

SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Monday 12th Aug 2024 at 7.30 pm in Suckley Primary School

Present: Cllr R Lewis, Cllr H. Ormerod, Cllr A. Mansell, Cllr B. Roper, Cllr H Philpotts

In Attendance: District Cllr P. Whatley.

One member of the public attended the meeting.

113/24 Apologies for Absence

None received

114/24 Declarations of Interests

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

There were none.

115/24 To consider Written Requests from Councillors to Grant a Dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) relating to items on the Agenda.

None were received.

The Meeting will be adjourned for Public Question Time/Participation. (The time allocated is at the discretion of the Council/Chair). 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 Chair.

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 Chair 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.

116/24 The Chair will invite members of the public present to make short presentations to the Council.

(a) Public presentation(s) (including planning applications representatives)

Planning (if on Agenda):-

(1) The Council Chair 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

(a) Public Presentations (including planning). None

- (b) Report from District Councillor. Cllr Whatley advised on key issues currently under consideration by MHDC. These included the possible provision of a mobile phone mast in the locality and developments in Government planning policy affecting West Worcester. The council had been advised of the initiative to offer a mast by County Councillor K Hanks following representations around the county by residents about the poor quality of mobile signal in some locations. It was agreed that Cllr Mansell would make contact with the co-ordinator within WCC and do so in the first instance.

As reported nationally, there was significant activity concerning planning at all levels of government, particularly concerning the provision of additional housing. For the Malvern Hills area, the annual building target would rise from 368 houses pa to over 600. Cllr Whatley doubted whether there would be sufficient brownfield or greyfield sites available to meet these revised needs and it seemed likely that some greenfield sites would need to be considered. However there were many administrative obstacles to be addressed, such as the provision of “affordable” homes, the need to comply with “biodiversity net gain” (under which new developments are supposed to demonstrate sustainability and their positive effect on the environment).

- (c) Report from County Councillor- None received for this meeting
- (d) Lengthsman Report – No specific report was available although the chairman noted that the council awaited a quotation for ground work around some of the play equipment at the playing fields.
- (e) Local Police Report – None received for this meeting
- (f) School Report. Cllr Philpotts reported that the school had enjoyed a productive last term, with the sports day having taken place on a much improved playing field area, a successful Summer Fair, and continued with the Rags to Riches scheme. In addition, all pupils taking the Bike Agility Test had passed.

The Chair re-opened the meeting

117/24 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 8th July 2024 were approved on the proposal of Cllr Ormerod, seconded by Cllr Mansell

118/24 CO-OPTION & CLERK VACANCY AND ALLOCATION OF COUNCILLOR ROLES

There had been, so far, two applications for the position of parish clerk. It was agreed that interviews should take place on 29 August. Councillors were invited to put forward questions for such interviews; these questions would then be co-ordinated and standardised by the chairman.

For one of the vacant councillor roles, it was agreed that the clerk should now proceed with the existing co-option process and follow up with the usual recruitment process for the two others.

The position of councillor Savage was discussed. Although he had indicated his resignation at the meeting in June, no formal written notification had been received. The meeting noted that non-attendance for six months would then mean that resignation could be deemed to have occurred.

119/24 PLANNING

No reports or discussion.

120/24 PLAYING FIELD

All items and issues relating to playing field, pavilion, astro turf, play equipment etc.

(a) Agreement with Worcester Utd FC. The chairman explained that the council had been considering a proposal for this football team, alongside an existing one with St Johns FC. In short the WUFC offer would significantly increase the use of the pitch which had already suffered a great deal of flooding last season to the extent that St Johns had managed to complete 3 games in Suckley. He noted that, as a matter of goodwill, the team had still honoured the payment agreement. While the council was seeking to alleviate the pitch problem via a grant to improve drainage, this was still at an early stage with no dates. There would be increased traffic on what is a narrow access road and accepting an additional team would put further strain on an already depleted number of councillors, notwithstanding the plan at item 8(b) below. Following discussion, the council voted unanimously to decline the agreement with WUFC and maintain the existing one with St Johns, subject to some minor revisions/clarification. Proposed: Cllr Roper, Seconded: Cllr Mansell, following which Cllr Ormerod would provide a draft response for the clerk to send to each club.

(b) Formation of Playing Field Committee. Planning continued for the formation of this committee. Cllr Mansell explained that it was intended that playing field matters should become more autonomous, with more involvement from the local community, while the council would still retain overall control, including ownership of the field itself.

(c) Online booking system. The council had received an unsolicited, but timely, offer from 'Lemonbookings', to demonstrate their booking system. Cllr Mansell, who had already reviewed another commercial product, said that it was intended that this was something that the Playing Field Committee would consider.

