

MALVERN WELLS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Malvern Wells Parish Council duly convened and held in **The Village Hall, Wells Road** on Thursday, 24th February, 2011 commencing at 7.30pm

Present: Councillors K Wagstaff (Chairman)
Mrs A Bradshaw P Buchanan
Mrs A Cheeseman C O 'Donnell
A Hull J Black
B J Knibb
M Victory

In attendance: D Cllr C Cheeseman, WCCllr S Brown
and Mr D M Taverner (Clerk)

Apologies noted: Cllr H Burrage, Cllr T Henley, Cllr N Johnson

14/11 Declarations of Interest for:-

a) the Meeting: the Clerk declared a pecuniary interest in item 13 – Report of the Staffing Committee and left the room during discussion of the item.

b) any Changes to be notified to the Registers of Interests and Gifts & Hospitality: No changes were necessary.

15/11 Closure of the Meeting to allow Parishioners Present to speak on any Matter on the agenda

No Parishioners were present at the meeting.

16/11 To receive a report from the local policing team

PC Steve smith and his team had tendered their apologies for being unable to attend the meeting due to operational reasons. Three months had elapsed since there had been police representation at a Council meeting and the Clerk was asked to send the local policing a list of future Council meeting dates to help them to plan attendance.

17/11 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Parish Council held on 26th January, 2011 having been previously circulated were **approved** and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

18/11 Matters arising from the Minutes

Minute 8/11 – Report of District Councillor- the Clerk confirmed that the Band D figure of £132.33 quoted referred to the District Council element of the 20011/12 Council Tax demand only.

At this point in the meeting the Chairman proposed a change to the scheduled agenda to allow for the consideration of items 10(a)- report of County Councillor and item 10 (b) - report of the District Councillor to be taken earlier. This proposition was unanimously supported.

19/11 Report of County Councillor

Cllr S Brown gave an update on proposed changes to speed limits on the Hanley Road and reported that he had lodged an objection against these proposals with the County Council.

Cllr Brown also advised that the consolation period for the Countywide Bus Transport review had been extended. The Clerk advised Members that he would be coordinating responses to the consultation document on behalf of the Parish

An increased share of the County Council's Highways budget had been allocated for the repair of road pot holes and associated remedial works were due to be undertaken. In contrast there had been a reduction in the County wide budget for road maintenance.

20/11 Report of District Councillor

Cllr Cheeseman reported that in common with the County Council, the Police and the Fire Authorities, the District Council would be freezing its council tax demand for the coming financial year. The reduction in the District Council's Central Government grant settlement would mean that spending cuts totalling 15% would need to be found over the life of the District Council's Medium Term money plan. Some difficult decisions would have to be taken regarding potential spending cuts.

Cllr Cheeseman was pleased to report that grant funding to the Festival Theatre would be maintained at current levels, although this level of support could be the subject of review as part of the District Councils revised budget review in the autumn.

The cuts in the overall level of central government support to the District Council would also mean that there would be an adverse impact on the amount of funding available for community grant awards.

Cllr Cheeseman also reported that negotiations over the letting of the St Anne's Well cafe contract were progressing.

The Malvern Hills Conservators had been carrying out vegetation management throughout the Parish. Following a request from Members the Clerk was asked to invite representatives from the Conservators to future meeting of the Council to explain their role and the manner in which they undertake vegetation control works.

21/11 To consider the CLG consultation document on the Code of recommended practice for local authorities on data transparency

The Clerk presented the CLG Consultation document on data transparency that had been previously circulated to Members.

The Government has pledged greater transparency across the public sector through publishing data to strengthen accountability to citizens. Government has committed to publishing certain information on salaries, spending and contracts.

This agenda is set to grow and embrace other areas of information. The Government sees this initiative as an opportunity for local public service providers and the people and businesses that they serve, to better use public data and information as an asset to add value to public services or to help people and communities who need information and data to do things for themselves. It also aims to offer opportunities to foster wider use of digitally based information and services.

The Government's stated purpose is to enable greater transparency, greater engagement and greater efficiency by allowing inspection by residents, peer comparison and reuse of the data in applications and analysis.

The Government intends that increased transparency and making data public has a number of potential benefits that include:

- Improved local accountability
- Improved local decision making
- Reduced costs in responding to Freedom of Information requests;
- Potential for benchmarking across public sector organisations.

The Clerk advised that the Council has already put in place all of the recommendations relating to financial accountability, and the control of payment fraud, as set out in the consultation document.

The consultation period ends on 25th March and following that date the final code of practice would be published.

A further report on the content of the final code would be made to the Council by the Clerk at the appropriate time.

22/11 Gas Lamp Maintenance agreement

Cllr Black reported on the results of the recent meeting of the gas lamps working group which had been held with Ivor Pumfrey of MHDC. A revised grant offer letter had now been received from the District Council which the working group felt had largely contained the revisions to the grant conditions which had been requested by the PC.

Whilst Members were broadly happy with the content of the revised offer letter it was still felt that the conditions attached should be subjected to independent legal scrutiny to ensure that the interests of the PC were properly protected.

Cllr Black and the Clerk had also attended a meeting with the District Council's Planners and the Conservation officer to discuss the process for obtaining listed building consent for the refurbishment works that were due to be undertaken. At that meeting it had become apparent that the PC would need specialist advice to assist with the complexities surrounding the application process.

Both Malvern Town Council and West Malvern Parish Council had appointed a specialist consultant architect – Marcus Cleaver - to undertake the listed building applications on their behalf. The indicative costs for this work had been estimated at approximately £12 per lamp.

