

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
NORTON-JUXTA-KEMPSEY PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
22 JANUARY 2024

There were no Public Question Time discussions.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** J. Waizeneker. These apologies, and the reason for them, were accepted and approved.

Attending: K. Fincher (Chairman), C. Arrow, C. Dawson, A. Job, M. Pollard, P. Richmond, M. Stafford, Cllr R. Adams (WDC District Councillor), Cllr Mrs L. Turier (WDC District Councillor), Cllr Mrs L. Robinson (WCC County Councillor) and J. Greenway (Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer).

2. **Changes to Membership**

Discussed following agenda item 5a. The prospective councillor was welcomed to observe the meeting (following the application considered at the 30 November Parish Council meeting). Co-option considered after agenda item 31, minuted under item 2.

Co-option of Dr Carlos Rega as a Parish Councillor was considered and agreed. Proposed Cllr Dawson, seconded Cllr Stafford and agreed by all. Cllr Rega was welcomed to the Parish Council. Wychavon DC will be notified, and papers will be forwarded to Cllr Rega for completion. **Action: Clerk**

3. **Declarations of Interest**

- a) Reminder and requirements noted.
b), c) and d) None.

4. **2024/1 Minutes**

a) The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2023 were approved and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Proposed Cllr Job, seconded Cllr Dawson and agreed by all.

b) The minutes action summary was reviewed and will be updated following the meeting. Discussions pertinent to agenda items are recorded within the relevant section of the minutes. **Action: Clerk**

5. **2024/2 Reports**

a) Cllr R. Adams and Cllr Mrs L. Turier (Wychavon District Council (WDC) District Councillors)

Cllr Mrs Turier's report circulated in advance of the meeting was noted, with this highlighting WDC Community Legacy Grant opportunities, the Trees Call to Action Project/community orchards and record breaking total annual rainfall levels at the Civic Centre in Pershore (1,036mm). Cllr Adams reported on WDC 'Promises & Priorities' to take the Council forward over the next 4 years and the potential for the WDC element of Council Tax to increase (reflecting inflationary cost pressures); Cllr Adams will press for any increase to be manageable for residents.

b) Cllr Mrs L. Robinson (Worcestershire County Council (WCC) County Councillor)

Cllr Mrs Robinson's report circulated in advance of the meeting was noted.

Following discussions under agenda item 4b, it was agreed for the Parish Council to write to the WCC Chief Executive (cc to Cllr Mrs Robinson and Nigel Huddleston MP) to seek a meeting to discuss the lack of progress by WCC in respect of various matters raised by the Parish Council (e.g. WCC apparent disinterest in carrying out ATC improvements (despite safety issues relating to the route), changes to Public Rights of Way maintenance funding/process and support with Norton Connector funding). It was noted that Cllr Mrs Robinson has requested a meeting however, the WCC response to date appears dismissive. **Action: Cllr Fincher**

Two recent incidents of car/pedestrian near misses along the Woodbury Lane section of the WCC Active Travel Corridor were highlighted to the Parish Council.

Cllr Mrs Robinson reported on actions taken in response to reports of the Crookbarrow Way bridleway bridge being dangerously slippery during icy weather, and highlighted similar reports made to Highways by the St Peter's County Councillor. WCC Highways is exploring the potential to install a non-slip surface overlay to the existing surface (the metal bridge construction isn't suitable for gritting). It is understood that due to the design of the bridge, it isn't possible to install the same surfacing as has been installed on the Broomhall Way bridge (which appears effective in icy weather). Suggestions for potentially suitable surfaces were made and Cllr Mrs Robinson will pass this information to WCC Highways for consideration. It was noted that Cllr Mrs Robinson may be able to contribute to costs via

Divisional Allowance funding.
Dates for Parish Councillors to visit EnviroSort will be sought.

Action: Cllr Mrs Robinson
Action: Cllr Mrs Robinson

c) Finance

(i) Balances: current account £7,842.99, instant access deposit account £60,862.39, 32-day notice account £50,156.93 (22 January). Members were reminded that whilst balances are healthy, funds are committed or earmarked for future expenditure.

(ii) The monthly accounts and bank reconciliation to 31 December will be circulated once received.

