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Great Comberton Parish Council

Parish Council Meeting - Minutes Monday 4th November 2024, 7.00pm Village Hall

Parish Councillors Present: K Collingwood (Chair), S Hamilton, (Vice-Chair) A Lavelle, G Hodgson, D Wilks, S Hickey & K Barnes.
District Cllr B Hardman

Clerk/RFO: Nicola Harding

In attendance: No parishioners

1. Apologies

Received from County Cllr Hardman.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

3. Parishioner's Comments

There were no comments received.

4. Casual vacancy

Following discussion of two applications shared at the last meeting, proposed Cllr Collingwood, seconded Cllr Hamilton, all in favour to co-opt Keith Barnes to fill the remaining seat on the parish council. A Cllr declaration of acceptance of office was signed and a register of interest form will be forwarded for completion and return to Wychavon District Council within 28 days.

Action: Clerk/Cllr Barnes.

5. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 2nd September 2024

Proposed Cllr Lavelle, seconded Cllr Hodgson, all in favour to approve the minutes as a true record.

5. Progress reports from Parish Activities - brief updates:

a. Lengthsman: Gully grates and grips have been attended to around the village and Pershore Road, in addition to siding out of footpaths and vegetation clearance from signs and visibility splays. The worksheet for October is outstanding and will be forwarded to WCC once received and payment processed.

Action: Clerk/signatory.

b. WCC Highways: Footpaths: Cllr Hamilton noted a local public right of way where sleepers have become dangerous underfoot and agreed to report online to WCC.

Action: Cllr Hamilton.

Quay Lane: Following a report at the last meeting regarding intermittent problems with vehicles accessing the Quay, a discussion ensued regarding definition of the track beyond the public highway which ends at Quay House. County Cllr Hardman has liaised with WCC Senior Highways Engineer, but there are no further updates at present. It was recommended therefore that the Parish Council cost a sign to erect on parish land to deter vehicles beyond the end of the highway, and Cllr Hardman agreed to fund this using his Cllr divisional members fund.

Action: Cllr Collingwood to design a sign and circulate to Cllrs for consideration.

c. Police: A new Safer Neighbourhood Team is in place and details have been forwarded to Cllrs. The Clerk has invited PC Prentice and PC Trowman to meet with the Council in order to discuss previous speed enforcement and the increasing issues experienced through the village, especially during Eckington bridge closures. The police team also requested regular village communication, therefore it was agreed that The Link was the most appropriate channel for residents in the area.

Action: Clerk to request further updates/ arrange a meeting with Cllrs & update regarding The Link for future communications.

d. 'Our Community Can' WDC initiative: Following ten responses received to the village survey circulated by Cllr Hamilton regarding future creative/physical activities, a flexible class proved the most popular proposal, as currently underway in Little Comberton parish. It is proposed therefore to set up a class on Wednesday 8th January 2025 in Great Comberton - Cllr Hamilton has liaised with the village hall committee to secure the hall on a Wednesday morning so that this does not clash with existing provision in Little Comberton, and a meeting has been arranged with the community contact at WDC to proceed further with setting up the grant for this initiative. A discussion ensued regarding the lack of current provision for men in the district, in similar vein to the charity 'Men in Sheds' which provides space, tools and equipment for small woodworking projects, community projects, gardening and socialising. It was noted that a suitable location and subject of interest can be restrictive in setting up such a scheme, therefore it was requested to consider any suitable ideas and locations in the vicinity and forward to Cllr Hardman. Cllr Hamilton also raised the idea of monthly walks in the Spring and croquet as additional, potential ideas for future consideration.

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Actions: Cllr Hamilton to make contact with WDC regarding setting up the grant, advertise the session in the Link and send an email and reminder to the village in December/January. Cllrs to consider ideas and locations to encourage more male centred activities.

e. Water testing: The Clerk had confirmed that Monday was the most suitable day for availability of volunteers from the Combertons to attend necessary training set up by the District Council. Cllr Hardman is awaiting confirmation of a date and agreed to confirm once finalised. It was confirmed that Great Comberton, Little Comberton, Bredon & Beckford will be trial parishes for the new scheme to be funded by Wychavon and once the necessary training has been completed, volunteers will work alongside the Avon Vale River Action Group. It was agreed that the overall objective of the scheme is to assess water quality and obtain evidence to present to the water authority.
Action: Cllr Hardman to confirm training date once agreed. Clerk to inform volunteers.

f. Brailles Orchard: Cllrs have been notified that the ongoing hay making arrangement at Brailles Orchard will be ceasing in the near future, therefore its future maintenance needs to be considered and agreed. A variety of suggestions were put forward and discussed, including sheep or horse grazing, monthly grass cuts and negotiating the terms of the existing tenancy. Pros and cons of each suggestion were noted and it was reminded that it is mutually agreed in the lease agreement with the Worcester Diocese that the ground may be used for the annual flower show and general recreational purposes. It was also noted that existing fencing will require attention, if the field is grazed, and any potential financial outlay via the precept would need to be agreed by the council ahead of setting the 2025/26 budget in January 2025. Outline figures for mowing and hedge cutting have been obtained.

It was therefore agreed that Cllr Collingwood would draft an advertisement to be published in the December edition of The Link, offering a hay crop and/or grazing of the orchard in the first instance.

Action: Cllr Collingwood.

