

WOLVERLEY & COOKLEY PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council
Held via ZOOM on Tuesday 2nd March 2021 at 7.00pm

Mr R Drew (Chairman)
Mr D Jones (Vice Chairman)
Mrs V Bordewich
Mr A Carloss
Mr D Cox
Mr J Hart
Mr M Hart
Mrs L Jones
Mr B McFarland
Mr C Nicholls
Mr C Sherrey
Mr S Sherrey
Mr W Southam
Mr J Wood

County Councillor: Ian Hardiman
District Councillors: Marcus Hart, Lisa Jones

189. **Apologies.** West Mercia Police.

190. **Declarations of Councillors Interests**

- a) Register of Interests: Councillors are reminded to complete and need to regularly update their register of interests.
- b) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.
- c) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests (Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary) in items on the agenda and their nature.
Cllrs J Hart and M Hart, do not have a DPI or ODI but in the interests of transparency declared an interest in Planning Application 21/0119/Full as the farm backs on to property both have an interest in.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME:

The Chairman welcomed three members of the public to the meeting. Mr Mike Worsley who has been a resident on Lea Lane for 5 years spoke on the matter of Lea Lane which is on the agenda for discussion. He stated that the standard of driving has deteriorated, it has been much better since the lane has been closed. If signage were improved people still ignore this and there is evidence that speed bumps/choke points do not work, making the lane one way would inconvenience residents and reducing the speed limit would be impossible to enforce. Clerk read e mail received from Graham Booth, also a resident on Lea Lane.

"I am broadly in favour of limiting the users to pedestrians and cyclists although, no doubt, motor cyclists will include themselves in that. That said, there will have to be motor vehicle access to Lea House at one end and Upper Lea Cottages at the other as at present. This seems to be working quite well and there would be even less traffic to deal with if the signage were improved to say 'No Through Road' - we still get at least two 'chancers' a day. Turning points would be needed, which is less of a problem on the Cookley side than ours, but I am sure something could be arranged. Of the alternatives being discussed -

Opening it fully is downright dangerous with the amount of traffic that used the lane when it was last open. It also raises the possibility of further landslips.

I can't see traffic management helping much - I thought that speed bumps were out of favour these days because they cause people to use more fuel slowing down and then speeding up.

Making it one way would increase the inconvenience for everyone but also make it more dangerous to pedestrians because motor vehicles would travel even faster knowing that nothing was coming in the opposite direction.

191. **Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February 2021 at 7.00pm.**

These having previously been circulated, it was resolved unanimously to receive and adopt the minutes as a true record of the meeting.

Matters for Discussion / Decision.

192. **Police Report**

Written report circulated.

Criminal damage - Gypsy Lane, Blakeshall - Police ref 00329_I_12022021 - Sometime between the afternoon of 11/02/2021 and the afternoon of 12/02/2021 persons unknown caused damage to the electric gates of a property. No entry was gained.

Vehicle Crime - Blakeshall Lane - Police Ref 00344_I_14022021 - Between 13.30pm and 15.45pm on 13th February a Blue Mercedes parked on the Kingsford Car Park (corner of Blakeshall and Gypsy Lanes) has been stolen without keys.

Criminal Damage - Sebright Rd - Police ref 462_I_27022021. Sometime between 0300hrs and 0500hrs 27/02/2021 someone has smashed the glass above the front door to a property. No entry gained.

Burglary - Sladd Lane - police ref 492_I_26022021. Entry gained and damage caused to a stable door. Nothing taken.

Burglary - Elm Place, Cookley - Police Ref: 183_I_28022021 - Sometime between 16:00hrs 27/02/2021 and 10:00hrs 28/02/2021 persons unknown have entered a shed located in the rear garden of the property and taken a large quantity of tools, including Makita and SDS drills, a Stanley backpack and 2 x tools chests containing various tools.

Burglary - Axborough Lane- Police Ref: 158_I_28022021 - Sometime between 23:30hrs 27/02/2021 and 11:30hrs 28/02/2021 2 x outbuildings have been broken into and 2x chop saws, a Makita drill, a multi cutter and a Husqvarna chain saw have all been taken. A small hatch back was seen in the lane around 00:50hrs however unknown if this is connected and no further details.

193.

