

MALVERN WELLS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Malvern Wells Parish Council duly convened and held in The Village Hall, Wells Road, Malvern Wells on **Wednesday 27th January, 2016** commencing at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors Mrs H Burrage (Chairman) M Victory, N Chatten, P Bennett* (until 8.05pm), B Knibb, Mrs C O'Donnell, Mrs J Smethurst, S Freeman, N Johnson

Apologies for absence: K Wagstaff, J Wagstaff, J Black, S Atwell

In attendance: David Taverner (Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer)
County Cllr Mrs L Hodgson* (from 8.20pm)

107/16 Declarations of Interest

- (a) **Register of Interests: Councillors were reminded of the need to update their register of interests:** Although no changes were necessary it was noted that one Councillor still had not yet completed the 2015/16 update form. The Clerk advised that he would ensure that this matter was dealt with.
- (b) **To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature:** The Chairman and the Clerk declared pecuniary interests in agenda item 7 (a) Approval of accounts, regarding the approval of payments in their names.
- (c) **To declare any Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature:** Cllr O' Donnell declared an other disclosable interest in agenda item 5a regarding planning application 15/01166 – 2 Yew Tree Lane - in that she was a close neighbour to the application site.

108/16 To Consider Requests from Councillors for the Council to Grant a Dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011): There were none.

109/16 Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 25th November, 2015
The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, held on 25th November, 2015 had been previously circulated. The minutes were **unanimously approved** as a correct record of that meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

110/16 Matters arising from the Parish Council minutes of 25th November, 2015
There were none.

Closure of the meeting to allow the public present to speak on any matters relating to the Parish.

111/16 Planning application 15/01166 – 2 Yew Tree Lane

The Chairman closed the meeting to allow Mr Andy Pitt– Chairman of the Upper Welland Action Group to address the Council regarding minute reference 101/16 (c), 25th November -regarding the treatment of planning application 15/01166 – 2 Yew Tree Lane

Mr Pitt outlined the reasons behind the considerable disquiet of UWAG regarding the decision to grant planning approval for application 15/01166 under officer delegated powers, rather than by the Southern Area Development Management Committee (SADMC).

Mr Pitt noted that whilst he was aware that planning decision making procedures had been relaxed for minor developments, this particular application was highly contentious especially in view of the sensitivity of the application site.

- the site is located in a prominent position in both the AONB and the Conservation Area
- the site forms part of a continuous 'green strip' that runs from Malvern Wells to Upper Welland and acts as an important buffer zone preventing ribbon development along the northern edge of the Upper Welland Road and provides a 'soft feathered edge' to both the Conservation Area and the open farmland along the southern edge of Upper Welland Rd

UWAG were of the view that the approval of this application risks setting a precedent regarding the future of the green 'buffer zone' and that therefore these plans should not have been subjected to a delegated decision.

Decisions made under delegated powers are very dependent on local knowledge and the input of the local Council / Ward members both of whom were unavailable for comment during the short member consultation period

Mr Pitt stated that good practice should have dictated that this particular application should have been called in for consideration by SADMC thereby enabling open discussion of its merits. The key questions which planning officers should answer in this case were: -

- Why was the decision on such a highly contentious planning application made under delegated powers?
- Who needs to be present to make such a decision, who was actually consulted / present and where is the evidence?
- Why was the decision progressed to such a tight deadline, what was the urgency, was a small delay to resolve matters considered unreasonable?
- Why was the request for input to the AONB officers delayed, and why was the request for a response not chased given the sensitive site location (no response is not an option for such a contentious application which has possible precedent for future speculative developments?)
- Why was the application not referred to the SADMC given the strong objections made by the parish Council and local residents?

The Chairman thanked Mr Pitt for his statement and re-opened the meeting for questions and comments from Council members.

Cllr O'Donnell advised the meeting that she had raised these issues with the Head of Development Control at the District Council and had been assured that in future no delegated decision notices would be issued unless they had been agreed by at least two members of the relevant MHDC Development Management Committee. However, Cllr O'Donnell had not yet received written Confirmation of this.

Members shared the concerns which had been outlined, especially the assertion that this application would be sustainable which was in direct conflict with the findings of the Planning Inspector when setting out the reasons for the dismissal of the appeal relating to application 14/00890/FUL – 2 Assarts Lane.

