

Little Comberton Parish Council

2024/21

Parish Council Meeting - Minutes Wednesday 17th July 2024, 7.00pm Village Hall

Parish Councillors Present: N Jamieson, C Rabbette & L Schmitz

Clerk/RFO: Nicola Harding

In attendance: One parishioner

1. Apologies

Received from Cllrs D Smithson, N Smithson & Cllr B Hardman.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

3. Election of Vice-chairman

It was agreed to revisit this at the next Parish Council meeting in September, when there should be a full complement of Cllrs.

4. Proposal to fill casual vacancy by Co-option

An application had been received to fill one of two remaining vacancies on the parish council. This was proposed by Cllr Rabbette, seconded by Cllr Schmitz, to be formally approved at the next meeting when the applicant is able to attend and sign a new Cllr declaration.

Action: Clerk to update applicant and include on September agenda.

5. Parishioner's Comments

A parishioner in attendance requested updates regarding planning application W/24/00941/AGR Land at (OS 9652 4375) Wick Road. This was discussed and reported under item 8, planning.

Attention was also drawn to four trees on the right hand side of Wick Road, which have become heavily infested with mistletoe. It was confirmed that advice had been sought from Worcestershire County Council's Senior Greenspace Officer in April, who noted that although the majority of trees normally affected are fruit trees, those infested are hawthorns. It was confirmed that there is no easy solution given that mistletoe tends to grow back in 3-5 years to the same volume as initially present. and the advice received was shared with the meeting. A quote had also been obtained from a tree surgeon for the removal of the mistletoe, but this would prove a costly annual expenditure and long term, it would be more cost effective to replace the trees. It was agreed therefore to re-consider the council's options in the next year.

Action: Continue to monitor and re-visit next Summer.

Grass verge, Orchard Drive: Following a report from a parishioner, the clerk had made contact with WCC estates team to request this area is included in their general village works programme whereby cuts are completed five times per year in May, June, July, August & September/October. A cut is therefore scheduled before the end of the month. *Action: Monitor.*

6. Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 12th June 2024:

Attention was drawn to item 10, correspondence 20/24, regarding a Neighbourhood Plan Survey which had been circulated by Wychavon DC. Completion of a questionnaire had been requested to understand what stage each Parish is at with neighbourhood planning and what help and guidance may be required. Responses are to be received by midnight, Wednesday 31 July 2024, to help inform WDC of areas of concern and where they can provide extra support and information.

Cllrs considered it important to note that the parish council does have a relevant village design statement in place, which a lot of time had been invested in. Given that Neighbourhood plans are complex legal processes with a great deal of commitment required, as a small village it is not felt that there are sufficient resources to contemplate any complicated legal process in the near future, however it may be worth revisiting and enhancing the village design statement with a light touch approach in future.

Action: Clarify completion of the survey with Cllr D Smithson. Clerk to flag up the council's position with WDC via email.

As the only Cllr present at the June meeting, Cllr Rabbette proposed to approve the minutes as a true record.

7. Progress reports from Parish Activities - brief updates:

a. Lengthsman: Overgrown footpaths reported behind Old House Farm have all been attended to. Weed killing has been undertaken and Cllr Jamieson has also brought some minor tasks to the lengthsman's attention for July. Restoring the overgrown footpath towards the rectory will also be completed to reveal the tarmac.

It was noted that works flagged up with WCC Highways to tarmac the muddy area in front of the church have now been completed. It was agreed to thank the senior highways engineer for his intervention and to request an update regarding the remaining lay-byes along Wick Road, which require additional road chippings to fill pot holes. *Action: Clerk.*

- b. Highways: Speed initiative – Positive responses have been received regarding the new VAS in operation. It was proposed to conduct a survey in six months’ time to monitor progress and to establish if there are any changes in speed when the sign is rotated to the alternative pole location. A quote remains outstanding from WCC contractors for the six village posts agreed to be installed along Pershore Road, close to the village entrance, in order to reinforce the 30 mph limit.
Action: Clerk to request further updates from BB, WCC Highways.
- c. Highways: Drainage – Following details of the drainage survey conducted in May, few defects were discovered, however a manhole has been detected near a property on Pershore Road which may require access in future. Should there be overgrown roots and issues detected in the next few years, it was agreed therefore to request an accurate measure of exactly where this brickwork chamber is located and to approach the homeowner for their clarification.
Action: Clerk to liaise with MM, WCC Drainage engineer.
WCC has submitted a road closure application for works, currently scheduled for the week of 16th December (subject to change,) for the installation of a new pipe across the road at the Orchard Drive/Pershore Road junction to take two road gullies outside number one. It was proposed to update the senior highways engineer of this closure, as a potential opportunity to arrange for the village posts’ installation at the same time, should this be workable.
Action: Clerk to request with BB, WCC Highways.
- d. Airband: Despite further correspondence forwarded by registered post to Airband directors, no responses have been received regarding the parish council’s request to have the fourteen redundant telegraph poles removed along Wick Road. Cllr Jamieson therefore proposed to visit head office at the end of next month with copies of the correspondence sent to date. Cllr Schmitz also raised the future possibility of contacting Ofcom in support of this issue.
Action: Cllr Jamieson.
- e. Trees: A quotation had been received for crown reduction of the lime tree at the Memorial Garden, following recent recommendations identified in a tree survey report undertaken in May 2024. Following a quotation received from a tree surgeon, it was agreed to undertake this work in the Winter, given the current height of the tree.
Action: Clerk to liaise with tree surgeon and request the most suitable month for completion.
Following a request from a parishioner to consider replacing a copper beech tree which was removed due to honey fungus some ten years ago, the tree surveyor recommended another Scot’s pine as a suitable replacement, to be planted 3m behind the current pine as an upright evergreen to eventually replace the existing pine.
Action: Clerk to request Cllr N Smithson liaise with tree warden in order to source/cost a potential replacement, with a view to planting in November time.
- f. Avon Vale River Action group: The Clerk had prepared a draft update and request for volunteer water testers for circulation via the village email. Cllr Jamieson agreed to add further detail using the presentation forwarded by the group and consider a personal approach to a resident who had indicated a willingness to allow access to Mary Brook from their property.
Action: Cllr Jamieson.
- g. Bonfires: Occurrences have been rare this Summer. It was agreed to respond directly with any potential complaints, forwarding the link from Worcestershire Regulatory Services:
[Domestic Bonfire | Worcestershire Regulatory Services \(worcsregservices.gov.uk\)](https://www.worcsregservices.gov.uk)
Action: Cllr Schmitz to draft a model response, using a summary from the Parish Council’s bonfire protocol.