(iii) S106 funding contributions were noted. The s106 funding allocations from planning applications W/15/01514/OU / W/17/02099/RM and some from W/22/00630/FUL (formal sports pitches contribution (pitch improvements) and off-site formal sports contribution (fitness provision)) are linked to the Worcester Norton Community Interest Company (WNCIC) developments on the Norton cricket club site (see agenda item 23). See agenda item 20 for discussions regarding the W/22/00630/FUL s106 allocation in respect of public open space maintenance.

d) Social Media Communications

The report circulated in advance of the meeting was noted, with the most popular Facebook (FB) posts continuing to be those of very local interest (e.g. roadworks in/around the Parish). The new planning posts received positive responses. The number of FB followers continues to increase (to 676), as does the number of website subscribers (now 105). Website 'news' posts contain multiple subjects to maintain communications at an effective level, with data indicating that readership remains very good.

e) West Mercia Police

Police.uk data for the Pershore Rural South & Rural Norton area was noted and a link to this will be posted on the Parish Council website.

Action: Cllr Pollard

A new West Mercia Police Chief Constable has been appointed.

g) St. James the Great Church, Norton

The report circulated in advance of the meeting was noted along with action to remove a tree that has fallen across war graves within the churchyard. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) will seek quotes for churchyard maintenance after the areas to be 're-wilded' have been decided upon.

6. 2024/3 Community Apiary

Updates received in advance of the meeting were noted, with the apiary group continuing to work well. The group has assessed its 2024/25 equipment requirement, with this due to be provided for by grant funding (secured), funds from sale of honey and donated equipment. The group has enquired whether the Parish Council would provide a grant (for the 2024/25 financial year) to cover the cost of British Beekeeper's Association (BBKA) memberships for apiary group members (which includes elements of insurance cover). It was agreed that the Council wouldn't wish to set a precedent for payment of the group's individual BBKA annual memberships, but that it did wish to support the community apiary and the hard work of the beekeepers in moving towards financial independence. It was agreed for the Council to provide a £250 grant to the group towards 2024/25 apiary expenditure (with the group to agree on the nature of the expenditure). Proposed Cllr Job, seconded Cllr Dawson and agreed by all. The apiary group will be advised.

Action: Clerk

7. 2024/4 Parish Green Spaces Working Group (PGSWG)/Biodiversity Matters

A PGSWG update was received including revised terms of reference, proposed projects, grant funding opportunities and grant submissions (awaiting outcomes).

The revised terms of reference were adopted. Proposed Cllr Stafford, seconded Cllr Dawson and agreed by all. Records will be updated.

Action: Clerk

Quotes to re-establish/re-define one of the tenanted field boundaries (following an area of field being relinquished by the tenant) were considered. The area relinquished is planned for planting to become 'The King's Meadow'. Grant funding has been sought for this expenditure, with a decision due in early February. It was agreed in principle for the Parish Council to fund this expenditure (within a £3k budget) should the grant funding application be unsuccessful. The PGSWG will consider which is the preferred quote. Proposed Cllr Stafford, seconded Cllr Job and agreed by all.

Apiary field maintenance/improvement work and improvements to a section of the Littleworth to Stonehall Common bridleway are included within the PGSWG remit, with grant funding being sought to undertake the proposed works.

Signage to replace the fallen information board located to the rear of the STW pumping station in the Parish Hall car park will also be considered as part of the PGSWG remit.

The Council's draft Biodiversity Policy was considered under agenda item 7 (rather than agenda item 27). It was agreed to adopt the draft policy based upon the NALC model policy. Proposed Cllr Pollard,

seconded Cllr Stafford and agreed by all. Cllr Waizeneker was thanked for providing the draft policies for review. The Council's files will be updated. **Action: Clerk**
See item 23 below for discussions relating to open air gym proposals (for the Norton area).

8. 2024/5 Wychavon Community Legacy Grants (CLG) 2024

Expressions of interest are being prepared by the Parish Council for PGSWG project funding, and by WNCIC for assistance with internal fit out costs relating to new facilities on the Norton cricket club site. Other ideas for projects for CLG funding were welcomed for consideration (noting the midday on 20 February closing date). CLG information including grant criteria and submission dates will be forwarded to the Headteacher of NJK CE Primary School. **Action: Cllr Fincher**

Cllr Mrs Robinson highlighted other funding opportunities such as the UK Share Prosperity Fund and the UK Rural Share Fund.