Councillors were of the view that MHDC should review their processes to avoid that similar problems with the use of the system of delegation in the future. If there were objections, to a particular application, from the Parish Council then this should automatically trigger its call in for consideration by SADMC

Following further discussion, it was agreed that the clerk should compose a further letter to senior officers at MHDC asking them to review the delegation process especially in cases where there were sensitivities regarding planning or significant objections from local residents and/or the Parish Council.

112/16 Reports from Council Committees

- (a)** Cllr Chatten presented the previously circulated report of the **Planning Committee** meeting which had been held on **19th January, 2016**. The report was **noted and accepted** by the Council.
- (b)** The Clerk presented the previously circulated report of the Environment **Committee** meeting which had been held on 7th **January, 2016**. The report was **noted and accepted** by the Council.
- (c)** Cllr Johnson presented the previously circulated report of the **Finance and General Purposes Committee** meeting which had been held on 14th **January, 2016**.

The Committee had recommended that the Parish Council should approve: -

- 1.** An increase of 0.5% in **the Parish Precept for 2016/17** to be set at a level of £ 76,990
- 2.** An increase in **the Earmarked Community Development Reserve** to a level of £40K with immediate effect.
- 3.** An increase in the level of the individual **Cemetery Fees and Charges** of 5% rounded up to the nearest £5, effective from 1st April, 2016
- 4.** The opening of an **Electronic Banking Facility** with Lloyds Bank PLC.

5. The adoption of the **Treasury Management and Investment Strategy** for 2016/17.
6. The **Purchase of Chairman's regalia** up to a cost limit of £500.

The report and **the recommendations contained therein** were **unanimously approved** by the Council.

113/16 Reports from Working Groups

(a) Gas lamps working group

The new electric lamp in Watery Lane had now been installed

Cllr Freeman was continuing discussions with David Armitage of the Malvern Hills AONB who was now running the management of the scheme to install new lamps to fill the current gaps in lamp provision along the Wells Road.

Mr Armitage would be spending a significant amount of his time on the management of this project and had agreed that he would only charge an hourly fee of £15 for the work involved on areas such the identification of potential grant funding and scheme supervision. It was unanimously agreed that the Council's Annual contribution to the AONB unit running costs should be increased in 2016/17 to reflect the additional management costs incurred.

Cllr Knibb mentioned that two or three of the lamps on the Wells Road were not functioning properly and he agreed to advise the Clerk of the numbers of the lamps involved so that the gas lamp contractor could be asked to rectify the problems.

(b) Events working group

The Clerk advised that he would be contacting members of the group with a date for an initial meeting to discuss the organisation of the organisation of the Summer Fête which had been scheduled for Sunday September 11th.

(c) Communications Working Group. Cllr Smethurst advised that BT Fibre Broadband had been installed and was now available in the Village Hall. The network Wi Fi password could be obtained from the Clerk on request.

(d) Play and Open Spaces Working Group. The Clerk advised that liaison work with Malvern Hills District Council's legal team needed to be completed with regard to the removal of the restrictive legal covenants relating to the Scout Hut Site at Assarts Road. The matter was due to be progressed imminently.

