

DRAFT

Little Comberton Parish Council

2024/31

Parish Council Meeting - Minutes Wednesday 13th November 2024, 7.30pm Village Hall

Parish Councillors Present: L Schmitz, D Smaylen, N Smithson & D Smithson. District Cllr B Hardman.

Clerk/RFO: Nicola Harding

In attendance: No parishioners

1. Apologies

Received from Cllrs Jamieson, Cllr Rabbette & County Cllr A. Hardman.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

3. Parishioner's Comments

There were no comments received.

4. Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 9th October 2024

Proposed Cllr Smaylen, seconded Cllr D Smithson, all in favour to approve the minutes as a true record.

5. Election of Vice-Chairman

Item to be deferred when there is a full complement of Cllrs present.

6. Progress reports from Parish Activities: brief updates:

a. Lengthsman: Fly tipping in the hedge along Wick Road has been reported to WCC. Three parish grit bins have been checked – one outside the village hall is full, although two at Brookfield require replenishing. These have been reported online, however WCC have queried ownership. *Action: Clerk has taken photographs and will report back to WCC.*

b. Highways: Speed initiative updates:

VAS sign: Cllr Jamieson has extracted and circulated data from the new speed sign, producing a 3-month breakdown for the period July – September of incoming and departing vehicles. Cllrs were concerned to discover that a peak speed of 67mph had been recorded and many other speeds are within the 50mph range. Although the recorded mean average was encouraging, it was noted that those vehicles turning right from the Great Comberton turning will automatically be travelling at lower speeds, which will in turn affect this average. It was agreed that it would be helpful to establish the time of day/day of the week when the higher speeds were recorded, in order to pinpoint the ideal time for police presence in the village to conduct enforcement.

Action: Request if Cllr Jamieson or AD can establish this for information.

Wick Road: The Clerk has requested further updates from WCC Highways regarding surfacing of the lay-byes and consideration of single track signage, however there are no further updates at present. *Action: Continue to pursue and provide updates as received.*

Speed posts: Notification has been received that the six village posts are going into production and an invoice has been received from WCC for outstanding works approved for the Highways Scheme, on entrance to the village towards Orchard Drive.

c. Footpaths/PRoW: Concerns had been noted regarding changes occurring on and around the public rights of way on land either side of Wick Road. A discrepancy was noted around which footpath had been recorded as an existing public right of way by the WCC Senior Footpaths officer, therefore Cllr Schmitz agreed to forward specific location details for clarification.

Action: Clerk to update footpaths warden/WCC.

It was also raised that it would be productive to reflect upon the best means of building a positive relationship with the new farming tenant in moving forward. *Action: Cllrs to consider.*

d. Trees: Works to reduce the crown of the lime tree at the memorial garden have been rescheduled – this will now take place on Tuesday 10th December. Concerns have been raised regarding maintenance and visibility at the garden, following a proposal to plant a recently purchased Scott's pine tree, originally earmarked to replace a tree removed in recent years (this was in response to a request from a Parishioner that the tree be replaced.)

Cllrs recognised these concerns and the potential effects this could create, in addition to the ongoing efforts of volunteers in maintaining this important space. It was agreed therefore to explore the option of exchanging the tree for a dwarf Acer shrub which could enhance this space but create little additional maintenance, or alternatively, to consider planting the tree in one of the verge side gaps along Wick Road. It was agreed to update the tree warden and seek advice from Pershore College in the first instance, for further consideration by Cllrs via email. *Action: Clerk to liaise with tree warden/Pershore College & provide further updates as received. Clerk to update homeowner regarding lime tree reduction.*

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Subsequent to the meeting, following further concerns raised regarding visibility of traffic from the village hall direction for those turning right out of Wick Road, Cllrs agreed not to pursue any additional planting at the memorial garden. Alternatively, the recently purchased Scott's pine tree could be planted to enhance one of the gaps created in the verge along Wick Road.

Action: Clerk to liaise with tree warden & update parishioner who initially requested a tree replacement at the memorial garden.

e. 'Our Community Can' WDC initiative: Cllr Rabbette had circulated updates ahead of the meeting – there has been an encouraging response to a recent survey circulated via The Link magazine and taster activities have been planned across the three local parishes at the beginning of December, which may evolve into regular weekly activities in the new year using funding provided by WDC. Dates for these taster sessions will be confirmed, to include mobility and fitness classes in Great Comberton & Elmley Castle, in addition to exploring dance fitness and craft as potential additional options. Cllr Hardman noted that there remains a gap in important provision for men in the district, in similar vein to the charity 'Men in Sheds'. 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.

Action: Cllrs to consider potential options.

f. Airband poles: Cllr Jamieson has made further contact with an Airband manager regarding removal of the telegraph poles along Endon Hill – an eight-week complaint timeline remains in progress and should it be necessary, the issue will be escalated with Ofcom in an attempt to resolve this protracted issue.

Action: Cllr Jamieson to continue to update.

The Clerk also updated members that water testing training to be delivered by Wychavon DC has been potentially scheduled for Monday 9th December at 2pm – this will be confirmed by Cllr Hardman once notified by the trainer. The Combertons, Beckford & Bredon parishes are trial villages for this funded initiative.

7. District and County Councillor's reports:

County Cllr A Hardman - the following updates were received:

Reform Bill: The County Council awaits publication of the Government's Local Government reform bill which could see changes implemented to the structure of councils in the West Mercia area.

Footpaths: Resurfacing works scheduled for the footpath adjacent to the village hall remain on track for February, so should be completed before the end of the financial year.