9. 2024/6 Public Rights of Way (PRoW) / Parish Paths Warden (PPW)

Following WCC changes to management/funding of PRoW maintenance, PRoWs within the Parish have been added to the WCC 'proactive strimming list' for 2024 and each subsequent year. The Parish Council can no longer instruct third party contractors to undertake PRoW maintenance work (unless the PRoW crosses Parish Council owned land e.g. Parish Hall site). A communication will be issued to Parishioners (via the Parish Council Facebook page, website, newsletter and noticeboards) to highlight the changes introduced by WCC and how to report PRoW matters to WCC. **Action: Clerk**

The PPW will be asked to provide a brief PRoW report for each Parish Council meeting. **Action: Clerk**

10. 2024/7 Public Open Space/Verge Maintenance, Highways and Drainage Matters

Works to rebuild/repair sections of the Barracks curtilage wall along Brockhill Lane continue and are a little behind schedule due to poor weather conditions. Issues relating to the safety of the Active Travel Corridor (ATC) remain and will be raised at the meeting being sought with WCC (as detailed under item 5b). Application to the Police & Crime Commissioner's 'road safety improvement fund' was considered in view of WCC's inactivity in improving the ATC. It was agreed to explore ATC safety improvements via this fund. **Action: Cllr Fincher**

Highway flooding along Wadborough Lane, Littleworth (in the area by school) has been reported to WCC Highways and the WDC Drainage Team. WCC is arranging for drains/gullies to be jetted and for the pavement and kerb by the old Methodist Chapel car park to be lifted. A representative of the owners of the old Methodist Chapel has advised that some land drainage has been installed under the car park, with the flooding issue being due to the volume of water running off the field behind the Chapel, adding that the situation could potentially be resolved by installation of a drain outlet on the pavement (in front of the hedge), with this connected to the road drains. This will be highlighted to WCC, and an update sought on progress with the work already proposed/scheduled by WCC. **Action: Clerk**

The ditch clearance work requested by WDC has been completed by the landowner.

WCC is progressing with proposals for revised parking restrictions along Wadborough Road, Littleworth. A first consultation with elected bodies/partnership organisations is underway, with a public consultation to follow. WCC is aware that the Parish Council wishes to help to publicise the public consultation. The proposals were reviewed along with comments regarding the dark environment outside school due to the lack of street lighting. Having exhausted other measures to seek to resolve the situation through co-operation, the need to relieve parking in the area outside school was agreed and the need for other 'enhancing' measures could be considered once the impact of the new restrictions is known. It was agreed for a formal response in support of the proposals to be submitted to Highways by 9 February. Proposed Cllr Arrow, seconded Cllr Dawson and agreed by all. **Action: Clerk**
WCC Highways has agreed to remark the existing yellow lines in the vicinity of Cooksholme Farm and Cllr Mrs Robinson confirmed that the 'no parking' school bollards have been ordered.

The replacement Oak tree within the tree seat at Norton has been planted.

Persimmon Homes is being chased for its contractors to complete outstanding remedial work to the Gazala Drive grass verge. Residents have reported that delivery vans regularly cause damage to the verge and are seeking Council assistance to improve this situation. Ideally, remedial costs should be passed on to any drivers causing damage to the verge, but difficulties in identifying drivers and providing sufficient evidence to pursue claims is likely to limit this course of action. Installation of rocks around the driveway edge of the verge was considered, whilst noting potential issues should drivers damage their vehicles due to the rocks, and also implications regarding mowing. It was agreed to seek the views of the residents that have contacted the Parish Council and to ask if they could gather feedback from the other residents along this driveway and advise this to the Council. **Action: Clerk**

The lack of maintenance and overgrown state of the narrow strip of land between the base of the hedge along Norton Road (Regiment Close side) and the pathway was highlighted. It was agreed to investigate who owns/is responsible for this strip of land. **Action: Cllr Arrow**

11. 2024/8 Norton Connector (NC)

The report circulated in advance of the meeting was noted, with monthly passenger numbers continuing to maintain the upward trend. November passenger numbers were the third highest since the Norton Connector began operating in spring 2021. Efforts continue in seeking funding from WCC and WDC towards NC operating costs to secure future service provision. No feedback has been received regarding the WCC Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service which only covers a small area of our Parish (Hatfield and the area around St James Church). The NC remains a vital service for the main settlement areas within the Parish i.e. Brockhill and Littleworth.