7. District and County Councillor’s reports:

District Cllr Hardman provided the following summary which was shared with the meeting:

Neighbourhood matters: the Parish Council is encouraged to promote this information service: [Home Page -](#)

[Neighbourhood Matters](#) Updates on crime instances and community events in your area can be received by email text or phone from the police. Cllr D Smithson has agreed to look into this on behalf of the parish and it was proposed to revisit this at the next meeting.

Well-being classes: Once potential dates have been received from Elmley Castle Parish Council, a well-being village hub meeting will be arranged for the three local villages. *Action: Clerk to provide any updates.*

8. Planning

W/24/00031/HP Associated Ref: W/24/00032/LB Location: The Old Thatch, Pershore Road - addition of new obscured glass window to the upstairs bathroom. Rebuild and extend the garage/workshop. Replace all existing windows. Timber rose arch between house and detached garage to form covered pedestrian link – confirmation has been received that permission has been granted.

W/24/00941/AGR Land at (OS 9652 4375) Wick Road: Prior Notification for a new agricultural building – comments of objection had been submitted on 5th June 2024 & 8th July. For the benefit of the meeting, Cllr Jamieson provided a summary of events regarding the prior approval application for a steel framed agricultural building on land at Wick Road. Regular weekly updates have been circulated via the village email following a village consultation, and the Parish Council now awaits a response from the District Council following their objections raised in respect of its scale and location. It was agreed to request District Cllr Hardman’s intervention in establishing the likely procedures hereon in, so that further action and updates may be considered.

Action: Clerk to liaise with Cllr Hardman.

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9. Finance

a) Current Balances at 1st July 2024

Treasurer's Account:		£14,350.87
	TOTAL	£14,350.87

b) Payments to report:

Salary: July 2024		£388.70
Clerk Expenses: July 2024		£12.00
Postage: Airband letter 2		£6.10
K Lloyd: Grass-cut (i) Memorial Garden		£125.00
PPC: Grass-cut (i)		£125.00
Lengthsman: July 24		£165.00
LCVHC: June hall hire		£13.00
	TOTAL	£834.80

Income to report:

WCC Lengthsman June 24 work-plan		£165.00
VAT refund 24-25 expenditure to date		£552.34
County Cllr Hardman: Divisional funds – speed initiatives		£1,500.00

Proposed Cllr Jamieson, seconded Cllr Rabbette, all in favour, to approve the payments presented.

Action: Clerk to set up online payments for authorisation by Cllr Rabbette.

c) Bank reconciliation & Budget review (i) June 2024: Documents had been uploaded for checks and verification by Cllr D Smithson, to be signed as approved at the next meeting.

Action: Cllr D Smithson/Clerk. The Clerk summarised expenditure to date at the end of the first quarter, which is on track and in line with the budget, with the exception of an overspend in annual insurance costs incurred due to national increases. Following the survey financed via the tree maintenance budget, funding from an additional budget heading is available towards the lime tree crown reduction towards the end of the financial year, however it was noted that there is currently a £290.00 shortfall in meeting speed initiative costs after the Safer Roads Fund and Cllr Hardman divisional funds received, with further expenditure required for the village posts. It was agreed to monitor this each quarter for further discussion and consideration.

Action: Clerk/Cllrs.

10. Correspondence

West Mercia Police	A questionnaire had been received from the Police & Crime Commissioner as an opportunity to comment on policing in the local area, raise any concerns and identify potential improvements. The council can complete this online or a word version is available https://survey.alchemer.eu/s3/90725530/Town-and-Parish-Council-Survey-2024 Completed survey responses are to be emailed to: opcc@westmerciapolice.uk or post to OPCC on the postal address given. It was agreed to request if Cllr N Smithson may have an opportunity look into this on return from holiday ahead of the close of survey on Monday 5 th August, or if an alternative Cllr is needed. <i>Action: Clerk to email NS.</i>
Local Government Boundary Commission	The electoral review of Worcestershire has now been completed and the final recommendations have been published on 9/7/24 for future electoral arrangements in the county. Final recommendations are available via Worcestershire LGBCE and have been emailed to Cllrs. No changes had been identified, although Bricklehampton remains separate from Little Comberton Ward.

11. Councillor's reports and items for future agenda: There were no items raised.

12. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 11th September 2024 at 7.30 pm

Signed

Date.....

Chairman