

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF DRAKES BROUGHTON AND WADBOROUGH WITH PIRTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 3rd APRIL 2025 AT 7.30 PM AT DRAKES BROUGHTON VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Cllr J Butterworth (Chair), Cllr Pell, Cllr Grisdale, Cllr Turner, Cllr Booker, Cllr Bessant, Cllr Skeys, Cllr Clarke and Cllr Williams.

IN ATTENDANCE: County Councillor Robinson, District Councillor Turier, District Councillor Rob Adams and Mrs N Nicholson (Clerk)

PUBLIC: None

1) APOLOGIES:

Cllr Abercrombie

It was noted that Cllr Roberts had sadly resigned during the month leaving Wadborough underrepresented.

2) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

Public Participation: N/A

3) VACANCIES FOR MEMBERS

The Chair advised that the vacancies were increasing. There was now one vacancy for Drakes Broughton Ward and two vacancies for Wadborough Ward and one vacancy for Pirton Ward. She urged members to talk to residents, more members would spread the responsibilities. There was a concern that with the proposed solar farm very close to Wadborough and only one member the residents were not going to be fully aware or represented.

4) MINUTES

The minutes from the meeting held on 6th March 2025 were proposed by Cllr Pell, seconded by Cllr Booker, agreed by all and signed by the Chair as a true record.

5) MATTERS ARISING

The Chair noted Play Park signage still to be reviewed by Cllr Pell and Cllr Turner, proposal requested for May meeting.

The Chair advised that the website review was being undertaken by Cllr Clarke and Cllr Bessant, the clerk had already obtained three prices, and the offers would be reviewed with a proposal to the full Council at the May meeting.

6) FINANCE

SSE – Electricity account update: The Chair advised the they clerk had received 32 letters in one day from SSE and had analysed to a likely £1400.93 still to pay, but it appeared still muddled between the two meters the streetlights run from and there is still no actual bill. The Chair is going to try move this forward via the ombudsman.

V.E Day celebrations – WDC had granted £250 to Drakes Broughton and a further £250 for Wadborough and Pirton. Drakes Broughton are planning a celebratory tea on Friday 9th May, Pirton are planning a 'Big Lunch' on Sunday 11th May and plans have yet to be made for Wadborough.

Confirm price agreed for white lines at the car park – The Chair advised that the quotes had been reviewed, and it was agreed £720 was the best price for the PC section.

Appoint internal auditor – It was agreed to retain the services of S Carlyle as per the previous year.

The monthly bank reconciliation for March had been completed and confirmed by Cllr Skeys and Cllr Williams via email.

It was proposed by Cllr Pell and seconded by Cllr Skeys to transfer £1600 from Deposit account to the current account and authorise the following payments:

a) Mrs. N Nicholson – Clerk Salary February– S/O	£634.94
b) HMRC quarterly employee deductions	£219.20
c) Mr. B Arrowsmith – Lengthsman Services – March	£280.00
d) Playsafety Ltd – Annual Play Park inspection	£240.00
e) Smart Cut – grass cutting DB playing field	£181.68
f) Lloyd’s bank monthly banking fee	£5.17

It was noted that Lloyds Bank were no longer offering fee free banking to Parish Councils.

Remittance: WCC Lengthsman reimburse Jan & Feb £466.61
WDC VE Grants £500.00

7.) PLAYPARK and PLAYING FIELD

The ROSPA safety inspection – Cllr Clarke advised that the summary the clerk circulated was very accurate, Cllr Clarke advised there were no items over 6 on the younger play area and only the embankment slide and its proximity to the rope climb post still scored 9, despite the installation of hexboards. It was discussed that this item had been installed to the manufacturer specification and had been safety inspected as safe prior to the opening of the facility and for several years after, before the PC moved recently to a ROSPA inspection. Last year the advice had been to address all items over a 10, this was not, it was agreed no further action was required.

Items needing investigation and possible remedy included the junior play entrance gate sticking open and adding some anti slip treads to the rope bridge. Cllr Clarke suggesting obtaining a supply of caps to add when these failed.

Cllr Bessant advised there had been another incident of an adult tripping over the monkey bar guide wire, members discussed and decide to remove the guide wire as it was not integral to its use. Cllr Clarke would remove.

Cllr Clarke advised there was a lot of advisories regarding the ‘Oreo’ swing and the zipline regarding servicing, tightening and checking chain wear etc. Cllr Clarke suggested this was quite specialist and suggested asking Smart Cut to quote for an annual autumnal service, The Chair asked Cllr Clarke to draw up a specification so the clerk could request a price Smart Cut.

Car Park Drainage – Cllr Booker had been investigating if there had ever been a drainage ditch adjacent to the Play Park and road. It was noted currently there was no-where to drain any surface to and WDC’s Andrew Fell had advised that land drains can’t be installed near the Highway. Cllr Grisdale suggested directing towards Brickyards Lane where the draining ditch was being improved for housing development. Cllr Booker would continue to look at options.

8.) OPEN SPACE PHASE 2 – Cllr Booker

Cllr Booker advised that we should expect to receive the contract from One Ltd shortly.