12. 2024/9 Employment Matters

This item was discussed on a confidential basis, with minutes prepared on a summary/overview basis. Following discussions, it was agreed to write to the groundsman/litter picker to confirm the current situation and the Council's duty of care as an employer. **Action: Clerk**

The Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) will be stepping down at the end of August 2024. It was agreed for an informal working group to be convened to consider matters associated with this change in staffing and to develop recruitment proposals for consideration by the Parish Council. The group will consist of Cllr Fincher, Cllr Job, Cllr Stafford and the Clerk/RFO. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr Mrs Robinson and Cllr Mrs Turier gave their apologies and left the meeting at 9.10pm.

13. 2024/10 Budget and Precept 2024/25

a) The draft budget figures circulated in advance of the meeting were considered. It was proposed by Cllr Pollard, seconded by Cllr Richmond, and agreed by all to submit a budget requirement of £65,324 to Wychavon DC (£64,057 precept and £1,267 Grant), which equates to an annual increase of £3.52 (5.6%) for Band D Council Tax. The 2024/25 budget will allow for the continued operation of the Norton Connector in 2024/25 and will provide funding towards the biodiversity projects being progressed by the Parish Green Spaces Working Group (with the majority of the PGSWG project funding to be provided by external grant funding). An annual increase of £3.52 (Band D) was felt not to be unreasonable in the current inflation climate and was hoped to be manageable for residents. The Clerk will submit no later than 26 January. **Action: Clerk**

The Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer was thanked for drafting the 2024/25 budget.

Information relating to the increased budget requirement will be included in the Chairman's report for the spring edition of the Parish Council newsletter. **Action: Cllr Fincher**

Day-2-Day Garden Services will be instructed to mow the Brockhill Village small grass verges (set within pavements) for the 2024 growing season at a cost of £400 for 10 cuts (charged on a pro rata basis). Proposed Cllr Arrow, seconded Cllr Job and agreed by all. **Action: Clerk**

b) The Reserves Policy was considered, with agreement for the principles within this to remain unchanged. The Policy will be reviewed in detail after agreement of the 31 March 2024 year end accounts. Proposed Cllr Arrow, seconded Cllr Dawson and agreed by all.

c) See agenda item 5g for an update on mowing of the St James the Great churchyard. Clarified guidance from NALC confirms that Parish Councils may contribute to churchyard mowing costs.

14. 2024/11 Annual Appointment of Internal Auditor

Iain Selkirk will be appointed as independent Internal Auditor for 2023/24 at a cost of £120. Proposed Cllr Job, seconded Cllr Arrow and agreed by all. **Action: Clerk**

15. 2024/12 Annual Insurance Renewal

The Zurich Insurance renewal was reviewed, with cover agreed as adequate. The policy will be renewed on a 3-year Long Term Agreement basis, with a 2024 renewal cost of £3,869.97 (including Insurance Premium Tax). It was noted that Zurich has previously provided good service in respect of claims and provision of guidance/advice when needed. Proposed Cllr Arrow, seconded by Cllr. Job and agreed by all. **Action: Clerk**

16. 2024/13 Planning

a) The following current planning applications were noted.

