present and no comments had been received.

4. Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 2nd November 2022

Proposed Cllr Hodgson, seconded Cllr Wilks, all in favour, to approve the minutes as a true record. The minutes were duly signed.

5. Progress reports from Parish Activities: brief updates:

- a. *Lengthsman:* Gully grates have been cleared, footway siding completed, headwalls cleared and signage cleaned within the Parish.
- b. *Highways:* Further updates had been requested from WCC and were raised under item 8, County Cllr report. It was noted that surface patching has now been completed along Pershore Road.
- c. *West Mercia Police:* Latest newsletters had been received from the Safer Neighbourhoods & Rural Watch teams and circulated to Cllrs.
- d. *Footpaths/PROW:* Cllr Hodgson noted that the broken handrail reported at the footpath along Church Street still requires a repair. The Clerk recommended checking the WCC website for further updates using the reference number from the original report.
- e. *War Memorial:* Stonemasons of Worcester have attended to make good the mortar flaunch on the rear of the memorial, and have also put some mortar into the fissures on the front face to reduce the impact of existing cracks. It had been noted by the War Memorial Trust that the stonemasons appear to have made an excellent job, particularly in incorporating the original carving. Grant funding has been received and annual updates are now required to demonstrate that monitoring and/or maintenance are being undertaken using a condition survey.
Action: Clerk to request the support of local conservation architect with an annual condition check.
- f. *Conservation Area Character appraisal:* The Chairman has prepared and circulated a draft summary to Cllrs. It was agreed that wording, including a potential deadline for comments, would be checked ahead of forwarding via the village email.
Action: Cllr Collingwood/Cllr Inglis.
- g. *Rooftop Housing:* KB confirmed that updates requested from the Housing Officer would be forwarded once received.
- h. *Quay Lane:* No further updates from Land Registry at present (expected 26th September 2023.)

6. Brailles Orchard

A discussion had taken place via Zoom prior to the meeting. The following summary had been agreed:

- Cllr Hamilton to draft a letter to the current land managers, outlining that the Parish Council wishes to continue with their current agreement, unchanged, for two years.
- Reconsider the question of increased public access in the Summer.

7. Allens caravans

Cllrs discussed the current working relationship between Allens caravans and the Parish Council. A concern was raised for consideration regarding Allens' offer of potential donations towards village projects such as the war memorial and Brailles orchard. Given that rights previously requested by Allens across common land at Comberton Quay, (the ownership of which is pending with the Land Registry), in addition to a potential third planning phase remain outstanding, it was raised for debate whether accepting donations may put the Parish Council in a difficult position in remaining impartial.

Assurances were made that should any future contributions be accepted from Allens, Cllrs would not have a personal interest to declare as they make decisions on behalf of the village, and the Council's ability to comment on any future planning application would not be affected by their working relationship with Allens nor any donations received.

It was also noted that donations, as well as fund raising ventures, are additional positive funding streams alongside the precept and that an open dialogue could therefore bring positive benefits to the village, as has been the case in neighbouring parishes.

Cllr Lavelle proposed an amendment, seconded by Cllr Hodgson, for the Parish Council to, 'build a working relationship with Allens caravans'. Further discussions ensued and a suggestion was made to consider an extension to this amendment to also, 'look for opportunities to benefit the village.' A question was raised whether this extension included accepting donations and a final, amended proposal was therefore put forward by the Chairman in line with Cllr Lavelle's original, as follows:

'Parish Council to build a good working relationship with Allens caravans'

Cllrs Collingwood, Inglis, Peart & Wilks all in favour, Cllrs Lavelle and Hodgson against omitting to also include exploring opportunities for benefitting the village.

It was also noted that acceptance of this proposal does not necessarily negate future discussions regarding financial options.

8. District & County Cllr's reports

The following summaries were provided:

County Cllr Hardman:

- Covid & flu cases continue to rise in the district but this is not currently having a significant impact on adult social care following hospital admission.
- A Council Tax consultation begins on 5th January 2023, with a focus on adult and children's care.
- The Pershore pyramid will see schools moving to a two tier system in 2025, now that government funding has been secured for school expansions. A public consultation on school catchment areas will ensue.
- Cllrs noted with gratitude the recent surface patching along Pershore Road. Footway repairs in the vicinity of Joe's Farm are on the list for completion by WCC in the 2023/24 financial year. The Chairman requested updates regarding the railings around Brailles Orchard which require repairing. County Cllr Hardman confirmed that this could be financed through County Cllr divisional funding in the 2024/25 financial year if the Parish Council could arrange a quotation with a local contractor. Thanks were extended on behalf of the Parish Council.

Action: Cllr Collingwood to obtain an up to date quote and forward to County Cllr Hardman.

