

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EARLS CROOME PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 25<sup>th</sup> JULY 2023 AT 7.30 PM AT EARLS CROOME VILLAGE HALL.**

**PRESENT:** Cllr Mark Smith (Chairman), Cllr Penny Green , Cllr Margaret Herbert, Cllr Charlotte Bloomfield, Cllr Ian Wilson, Cllr Giles Steiger, Malcolm Tomkins (Tree Warden), Ann Smith (Advisor to PC) and the Clerk.

**In attendance:** County Councillor Martin Allen.

**1) APOLOGIES**

District Councillor Owenson & Cllr Tom Goodwin

**2) PUBLIC**

None

**3) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**4) MEMBER VACANCY – CO-OPTION**

Mr Giles Seiger was co-opted onto the Council. The Co-option forms were signed in front of the clerk and Cllr Giles Steiger was welcomed to the meeting.

Mark introduced all those present and their respective roles to Giles.

**5) ELECT VICE CHAIR**

After a brief discussion on the requirements of the vice-chair, it was proposed by Penny and seconded by Charlotte to re-elect Margaret as the Vice Chair.

**6) MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th May were proposed by Margaret, seconded by Penny, agreed by all and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**7) REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS**

Martin delivered the following report on **COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS**

**ON DEMAND BUS**

There is a new on demand bus that has been launched in our area. I have emailed you what details I have.

I am very disappointed that both you and I were not consulted before the launch.

The bus will run from 7am to 7pm, Monday to Saturday. There is a flat fare of £2.50 for all journeys, with additional passengers paying £1.25, ticket bundles are available as well as concessionary cards. There is an app, anyone who cannot use an app can phone 01905 765765 and choose option 0 for assistance. I have tried to use the app twice and it has failed. The phone is not manned on a Saturday.

Finally, Cllr Tom Wells and I have had a briefing just over a week ago. We pointed out that this new bus does not go to The Worcester Royal Hospital, Harefield House, Worcester. Tesco's, Aldi, or St Peters Garden Centre. In fact, part of my Division, Croome and High Green had been totally missed off the Zone of Pick up and Travel!

Once Officers come back about the requested changes I will let you know.

**A38/A4104 ROUNDABOUT GRASS**

Following the grass being killed off at the roundabout, I have had an update from the Officer i/c Mr Nick Churchill.

I can confirm that as part of the Planning requirements regarding Ecology, there are three different types of grass species that will be sown across the site. The sprayed vegetation that existed before was a mixture of self-sewn grass and weeds. These have been reduced and when cleared, the new grass seed will be sown – subject to weather conditions.

### **OVERSPEND**

You may have seen in the papers that WCC have overspent by just over £7m.

I have not had anything official from the County Council.

### **SPEEDING MOTION REJECTED**

My group: the Greens/Independents brought forward a motion for a mandatory speed limit of 20mph around all schools. Currently those that have the flashing lights indicating a temporary reduction to 20mph at school time are not enforceable and are only advisory. I am sorry to say that it was heavily defeated.

### **QUAY LANE NORTH**

The footway is due to be done end of September/October 2023.

### **QUAY LANE PASSING BAYS**

21/07/23 I met Tanya and ECPC onsite and it was agreed that Passing Bay Number 1, which is closest to the A38 is to be requested to be made a proper passing bay. The others unofficial bays can/should be maintained locally.

### **EXTRA VASS POLE**

During the visit on 21/07/23 we agreed the pole by the Village Hall would be relocated to near Glebe Barn.

### **VERGE MASTERS X 2 MISSING QUAY LANE**

13/06/23 ECPC reported them missing to Tanya, ECPC had already reported them

missing #17996 on 20<sup>th</sup> of April 2023. Margaret raised the issue.

They will be replaced in the next three months. Margaret advised that they had not been concreted in correctly that was why they were disappearing so easily!

### **UPTON A38/A4104 ROUNDABOUT ARTWORK**

I have contacted Cllr Maggi Davis of Ripple Parish Council asking for in depth details, without those I cannot go to WCC.

### **BOUNDARY REVIEW WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

This round of the consultation has been extended into September 2023.