114/16 Financial matters – payment of accounts

Chq	Payee	For:	NET	VAT	GROSS
			£	£	£
3301	Steve Maund	Outdoor Work December	686.40	-	686.40
3302	Cheque Cancelled			-	-
3303	ALB Services	Defibrillator installation and Xmas illuminations connection works	1,460.00	292.00	1,752.00
3304	ALB Services	removal of tree lights and temporary fittings	200.00	40.00	240.00
3305	Martin Thomas	Outdoor Work December & January	505.89	-	505.89
3306	Steve Maund	Outdoor Work January	1,258.40	-	1,258.40
3307	HMRC	PAYE and Nat Insurance - Dec Qtr.	1,007.44	-	1,007.44
3308	British Gas Trading Ltd	Gas lamps consumption - Dec qtr.	1,283.88	256.78	1,540.66
3309	Collet Accountancy	Payroll work - May to Dec 2015	245.83	49.17	295.00
3310	County Building Supplies	Cemetery materials	66.38	13.28	79.66
3311	Coddington Christmas Trees	Tree for Jubilee Garden , delivery and removal	150.00	40.00	190.00
3312	Malvern Wells Village Hall	Room Hire - oct to Dec	66.00	-	66.00
3313	n power	Cemetery Electricity	59.77	2.99	62.76
3314	Print Plus	Wells News printing	1,000.00	-	1,000.00
3315	Carolyn Aynsworth	Wells News Editor honorarium	100.00	-	100.00
3316	Severn Trent Water Authority	Cemetery Water Supply - Dec qtr.	58.58	-	58.58
3317	Wells & The Wyche WI	Remembrance Service Refreshments	25.00	-	25.00
3318	Jim Black	Village Hall Xmas tree	29.99	-	29.99
3319	D M Taverner	Administration Expenses December 2015 and January 2016	476.34	38.91	515.25
s/order	D M Taverner	Clerk's Salary December, 2015	1,521.84	-	1,521.84
3320	Helen Burrage	Carol Service Expenses	31.32		31.32
3321	Brendan Lawler	Carol Service Expenses	35.00		35.00
			-	-	-
TOTALS			10,268.06	733.13	11,001.19

Two invoices from Sight Designs Ltd for Gas lamps maintenance and the installation of the Watery Lane lamp were approved in the sums of £1,707.84 and £798 respectively, but payments were held pending a satisfactory inspection of the related work undertaken.

115/16 Chairman's Communications

(a) David Bruce – new Rector of Malvern Chase parishes

The Chairman Had been invited to attend the licensing service for David Bruce in his role as the new Rector for the Malvern Chase Team of Parishes. Cllr Burrage had been unable to attend and Cllr Freeman had deputised.

116/16 Actions undertaken by the Clerk since the previous meeting.

(a) Assarts Road – New play equipment

The Contractors had started the installation of the new equipment purchased and were due to complete the work by the end of the first week in February. The legal agreement relating to the release of the section 106 funding had been returned to the MHDC legal team and the payment was now awaited.

(b) Community access defibrillators.

The defibrillator unit at the Wells school had been installed and was now available for use. Two further cabinets were being installed at the former SPAR shop on the Wells and at the Wyche Institute.

(c) Jubilee Garden Water supply.

A meeting had been arranged with a local contractor to obtain quotations for the provision of a water supply to the garden with the intention that the necessary works would be completed before the end of March.

(d) Wells News.

Deliveries of the magazine were completed by mid-December. Many compliments had been received regarding the style and content of the magazine and thanks were again extended to Carolyn Aynsworth for the excellent editing work that she had undertaken.

As several of the volunteer magazine delivery team had decided to stand down the additional assistance would be required with future editions.

(e) Parish boundary signage.

Cllr Bennett had agreed to ascertain the costs of new Parish boundary signage and he would report back on this issue to a future meeting of the Council once further information was to hand.

(f) Local Heritage Asset listing.

The Clerk advised that he had attended an initial meeting on this topic with Paul Esrich of the Malvern Hills AONB unit and Nicky Wardropper the former MHDC Conservation Officer. Nicky was starting to identify local buildings that might be suitable for inclusion on such a listing.

117/16 Community events

(a)- Carol evening 11th December, 2015

The Chairman reported that the Christmas Carols event was once again a very successful event. The Charity speaker was Andrea Maddocks for Mentor Link who provide support in the local area, usually through the schools, to

emotionally distressed children and young people. The retiring collection had generously raised the record amount of £220.50 for that charity.

The unused four dozen mince pies were once again donated to the Malvern Hills Foyer for the Homeless, who received them enthusiastically the following day.

Thanks were due to the Village Hall Board of Management, Malvern Wells Parish Council and to all members of the hard working team who dressed the Hall, made the mince pies and mulled wine, read and sang to make this wonderful annual event into another success.

Andrea Maddocks had written a press release with a photograph of the event which had been published in the Gazette on 18th December 2015.

(b)- Queen's 90th birthday celebrations

The clerk had circulated details of the national plans to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. Local communities are being invited to run their own street parties and reignite community spirit in honour of Her Majesty.