6. District and County Councillor's reports:

District Cllr Hardman

Wychavon has been awarded more than £2.9 million from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to help deliver low carbon heat and power systems at Evesham and Pershore Leisure Centres. The scheme, run by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and delivered by Salix, will see the current gas heating systems at both centres, as well as the combined heat and power unit at Evesham Leisure Centre, replaced with air source heat pumps. The measures will cut Pershore Leisure Centre's emissions by between 80% and 90% and Evesham Leisure Centre's by between 60% and 70%. In total, about 700 tonnes of carbon emissions a year will be saved, helping Wychavon to meet its Intelligently Green Plan target to reduce the council's carbon emissions by at least 75% by 2030. This will, however, result in the closure of both centres for up to twelve weeks in the new year, whilst the works are completed.

County Cllr Hardman

As reported under item 5b, Progress reports. It was also agreed that Cllr B Hardman would report back any matters arising from the meeting, for information.

7. Planning

W/24/01235/LB: Retrospective application for repairs to outbuilding/barn within the curtilage of grade 2 listed Fern cottage – this application has been approved.

W/24/01465/HP: Proposed single-storey extension; new dormers, roof lights, windows and doors; and new outbuilding to provide workshop and store: Hopestan House – this application has been approved.

8. Finance

a) Current Balances at 4th November

Community Account	£7,177.70
Business Account:	£1,809.19
TOTAL	£8,986.89

b) Payments to report:

Salary: September 2024	£323.92
Salary: October 2024	£323.92
Salary: November 2024	£323.92
Pershore Community First Responders	£100.00
Lengthsman: August 2024 work-plan	£180.00

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Lengthsman: September 2024 work-plan	£180.00
Village Hall: September & November meeting hire	£14.00
Fisher German: Brailles rent (i) March-Sept 2024	£112.50
Expenses: Sept-Nov 2024	£36.00
ICO Annual registration data protection fee	*£35.00
TOTAL	£1,629.26

*The Clerk had completed a bank direct debit instruction form for signing and forwarding to the ICO, in order to set up an annual payment at the slightly reduced cost of £35. The Clerk & Cllr Collingwood signed this instruction on behalf of the Council.

Action: Clerk to forward to ICO.

Income to report:

Precept (ii)	£2,650.00
CTSG (ii)	£121.00
S Hickey: Brailles orchard hire	£100.00

Proposed Cllr Lavelle, seconded Cllr Hickey, all in favour to approve the payments and income presented.

c) Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL): Following discussions at the last meeting, the Clerk had sought clarification from Wychavon regarding potential, suitable proposals for use of this neighbourhood fund. Wychavon had confirmed that improvements to the railings at Brailles Orchard would fall in line with their regulations, and therefore would be a suitable proposal to improve existing infrastructure.

d) Proposal to approve expenditure @ £303.17 including VAT for purchase of new defibrillator battery:

Proposed Cllr Lavelle, seconded Cllr Hickey, all in favour to formally approve this necessary expenditure following the last meeting of the Parish Council.

Action: Pershore Community First Responder to complete regular maintenance checks of the defibrillator;

Cllrs to consider budgeting of future defibrillator expenses – for information, the new battery will require replacement in five years, with the pads requiring replacement in November 2025.

e) Barclays: updates – Following earlier discussion and points noted in the quarterly bank reconciliations, Cllr Hamilton confirmed that there are no restrictions on deposits or withdrawals between the community and business accounts, therefore it was agreed to transfer the existing parish reserves and Community Infrastructure Levy fund from the community account to the business account, to gain benefit from additional interest which would be accrued on a daily basis. Cash flow can then be monitored by the Clerk and signatories.

Action: Clerk.

9. Correspondence

Police Safer Neighbourhood Team
Parishes are notified of a change to the local Safer Neighbourhood Team officers covering the Great Comberton area and a request to provide a monthly submission to a village magazine or equivalent, for those in the community that do not have access to social media/internet. The new team members are: PC Prentice, PC Ben Trowman and PCSO Harris.
Action: Clerk to inform PC Prentice about the monthly Link magazine.

WCC Highways
Winter Parish newsletter received – Highways are currently out refilling any grit bins that require salt. It was confirmed that there is no highways bin in the village, the nearest one being on Pensham hill.

Worcs CALC
Details of new government staff pay scales have been received and circulated to Cllrs for 2024/25 - Calc recommend that Council's note the new increase in pay for employees as a contractual obligation.
Proposed Cllr Lavelle, seconded Cllr Collingwood, all in favour.

Cotswolds National Landscape
A consultation is underway regarding the Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan – deadline for comment is 18th December (*emailed to Cllrs 4th November.*)

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10. Councillor’s reports and items for future agenda:

War Memorial: A local conservation architect has kindly agreed to complete the second annual inspection of the war memorial, following restoration work funded by the War Memorial Trust in 2022. The Clerk also noted that following a query raised at the last meeting, checks had been made with the War Memorial Trust, who confirmed that the grant enforcement period for such checks is 6 years. This is designed to ensure that the funding spent is protected, but is principally to encourage custodian/ grant recipients to monitor the memorial to ensure general maintenance is carried out and to identify any problems.

Bench: Following reports of damage to the bench near the phone box at the last meeting, Cllr Barnes had confirmed with Rooftop Housing Group that this is their responsibility to maintain. As there had been no further updates received, Cllr Barnes agreed to make further contact.

Action: Cllr Barnes.

11. Date of Next Meeting: Monday 13th January 2024 at 7.00 pm

Action: Clerk to notify village hall of meeting change and amend existing booking.

Signed

Date.....

Chairman