| | <u>Application</u> | <u>Description of Proposal</u> |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| <u>Approvals:</u> | Norton Hall Lodge, Persore Road, High Park. W/23/01642/HP | Loft conversion with rear dormer, infill of canopy areas with internal alterations and front boundary wall with new gate. |
| <u>Refusals:</u> | Norton House Farm, Woodbury Lane, Norton W/22/01543/FUL | Conversion of barns/storage buildings to 3 No. dwellings and construction of a domestic car garage and bin store. Parish Council objects. |
| <u>Awaiting Decision:</u> | Land At (Os 9017 5117), Mucknell Farm Lane, Stoulton. W/22/01955/FUL | Development of a 1MW solar farm and associated infrastructure. Parish Council objects. |
| | Retreat Inn, Woodbury Lane, Norton W/23/01207/FUL | Replacement barn and 3 no. 1 bedroomed log cabins and 4 no. touring bays, 2 no. tent bays and a toilet block. Parish Council objects. |
| | Land At (OS 8659 5192), Yew Tree Court, Norton Road. W/23/01836/FUL | Construction of 2 No. dwellings. Parish Council comments submitted. |
| | Land At (Os 8785 5016), Hatfield Lane, Norton W/23/02506/FUL | Proposed live/work unit. Parish Council objects. |
| | Worcester Norton Sports Club, Brockhill Lane W/23/02557/FUL & W/23/02555/LB | Proposed refurbishment of clubhouse building including internal and external alterations to form multi-use community space, refurbishment of existing cricket changing rooms (including partial demolition) to form new changing and gym facilities, the construction of a tarmac MUGA, and relocation of existing car parking (Resubmission of W/22/02608/LB to allow removal of condition 5 and rewording of condition 3 to permit double glazing) and (Permission W/22/02607/FUL - removal of condition 5). Parish Council supports. |
| | Willow Barn, The Nook, Wadborough Road, Littleworth W/23/02499/FUL | Substitution of house type as approved under planning permission reference W/22/01321/FUL - addition of 3 photovoltaic panels to the outshot roof of proposed Barn 1 dwelling. No comments submitted. |
| | Cooksholme Farm, 3 Wadborough Road, Littleworth W/23/02520/FUL | Convert 3 agricultural buildings to residential dwellings, erect 4 new dwellings, change of use of agricultural land to residential use, partial demolition of agricultural buildings. (Variation of condition 2. 17/00972/FUL). No comments submitted. |
| | Merryfield House, Woodbury Park, Norton W/23/02577/FUL | Proposed construction of detached single storey dwelling, access and garaging. (Variation of condition 2 Ref 19/01546/FUL). No comments submitted. |
| | Old Brickworks, Church Lane, Norton W/23/02450/FUL | Proposed vehicle inspection building (Retrospective). No comments submitted. |
| <u>Internal Consultation:</u> | None | |
| <u>Other:</u> | None | |

Cllr Adams has received feedback regarding application W/23/02577/FUL and is following this up with the WDC Planning Team.

b) Members were referred to the SWDPR review website where it can be seen that the planning inspectors have begun to send questions back to the SWDPR team.

<https://www.localplanservices.co.uk/swdpreview>

c) In view of the online nature of the consultation, Parish Councillors were encouraged to respond to the WDC Design Code consultation on an individual basis (closing date 5 February). It was also agreed for a response to be submitted on behalf of the Parish Council by Cllr Fincher. **Action: Cllr Fincher**
Details of the consultation will be recirculated to Council members. **Action: Clerk**

17. 2024/14 Parish Council Owned Land

It was agreed for the JH Tree Surgery Ltd invoice to be paid once satisfactory completion of the work has been confirmed to the Clerk by Cllr Dawson. **Action: Cllr Dawson**
Investigations continue to clarify ownership of the 3 Italian alders on the boundary of 14 The Hidage and the allotments.

18. 2024/15 Allotments

The update received in advance of the meeting was noted along with a healthy and growing waiting list, increasing use of the allotments Facebook group by tenants, development of an allotment 'dos and don'ts' leaflet for tenants (including no BBQs on the allotments).
After discussion, installation of 9' x 18' enclosed chicken run on Plot 31C was agreed subject to this being installed on paving slabs with a dry sand and cement base (rather than a concrete slab) and to the tenant agreeing to remove the run and paving slabs upon vacating the plot. Cllr Richmond's concerns regarding livestock being kept on the allotments were noted, with this permitted under the Allotment Act 1950 (other than for trade or business).
Cllr Richmond is meeting with the Assistant Clerk on 26 January to carry out an allotment inspection visit and to review signage on gates to the allotments. It was agreed for 'no dogs' signs to be purchased for display on all gates into the allotments. **Action: Assistant Clerk, Cllr Richmond**
It was agreed for the broken gate latch to be replaced. **Action: Cllr Richmond**

19. 2024/16 Parish Defibrillators

The defibrillator and outside locked cabinet are with Little Treasures nursery for installation as soon as possible (Little Treasures is arranging for its electrician to install at no cost to the Parish Council).
Signage to highlight the defibrillator location will be arranged (up to the previously agreed cost of £200 + VAT) and details (including photos) will be publicised via the Parish Council website and Facebook page following installation.