Cllr Booker advised that he had received a detailed email from One Ltd that morning with documents regarding the pump track and MUGA and quotes. Cllr Booker would go through the papers and summarise to the Open Space Committee to make a next step proposal which the Parish Council can consider in the May meeting.

Cllr Booker advised that WDC Jem Teal thought that the MUGA could be funded via the formal sport allocation, which was great news freeing up more Open Space money for the pump/multi use track and afford the correct surface required.

9.) NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE

Cllr Grisdale advised that the communications with the public was underway with notices in the pub, shop, hairdresser and a communication being prepared for April Villager. Cllr Grisdale advised that he still needs to apply for the grants. Cllr Grisdale and Cllr Clarke had reviewed the document in its entirety and there would be another small group checking again after he made the changes they had identified. The plan was for that work to be complete by 18th April and then move onto talks with WDC prior to the public consultation. NP review group had met on Tuesday and the first final draft would be circulated before the end of March, ready to go to WDC for review by June.

The Chair advised that advice from CALC regarding asking landowner to 'gift or bequeath land' had been received as follows:

What would be best is that the Parish Council does a "call for sites" which is normal procedure under NP's. While you are doing your public consultation you will gather evidence of the need for green open spaces. Therefore, when discussions with landowners start with the NP process you can show the evidence and ask for green open space to be included within the development. Depending on if you are allocating sites/carrying out a sustainability assessment etc. these can be weighted to benefit developments with more green space.

The Chair advised that hopefully the many sites already with planning consent that had not started to be built would be included in the N Plan as the future housing allocation and there would not be needing a call out for sites at this stage.

10.) ROAD SAFETY – Speed watch & VAS

Cllr Bessant advised that the remaining Community Speed Watch volunteers were going through vetting again.

The Chair advised that a request had been received from a resident to move the recently relocated VAS in Wadborough. The clerk advised this was due to a confidential health issue. Members agreed to ask WCC to see if they could move the VAS closer to the junction. County Councillor Robinson raised her concern regarding costs of relocation and that the VAS site had been safety inspected was installed on WCC Highways verge, it was noted it was a very wide verge, the clerk was asked to reply accordingly and check the angle of the face of the VAS.

11.) WALCOT LANE FORD

The Chair advised that the Highways liaison officer had confirmed there had been no change to Highways policy and that road closure signage and barriers should not be being used by anyone unless a vehicle is stranded.

The danger to life was discussed again and the fact that despite what WCC Highways was saying barriers were being put in place by the police how could all the services have a different take on this. District Councillor Adams suggested a multi-agency meeting be held on site at the ford to try and get a consistent approach to safety going forward.

12.) REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

County Councillor Robinson – summarised her report circulated prior to meeting.

She updated members on the new secondary school being built next to the hospital in Worcester and that a new blue light route was being proposed to ease issues with congestion. There was also a new proposed multi-storey car park being installed which staff would park in to free up more patient/visitor parking.

County Councillor Robinson advised that the SWDPR Inspector had particularly praised the work of the joint parishes committee.

District Councillor Reports

District Councillor Adams – Cllr Adams expressed his concern at the growing numbers of member vacancies, he was concerned this was a growing trend with a number of other vacancies in other parishes he was aware of.

District Councillor Adams advised on a concert at the Cathedral for VE day, featuring the band of the Mercian regiment.

District Councillor Cllr Turier – had circulated information regarding the closure of Evesham College moving all activities to the Pershore site.

Cllr Skeys raised his concerns regarding the closure of Evesham College and urged both County and District Councillors to seriously consider the impact the loss of the Evesham College Campus will have on the local community. In 2021 Warwickshire College Group (WCG) stated that Evesham College would continue to focus on highly sought after technical and professional skills in which it excels and use its high standard of facilities to deliver this education. In 2022 WCG consulted on new plans for a £1.2 million investment in colleges within South Worcestershire which included the Evesham Campus.

WCG state that the number of students at the Evesham Campus has dropped by 60%, is this perhaps because the offer by WCG at Evesham does not meet local needs? There is a need for courses and an environment which meets the needs of those young people who do not readily engage with mainstream education together with a provision for Adult and Continuing education and training and the value this brings to the local community.

It is also understood that some of the land which makes up the Evesham College Campus was part of the John Martin Charity and specified to be used for educational purposes.

Other reports as necessary:

Cllr Williams advised that the smell of sewerage is very strong on Brickyard Lane and sympathised with local residents.

Cllr Williams raised her concerns to County Councillor Robinson regarding HGV overnight parking in the pull ins on the A44 many of which were unregistered. It was suggested a summary be sent to the clerk to forward to the police.

Cllr Bessant advised that she and Cllr Booker had attended the CALC briefing on the move to a Unitary Authority and she was very unhappy regarding how negative it had been and, in her opinion, very unprofessional, Cllr Booker agreed.

Cllr Pell advised that site clearance in land at the bottom of Beech Ave had damaged the electricity pillion stays and had cleared trees debris and trunks into the brook. The clerk was asked to advise the WDC drainage officer and report to the National Grid.