In order to ensure that the technicalities of application process were correctly dealt with, and that a consistency of approach was achieved, Cllr Black **proposed** that the PC should also appoint Marcus Cleaver to undertake the listed building application for its lamps at a total estimated cost of £550. This proposition was **seconded** by Cllr Knibb and **unanimously supported** by all Members.

Further meetings had been held with Sight Designs Ltd (SDL) who had been requested to produce a contract for the refurbishment works to be undertaken. SDL had updated their terms and conditions of business which had been extensively re-worked with Malvern Town Council (MTC).

SDL had also been requested to produce updated quotations for the refurbishment works and to update the revised schedule of work to be undertaken. SDL had confirmed that the pricing for the work would remain the same as had been quoted in December 2010.

Cllr Black advised that it was the view of the Working Group that any contract documentation appertaining to the gas lamps refurbishment project, together with the content of the revised offer letter from MHDC, should be subjected to independent legal scrutiny and review to ensure that the interests of the PC had been properly protected.

The Clerk was asked to liaise with the local CALC officers and legal advisers to ascertain the most appropriate source of legal advice in this regard.

23/11 Planning Matters

The following **planning applications** had been received from Malvern Hills District Council for comment;-

- (a) **Planning application 11/00152/ FUL** – application for the demolition of the existing dwelling and erection of a new dwelling at **56 Old Wyche Road**

Following careful consideration of this application Members raised no objections to it.

- (b) **Planning application 11/00136/FUL** - to consider a retrospective application for agricultural access at **Arosfa, Upper Welland Road**

Although Members raised some concerns regarding the location of the access and the sight line for local traffic they raised no objections to this application.

The following **decision notice** had been received:-

- (c) **Decision notice 10/01604/FUL La Maison De Malvern Ltd,157 Wells Road** – change of use to a retail convenience store.

Members noted the planning conditions that had been attached to the approval notice dated 27th January, 2011

The following **appeal notification** had been received:-

- (d) Appeal against planning refusal notice **10/00521/FUL** – Erection of an apartment building (10 Dwellings) with associated parking at **18 a Peachfield Road** - Appeal launched 19th January, 2011

23/11 Chairman's Communications

The Chairman reported that a local resident – Lynne Hackles - had expressed an interest in becoming the editor of the Wells News. Following discussion Members agreed that a small editorial working group comprising Cllr Victory and the Clerk should be established to meet Mrs Hackles to discuss the production of the summer edition. Councillors **unanimously agreed** that, in future, an honorarium of £100 should be paid to the Editor of the Wells News, for each of the bi- annual editions of the publication, as a mark of thanks for the work involved in its production.

24/11 Report of representatives on other bodies.

- (a) **Malvern Wells Village Hall Management Committee** – Cllr Burrage had tendered her apologies for being unable to attend the meeting and there was no report to make.

- (b) **AONB: Joint Advisory Committee** – Cllr Black advised that changes were being made to the level of grant funding available to the AONB Management Board which would see a reduction in income to them of some 9.6% during 2011/12 . The AONB Management Committee was seeking to identify administrative savings to compensate for this loss of income.

- (c) **Malvern Hills CAB** - Cllr Johnson had tendered his apologies for being unable to attend the meeting and there was no report to make.

- (d) **The Wyche Institute** – Cllr Bradshaw reported that no meeting had taken place since the previous Parish Council Meeting

(e) MH District Community Policing Matters – Cllr Knibb reported that no meeting had taken place since the previous Parish Council Meeting

(f) CPRE- Cllr Mrs Cheeseman reported that there had been no meeting since the previous Parish Council Meeting

(g) Three Counties Showground Liaison group- Cllr Mrs Cheeseman reported that there had been no meeting since the previous Parish Council meeting. Nick Vincent – the Chief Executive of the Three Counties Showground (TCS) had accepted the Council's invitation to attend the Council's Annual Parish Meeting.

(h) Summer Fete working group - Cllr Mrs Cheeseman reported that preparations were well in hand for the Summer Fete which was due to be held on St Wulstans field on Sunday 17th July. Various stalls and events were being organised and volunteers would be needed to help on the day. It was agreed that the Council would offer help and support to Cllr Cheeseman and the team making preparations for the event as and when any assistance was required.

(i) Abbey House Liaison Group – Cllr Buchanan advised that as Cllr Burrage was unable to continue to serve on the liaison group a second volunteer Councillor would be welcome to join the group. Any Member interested should contact Cllr Buchanan who would provide a briefing on the aspects of the role.

25/11 Cemetery Matters

The Clerk reported that a meeting of the Cemetery working group would be called to review cover arrangements for interments at the Cemetery and to review the existing fee structure. A report would be made to the March meeting of the Parish Council.

Confidential Items

26/11 To receive the report of the Staffing Committee held on 2nd February, 2011

*At this stage of the meeting the Council passed the following resolution:-
That, pursuant to the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960, and in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press should be excluded from the remainder of the meeting. The reason being the consideration of staff contracts.*

The Clerk had declared a pecuniary interest in this item and left the room during its consideration

Cllr Burrage advised the Council that Members of the Staffing Committee had met with the Clerk on the 2nd February to review his performance in the post during his first few months of employment. The Committee were happy to confirm that the Clerk's probationary period in the post had been completed satisfactorily and was now complete. The Clerk's next review will be the Annual Review, due on or after 11th October, 2011.

Following further discussion by Members the report of the Staffing Committee was unanimously **approved** by the Council.

27/11 Payment of Accounts: Accounts Shown on the schedule submitted were approved for payment.

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There being no other business the meeting Closed at 9. 50 pm

K. WAGSTAFF

-----**(Chairman)**
(23rd March, 2011)