County/District Councillor Reports **County Cllr Ian Hardiman's Report**

County Council Budget Approved:

At the 18th February Council meeting, the budget was approved; The County Council's element of Council tax has been increased by just 2.5% for this year, (1.5% general taxation and 1% social care levy), the maximum allowed by government being 5%.

The County Council are investing an additional £4m in pavements, £6m in highway, £600k into public rights of way, £2.5m in lighting regarding conversion to LED's.

I am pleased that each county councillor will again have a Divisional Fund of £10,000 for supporting local groups such as the Scouts and local school projects. Lea Lane Landslip: Unfortunately, negotiations between the County Council and other parties involved have not yet been resolved to allow Highways to proceed with the necessary works.

Lea Castle Quarry Application: I have spoken with the County Council's Development Manager who said there is still no date yet set for the County Council's Planning Committee's meeting to consider this application. (19/00053/CM)

Road Works Signage: I am presently chasing up the Highways Department and the Cabinet Member responsible regarding the practice of road signage being left standing too long after works have been completed. .

Two Dead Trees in Wolverley Village: These two trees in Blakeshall Lane have now been removed in the interests of safety. Former parish councillor Trevor Botterill helpfully drew my attention to the unsafe condition of these; many thanks to him for this.

Highway Flooding Issues: I am continuing to chase Highways for investigation into recurring flooding problems at Kingsford Lane, Lowe Lane & Highlow Bank.

Wolverley High School Safety Concerns: Good progress is being made on necessary plans to improve highway safety for children arriving at and leaving school. Highways Engineer Hannah Davies is being most helpful in securing appropriate measures to ensure safety for children when crossing the road near to the school.

Cookley Dead Tree in Castle Road: The dead tree by property number 71 is to be removed and will be replaced quite soon.

The Crescent, small Island: In response to a request by residents, I have arranged for the removal of the small grass Island within The Crescent and to replace it with Tarmac and appropriate road markings. This will improve safety at this inner junction.

District Councillors Report

Local Issues

We have been dealing with the usual routine casework, fly tipping and litter picking on the main A roads and along the country lanes. We have asked Green Street for their particular attention along Caunsall Road from the A449 to the Stourbridge Road as it has become extremely messy over the current lockdown.

Enforcement Issues :- Wyre Mill House, Mill Lane - Unauthorised outbuilding, we are still waiting for an application from the owner. The officer has sent a formal letter asking for the resident to contact them.

Motor Cross Events - The officers are currently working through the record of events for all of the sites and will update us shortly.

Brown Westhead Park - We met virtually with the Chief Executive Ian Miller and The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Localism Cllr Helen Dyke regarding the lack of response from officers to speak with us to discuss possible solutions for the parking issues from the football matches on the field. The Chief Executive assured us that Green Street officers would meet with us on site to discuss a resolution.

We have now met officers on site and suggested that additional car parking spaces are created from the removal of the large boulders and brambles, create spaces nearer the trees at the bottom of the field and decrease the spectator area to increase car parking spaces, this in all will create an additional 40 spaces and will take 2-3 days work for operatives to complete. Works are due to start this Thursday to enable these to be completed before the start of the football season. Lisa has asked for before and after photographs which will be forwarded to our residents in Brown Westhead Park and the Parish Council.

Lisa was informed about a motorist reversing into the Elm Place Road sign and floral display that was unfortunately completely destroyed, a new sign is on order but has unfortunately been delayed at the production factory, Green Street are ready to install the new sign as soon as it hits the depot, it is envisaged to be within the next two weeks. The Cookley bloomers are very kind in offering to replace the planting around the sign.

Some good news from the Environmental Enforcement Officers, they have caught and issued FPNs to over half a dozen fly tippers along Axborough Lane over the last 12 months and quite a few more litter offenders.

Wyre Forest District Issues

The District Council have frozen prices for the brown garden bin service, residents can simply make one easy annual payment of £52 for a 240ltr bin, and £36 for a 140ltr bin. There is a £20 sign-up fee for new customers.

Collections restart for Week 1 (Green) on 1st March 2021 and for Week 2 (Grey) on 8th March 2021. The subscription will run until week commencing Monday 22 November for week 1 customers and Monday 29 November for week 2 customers.