20. 2024/17 Parish Hall Recreation Facilities and Outside Space

The weekly play area/recreation facilities checks are being undertaken by the Assistant Clerk in the absence of the groundsman. An update on the baseball team's proposals to improve drainage in the area around the baseball pitch will be sought. **Action: Cllr Dawson**
The potential for a s106 Public Open Space maintenance contribution of £1,650 to be utilised towards baseball area drainage costs will be explored, and an application submitted should the work progress.
Proposed Cllr Job, seconded Cllr Arrow and agreed by all. **Action: Clerk, Cllr Fincher**
The Hall rainwater system and flow of water through the rainwater manhole covers in the Hall car park will be investigated as soon as weather conditions and councillor availability allows.
New outside space signage is in progress at a cost of £100 + VAT (within costs agreed at the 26 October 2023 Parish Council meeting). Signage is no longer planned for within the information board.
The first Sovereign compliance inspection is due w/c 22 January with play area/MUGA/tennis court maintenance to be considered following receipt of the inspection report.
Enquiries continue to obtain quotes for installation of resin/bonded type pathway surfacing around the main entrance to the Hall. Difficulties are being experienced in finding contractors wishing to quote.
Guidance from the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)/The Countryside Charity regarding managing a mole population in public open space, and minimising risks to playing field users, has been considered alongside information from a professional pest control contractor. The Council's duty of care to field users was noted and feedback will be sought from the baseball team regarding the impact of mole hills on its activities. **Action: Cllr Dawson**
As an alternative to trapping, quotes will be sought for use of gas as a control measure, along with feedback regarding its effectiveness/safety in a public open space environment. **Action: Clerk**
It was agreed for Pre-school to carry out a litter pick around the Parish Hall grounds, with Pre-school aware that it has full responsibility for this activity which is entirely at Pre-school's own risk.
See item 23 below for discussions relating to open air gym proposals (for the Norton area).

21. 2024/18 Parish Hall

An update was received from Cllr Fincher (Chair of the Hall Trustees and Parish Council representative) including provision of a shop report as part of the Hall's financial year end process, decisions on two grant applications being due in early February (in support of work to replace the floor in the main hall, the lobby and Mary's kitchen and work to replace windows, doors and 'skirting/panels' along the window wall of the main hall). Installation of a clothing bank in the Hall car park was declined due to the risk of litter and vandalism, and such facilities already being available locally at Tesco St Peter's.

22. 2024/19 Martyn's Law - Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill

Information received from NALC and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) regarding progress of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill was considered. In line with NALC/SLCC suggestions, this item will remain on Parish Council meeting agendas for discussion of guidance received (as this evolves) and to respond to Home Office consultations when these become available.

23. 2024/20 Worcester Norton Community Interest Company (WNCIC)

An update was received from Cllr Fincher (Parish Council WNCIC Board representative) in line with the agreed dispensation. Work has started, with new facilities currently due to open in June 2024.

The listing of Worcester Norton Sports Club (Cricket Club) as an 'Asset of Community Value' is due to expire on 2 July 2024. It was agreed to reapply for 'Asset of Community Value' listing of this site.

Proposed Cllr Richmond, seconded Cllr Arrow and agreed by all.

Action: Clerk, Cllr Pollard

Potential for the 'Mens in Sheds' initiative to be hosted in a room within the renovated buildings was highlighted and will be discussed with Cllr Adams.

Action: Cllr Fincher

Siting of an outdoor gym on WNCIC land was considered further, with proposals including use of the £1k Tesco Community Fund grant (held by the Parish Council) for Council purchase of a single item of equipment to that value before 3 May 2024, and the £17k funding secured from Severn Waste Services to be paid to WNCIC for purchase of remaining outdoor gym equipment. Location on the WNCIC site would result in equipment being close to the large Brockhill population, with WNCIC likely to give landowner's permission for installation. This approach was agreed by the Parish Council.

