

SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING Held on Monday 15th May 2023 at 7.00 pm in SUCKLEY PARISH CHURCH

Present: Cllr S Gray, Cllr A Lewis, Cllr A Mansell, Cllr H Ormerod, Cllr M Savage
Dist Cllr S Rouse

In Attendance: Mrs Lynn Butler (Clerk),

Four members of the public attended the meeting.

This is the first Parish Council meeting following elections on 4th May 2023. Five councillors were returned and each signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office before the meeting commenced.

44/23 Election of Chairman & signing of Acceptance of Office for Chairman

Previous Chairman Robin Hill initially took the chair to take nominations for Chairman. Cllr Gray was proposed by Cllr Savage and unanimously elected by all four councillors. He signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman and took the chair for remainder of meeting.

45/23 Apologies for Absence – none

46/23 Election of Vice-Chairman

Cllr Savage was proposed by Cllr Gray, seconded by Cllr Ormerod and unanimously elected as Vice Chairman

47/23 Declarations of Interests

(a) Cllrs are reminded of the need to complete/update their Register of Interests form.

(b) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the Agenda and their nature.

(c) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests in items on the Agenda and their nature.

Councillors who have declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, or any Other Disclosable Interest which falls within the terms of para 12(4)(b) of the Code of Conduct, must leave the room for the relevant items. Failure to register or declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest may result in the commission of a criminal offence.

None were received. Councillors were reminded they should complete the Register of Members Interest and return to the Clerk as soon as possible.

48/23 To consider Written Requests from Councillors to Grant a Dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) relating to items on the Agenda.

None have been received

The Meeting will be adjourned for Public Question Time/Participation. (The time allocated is at the discretion of the Council/Chairman). Residents are invited to give their views and question the Parish Council on issues on this Agenda, or raise issues for future consideration at the discretion of the Chairman. Members of the public are reminded that by doing this, the matters for discussion may be included in public Minutes, and should give their consent to this prior to any discussion. The Chairman will give members of the public the chance to withdraw from the meeting if they so wish.

Members of the public may not take part in the Parish Council Meeting itself.

49/23 The Chairman invited members of the public present to make a short presentation to the Council.

- (a) Public presentation(s) (including planning applications representatives)
Planning (if on Agenda):
- (1) The Council Chairman will ask the applicant/s or their representatives (if present) to put forward any points he/she wishes to make regarding their application
 - (2) Other parishioners are then invited to put forward their comments
 - (3) The applicant/representative then has the opportunity to respond to any points raised if he/she wishes to do so

The applicants for item 59/23(a) addressed the meeting. The site is to be used to provide a green space for Adults with learning disabilities. Cllr Savage raised the possibility of a condition to prevent future conversion to a residential property. The applicants said there had been previous conditions so they would be ok with further conditions.

(b) **Report from County Councillor – Cllr Karen Hanks
Contribution from Divisional Fund to Suckley Parish.**

I am pleased to have submitted a funding request for Suckley Space and BFG for Broadband Enhancement to facilitate Card Payments for BFG as well as enhance all of the other fantastic community reach projects of Suckley Space. The Grant is £1,275.00 and should be received into the Suckley Space Account in the coming weeks. This is from my discretionary 2023/24 budget.

Response to Speeding Petition

I can also update on a response I have received from WCC Highways – David Jew following submission of the recent speeding petition.
“Looking at both routes, the roads are predominantly rural with little frontage development and sections that only border fields. In the case of Suckley Knowle, the carriageway width is consistently narrow, with many slight bends and poor forward visibility. There are very few junctions and low numbers of homes, that are well spaced alongside this route that is almost a mile long. Many properties are set well back from the road and are hidden behind hedgerows and trees.

The speed data taken at the Cross Keys Public House reflects this in terms of the low speeds recorded (as shown below, the average mean speeds are 24mph and the average 85th percentile speeds are 32mph). This demonstrates that drivers are adopting speeds based on the environment that are far below the posted national, 60mph speed limit.