The Leader of the District Council, Councillor Graham Ballinger, has announced a new appointment to his cabinet as well as his plan to stand aside as leader at the council's annual general meeting in May, he will be replaced by Cllr Helen Dyke. Councillor Mary Rayner has been appointed as a member of the cabinet and that she would take over the finance portfolio. Councillor Anna L'Huillier will become the Chairman of the council's Ethics and Standards Committee.

The District Council element for council tax will increase by 2.28% which represents an increase of £5 for a Band D property.

At the full council budget making meeting it was voted that the District Council will give pay increases of between 10-15% for the majority of their staff which equates to £2 Million over a three-year period. They have also been given a one-off payment of £125 Covid bonus which totals £48,000.

In the budget for 2021-2023 the Progressive Alliance cut the Community Leadership fund in a staggered reduction so that it will reduce from the current £1,000 for this year to £500 for 2022 and £250 for 2023.

Cllr. D Cox enquired why an increase of 10-15% for salaries was voted when the District are in such financial difficulties, Cllr M Hart advised this had not been supported by the Conservative councillors. Chairman thanked County Councillor Hardiman for chasing Wolverley projects.

194. Financial Matters.

a) **To discuss street lighting invoices 2017/18 & 2018/2019.**

Cllr. C. Sherrey requested defer to next meeting.

b) **To agree the schedule of cheques to be signed.**

67	Mrs B J Drew (Salary February 2021)	1046.72
68	Mrs B J Drew (Ink/Zoom/Stamps)	44.78
69	Underhill Farm (Lengthsman)	16.20
70	Underhill Farm (One off Litter Pick)	145.80

195. To receive recommendation from Working Party on Lengthsman Contract 2021/2022.

Cllr. S Sherrey advised that the Clerk had sent out 10 application forms and 7 were received back. The working party shortlisted 4 candidates for interview and the Clerk set up Zoom Interviews held on 22nd February. The candidates were graded and assessed by criteria using a matrix. The successful candidate was Ms Lorraine Neal. She lives in Wolverley, works for two other Parish Councils in Shropshire, and has a small gardening business. She has accepted the position and is booked for the Lengthsman training on 18th March. The whole process for re-tendering was very thorough. The Chairman thanked the working party and Clerk.

196. To discuss Litter Picking in the Parish.

Clerk advised that the Bin Emptying contract does include litter picking but litter has dramatically increased lately, especially Shatterford Lane/Beech Tree Lane and Common Barn Lane. An invoice has just been received for 9 hours work to clear Shatterford Lane, Wolverley. The Parish Council need to discuss this additional invoice and going forward clarify and agree with the contractor what is expected as the contract does not specify how much time should be spent per week. All agreed payment of the invoice as a "one-off".

There was much discussion on this, and it was agreed the Clerk should go back to the contractor and ask how many hours they spend litter picking per week and then this can be discussed and it be made clear what the Parish Council expect going forward. The current 3-year contract ends on 31st March 2022.

197. **To consider correspondence received from County Councillor regarding Lea Lane.**

County Cllr Hardiman had sent an e mail to the Clerk which had been forwarded to all Parish Councillors asking the Parish Council to consider seeking the views of Wolverley and Cookley residents to identify whether the majority would prefer or not a change of use of Lea Lane with vehicles not being allowed through access between the villages.

Chairman opened up discussion.

Cllr D Jones stated that he had not asked for the lane to be closed to traffic but had asked, following the media release in August, for County Council/District Council to investigate the creation of a Cycle/Pedestrian friendly Lea Lane, Cookley.

There was a very lengthy discussion on this with all Councillors raising various points and there were arguments either way, to re open in its current form or to convert to a footway/cycle way and access only for residents.

It was suggested that the Parish Council must listen to the whole of the community, also listen to local businesses, the church etc.

The question was asked how realistic is it that Worcestershire County Council will support the outcome of any consultation.

County Councillor Hardiman stated that Worcestershire County Council will cover the costs involved with Lea Lane remaining either full vehicular access or being changed to an active travel route (cycling/walking/horse rider usage), so it is realistic. He categorically stated that there is no way Lea Lane can have a cycle / footway and be open to traffic, it will be one or the other and there is no way it will be made one way. If the Parish Council do nothing the road will return to normal usage.

