

DRAFT

Little Comberton Parish Council

2025/01

Parish Council Meeting - Minutes Wednesday 15th January 2025, 7.30pm Village Hall

Parish Councillors Present: N Jamieson, C Rabbette, L Schmitz, N Smithson & D Smaylen.

Clerk/RFO: Nicola Harding

In attendance: No parishioners

1. Apologies

Received from Cllr D. Smithson & County Cllr B. Hardman.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations. Cllr Schmitz requested a new register of interest form to update, following a recent change in employment.
Action: Clerk to forward to Cllr Schmitz, for completion and return to Wychavon.

3. Parishioner's Comments

None received.

4. Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 13th November 2024

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

5. Progress reports from Parish Activities: brief updates:

- a. Lengthsman: updates were noted from the December work plan received and Cllr Jamieson confirmed he would look into exploring data from the new VAS sign in the new year. The lengthsman would also be requested to brush the pavement following the recent drainage works by WCC. The new VAS post in the verge opposite Ringsmere Orchard has been hit and is now loose in the ground. It was agreed to report to BB at WCC Highways for attention.
Action: Clerk.
- b. Highways: *Drainage:* Works were completed on Pershore Road in December and a new culvert was installed across the carriageway into the ditch at the junction with Orchard Drive. This will now take flows from the two gully's which have had long standing issues. WCC will return in the new year to replace tarmac used for reinstatement of the trench, in addition to uncovering a buried manhole to facilitate a survey to detect if any further works are required upstream. It was noted that the stretch of brand new soil as a result of works to the ditch could be ideal for wild flower planting – Cllr Jamieson agreed to talk to the footpaths warden with a view to the parish council purchasing grass seed and potential village sponsorship of wild flower seeds. *Action: Cllr Jamieson.*
Speed initiative: Six village posts have been delivered to the WCC depot and are due for installation beyond the dragon's teeth road markings, once a parish gang is available. *Action: Clerk to clarify installation date.*
Wick Road: Surface works to support the lay-byes remain outstanding, which became a significant issue during the recent road closure and diversion. It was agreed that a minimal repair would be a realistic resolution and this would be requested again with WCC Highways.
Action: Clerk.
- c. Footpaths/PRoW: Updates had been received and shared from the new land agent & WCC senior area public rights of way officer regarding changes to the PRoW # 501. Way marking may need to be refreshed in due course and it was noted that the tenant is aware of the presence of a PRoW and the need to keep this accessible will be reiterated. It was also noted that local walkers have previously followed the fence line (now removed) assuming this to be the PRoW, when in fact it is further south.
Action: Review in the Spring.
- d. Trees: Memorial Garden: A local tree surgeon will attend to the lime tree reduction on Thursday 30th January after a need to reschedule - the adjacent homeowner has been informed. Cllrs revisited a previous discussion from the November meeting, subsequent to which Cllr Jamieson liaised with a parishioner who had requested a replacement tree following the removal of a diseased tree some years ago. Reasons behind the Council's reluctance to replace this were reiterated, as Cllrs remain concerned about any additional trees affecting visibility further at this narrow junction, given the increase in traffic over time. It was agreed to seek advice from WCC Highways regarding visibility in the vicinity.
Action: Clerk to request advice from BB at WCC Highways.
Wick Road: Attention had been drawn to an ash tree along Wick Road, which a tree surgeon had noted to have possible signs of disease. As this is in the highway, the Clerk had reported to WCC, however they responded that ownership cannot be determined and the tree is not considered to be a danger to the highway at present. As a previous adjacent ash tree was attended to by WCC in 2018, it was agreed to revisit previous correspondence and clarify further with the County Council.
Action: Cllr Rabbette/Clerk.
Tree sponsorship: A local resident has requested to plant a tree in memorial along Wick Road – it was agreed to liaise with the tree warden to assess a suitable species and appropriate location.
Action: Cllr Rabbette/tree warden.

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- e. 'Our Community Can' WDC initiative: Cllr Rabbette provided updates following recent taster sessions held in the Combertons & Elmley Castle, which have been positively attended and funded by Wychavon. A fitness and mobility class will be held in Great Comberton for 12 weeks, after which it is hoped this will be self-funded. A 'craft and chat' session is hoped to go ahead in Little Comberton and 'Dance Fit' in Elmley Castle. Further announcements will be made to update residents in the next few weeks.
Action: Community Can volunteers.
- f. Airband poles: There are no new updates regarding recovery of the redundant poles following a complaint to Airband's Head of Delivery, however Cllr Jamieson continues to pursue on a monthly basis on behalf of the Parish Council and will escalate further where necessary.
Action: Cllr Jamieson.

The Chairman then moved the meeting to an urgent item that had been received following circulation of the agenda:

It was noted that the Village Hall Committee has received notification about a funding opportunity to help finance some decoration of the Village Hall. This includes a mural to be completed by a local artist as a representation of village life in Little Comberton. As there is a time limit in which to secure this funding, it was confirmed that the Village Hall committee fully support this opportunity and after formally sharing with Cllrs, the Parish Council also agreed to support this proposal. Further updates to follow as confirmed.