Based on the current numbers of voters in this Division, Croome was predicted that by 2029 it would have about 1000 voters more than permitted.

Following my totaling up of the present day number of voters and then subsequently the Boundary Commission checking my figures, they have admitted they are in the wrong!

Interestingly, the Division of Powick is also out by about 1000!

**I would suggest that you put in a comment that you would prefer the Division to remain as it is.**

Martin delivered the following report on **DISTRICT COUNCIL** matters:

### **PARKING ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS**

Following complaints about parking I have received a promise that Upton will be visited by Traffic Enforcement Officers at least 3 times a week. One of those visits will be after 1700. Parking tickets issued for the last eight weeks are 160.

If you do see a parking problem, I would urge you to report it on the MHDC website, look for the Report it Section.

<https://swict.malvern hills.gov.uk/cepoformsmhdc/forms/onstreetparking/main.jsp>

MHDC have made it clear, if there are lots of reports in an area in the district, more visits will be made.

### **Planning Matters**

For your info the following planning applications will be decided soon and I expect they will both go to Southern Planning Committee. I have requested official site visits for members of the committee, this visit will be carried out on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> of July.

This will give planning committee members the chance to understand the application.

- a. 25 affordable homes at Furrow Close
- b. 70 Homes at Welland Road, Holly Green.

Members asked Martin a series of questions regarding these site, Furrow Close being entirely made up of affordable housing and Welland Road 40%. Discussion on government policy and green field building was had, Martin explained that 67 families in Worcestershire were currently inadequately housed.

The large industrial estate planned for ECPC as part of the SWDPR was also discussed.

As for 20/01827/FUL Baughton Stud, Smithmoor Common. I have not heard anything further at the moment.

Margaret asked Martin to look into a potential breach of planning conditions at, Digaway & Clearaway, regarding storage of skips etc in the car park area.

### **DEFFORD MILL**

I have been in contact with Enforcement at WCC, who have said that there is no license that they can enforce. Following that, I have handed the case over to the head of Planning at MHDC; Cllr David Harrison and he has now contacted Dewi Hammond who is the head officer at MHDC in charge of planning enforcement.

### **8) WCC Boundary review**

As Martin advised in his report, members asked the clerk to submit ECPC response asking for the status quo to be retained.

## 9) HIGHWAYS MATTERS-

VAS locations – following the site visit with Martin, Penny and the Highways Liaison Officer it has been agreed to relocate the VAS pole from the Village Hall to a location near/opposite Glebe Barn.

Quay Lane Passing Bays –during the site visit the bays were visited and reviewed and the one nearest the A38 Martin has requested to be formally adopted. The others can be maintained by ECPC, they were in quite good repair. It was noted that a car was parking on one of the bays - Members asked the clerk to write to the residents of North Quay and ask that they refrain from parking in the passing bays.

A38 Footway from new pavement to the garage. Martin advised that a disabled resident has contacted him as the grass/hedge growth was making the path impassable. A discussion arose regarding the restriction in the lengthsman contract regarding working on A roads, trunk roads and roads faster than 40MPH. Members asked Malcolm if he would be willing to give it a trim back so it was passable for the resident – Malcolm agreed.

## 10) DEFFORD MILL

Members raised and discussed the ongoing issues with HGV's driving down the wrong drives and driving across Dunstall Common. Lack of clear signage was raised a suggestion was to write to the site owner Brightwell's. Martin agreed to organise a site visit with the Highways Liaison Officer in the first instance to see what could be done.

## 11) PARISH PATHS

The Clerk advised that during the month there had been a request from Hill Croome PC regarding clearing of the BOAT to the left of Emblem Villa. There had been a complaint from a horse rider, it transpired that this was actually a day after Malcolm had cut it back! Both the Clerk and Fiona Argyle from the Countryside Centre had reviewed the BOAT and it was clear enough on foot. (Many thanks to Malcolm) Fiona has put it on the autumn cutting schedule to get in some machinery and get the higher branches and brambles cut back.