During the 4th to 6th March up to 1 million people are expected to clean up their neighbourhoods as part of a national clean-up day, Clean up for the Queen. Further details of this initiative could be viewed at <http://www.cleanforthequeen.co.uk>

There was a potential for the annual community "big lunch" event to be the centre piece for the celebrations held locally

The Council's events working group would give this topic further consideration at their next meeting.

118/16 Report of County Councillor – Mrs Lucy Hodgson **2016/17 Worcestershire County Council Proposed Budget**

The Council is five years into a programme to transform itself into an innovative organisation that puts residents' priorities at the heart of every decision that it makes.

Those priorities have been shaped by our public engagement programme which includes talking directly to residents from across the county at summer roadshows and through our annual Viewpoint survey.

Each year the council spends around £330 million which, together with the receipt of non-schools grants, means that we spend more than £1 million every single day to deliver excellent outcomes for our residents.

This year the Council has delivered on a number of its investment commitments outlined in the previous budget, in line with the four corporate plan priorities identified by the public: Open for Business; Children and Families; Health and Well-Being and the Environment.

Investments supporting the Open for Business priority include: the £5million invested into Worcester Six technology park, which has attracted £15million of further investment from an American firm and the £4 million invested into Malvern Hills Science Park which has attracted one of the world's largest defence contractors UTC. The Council has continued its commitment to the Hoobrook link road which was a factor in Amtek's decision to invest in a new facility. Together

these and other development initiatives in Worcestershire are to create up to 16,000 new jobs in the next 5 years.

This year's recommended budget requires £24.6 million of savings as the council continues to address rising demand from our ageing population and our most vulnerable young people along with a significant reduction in funding from Central Government. Of this £22.6 million of savings have been identified leaving a gap of £2 million based on what we know prior to the publication of the local government settlement. The County Council remains optimistic that this savings gap can be addressed by the end of the financial year.

It is proposed that there will be an increase to the council tax precept of 3.94%. This includes 1.94% to recognise the rising demands to protect vulnerable children, forecast to be £5.8 million in 2016/17 and a 2% increase in line with the Chancellor's announcement that councils can raise council tax by an additional 2% for Adult Social Care.

Worcestershire County Council commits to further investment in county roads

As part of the 2016-17 Budget proposals there is the significant investment in a two-year Driving Home highways infrastructure improvement programme and ongoing annual road maintenance.

£12 million of capital funding has been allocated to the Driving Home programme, which will be used on rural and urban roads across the county. The work will include full surfacing, patching and surface dressing to improve and extend the lifespan of Worcestershire's highways network. In addition, £0.5 million will be invested each year for ongoing road maintenance.

The County Council and its partners have enabled significant investment to be made in a number of infrastructure schemes which are either nearing completion or well progressed. These include Kidderminster Hoobrook Link Road, Bromsgrove Railway Station relocation and investment in Malvern Hills Science Park.

Further improvements are well underway on the Southern Link Road which will greatly improve traffic flow and the new Worcester Six development that will lever in more significant investment from the private sector and drive business growth and job creation. Work to progress the new Worcestershire Parkway Regional Interchange railway station is progressing and remains a vital part of delivering the Strategic Economic Plan for the county area.

New Leader Appointed for the County Council

Following the resignation of Leader of the County Council, Councillor Hardman over the Christmas period Councillor Simon Geraghty had been appointed leader of Worcestershire County Council. He becomes the youngest leader in the Council's history and the youngest County Council Leader in the country. For the past five years he has been the County Council's Deputy Leader and the Cabinet Member responsible for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure. He has been the driving force behind the Council's Open for Business Priority and creation of key economic development sites across Worcestershire. Combined, these 'Game Changer' sites will lead to the creation of more than 16,000 new jobs for the county.

The newly elected Deputy Leader at Worcestershire County Council is Anthony Blagg. The Councillor for Bromsgrove Central is also the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment. The newly elected Leader of Worcestershire County Council, Councillor Simon Geraghty, has brought his Cabinet team back up to full strength with Councillor Dr Ken Pollock being named as the new

Cabinet Member responsible for Economy, Skills and Infrastructure. Councillor Pollock, the Councillor for Tenbury, takes over the role from Councillor Geraghty who held the position on the Cabinet until his election as Leader. In his new role Councillor Pollock will lead the Council's Open for Business Priority and the creation of key economic development sites across Worcestershire. Combined, these 'Game Changer' sites will lead to the creation of more than 16,000 new jobs for the county.