6. Parking on pavements:

Incidences of parking on pavements have been noted since Christmas, which have resulted in pedestrians needing to walk into the road. This was especially dangerous during the recent icy conditions and is a particular issue of concern for more frail residents and those with pushchairs/wheelchairs. The issue also escalated during the recent Pershore Road closure when Wick Road was used as a diversion. It was noted that the problem could be exacerbated further should vehicles park on the road in areas of the village where they narrow. It was agreed that the police liaison Cllr would seek general advice from the Safer Neighbourhood Team ahead of revisiting at the next meeting and sharing with the village. It was also agreed to provide speeding updates, further to the latest request for parish priorities from the SNT.

Action: Cllr N. Smithson.

7. District and County Councillor's reports:

District Cllr: Cllr Hardman had forwarded an update regarding the devolution of County Council and District Councils, meaning that Wychavon will finish in approximately two years' time. The government are going to replace counties and district councils with unities and a mayor with special powers who will cover several of these. Further details will be shared as received.

8. Planning

There are no applications pending or received to date.

9. Finance

a) Current Balances at 7th January 2025

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|----------------------|-------------------|
| Treasurer's Account: | £14,210.19 |
| TOTAL | £14,210.19 |

b) Payments to report:

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| Salary: December 2024 | £405.08 |
| Salary: January 2025 | £405.08 |
| *Expenses: Dec/Jan 24/25 | £24.00 |
| Lengthsman: October 24 | £165.00 |
| Lengthsman: November 2024 | £165.00 |
| *Grass-cut (ii) Memorial Garden | £125.00 |
| *Grass-cut (ii) PPC | £125.00 |
| RBL: Annual donation | £25.00 |
| Annual gifts expenses (approved Nov meeting) | £112.79 |
| *Hall hire November 2024 | £13.00 |
| TOTAL | £1,564.95 |

*Following circulation of the agenda, the December 2024 timesheet was received from the lengthsman, to add as an additional payment @ £165,00 - Proposed Cllr Rabbette, seconded Cllr Smaylen, all in favour to approve the payments presented.

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c) Bank reconciliation (iii) 18 December 2024: Documents were made available prior to the meeting for checks & verification by Cllr D. Smithson. Two questions were raised relating to dates of transactions in the accounts versus the bank statement. Following the meeting, the Clerk clarified these points as a time delay between payments inputted into online banking and subsequent Cllr approval/debiting from the account.

d) Proposal to approve annual Parish web-site hosting @ £129.60 inc VAT:
Thanks were extended to Cllr Jamieson who continues to manage the village email system. A report highlighting the annual website traffic during 2024 was shared and it was agreed that the website continues to be well used. As Cllr Jamieson had personally subsidised this in 2023, it was agreed to consider a full contribution for the 2024 web hosting costs, as was the case in 2022.
Action: Clerk to request consideration from Sports & Social Committee.

e) Proposal to approve 2025/26 budget & resultant precept request:
Prior to the meeting, the Clerk had prepared and forwarded a January review of the 2024/25 budget and potential budget headings/resultant expenditure budget for the 2025/26 financial year – copies were made available and likely income and expenditure in the financial year ahead was considered, along with current earmarked reserves. A discussion ensued and potential precept options were considered – a proposal was put forward to approve option (vi), all Cllrs in favour, to approve a precept of £7,600 for 2025/26, resulting in an overall annual band D increase of £3.94.
Action: Clerk to submit the Council's request to Wychavon by 24th January.

*Lloyds Bank: The council has been notified of a change of current Treasurer's account to a Community Account on 14 January 2025, designed for non-profit organisations with an annual turnover of less than £250,000 per year. A monthly charge of £4.25 per will therefore then be applied on day to day banking services and account maintenance. Following clarification by the Clerk, Lloyds have confirmed there is no other free account for parish councils to migrate to, therefore Cllrs agreed that a £51 annual charge was acceptable under the circumstances.

10. Correspondence

WCC Streetscape Design Guide consultation Reminder of WCC's draft Streetscape Design Guide currently out for public engagement 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

Pershore Education Planning Area Review Notice of agreement to extend the age ranges of all the first schools in the Pershore Education Planning Area to become primary schools. The middle schools in Pershore will no longer have a point of entry into Year 5 for September 2025, and Pershore High School's intake will be expanded to accommodate all Year 7 pupils in the area from September 2027.

SWDP Review Further to comments submitted in respect of the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review, the Secretary of State has appointed two planning Inspectors to conduct an Examination into the soundness and legal compliance of the Plan. Ian Kemp will act as Programme Officer for the Examination and will be responsible for assisting the Inspectors with the administrative and procedural aspects of the Examination process & the primary point of contact for any queries.

WDC A Parish & Town Council event will be held at WDC on Thursday 6th March at 6pm – details of proposed topics had been circulated in advance of the meeting.
Action: Clerk to book a place for Cllr Jamieson/further interest to be confirmed by any Cllrs by 26 February.

11. Councillor's reports and items for future agenda: Request further updates from Cllr B. Hardman regarding water testing to feed back to villagers in the Spring.

12. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 12th February 2025 at 7.30 pm – Cllr Jamieson & Schmitz offered their apologies.

Signed
Chairman

Date.....