24. 2024/21 Sentry Statue Landscaping Proposals

Spring planting will be carried out when ground/weather conditions allow, with signs to explain the significance of plants also planned. A budget of c. £600 remains for these costs.

25. 2024/22 Parish Council Newsletter

Content should be provided to the Clerk by close of 7 February. **Action: All newsletter contributors**

26. 2024/23 Neighbourhood Plan (NP)/ Parish Aspirations Document

Following discussions at the 30 November Parish Council meeting, an update on revising the Parish NP was received. WDC has agreed to carry out (and pay for) a Parish Housing Needs Survey and post survey analysis. This is due to be carried out after WDC has received new software (due Q1 2024).

Cllr Pollard will liaise with WDC to progress and will circulate the 2019 Parish Housing Needs Survey to all PC members for information.

Action: Cllr Pollard

In addition to financial support from WDC for the Housing Needs Analysis and Parish Referendum (if needed), it is envisaged that the Locality technical support package/grant will cover remaining costs. The next Parish Aspirations Document quarterly review is due in February 2024.

27. 2024/24 Policies

See discussions under agenda item 7 relating to adoption of the Parish Biodiversity Policy.

28. 2024/25 Annual Parish Meeting (APM) – 9 May 2024

Arrangements to be progressed, with any suggestions for revised content/invitees to be advised to the Clerk as soon as possible. The APM will be publicised in the spring edition of the Council's newsletter, via roadside signs, and on the Council's website/FB page to seek to boost attendance. **Action: Clerk**

29. 2024/26 Finance

a) It was proposed by Cllr. Pollard, seconded Cllr. Dawson **and all were in agreement** that the accounts presented to the meeting, as summarised below, be approved for payment/confirmation.

Accounts for Confirmation:

| Category | Detail | Amount £ * |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Administration | Windows, doors, panelling grant to Norton Parish Hall (agreed 30 November Parish Council meeting) | 2,500.00 |
| | Floor grant to Norton Parish Hall (agreed 30 November Parish Council meeting) | 2,500.00 |
| | Society of Local Council Clerks annual subscription (agreed 30 November Parish Council meeting) | 288.00 |
| | Printer paper | 59.98 |
| | Poppy appeal donation (local branch Royal British Legion) (agreed 30 November Parish Council meeting) | 50.00 |
| | December 2023/January 2024 instant ink subscription | 22.49 |
| | November/December 2023 instant ink subscription | 22.49 |
| | Mobile phone contract December 2023 DDR | 10.29 |
| | Mobile phone contract January 2024 DDR | 10.29 |
| | Website fees December 2023 | 5.98 |
| | Website fees January 2024 | 5.98 |
| | Community Services | Norton Connector November 2023 |
| Norton Connector December 2023 | | 260.00 |
| Grounds/ Parish Property Maintenance | Wychavon DC annual billing for weekly emptying and cleansing of 4 litter/dog bins | 440.98 |
| | Lengthsman duties December 2023 | 200.00 |
| | Lengthsman duties November 2023 | 192.00 |
| | Allotment water bill 3 December (older meter – monthly billing) | 31.60 |
| Staff Costs | Dec 2023 payroll (gross): Clerk & Assistant Clerk (incl. back pay), groundsman & litter picker (incl. expenses), pension contributions | 3,360.99 |
| | Quarterly HMRC PAYE tax and NI payment | 1,124.74 |
| | TOTAL | 11,465.81 |

* Incl. VAT where payable on invoice

Accounts for Payment:

| Category | Detail | Amount £ * |
|---|---|------------------|
| Grounds/ Parish Property Maintenance | Tree work agreed at 30 November 2023 Parish Council meeting | 1,300.00 |
| | Annual 2023 mowing small 'pavement' grass verges at Brockhill, Norton | 380.00 |
| | Return of allotment refundable deposit (plot 38B) | 50.00 |
| Staff Costs | January 2024 payroll (gross): Clerk & Assistant Clerk, groundsman & litter picker (incl. expenses), pension contributions | 2,265.44 |
| | TOTAL | 3,995.44 |
| | GRAND TOTAL | 15,461.25 |

* Incl. VAT where payable on invoice

A Norton Theatre Group grant application seeking a contribution towards the cost of temporary toilet facilities for the pantomime at the Parish Hall was considered. It was agreed to clarify the cost incurred by the Group. **Action: Clerk**

If costs were £450, the Parish Council agreed to provide a grant of £225 in line with the 2023 grant. If increased costs were incurred for the 2024 pantomime, the Parish Council agreed to consider an increased grant.