(d) CCTV Warranty. The manufacturers of the existing CCTV system had advised that the warranty period was due to expire. It offered to extend the warranty for a further 2 years at a cost of £180. After due consideration, the council felt that the offer represented a reasonable one and would ensure continued protection of the work done and investment made in the playing field area. It was agreed that the clerk should be asked to accept the offer. Proposed: Cllr Lewis, Seconded: Cllr Philpott

121/24 FOOTPATHS

There was nothing to report.

122/24 COMMUNITY

(a) Village Show. This event was now in doubt. Cllr Ormerod reported that following the resignation of the show committee chairman and the unavailability of 2 other committee members, he had asked the remainder whether they wished to continue or not. Most replies had indicated a preference not to continue and so for the time being at least, there will be no village show in 2025. It was, however, open for any individual or organisation to re-constitute a group with support as before from the council, and if desired, to take forward the work already done,

(b) Notice Boards. In addition to the notice board at the Lower House Dairy, it was the council's intention to put another up at the Memorial Ground, and at the Cross Keys Inn. The chairman hoped to be able to obtain one at no cost and it was expected that the third would be relocated from the shop/post office as events dictate.

- (c) Newsletter. This would be considered at the October council meeting. In the meantime, Cllr Mansell will draft a piece for the Sphere magazine to update parishioners of our plans
- (d) Parish Map. This project is almost at the stage where the next stage – graphic design – can be started. Cllr Ormerod would consider, in conjunction with the clerk, how this contract element needs to be carried out, having regards for the value of the work. However, there had been no response from the owners of the Bruff, despite RMW Estates Ltd having been hastened for the promised input. After discussion, it was agreed that should nothing be received by the next meeting, then the Bruff article and picture could be replaced by a picture of a defibrillator together with arrows showing the locations of the defibrillators locally, one of which was actually the Bruff itself. It would also be relatively easy to add additional locations as more of these life saving devices could be procured. It was further agreed that the “What 3 Words” should be shown on each of the defibrillator locations.
- (e) Defibrillator, training and Buddy system. There were currently 2 within Suckley – at the school and the Bruff. The council intended to obtain at least one other the chairman would, review with the clerk, what opportunities may exist to obtain another, including any available grants. In the meantime the council noted that the maintenance duties would now be carried out by L. Cairns.
- (f) Correspondence including Facebook. It was not clear what the position was regarding the existing Facebook page “ Suckley Parish Council 2024“ which purported to be an official Suckley Parish Council medium but which wasn’t and whether it would be possible to launch and manage one which would be. It was suggested that it may be something that the new clerk could assist with, alternatively one or two local individuals might be approached to ask for assistance

123/24 CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) Mobile Phone Mast. This was discussed at item (4b) above.
- (b) Fish and Chip Van. An enquiry had been received from a potential mobile fish and chip vendor about the possibility of operating one night a week from the Village Hall. It was agreed that the council had no objections but clearly it is not possible to operate from the village hall itself so the vendor should be advised to make contact with the housing association responsible for the car park at Damson Way. The Chairman will advise the vendor accordingly.
- (c) Thanks and complaint. One letter had been received concerning an apparent rumour about the contracting process undertaken in respect of services at the playing field. No councillor had been approached or had been aware of this issue as it was understood that the process had been completed in accordance with the usual rules. No further action was taken.

124/24 FINANCE

The following payments were approved as proposed by Cllr Mansell and seconded by Cllr Roper:

(a) Gen Fund:

SmartCut Ltd £240.00 – cutting on 05/07/2024 & 11/07/2024

SmartCut Ltd £120.00 – cutting on 25/07/2024

R Wilks – Lengthsman £504 May and June

L Butler £579.82 – clerk’s salary July 2024

L Butler - £77.30 clerk’s expenses April – June 2024

(b) Playing Field A/c

WaterPlus D/D for July - £11.65

EDF Electricity £26.06 - 02/05/24 – 30/06/2024

125/24 OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr R Lewis would be the councils 2nd nominated representative (trustee) on the Suckley Charities. He would also take over the role of Police liaison.

126/24 MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Suggested items included:

- recording within council minutes of parish Births, Marriages and Deaths.
- to review the frequency of parish council meetings,
- to review councillors' responsibilities following items 6 and 13 above,
- to review signage at the playing field re dogs and also the need for a sign at the pop-up book shelter
- to review the procedures for handling and publicising the subjects of correspondence received.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

There being no planned meeting in September, the next meeting will be on 14th October 2024