Syrian Resettlement Scheme

Council leaders across Worcestershire have agreed to go ahead with a formal bid to the Home Office to relocate Syrian refugees across the county.

Negotiations will begin later this month with the Home Office and West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership to host up to 50 people in Worcestershire by the end of 2016.

It follows a decision by the leaders of Worcestershire County, Bromsgrove District, Malvern Hills District, Redditch Borough, Worcester City, Wychavon District and Wyre Forest District Councils at a meeting on 7 January.

The Government originally confirmed the full cost of supporting Syrian refugees for the first 12 months will be provided to councils from the Foreign Aid budget with the following 4 years being funded on a sliding scale

The arriving refugees will be looked to be housed within the private rented sector, to minimise the impact on social housing supply and other vulnerable groups. Some districts have already been approached by private landlords offering to house refugees.

Worcestershire Leaders said: "We've always been clear we were prepared to play our part in housing some of the most vulnerable people affected by the Syrian conflict, but we needed assurances over funding. We're delighted we now have those assurances and are able to proceed with a formal bid."

"A huge amount of work still needs to be done and complex detail gone through, before we can accept our first families. We need to ensure the right infrastructure and support networks are in place to fully support Syrian refugees arriving here and help them settle into the community"

Council Change of Numbers

New phone numbers will give Worcestershire residents direct access to the County Council's Adult and Children's Social Care Services.

This is being done to provide more direct access to Adult and Children's Social Care services the Council is phasing out the 0845 607 2000 number which has been shared by these services over the past 10 years. From now on callers will be able to directly access Adult Social Care services on 01905 768053 or through the Council's new web service Your Life, Your Choice.

The existing 0845 607 2000 number will continue to be available until the end of March 2016 while we make sure that everyone is made aware of the new contact arrangements.

Callers wishing to discuss concerns about a child or young person can now dial 01905 822666, or use the Council's website. Both new numbers also provide a point of contact for safeguarding concerns about Adults and Children.

People can also find out more through Your Life, Your Choice; a new website for Worcestershire full of information and advice about how people can stay well and independent, and plan for their long-term future. The website helps people find out about support available in the community, and about all kinds of care services for older people and adults with disabilities.

This can be found at: <http://ylyc.worcestershire.gov.uk/>"

Planning application submitted for £4 million phase 5 of Malvern Hills Science Park

Technology, cyber security and IT companies are set to benefit from an additional £4 million investment into Malvern Hills Science Park, if planning permission is granted for further site development.

Following public consultations sessions held in October and November, a planning application has been submitted to Worcestershire County Council to proceed with Phase 5 of the Science Park. This next phase is to be funded in full with £4m from the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership through the Worcestershire Growth Deal. It includes demolition of an existing building, to be replaced with a new two storey building.

The new building will provide around 1,500sqm of space that can be used by new tenants or as flexible grow-on space for established tenants. It will be energy-efficient, resulting in lower operating costs for businesses, and also improves the attractiveness of the Science Park. Phase 5 will develop half of the cleared site, leaving the other half to be developed at a later date as Phase 6. Malvern Hills Science Park has already been hugely successful in developing over its first four phases. Phase 4 is due to be completed shortly and will see current tenants UTC Aerospace Systems move into a new 30,000sqft high tech office and production facility in early January 2016. Worcestershire County Council has invested £3.5m into Phase 4, alongside £370,000 from Malvern Hills District Council.

The Science Park has been identified as one of the key economic 'game-changer' sites in the County and has a significant role in creating a strong future economy. It is already home to the National Cyber Security Centre and a significant cluster of IT and cyber security companies.

A decision on the planning application is expected in early 2016, with an anticipated construction period of 9 months if approval is granted.

119/16 Report of the Elected Conservator – Cllr Simon Freeman

The Conservators updated Land Management Plan was entering the final stages of public consultation and could be viewed on their website.

The new Director of the Conservators, Duncan Bridges, took up his appointment 1st February

There being no other business the meeting the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.26pm.

Minutes approved Wednesday 24th February, 2016

Signed
Cllr Mrs Helen Burrage Chairman of the Council