It was agreed that the Parish Council cannot make the decision and it was proposed Cllr D Jones that the Parish Council consult the communities of Wolverley & Cookley, decide on consultation / referendum and be clear on question being asked. This was seconded by Cllr. M Hart and agreed. Clerk to re-agenda for next meeting.

198. **Worcestershire County Council Consultation on the Statement of Community Involvement 2021.**

Noted.

199. **To discuss Councillor Training.**

Cllr. B McFarland encouraged all Councillors to attend training which is very useful, especially to understand what powers the Parish Council have. The Clerk forwards regular updates showing training available which can be booked through the Clerk.

200. **Planning Applications for Consideration: -**

PC No **WFDC No/Details**

3515 Deferred last meeting:

21/0066/S73: Minor Material Amendment to 19/0724/RESE to substitute house types in Phases E and F, make elevational changes to house types within Phases A and D and amend soft and hard landscaping at former Lea Castle Hospital, Park Gate Road, Wolverley. No further information - defer again.

3516 21/0077/LBC: Installation of stair void lift, form gate in ranch rail balustrade on first floor at 1 The Lucas Building, Wolverley, Recommend Approval.

3517 21/0085/HOU: Erection of two storey side and single storey rear extensions and pitched roof front porch at 21 Sebright Road, Wolverley, Recommend Refusal, inappropriate development, proposed extension protrudes in front of building line and extends to full boundary of neighbouring property.

3518 21/0105/SCR: Environmental Impact Assessment Screening of development of approximately 800 new homes, local centre, land for employment and potential 3G playing pitch on land to the north, west and east of the former Lea Castle Hospital Site (the Lea Castle Wider Site), Noted.

3519 21/0107/TCA: Fell Cypress at Lea House, Lea Lane, Cookley, Recommend Approval.

3520 21/0117/HOU: Erection of single storey rear extension at 9 Fairfield Lane, Wolverley, Recommend Approval.

3521 21/0119/FUL: Proposed siting of an agricultural worker's dwelling house, together with new access track, parking area and garden on land at Highlow Nurseries, land at Os 382370 278680, Franche Road, Wolverley, Recommend Refusal. Inappropriate development in Green Belt, Out of Keeping in the area and inadequate justification for proposal as the site has been farmed for a considerable time with no dwelling house on site and nothing appears to have changed to now justify the need for a dwelling. The Parish Council also draw attention to the concerns raised by North Worcestershire Water Management and Highways Authority and query provision for electricity to the proposed dwelling.

- 3522 21/0169/TPO: Fell Cherry (T1) and Sycamore (T2) at Westley Court, Austcliffe Lane, Cookley, Recommend Approval.
- 3523 21/0172/LBC: Proposed raising of height of an internal doorway at Oak House, Wolverley Village, Recommend Approval.
- 3524 21/0184/HOU: Replacement roof to existing sun lounge at 42 Lionfields Road, Cookley. Recommend Approval.

Parish Matters for Update Only - no decisions required.

201. Clerks Report. (Clerk) Footpath Diversion Order - no decision yet, plans for information only 21/0185 demolition of garages, Wardle Way, Wolverley, 21/0881 Reserved Matters Application to consider access, appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale following outline approval 19/0498/OUT for the erection of 5 no. dwelling houses, Kimberlee Avenue.
202. Localism. (RD) Chairman advised of 2 upcoming meetings on Localism, 15th March, meeting with Ian Miller to discuss opportunities for W & CPC (invited DJ/CS/MH to attend) and meeting on 18th March with all Parish and Town Councils. Clerk to put on next agenda.
203. To update on Defibrillator for Caunsall. (AC) Cllr Carlross suggested waiting until the Heart Foundation Grant becomes available again and then pursue.
204. To update on request to change footpath - Brown Westhead Park. (RD) Landowner refused access.
205. To update on contact made with Safer Roads Partnership regarding Accidents A449. (WS) Awaiting response.
206. To update on Lengthsman Work. (RD/WS) Only 1 hour this month to repair damaged sign in Wolverley.
207. Neighbourhood Plan / CLT. (DJ/JW) CLT trying to get extension on grant and reviewing right to regenerate consultation paper.
208. New Issues / Items for Next Meeting.
209. Date of Next Meeting - to confirm the date of the next meeting which is scheduled for Tuesday 6th April 2021.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Chairman - 6th April 2021