30. 2024/27 Correspondence for Information

See Appendix 1 for a list of correspondence received.

- 31. 2024/28 Clerk's Report on Urgent Decisions/Expenditure Delegations since the Last Meeting**
As reported during the meeting.
- 32. 2024/29 Items for Update to Local M.P.**
To be copied into correspondence to the WCC Chief Executive (see agenda item 5b).
- 33. 2024/30 Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agenda**
None.
- 34. 2024/31 Date of Next Meeting**
22 February 2024.

The meeting closed at 10.50pm.

| <u>Correspondence Received for 22 January 2024 Parish Council Meeting</u> | |
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| Sender | Subject |
| CALC | Information/updates including: Local Council Conference, Grants/Funding Officer, Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Civility and Respect Newsletter HR Update, training events, NALC Events, Diary Dates, Reminders from CALC, Clerk Vacancy, NALC Chief Executive's bulletin |
| Community First | Newsletters/bulletins |
| CPRE – The Countryside Charity | Campaign updates, rural affordable housing report, rooftop solar survey results |
| Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service | Public consultation on the Service's Resource Review proposals (closes 4 March 2024) |
| NALC | Newsletters, Chief Exec's bulletins |
| National Highways | M5 junction 8 carriageway repairs |
| One Network | Local roadworks reports |
| Resident | Planning application ref W/23/02577/FUL |
| Resident | Fly tipping on land adj. to Hatfield Lane |
| Resident | Enquiry relating to the history of the 'old Norton Hall' |
| Resident | Delivery vans driving on the Gazala Drive grass verge |
| Rural Bulletins | Bulletins: Rural opportunities/funding/vulnerability service/news |
| Soc. Local Council Clerks | Chief Exec news bulletins and updates |
| The Local Government Boundary Commission for England | Consultation on draft recommendations for division boundaries in Worcestershire (closing date 18 March 2024) |
| WM Police/ Police & Crime Commissioner/ Safer Neighbourhood Team/Neighbourhood Watch | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to contact the Police regarding dangerous dogs • Kyle Gordon confirmed as next Chief Constable for West Mercia Police • High visibility patrols around rural villages including Eckington, Bredon, Flyford Flavell, Flyford Grafton, and Whittington • West Mercia PCC - Safer Roads Grant Round 2 Launch • Our News Neighbourhood Watch Newsletters December & January • PCC newsletter December 2023 |
| Worcs Assoc'n of Carers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter 2023 Edition of Caring News |
| Worcs CC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Consultation with Parish and Town Councils 30 January 2024 • Closure of section of Wadborough Road, Littleworth for a customer connection by Severn Trent Water. Due to start on 16 February for 2 days. • Natural Networks funding increased to encourage more wildlife-rich habitats • Local Aggregate Assessment: Data up to 31 December 2022 • B4084 Closure - 13 nights (19:00 – 07:00) 24 January to 9 February 2024 |
| Wychavon DC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Legacy Grant expressions of interest close midday 20 February • Design Code consultation (closes 5 February 2024) • Tell Wychavon if you spot a rough sleeper this Christmas • List released to help cut festive recycling confusion • Councillors call for change to rules on communication poles • Project funding - Wychavon Rural Fund now open • Taste of democracy for local students • 10,000 children join fight against litter thanks to WDC funded education • New fuel use leads to greener bin collections |
| Wychavon DC Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda and minutes Planning Committee meeting 7 December 2023 <p><u>Approval Notices:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W/23/01642/HP - Norton Hall Lodge, Pershore Road, High Park - Loft conversion with rear dormer, infill of canopy areas with internal alterations and front boundary wall with new gate. |