For the C2070, adjacent to White House Court, speeds are slightly higher at 32mph, for the average means, and 38/40mph for the average 85th percentiles. This is again due to conditions/ road environment, as carriageway width is generally wider and straighter than that typical throughout Suckley Knowl.

When considering the information above, given the character of the roads and the immediate environment, this area does not lend itself to that of the standard urban 30mph speed limit type.

Having checked the available Police injury collision data, for the last 3 years, there have been no incidents recorded on either section (copy attached).

For the reasons detailed above and in order to maintain consistency throughout the County, it is concluded that the current national speed limit should remain unchanged.”

Cllr Gray is unhappy with the way the speed data checks were carried out. Measures were taken in places where cars would naturally slow down and on days when the road was closed. There is also a problem with visibility at the White House crossroads. A hedge may need cutting though it could be the boundary line restricting sight. A mirror may be a solution. Proposed by Cllr Savage and seconded by Cllr Ormerod that Cllr Gray respond on behalf of parish council.

(c) Report from District Councillor – Cllr Sarah Rouse

District Councillor Sarah Rouse reported that she and Councillor Peter Whatley, having both been re-elected to Malvern Hills District Council, are Independent. This will allow them to focus on things they want to change. There is a good mix of people on the new council with a good strong vision. Affordable housing and the rise in the cost of living continues to be of concern for residents. There is a food waste collection scheme proposed, which could prove costly. It may be best for householder to compost.

(d) Lengthsman Report

The Clerk updated the parish council on work based on timesheets recently submitted. During January to March gullies and grates have been cleared at Birchwood, Blackhouse Lane, Grittles End, Suckley to Longley Green and Acton to Mousehole. Flooding on Crews Hill, Birchwood, Blackhouse Lane and Suckley Road has been dealt with. Debris at Birchwood has been cleared with a digger.

(e) Footpaths Report

The Clerk was able to report that a new gate supplied by Worcestershire CC arrived early April and was installed on footpath 535(c) (Pewcroft Farm) by John Hammonds with the help of Alan Curtis and Roger Luton. Gates which provide better access to more people are now replacing old styles.

(f) Local Police Report – nothing to report

The Chairman re-opened the Meeting

50/23 To approve and sign minutes

Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on 13th March 2023 and Planning & Finance meeting held on 17th April 2023 were both approved on proposal of Cllr Lewis, seconded by Cllr Mansell and unanimous.

Documents for items 51/23 to 56/23 were previously circulated to all councillors.

51/23 To note Model Standing Orders (adopted September 2018) and agree to discuss adopting Model Standing Orders (updated April 2022) at next parish council meeting

The Council noted Model Standing Orders which were adopted in September 2018 and agreed to review the 2022 updated version at the next meeting.

52/23 To note (MHDC) Code of Conduct (adopted July 2022)

The Council noted the Code of Conduct adopted in July 2022.

54/23 To note and/or review the Council's Financial Regulations (adopted Sept 2016)

The Council noted Financial Regulations adopted in September 2016.

55/23 To note and/or review the Council's Insurance schedule

The Council noted the insurance schedule – due for renewal October 2023.

56/23 To note and/or review the Council's Asset Register

The Council noted the Councils Asset Register

57/23 To nominate Councillors as follows:-

- (a) Councillor responsible for Planning – Cllr M Savage
- (b) Council Representatives on Charities:-
John Palmer Educational Foundation – Cllr A Lewis
Suckley Charities x 2 – Cllr H Ormerod and Cllr S Gray
Alfrick Educational Charity – Cllr S Gray
- (c) The Hill Trust – Cllr H Ormerod
- (d) Council Representatives on Playing Fields Committee – the chairman has previously spoken with Carol Luton has she agreed to continue
- (e) Council Representatives on Worcs CALC Area Committee: Cllr S Gray
- (f) Councillor Liaison with Suckley School – Cllr A Lewis
- (g) Councillors with Special Responsibilities:
Police – Cllr S Gray
NHS and Defibrilators – Cllr A Lewis
Footpaths – Helen Philpotts has agreed to continue with assistance from Cllr M Savage
- (h) Managing social media, Facebook etc – Cllr M Savage
- (i) Custodian of various PC materials: memorial wreaths and crosses, red ballast – Cllr A Mansell
- (j) VAS – Cllr A Mansell

Councillors have taken on these responsibilities some with a view to being passed to new councillors in due course.