District Cllr Kearsley:

- Cllrs were reminded of procedures in planning applications - if under officer delegated authority and minded for approval, the Parish Council's representations in line with material planning considerations mean a great deal in applications, should there be any objections. In such circumstances, the District Council would seek the involvement of Cllr Kearsley. Cllr Kearsley has had lengthy discussions with the enforcement team and planning officers regarding recent applications in the Parish and agreed to look at the Council's latest representation for application W/22/01898.
- Cllr Kearsley confirmed her support towards the Parish Council's Conservation Area Character Appraisal and had been in contact with the relevant officer at WDC.
- The 2023/24 Tax base is subject to approval by the Executive Board who meet on 4th January.
- A workshop will be undertaken at WDC to consider comments received from the recent resident's survey and to agree what has been achieved and ideas for future implementation.
- Work continues in support of the District's Ukrainian guests.
- Officers continue to work proactively to find positive solutions in providing the best service for local residents.
- Cllr Kearsley confirmed she is the Cotswold National Landscape's representative for Wychavon.
- Due to local representations made, and despite representation approved by full Council at Wychavon, the Boundary Commission's final recommendations see their original proposal of a Bredon Hill ward, comprising the parishes of Elmley Castle, The Combertons, Netherton, Beckford, Conderton, Overbury and Ashton under Hill. This will take effect in May 2023.
- The public consultation for Wychavon's new Design Code is live until 1st February 2023. This is a proactive process from a planning perspective which will see a new design code setting standards for how buildings, streets and public spaces in Wychavon should look and feel.

9. Poppy wreath: Remembrance Sunday 2024

A request has been received by the Church for the Parish Council's consideration in funding a wreath for the village war memorial. Proposed Cllr Lavelle, seconded Cllr Inglis, all in favour to approve. Although there is no official wreath laying ceremony in the Parish, it was advised that the Chairman of the Parish Council would normally lay a wreath at the memorial.

10. Planning

W/22/01898/FUL: Newfarm House, Russell Street - change of use of land for domestic purposes and retention of storage barn and container (retrospective) – a decision remains pending.

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

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 – an appeal has been submitted following refusal of this application.

11. Finance

a) Current Balances at 18th December 2022

Community Account	£6,764.50
Business Account:	£1,771.18
TOTAL	£8,535.68

b) Payments to report:

Stonemasons of Worcester: (<i>final balance presented</i>)	£1,350.00
Fisher German (<i>Brailles rent (i) presented</i>)	£112.50
Salary (Nov & Dec 22)	£561.16
Expenses (Nov & Dec 22)	£24.00
B. Arrowsmith: Nov LM tasks	£156.00
Salary: Local Government Association: Salary award 22 (Back-pay 1/4/22-1/1/23) <i>attached</i>	£195.03

*The Clerk also presented the lengthsman's December timesheet which had been received after circulation of the agenda:

B. Arrowsmith: Dec LM tasks	£156.00
TOTAL	£2,554.69

Proposed Cllr Peart, seconded Cllr Lavelle, all in favour to approve the payments presented.

c) Bank reconciliation (iii): 18 December 2022: documents were appended to the agenda and circulated for checks and verification ahead of the meeting.

d) Proposal to approve 2023/24 budget & resultant precept request:

Tax base figures and potential calculations were forwarded ahead of the meeting and current balances and options prepared by Cllr Wilks were circulated for discussion. Cllrs had originally discussed a potential 7% precept increase option (resulting in a £2.03 Band D annual increase.) however, it was noted that due to potential inflation rises in expenditure, this increase commits to underfunding and may result in a larger request the following financial year. Cllrs were reminded that the recommended level of reserves is between 3-12 months' net revenue expenditure, closer to 12 months for smaller councils, and the predicted carry forward figure is in line with this. It was also noted that small precept increases equate to higher percentages. A proposal for a 7% increase was therefore not supported by the majority and the following option was agreed:

Proposed Cllr Hodgson, seconded Cllr Collingwood, to approve a 10% precept increase for 2023/24 (equating to a £3.05 annual band D increase.)

Cllrs Wilks, Peart & Inglis in favour, Cllr Lavelle against.

Action: Clerk to forward request to WDC ahead of 27 January 2023.

12. Broadband

Cllr Hamilton provided a report ahead of the meeting which was shared with members. A site meeting was planned for Thursday 5th January to discuss options with local residents regarding Airband's application to National Grid for use of the current ivy pole outside Home Orchard and an agreeable alternative, should this not be accepted. *Action: Cllr Hodgson to update members following the meeting.*

13. Correspondence

- Cotswold National Landscape
Request for completion of a dark night skies survey – this was shared and submitted by Cllr Collingwood.
- Wychavon DC
New design code for Wychavon: Public consultations for the Wychavon Central area (Evesham, Pershore and surrounding areas) and Wychavon North areas (Droitwich Spa and surrounding areas) now live until 1st February. The design code will set standards for how buildings, streets and public spaces in Wychavon should look and feel.
<https://communities.createstreets.com/WychavonCentral>

As part of the process, the DC want to hear from those who live in the area which buildings and places they like (or don't) and if they're appropriate for the area. The consultation map can be found via:
<https://communities.createstreets.com/WychavonCentral>
- Senior Farm Environmental Adviser: Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West
Request for any objections to woodland management on Bredon hill at Woollas Hall, in terms of intention to implement some structure to the management of the woodlands. Further information had been requested and circulated.

14. Councillor's reports and items for future agenda:

There were no additional items to note.

15. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 1st March 2023 at 7.00 pm

Cllr Lavelle offered his apologies in advance of the next meeting.

Signed

Date.....

Chairman