

Wickhamford Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting, 13th January 2016, 01/16

Clerk to the Council, Mike Smith, 12 Pitchers Hill, Wickhamford WR11 7RT

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Present J. Newbury Chairman, T. Waller V. Chairman, Councillors R. Gutteridge & J. Poulter
L. Eyre County Councillor & B. Thomas District Councillor

1. Apologies P. Schroenrock, PC, D. Manning WDC and Councillor D. Heeks

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. The meeting was adjourned for the Public Question Time.

No public in attendance.

4. The Minutes of the meeting held on the 11th November 2015 were agreed

5. Matters arising from the previous meeting

None

6. District / County Councillors Report.

- **Financial challenges on the cards for the County and its residents**

The first week of 2016 has seen us starting to understand the full impact of the Local Government Settlement. Worcestershire's challenge, post settlement, is an extra 11m to find on top of the annual 25m and an extra 40m over the medium term.

Every year now will be a challenge. Already a council tax rise of 3.94% is on the cards. This rise will ease pressures in elderly and children's care but we just cannot face any more "huge cuts". Of the 3.94%

- 1.94% will provide financial support for services for Looked After Children (budget forecast to be £5.8 million in 2016/17),

- 2% ring-fenced grant for Adult Social Care services, as allowed by the Spending Review, will contribute to existing older people cost pressures in 2015/16 (presently funded by one-off grant income or reserves that will not be available from 2016/17.)

We are not complacent the Council is already into five years into a programme to transform itself into an innovative organisation with residents' priorities (ascertained through surveys) at the heart of the decisions it makes. And new ways of working have been introduced so that the Council is more agile and responsive to residents' priorities but life has just got a whole lot tougher.

The net expenditure budget for 2016/17 set out a provisional budget requirement of £327.8 million and an indicative funding gap of £2 million which has to be closed by February 2016

The Government has announced its Revenue Support Grant to the Council will reduce evenly to an income of £10.9 million for 2019/20 so that by 2020/21 it will be nil.

Business rates are expected to rise in accordance with the Retail Price Index each year and income from Council Tax will gradually fund a greater proportion of the Council's budget in the future – not good news for residents but it funds services for residents!

The Cabinet has approved a draft budget for consultation which includes budget reduction area in Council's programme for the future. These are proposals that have been subject to detailed Cabinet and Scrutiny review.

Cabinet has endorsed the plan to address a savings requirement of £2 million, taking account of central Government's Spending Review announcement. It has also endorsed:

- an investment of £0.5 million each year for road maintenance,
- Great news for motorists! A significant investment in a two-year Driving Home highways infrastructure improvement programme and ongoing annual road maintenance. £12m of capital funding allocated to the two-year Driving Home programme, which will be used on residential roads across the county following feedback from residents and in support of the Council's Open for Business priority.

Please note one impact of the spending review will probably be a review of the New Homes Bonus,

Flooding

Worcestershire County Council has launched a final consultation on its draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to ensure every resident and business has the opportunity to express their views. The consultation is open until Monday 29 February 2016, and the Local Flood Risk Strategy will be formally adopted in July 2016.

The Council, as a Lead Local Flood Authority, has a duty to manage flood risk from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses across the county. To read the draft Strategy and comment visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk/flooding Paper copies of the draft Strategy are also available in the County Council's libraries and County Hall.

Fortunately Worcestershire has not so far suffered the extreme severe weather experienced in the North: Cumbria, Lancashire and parts of Yorkshire and also Scotland. Key areas for Worcestershire were around the river Severn, the Avon and some surface water flooding, not least in light of the ground water table which was fully saturated, with the last few weeks' regular rainfall.

Where are we now?

The river Severn is either levelling out or in some locations levels dropping slightly. Lower reaches of the Severn in the County around Upton and below will re-open it as soon as conditions enable this.

The river Avon is a faster responding river and did react over the last few days to the more localised rain and with ground saturation conditions being as they are, went up quite quickly as expected. Levels on the Avon are now dropping and this has meant that the B4080 Eckington roads as flood waters have receded.

- Highways maintenance staff have been involved in addressing and resolving any localised flooding issues that have arisen, working closely with our Highways Maintenance Contractor Ringway.

The County has worked closely with colleagues in Emergency Planning, Communications & liaising closely with officers in the Environment Agency and Met Office daily to ensure we monitor the situation closely. Where required we can and will put in place additional resources such as gulley emptiers/jettors and Highways gangs to manage any flooding issues as they arise.