58/23 Charity Accounts received by the Clerk

The Hill Trust had responded to say their accounts are not circulated and can be viewed on the Charity Commission website.

It was agreed not to include this item on future meeting agendas preferring to request them only for the Annual Parish Meeting.

59/23 PLANNING - MHDC

For consideration:-

- (a) App No: M/23/00569/FUL
Location: Old Hopyard, Suckley, Worcester, WR6 5DG
Proposal: Demolition of existing garage/store, construction of single storey Adult Education Centre and new access track within site boundary.

The parish Council considered representation made by the applicants and acknowledged the concerns of Worcestershire Highways and speed issues on the road by the site. On proposal of Cllr Lewis, seconded by Cllr Mansell the Parish Council agreed 'no comments' should be passed to Malvern Hills.

Decision notice for information:-

- (b) App No: M/23/00485/AGR
Location: Conowley, Birchwood Road, Suckley, WR6 5DT
Proposal: Prior notification of building for agricultural/forestry purposes

Approved with conditions: to be finished in larch timber boarding and roof material in anthracite grey.

NOTED by the Parish Council

District Cllr Whatley has emailed to ask the parish councils position on new housing and the South Worcestershire Development Plan. It was agreed to invite Cllr Whatley to July meeting to provide some more information.

60/23 HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS

- 1) A resident has reported to the chairman that the footpath between Damson Way and Woodland Road is not wide enough to walk down holding a child's hand. Ideally the high hedge needs cutting back.
- 2) There are a few potholes around the area, which residents can report on the Worcestershire County Council portal. To promote on The Sphere initially.

61/23 COUNCILLOR VACANCIES (*Clerk to Report*)

Clerk advised that co-option can currently take place within 35 days of the election (4th May 2023) so would have to be by 21st June at latest. If this didn't happen, the full co-option process would have to start again where ten electors can request an election. If that was to happen the parish council would bear the full cost of any election.

It was proposed by Cllr Lewis, seconded by Cllr Ormerod and unanimous to defer to July.

62/23 COMMUNITY

- (a) Kings Coronation – a live broadcast was provided in the church where everyone had a good time.
- (b) Parish Map Board - Cllr Ormerod reported – Progress is slow. Permission would need to be renewed with Ordnance Survey for use of the map. WCC cannot find anyone who signed up to it so may need to re-purchase from Ordnance Survey. The map is out of date. Its fifteen years old. There is a mix of private houses and businesses, some of which are no longer trading. Some entries would like to remain on, some want to be removed and there are some new ones who would like to be included.
- (c) Parish Council website – Clerk will now be updating the website which was previously carried out by Cllr Whatley. This is the website provided by Worcestershire County Council.
- (d) Boundary Markers (*Cllr Gray*) – Cllr Gray has received a genuine offer from a resident to provide and maintain white fence boundary markers made from wood to mark where the parish starts. They would probably be installed on highway verges so permission would need to be sought from Worcestershire County Council. Cllr Gray will investigate and report back.
- (e) Future Projects – Cllr Gray has drawn up a comprehensive list of community items for consideration. It was suggested items be put into an order of priority. As some items were events it was agreed to look at feasibility of setting up an Event Committee. To be included on agenda for July meeting.

