

# ELDERSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of Eldersfield Parish Council held on  
Monday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at Eldersfield Lawn School, commencing at 7.30 p.m.**

**Present:** A. Davies (Chairman), Mrs D Holt  
J. Keighley, Mrs T Owen, Mrs C Powell-Chandler, Mrs S Rush

**In Attendance:** District Councillor Bronwen Behan

**Members of the  
Public:** 6

## **1. Apologies for absence**

Clls P. Chichester, O. Williams

## **2. Members' interests**

None

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

The draft Minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2018 were accepted as a true record of that meeting and were signed as such by the Chairman of the meeting.

## **4. Matters arising from the Minutes**

The Chairman confirmed that the book store was being well used and had shown a small increase in its stock. Councillors congratulated him on this initiative and expressed their thanks to Mrs Davies who had undertaken the management of the project.

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

County Councillor Tom Wells was absent and no report was available.

District Councillor Bronwen Behan reported that a new national planning policy was being developed and that the need to encourage developers to develop land which they already held was receiving attention. Several large schemes were forthcoming within the MHDC district; affordable housing should constitute 20% of this new stock.

The programme to roll out the new wheelie bin programme was continuing, with implementation on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. Instructions were to be contained in a booklet now being issued.

## **6. Police Report**

The Police Report circulated prior to the meeting was noted.

## **7. Public Comment**

Mrs Lewis noted the car parking scheme outside the school but complained that access to her front door had been impeded by the placement of a post in the middle of the track leading to the house. The Chairman said that he had been under the impression that Mr and Mrs Lewis

had agreed to the scheme, and to the positioning of the posts, but that he would review the matter with WCC and would revert directly to Mr and Mrs Lewis.

## **8. Broadband**

The Chairman reported to the meeting the results of conversations he had held, in his private capacity, with BT and WCC.

The government acknowledged that the provision of broadband (BB) to small communities, especially those spread over a wide area, was unlikely to be economic for the provider and would therefore be unlikely to win investment from BT (or others). Accordingly, a fund had been established to assist the provision of BB to such areas.

The laws of physics dictated that BB provided over copper cable – the standard telephone wire – of over about a mile from the exchange would be degraded significantly, with the probable effect of making high speed BB impossible. Projects had been undertaken to mitigate this problem, by bringing fibre (with very high BB speeds) to telephone cabinets between the exchange and the subscriber. Such a system is called Fibre To The Cabinet, FTTC. Where this had been done, significant improvements could be achieved but, again, were limited by the distance of the subscriber from the cabinet; within the parish, most of what could be done by this method had now been implemented.

An alternative to FTTC was to bring Fibre To The Premises, FTTP, i.e. to lay a cable from a fibre-fed telephone cabinet directly to each individual subscriber's house, possibly transiting through a node on the way. The cost of this option was not known: it depended on how many subscribers wished to avail themselves of the offer and where their premises were situated. The cost would be borne by those taking up the service but there were significant grants available from the government and from WCC. There was also the possibility of reducing or eliminating existing costs, e.g. fibre internet would enable a mobile phone to work perfectly at home, thereby eliminating the need for a landline phone, and access to FTTP BB was thought to be a strong advantage when it came to selling the property.

BT offered to survey the area and then make a proposal concerning costs but it would first need to know who was potentially interested in the service; this was information which the Council could acquire and present to BT.

After a discussion, it was agreed that the Council would seek a quotation from BT and to do this would acquire the necessary information and present it to BT. Accordingly, a BB Working Group was formed, comprising the Chairman and Cllrs Chichester, Keighley and Owen. Three members of the community would be invited to join.

It was expected that the acquisition and presentation to BT of the data would be completed by 5<sup>th</sup> April, and that BT would present a proposal to the Council in time for its next meeting [on 2<sup>nd</sup> May]. The value of the subsidies and grants could then be calculated. It was suggested that the Council would then call a public meeting for members of the public to make known their views.

It should be emphasised that the initial survey by the Parish Council is merely a canvassing of opinion, intended to seek out those who are potentially interested in the service. A decision by

individual subscribers - whether to take the service or not - will be required only when BT has published its proposal and the costs to individual users are known.

### **9. Royal Wedding**

After a brief discussion it was agreed that the Council, would take no action to mark the occasion of the Royal Wedding which will take place on Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

### **10. Neighbourhood Plan**

Councillors were informed that a Neighbourhood Plan was the means by which parishioners' wishes for the development of their neighbourhood could be formally recorded and be used by the Local Planning Authority as a planning consideration. Plans could deal with any aspect of the environment which parishioners thought important: flooding, orchards, shops, housing. Plans could be long or short. To be valid, all plans must be approved by parishioners in a referendum.

Councillors decided to consider the matter further at the next meeting.

### **11. Transparency Grant**

The application by the Clerk for a grant from the Transparency Fund was noted. It was agreed that no purchase of computing equipment be made immediately.

### **12. School parking spaces**

The Clerk reported that he had received an invoice from Eldersfield Lawn School PTFA for £10,000 in respect of the grant offered by the Council to assist defray the costs of the provision of far parking spaces at the school. That grant had been awarded on the basis that the total cost of the project would be £30,000; the Clerk reported that he had received a letter from WCC stating that the 'Eldersfield School Group Working Party' had confirmed that the work was complete and that the total expenditure was £30,000.

Councillors noted that the funds available prevented payment of the invoice in total and, secondly, that a complaint had been received in respect of the work (see para 7 above). Accordingly, it was **RESOLVED** that a payment of £8,000 be made to the Eldersfield Lawn School PTFA and that the matter be reviewed at the next meeting.

### **13. Lengthsman**

The report and invoices submitted by the Lengthsman for December (£118.00) and January (£118.00) was noted.

### **14. Authorisation of Disbursements**

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

£ 134.09	J L Gabbott
£83.20	HMRC
£236.00	Lengthsman (£118.00 December 2017; £118.00 January 2018)
£25.47	WCC (hire of hall 5th March 2018)
£8,000.00	Eldersfield Lawn School PTFA

**15. Future Meetings**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Council would be held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2018 at Eldersfield Lawn School commencing at 7.30 p.m.

**16. Other business**

The Clerk reported that he had been informed by Worcestershire Wildlife Trust that they had completed the acquisition of Hardwick Green Meadows.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.

JLG, 6.3.18