13.) ASSET REGISTER

The Chair asked the Drakes Broughton members with items allocated to them to review the item condition and update the spread sheet or detail to the clerk so she can complete and update the register for approval at the May meeting.

14.) ANNUAL PARISH MEETINGS

The Chair reminded members of the dates set for the Annual Parish meetings. Tuesday 29th April – Pirton Parish meeting the Chair and Cllr Skeys were drawing up the agenda and topic. Drakes Broughton & Wadborough Parish meeting was scheduled for 6pm on Friday 9th May, there would be a presentation on Open Space and Neighbourhood Plan and Cllr Clarke suggested including the need for more volunteers especially.

15.) COMMUNITY SPACES FOR DRAKES BROUGHTON

This item was moved to the May meeting.

16.) HIGHWAYS MATTERS & tasks for lengthsman

There were no specific issues.

The lengthsman had requested a rate review from £14 per hour to £17 per hour, he was willing to allow the PC to divide the WCC allocation by the hourly rate which would result in no additional precept budget but potentially a loss of an hour or two per month, the allocation from WCC had not been confirmed yet. The lengthsman had advised that he didn't think it would affect the efficiency. The clerk explained that across the board the general rate for lengthsman was in some areas £20-£25 per hour and that she thought £17 was a reasonable request. The increase was proposed by Cllr Clarke, seconded by Cllr Pell and agreed by all.

17.) VILLAGER SUBMISSION

The Clerk and the Chair would prepare the submission for April edition. County Councillor Robinson asked if the Environment agency hotline be included, the more residents report to them regarding the sewerage, the more pressure they can exert on STW.

18.) PLANNING

- Correspondence with STW – The Chair advised she had circulated the most recent correspondence regarding local surveys and the progress of the infrastructure project. She was also corresponding with the local operative to keep abreast of what was happening on the ground.
- SWDPR – The Chair advised that the public hearings had concluded and the SWDPR was going forward to the next stage, it was pleasing that the inspector had made specific references to Drakes Broughton. The Chair was concerned regarding how developer lead things were going to be and was especially concerned regarding the solar farm at Wadborough accessed by very narrow lanes. It was noted that a member from another parish council, was asking for a condition be added regarding proper disposal of the panels at the end of their life.
- Thornleigh road naming – The developer had requested 3 road names, members had compiled a short list of 10, it was agreed to send the list of 10 and let the developer select from those.

- Earth watch Great UK Water Blitz – sampling plan. Cllr Grisdale updated members that he and some other residents and Councillors were doing Earth Watch sampling on the water courses around Drakes Broughton including Bow Brook, they had done a small sample the previous year but this year the sample would be larger, they are looking to see how much pollution is going into the watercourse.
- a) Planning applications made to Wychavon: W/25/00334/TDC5 Land at (Os 9310 4833) Brickyard Lane. Technical detail consent for the erection of 8 no dwellings. Detailed comments submitted and meeting with Planning Officer – The Chair advised that she, District Councillor Adams, Cllr Booker and Cllr Grisdale had met with the Planning Officer, the meeting was more positive than anticipated and the planning officer is negotiating with the developer to represent the PC interest, there are 8 suggestion put forward and the PC are keen to represent and negate the impact on the closest residence to the development.
 - b) Cllr Grisdale had had a follow up meeting with A Fell, Land drainage officer who appeared in agreement with the drainage suggestions.
 - c) W/25/00529/FUL Thornleigh Nurseries, 53 dwellings variation of condition 2. Awaiting submission of comments.
Cllr Willams advised there had been a conditions discharge notice with proposals to reduce the hedge between the new development and the Williamson Way residents who back onto it. The PC are not consulted on conditions discharges but when it causes distress in the Parish perhaps should be notified, it was agreed the clerk would send the Planning Dept a note saying the PC fully support the residents' comments regarding the hedge and requesting that any work on the edge is not done during bird nesting season.
 - d) W/25/00167/HP 1 The Firs, Worcester Road, Drakes Broughton. Erection of 2 storey side extension with a new bay window. Erection of small single storey rear extension. No objection from members and no comments submitted.
 - e) Applications Approved: None
 - f) Applications Refused: APP/H1840/W24/3354870. HT Marshall and Son Joinery Ltd, Appeal dismissed for PIP for the construction of one dwelling @ Windmill Lane, WR7 4RP.

W/24/01485/OUT 45 Worcester Road – awaiting decision.

19.)CORRESPONDENCE

- Resident request to re-site Wadborough VAS
- CALC re Feckenham Woods and Worcester wildlife biodiversity project.
- WDC Parish Games

INFORMATION AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Parish Council Monthly meeting **Thursday 1st May 2025** at St Barnabas First & Middle School. The meeting will start at 7.30pm

Parish Meetings – Drakes Broughton and Wadborough – Friday May 9th 2025 6pm at Village Hall, Walcot Lane, Drakes Broughton

Pirton – Tuesday 29th April 7pm at St Peters, Pirton

Meeting closed: 9.45pm