63/23 FINANCE

- (a) The following payments to be approved at this meeting:-
Gen Fund
LS Butler – Clerk's salary April 2023 - £686.60
Worcestershire CALC annual renewal - £414.74
Duffy & Regan internal audit - £84.00
Above accounts paid on proposal of Cllr Lewis, seconded by Cllr Ormerod and unanimous.
- (b) **Update of Banking arrangements**
 - (i) four councillor signatories are required
Councillors Gray, Ormerod and Savage agreed to be signatories.
 - (ii) to agree future banking – stay with Nat West or seek another bank
It was agreed the Parish Council accounts to remain with NatWest.
Clerk to obtain paperwork to change signatories.

- (c) **Lengthsman**
- (i) To sign agreement for 2023/24
Worcestershire CC have increased the budget for 2023/24 by 5% to £2,442.97
- (ii) To agree revised hourly rate
The lengthsman undertook 156 hours during 2022/23.
It was agreed to increase the hourly rate to £15.50
- Both items approved on proposal of Cllr Ormerod, seconded by Cllr Savage and unanimous.
- (d) **Grants/Donations**
- (e) Suckley PCC – maintenance of graveyards 2023/24 plus additional funding request for permanent paths to access the church
£250 towards graveyards plus one off £250 towards recently installed new paths was agreed on proposal of Cllr Mansell and seconded by Cllr Savage
- (f) Suckley Playing Fields – Grant 2023/24
£1,000 was agreed on proposal of Cllr Lewis and seconded by Cllr Savage
- (g) BFG (SPACE) Donation for BFG 2023 event
£500 plus following a submission by the organisers an additional £300 towards increased event costs was agreed on proposal of Cllr Ormerod and seconded by Cllr Savage
- (h) Consider and Approve Year End Accounts to 31st March 2023 – internally audited (these to be signed & dated by the Clerk & Chairman)
The accounts were previously circulated to all councillors. Approved on proposal of Cllr Ormerod, seconded by Cllr Mansell and unanimous the accounts were signed by Chairman and Clerk.

64/23 (a) APPROVAL OF ANNUAL AUDIT for Accounts to 31st March 2023 – (as an “Exempt” Authority)

The council resolved that as the income or expenditure of the council was less than £25,000 during the financial year 2022/23 the council met the criteria to be considered an Exempt Authority and did not have to forward a return to the External Auditors. Proposed by Cllr Ormerod and seconded by Cllr Savage, the statement of exemption was signed by the Chairman and Clerk. It will be uploaded to the council website and original forwarded to the External Auditor.

- (b) **ANNUAL AUDIT RETURN 2022/23 – Approval of Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement** - was signed by Clerk & Chairman.
Proposed by Cllr Lewis and seconded by Cllr Ormerod

- (c) **ANNUAL AUDIT RETURN 2022/23 – Approval of Section 2 – Accounting Statement** - signed by Clerk & Chairman
Proposed by Cllr Ormerod and seconded by Cllr Mansell

65/23 PLAYING FIELD COMMITTEE

The hoop has been installed and the net and posts will be installed this week.

66/23 DEFIB FACILITIES – SUCKLEY

Cllr A Lewis reported that the new defibrillator and cabinet at the school was working ok. Its open all the time – no code required – however it will need batteries and pads replacing as and when required so there will be ongoing costs. There is another Defib at The Bruff.

67/23 RISK ASSESSMENT

- (a) Report on any negative inspections of Bus Shelters, Playground Equipment, Skateboard Facility, Sports Equipment, Trees in Quarry, Map Board
Nothing to report

68/23 SUCKLEY CHURCH

Cllr A Lewis was able to update the parish council.

A resin based path is in the process of construction and should be finished this week.
It will provide access to the church all on one level.

69/23 SUCKLEY SCHOOL

Nothing to report

70/23 MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Nothing in addition to those items already identified.

Meeting closed 22:10

Next Meeting - Annual Parish Meeting: Monday 22nd May 2023 at 7.00 pm in Suckley Church

Next Parish Council Meeting: Monday 10th July 2023 at 7.00 pm in Suckley Village Hall