Note for the reader: Byway open to all traffic In England & Wales, a **byway open to all traffic (BOAT) is a highway over which the public have a right of way for vehicular and all other kinds of traffic but** which is used **by the public mainly** for the purposes for which footpaths and bridleways are used (i.e. walking, cycling or horse riding)

Malcolm advised that he was starting the second lot of cutting back and he had used £279 of the P3 budget so far.

Malcolm suggested that regular mowing with a lawn mower could help keep the path clear from Glebe Barn to war memorial. Suggestion for next season.

Margaret thanked Malcolm for instigating additional dog waste picking up signage at Dunstall Common.

## 12) TREES

### Ash die back

The Chair thanked Penny and Malcolm for their site visit and subsequent report. The members discussed their concerns and thoughts about removing the trees identified as dead, members discussed notifying WCC of their findings. The clerk advised that WCC had assured ECPC that the trees were safe and that they were observed and checked every three months, she thought that this should be enough. Charlotte agreed. It was discussed that an option could be that the clerk should send a summary of the observations to WCC highways and try and ascertain when the last observation took place as it was advised by the Forestry Commission to assess the trees when in full foliage.

Penny advised that ECPC were showing due diligence in monitoring the trees. It was noted that in the report there were two smallish dead trees and another that had dead branches overhanging the road, a lot of the trees had 'greened' up more than expected.

## 13) LENGTHSMAN SCHEME

A warning sign at top of Quay Lane was obscured by foliage members asked the Clerk to get the lengthsman to address. It was suggested that prior to the farmers hedge cutting all the warning signage should be cut around and exposed making it visible and easier for farmers to avoid damaging.

The ongoing issue of over hanging growth from No5 Orchard Close was raised and the clerk was asked to report on the hub as the pavement remained impassable.

#### 14) PLAYING FIELD PERIMETER

Members thanked Malcolm for a neat job cutting the Playing Field perimeter. Malcolm would return again in the autumn. Malcolm advised that some PC owned maple trees were beginning to overhang into an adjacent garden.

#### 15) COMMONS

It was noted that the hay had not yet been cut, due to the unseasonably wet weather.  
It was noted that there was some ragwort appearing at the bottom of Smithmoor Common.

Malcolm raised the issue that the MHDC signs that has been erected to replace the very faded signs showing the by-laws had a link to said by-laws that did not work. Malcolm had investigated to be told MHDC were no longer enforcing the by-laws. Malcolm would follow this up and report back to the clerk.

#### 16) PLANNING

23/00816/FUL Hollybeds Farm, Worcester Road, Earls Croome. Erection of agricultural building – No Objection.

23/00725/FUL – Land at (Os 8730 4267) Quay Lane – change of use to dog walking field. Objection.

Baughton Stud, Smithmoor Common. Retrospective application for menage.

#### 17) FINANCE

The monthly reconciliation of cash and other monies was undertaken for May & June by Charlotte & Penny.

Payments made since last meeting:

Mr A Millward – Lengthsman services – May	£221.00
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary- June (S/O)	£233.77
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance June (S/O)	£20.00
Mr A Milward – Lengthsman Payment – June	£143.00

To review and authorise the following payments:

a) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk salary – July (S/O)	£233.77
b) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Working from home allowance July (S/O)	£20.00
c) Mr A Milward – lengthsman payment – July	£TBC
d) Mr M J Clemas – Internal audit fee	£50.00
e) Ms Ann Smith – reimburse playing field grass cutting	£60.00
f) Mr A Milward – Lengthsman payment – August	£TBC
g) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk OPE	£39.00

Remittance:

WCC Lengthsman reimburse May £221.00  
HMRC VAT refund £186.62

#### 18. CORRESPONDANCE

Resident regarding pavement towards War Memorial – see Agenda item 9

Hill Croome PC regarding the BOAT – See agenda item 11

WCC Validation document review

Resident regarding playing field perimeter – See agenda item 14

Local policing charter – Clerk has completed inviting police representative to attend the Annual Parish meeting.

#### 19. INFORMATION AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 7.30pm at Earls Croome Village Hall.

Mark advised members that the clerk had taken on an addition role as clerk to Sedgeberrow PC

The Meeting closed at 9.30pm.