

# ELDERSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Eldersfield Parish Council held on  
Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at Eldersfield Lawn School, commencing at 7.30 p.m.

**Present:** H.S. Davis (Chairman), B.N. Parsons,  
Mrs C. Powell-Chandler  
C. J. Whitehead, Mrs R. Wilder, O.D. Williams

**In Attendance:** -

**Members of the Public:** Mr J Keighley

## **1. Apologies for absence**

C.H. Jeffes, R.S. Manwaring MBE

## **2. Members' interests**

None

## **3. Adoption of the Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014 were accepted as a true record of that meeting and were signed as such by the Chairman of the meeting.

## **4. Matters arising**

Cllr Wilder reported that the cattle grids at the Marsh had been examined by representatives of Highways who had questioned their necessity.

The Chairman reported that he had received a letter had been received from Mrs Baldwin MP from which it appeared that the underpass of the A438 under the M50 might be opened at any time between 15<sup>th</sup> February and 30<sup>th</sup> April.

## **5. Reports from District and County Councillors**

Neither the District Councillor Bronwen Behan nor County Councillor Tom Wells was present. Neither had submitted reports.

## **6. Reports from Police**

No report was available

## **7. Public Comment**

Mr Keighley asked whether the Council would support a presentation within the parish by the UKIP prospective parliament candidate prior to the election. The Chairman responded that he

was in favour of a vibrant political dialogue and would welcome any move in this direction. It was not, however, for the Council to favour, or support, one political party over another.

Mr Keighley also commented that in his view the application for Discretionary Rural Rate Relief by James Winter and Elizabeth Winter was worthy of Council's full support. The Butcher's was, in his view, an asset of capital importance in a divided parish and should be given every encouragement.

## **8. Planning**

It was further noted that in the last two months the Council had not responded to any consultations by MHDC on planning applications.

The Chairman suggested, and it was generally agreed, that after MHDC had ceased to issue paper copies of planning applications councillors found that they were struggling with the online system.

## **9. Rural Rate Relief**

The Clerk reminded the meeting that an application for Discretionary Rural Rate Relief by James Winter and Elizabeth Winter had been submitted to WCC (and had been circulated prior to the meeting) and that the Council was invited to recommend to WCC either that relief of 50% be granted, or that a reduced relief of 25% be granted or that, if the business was considered to be of no value to the local community, no relief be granted.

Councillors considered the matter at length. Various comments were made and centred on the perceived benefit of the Public House to the community. The comments included:

- the application of relief would encourage the owners in their operation of the establishment and tend towards ensuring its viability;
- such relief, if discontinued now, could be reinstated later;
- the Butcher's was 'less of a pub' than it had been in the past;
- a bicycling group had been invited to sit outside;
- councillors, who prior to the current management had held informal gatherings in the pub with parishioners, had not recently been made to feel that further such gatherings would not be welcomed;
- the Butcher's no longer had a skittles team;
- one employee, from the parish, no longer worked there.

Accordingly it was **RESOLVED** that this Council did not consider that the Public House was of benefit to the local community and that it recommend to WCC that no Discretionary Relief be awarded.

## **13. Catering Equipment Hire**

The Chairman reported that he had held discussions with relevant parties on the tariff applied for the hire of Council catering equipment. It was agreed in principle that further plastic boxes be purchased to assist with storage. The advantage of placing a list of contents of each box on the outside of the box was brought to his attention.

He also proposed that the tariff be amended to

	£
Chairs	0.10
cutlery	5.00
plates	5.00
cups and saucers	5.00
tables, 6ft	0.75
tables 4ft plastic	0.75
water boiler	2.00
tombola	2.00
skittle set	5.00
extended loan: by agreement	

It was **RESOLVED** that this tariff be the tariff applied to all booking made henceforth.

### **10. Road Safety**

The Chairman said that he had had discussions with Highways and others about possible improvements to the road outside the School to make it safer for parents to deliver and collect children. An incident had occurred recently when at night a car's wing mirror had struck a pedestrian whom the driver had not seen.

WCC Highways had commissioned a safety survey that recommended the retention of the 'pinch effect', with cars being parked half on, half off, the road. To encourage such parking, it was proposed to create a tarmac-ed strip, about a metre wide, on either side of the road and beyond that strip to have a walkway; cars would park half on the strip and children would get out of the car onto the walkway which would lead them to the school. No separate proposals had been made for a crossing of the road, it currently being assumed that the children would cross under parental supervision.

The Chairman was encouraged by the progress made and would attend a meeting with relevant officials towards the end of the month to progress the project.

He said that Highways had already made it clear that they considered this project of low priority and therefore had no funds available; if the project were to proceed, others would have to find the cash.

Councillors expressed their views which included the imposition of a 20 mph speed limit in front of the school; the introduction of road calming measures, the installation of street lighting, the creation of a roundabout at the junction of Line End Road with the B4211 and moving the school to a safer location.

The Chairman replied that whilst these would most certainly be borne in mind he was not confident that the need to pass national legislation to enable a mandatory 20 mph limit, the pragmatic need to permit the passing of combine harvesters, the intolerance of motorists to limits lower than 50 mph and the cost and disruption of moving the school would not prove insuperable barriers to their adoption.

The Chairman undertook to report developments to the Council at its next meeting.

### **11. Lengthsman**

The advantage of exploring the adoption of a lengthsman scheme had again been brought to the attention of councillors. In general discussion it was agreed that in principle the idea was good.

The Clerk was instructed to re-advertise the position, and to explore with other councils whether the option of a shared services approach – the lengthsman would have one employer but serve two councils - was feasible.