Budget: Concerns remain regarding overspending within the County Council, with further updates expected on receipt of the next quarter's figures.

Mobile library: It has been noted that the mobile library service does not attend in Little Comberton, therefore Cllrs are requested to consider if there may be a demand for this in the village and confirm with Cllr Hardman. Action: Cllrs.

District Cllr B Hardman

Tree Protection Orders: Clarification of an overall plan of TPO's recorded in the district is needed as it is currently required to input a specific address on Wychavon's website in order to establish where these orders apply.

Street cleansing: A new company is now completing street cleaning around the district – any areas required for attention or feedback following such work are encouraged and noted to Cllr Hardman. Cllrs considered Wick Road as a suitable area for attention, after ploughing has been completed in the vicinity.

Action: Monitor and report to Cllr Hardman.

HM Revenue & Customs: A new Government HMRC app entitled 'Do one thing' has been created, to support under 40's in the district with money management. It was agreed that it would be helpful to establish exactly what can be applied for under this scheme – further details are available via:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/download-the-hmrc-app>

Action: Consider advertising on the village website and in a future edition of The Link.

8. Planning

No applications have been received to date and none remain pending.

9. Finance

a) Current Balances at 6th November 2024

Treasurer's Account:	£17,110.67
TOTAL	£17,110.67

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b) *Payments to report:*

Warwickshire College: Scott's pine tree	£64.80
ICO: Annual data protection fee	£35.00
Salary: November 2024	£388.70
*Expenses: November 24	£12.00
*Hall hire: September 2024	£13.00
*Street Furnishings Ltd: VAT on posts purchase	£256.87
*Royal British Legion: Poppy wreath	£19.99
*Back-pay 24/25: Annual local government pay award	£131.00

**Payments to be set up and authorised online subsequent to the meeting.*

The Clerk updated Cllrs that the original invoice received for the purchase of the village posts presented at the October meeting, listed the net figure only. A revised invoice had therefore been requested by the Clerk to include the VAT element, to be paid separately and claimed back from HMRC.

The Clerk also drew attention to the following invoice received from Wychavon District Council following circulation of the agenda, for the twice annual cleanse and emptying of the dog/litter bin located near the church:

Wychavon DC	£112.87
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This was noted, therefore the total payments presented were:

TOTAL **£1,034.23**

Income to report:

WCC: Lengthsman Aug/Sept 24	£330.00
WCC: Cllr Hardman fund: Memorial Garden	£500.00

Proposed Cllr Smaylen, seconded Cllr N Smithson, all in favour to approve the payments presented.

c) Proposal to approve WCC Highways Scheme options A & B @ £1970.00 including VAT:

Proposed Cllr Schmitz, seconded Cllr Smaylen, all in favour.

The Clerk provided current 2024/25 budget figures against actual expenditure, in addition to updated speed initiative figures. Given the divisional funding awarded by County Cllr Hardman and the dead ash tree removal on Wick Road now being the responsibility of WCC, it was noted that there should be sufficient funds available in the existing budget headings to be vired towards the year end in making up the £666 shortfall, therefore there should not be a need to earmark any of the parish reserves for this purpose.

Action: Clerk to continue to monitor during the third quarter and towards the year end.

d) Proposal to approve annual gift to village volunteers up to £150.00:

Proposed Cllr N Smithson, seconded Cllr Schmitz, all in favour.

e) Proposal to consider annual donation to Royal British Legion @ £25.00

Proposed Cllr N Smithson, seconded Cllr Schmitz, all in favour.

f) Pay scales for 2024/25: Details of the Local Government pay award had been circulated for information and were noted by the meeting.

Action: Clerk to set up amended monthly standing order salary payment for authorisation, commencing December 2024.

The Clerk drew attention to a notification received from Lloyds Bank that the council's existing treasurer's account will change to a Community Account on 14 January 2025, designed for non-profit organisations with an annual turnover of less than £250,000 per year. Charges will start to be applied thereafter on day to day banking services and account maintenance. Details were discussed and it was agreed that Cllr Schmitz and Cllr N Smithson would establish which bank account similar organisations they are involved in use at present for comparison.

Action: Cllr Schmitz & N Smithson.

Notification has been received from Wychavon DC that the 2025/26 precept requirement is to be received by 21st January 2025.

Action: Clerk to prepare draft budget figures and options on receipt of council tax base figures, for consideration and approval at the January meeting.

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Cllr Hardman raised a suggestion to consider the possible future sharing of insurance costs for outside events with neighbouring parishes, following a query raised by Elmley Castle parish.

10. Correspondence

Cotswold National Landscape Details of a review currently being undertaken of the Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB) Management Plan – deadline for consultation 18 December (details circukated.)

WCC Streetscape Design Guide consultation WCC's draft Streetscape Design Guide is now out for public engagement for feedback (emailed.) This will be for a twelve-week period from Monday 4 November 2024 to Monday 27 January 2025 closing at midnight. Survey and design guide links:
<https://online1.snapsurveys.com/StreetscapeDG2024>
https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-11/Public%20Engagement%20-%20Draft%20Streetscape%20Design%20Guide_1.pdf

Action: Clerk to forward details to Cllr B Hardman.

11. Councillor's reports and items for future agenda:

It was agreed to forward thanks on behalf of the Parish Council to the parishioner who kindly lay the wreath on behalf of the parish on Remembrance Sunday.

Action: Clerk.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 15th January 2025 at 7.30 pm

Signed

Date.....

Chairman