They are or should be liaising with our Parish Council Colleagues and Parish Lengthsman to help locally clear grips and gulley gratings where it is safe to do so.

If you are aware of or see any specific issues of concern re flooding, then please contact us directly on 01905 822009.

The Highways Twitter account @WorcsTravel also has latest information.

Please be patient re highways issues given the call on our officers due to the floods.

Fire and rescue Support flooding events in Cumbria, Yorkshire and Lancashire. The service supported the “DEFRA Flood Rescue Concept of Operations over the Christmas period.

European Funding to support Worcestershire small businesses in rural areas and create more jobs.

Projects which support micro and small enterprise in rural areas, support farm diversification and support rural tourism can now apply for the £1.96m Rural Business small capital grant funding programme.

The key objectives of the programme include the growth of the rural economy and the creation of 74 jobs in rural Worcestershire.

Bidding applications can apply to support micro and small enterprises (including farm diversification) – such as the construction of new factories/offices and purchase of equipment – and support rural tourism, such as helping IT and e-booking systems, supporting equipment purchases for restaurants/cafes which cater to tourists, encouraging new attractions along waterways and cycle routes, and developing more opportunities for young families.

The District Councillor reported that the merger between Malvern & Wychavon District Councils is set to be in September. We are assured that this will have no impact on planning applications etc.

A brief discussion took place regarding “enforcement” which for the most is not practiced

7. Police Officers Report.

Since 12th Nov last, West Mercia has received 26 calls from residents within Wickhamford, this has resulted in two offences being recorded. 1 for criminal damage the other for theft from motor vehicle

8. Lengthsman.

It was requested that the A44 footpath and the footpath at the corner of Manor Road leading to the cemetery be sided out.

9. Sports Club Event Application

It was agreed to allow the Sports Club to hold their Country & Western Event with the provisos that,

Copies of the Temporary Event Notice & Full Insurance Details for the Playing Field & the Clubhouse in the name of the Event Organiser (the Sports Club) are with the Parish Council no later than 30 days before the event

Music shall cease at 11.30 on the Sunday night.

10. Play Area Equipment Update

Funding is being sought for further equipment

11. Rooftop Community Fund Update

Forms have been completed and submitted, we await an answer

12. Lorries Parked in Washington Road

This has been investigated and the outcome is that these are large vans and belong to the homeowners

13. Flooding

A letter received by the Chairman and other residents regarding the flooding issues over the years and recommendations for homeowners to avert this was discussed at the meeting where it was decided to respond

14. Styles Nursery

A Councillor reported that there had been a fire at the "derelict" Styles Nursery over the Christmas period. It is believed that enquiries are still ongoing.

15 Correspondence

Emailed booking form for Playing Field to Sports Club

Emailed a letter to J. Edwards (WDC Planning) re their non-response to our submission of queries as requested.

Written to Smart Cut offering the contract for grasscutting for 2016/2017 season and await any price increase.

Again submitted our questions re the Solar Farm direct to the case officer Gavin Greenhow on Sunday 29/11/15 as requested by tele-con (23/11/15)

Response sent re email received from a resident regarding Lorries parked in Washington Road.

- 16. Plans Reviewed,

APP/W/1840/02085/OU, Windward House Murcot

Comments sent to Inspectorate regarding the appeal.

W/15/02449, Wickham Farm, Wickhamford

Further comments lodged on WDC website and forwarded to G. Greenhow, Case Officer at WDC planning as requested

- 17. Finance.

Balance sheets made available for Councillor's.

Precept request of £10,000.00 for 2016/2017 forwarded to WDC

New Audit Regulations for 2017 onwards

Completed form for additional signature on bank account mailed to Santander 30/11/15 awaiting confirmation.

Grant form completed and returned re a funding opportunity from Tesco for the Play Area.

Cheques to be signed,

Wickhamford Memorial Hall, Hall Hire x 3 £45.00

Wickhamford Memorial Hall, Yearly Hall Hire for 2016 £90.00

HMRC, 3rd Quarter Tax £163.80

M. Smith, Newsletter (Nov) £30.00

L. Slade, Hedge Cutting £84.00

Receipts,

Tomlins, Plot + Ashes Interment £120.00

- Items for the next Agenda**

- 18. To confirm the date of the next meeting as 9th March 2016

Items for the next Agenda must be received 7 days prior to the above date.

Mike Smith

Clerk to Wickhamford Parish Council

Meeting Closed at

Signed.....

Date.....

Chairman

Notes of the Public Question Time