### **12. NHS initiatives**

Cllr Mrs Powell-Chandler reported that she had been in contact with two organisations which had offered health screening within the Parish: Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust and a company called ICE Creates, commissioned by WCC to deliver free health care checks to people in Worcestershire.

In her view, although the services offered by both were similar, those offered by NHS Trust were more comprehensive.

There then followed a discussion by councillors as to whether the main hall of the school would be available if school were in progress.

It was agreed that the Council would support the project by paying any charge for the hire of a room at the school; Cllr Mrs Powell-Chandler would contact the NHS Trust and the Chairman would liaise with the School.

### **14. Shed**

The Chairman said that it had been brought to his attention that the Council's shed required repainting. Members concurred. It was, however, thought that repainting should be delayed until the spring when the weather would, with luck, be drier.

### **15. School Hall hire**

It was **RESOLVED** that WCC invoice dated 9.10.13 for £64.16 in respect of hire of the school hall for council meetings in May, July, September and November 2014 and invoice dated 3.11.14 for £96.24 in respect of similar meetings in January, March, May and November 2015 be paid.

### **16. Financial Estimates and Budget 2014-15**

The Clerk presented a draft budget (circulated prior to the meeting) for consideration by Councillors.

The Clerk said that in his view the cash balance currently held by the Council was already unreasonably high and should be reduced. No major expenditure had been proposed by the Council – none was included in the draft budget - which would justify holding this amount of cash and failure to reduce this balance would lay the Council open to criticism, not only by tax payers but also by the Auditor, of maladministration. He had therefore proposed that a precept of £1,000 be set for 2015-16 (£4,000 in 2014-15) which would have the effect, on the basis of the proposed draft expenditure, of effecting a reduction in the Council's projected cash balance at the end of 2015-16.

The Clerk commented that while major councils faced potential legal difficulties if they wished to increase their council tax by more than inflation no such difficulties stood in the way of small parish councils such as Eldersfield.

Councillors responded to the Clerk's recommendation with a number of comments:

- discussions with WCC, albeit only preliminary, were under way concerning possible road modifications outside the school to which the Council might wish to contribute;
- the possibility existed that the Council might wish to contribute to the purchase of additional land for the cemetery at St John's Eldersfield;
- if the Council reduced the precept now then, if the law changed, it might not be possible to increase it in future.

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft budget for the year 2015-16 presented to the Council be adopted as the budget of the Council subject to the precept being set at £4,000.

### **17. Authorisation of Disbursements**

It was **RESOLVED** that the following disbursements be made:

£ 145.78	J L Gabbott
£34.00	HMRC
£96.24	WCC
£64.16	WCC

### **18. Correspondence**

The following correspondence was noted

Received:

- CALC updates
- MHDC: EPC tax base

### **19. Future Meetings**

It was noted that pursuant to item 15 of the meeting held 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014 future meetings of the Council would take place at Eldersfield Lawn School at 7.30 pm on the following Thursdays in 2015: 12<sup>th</sup> March, 14<sup>th</sup> May, 16<sup>th</sup> July, 10<sup>th</sup> September, 12<sup>th</sup> November

### **20. Other business**

It was noted that there was constantly water at two sites: on the road at Bridge End, and to the east side of the junction of Link End Road with Lime Street; when this turned icy the danger was great. The Clerk was asked to advise Highways in order that they might improve drainage.

It was noted that cars at Corse Lawn garage were often parked up to the edge of the carriageway and that this had implications for road safety. The Clerk was asked to invite Highways to review the matter.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

JLG  
10.1.15

## FINANCIAL REPORT AND BUDGET

	2013-14	CURRENT YEAR 2014-15			2015-16
	Actual	Budget	Actual		Budget
			Yr to 30.9	Forecast	<i>Adopted</i>
<b>INCOME</b>					
Precept	4,000	4,000	2,000	4,000	4,000
VAT repayment	236				-
Hire of table, chairs, china	83	100	95	120	160
Grant from CAPRI	1,033				
Grant from MHDC					
<b>Transfer from reserves</b>	-	-			-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,352</b>	<b>4,100</b>	<b>2,095</b>	<b>4,120</b>	<b>4,160</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
Clerk: salary, expenses	1,448	1,750	592	1,400	1,750
Insurance	244	250	244	244	275
CALC	234	275	248	238	250
Audit		150			150
Grant: Churchyard	500	600	600	600	700
Grant: CLWG	80	100	80	100	100
Grant: Cricket Club					
Grant: Jubilee	60				
Grant: Flower Arranging	41	60	60	60	60
Grant: Milestone Society	80	-			
WCC: School hall hire	148	100		100	100
Training		75		75	75
Contingency		200		200	200
Supported projects		1,000		1,000	
Notice Board	650	100			
Election		100			
Other: Shed					250
Other: Jubilee booklet	387				
<b>Transfer to reserves</b>	-	-	-	-	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,872</b>	<b>4,760</b>	<b>1,824</b>	<b>4,017</b>	<b>3,910</b>
<b>Net movement:</b>	<b>1,480</b>	<b>- 660</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>250</b>

<b>CASH BALANCE B/F</b>	<b>8,827</b>	8,312	<b>10,307</b>	<b>10,307</b>	<b>10,410</b>
Add TOTAL INCOME	5,352	4,100	2,095	4,120	4,160
Less TOTAL EXPENDITURE	- 3,872	- 4,760	- 1,824	- 4,017	- 3,910
<b>CASH BALANCE C/F</b>	<b>10,307</b>	7,652	10,578	<b>10,410</b>	<b>10,660</b>