

WOLVERLEY & COOKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 6th February 2024, 7.00pm.
Wolverley Church Hall

Present:

Mr R Drew (Chairman)
Mrs V Bordewich
Mr B Brookes
Mr J Hart
Mr M Hart
Mr D Jones
Mr B McFarland
Mr C Nicholls
Mr C Sherrey
Mr W Southam
Mr J Wood

West Mercia Police: PCSO Nicky Thomas
County Councillor: Councillor I Hardiman
District Councillors: Councillor R M Drew, M J Hart, I Hardiman.

156. **Apologies**
Councillor D Cox due to work commitments and Councillor A Webber due to holiday.

157. **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 Registerable Interests or Non-Registerable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.

Cllr R Drew declared an NRI in Item 9 as a Potential Risk of Bias as former Tennis Club member and friends with several current members of the Tennis Club.

Cllr J Hart declared an ORI in Item 9 as Parish Council representative to The Wolverley Memorial Charitable Trust.

Cllr C Sherrey declared an NRI in Item 9 as a Potential Risk of Bias as auditor for the accounts of the Tennis Club and friend of the Chairman.

They will leave the room when Item 9 is discussed.

Public Question Time:

The Chairman welcomed members of the public and asked for any speakers.

Mr Lyndon Darkes, representative of Wolverley Tennis Club asked three questions to the Parish Council;

1. Did the Parish Council and Memorial Hall intend to vary the terms of the 1961 lease, which was renewed in 2019, by the assignment document of 2020?
This assignment attempted to vary the lease terms and remove all the rights previously enjoyed by the tennis club, social club and the other community clubs listed in the previous lease.
2. Do the Parish Council and Memorial Hall Trust intend to develop part of the site currently occupied by the Childrens playground, tennis club and social club / bowling green for housing?.

3. If the answer to Question 2 is no development, then can you explain why the memorial Hall trust won't allow a 25-year lease on the Tennis Club? This minimum lease term is required to obtain grant funding and a shorter lease would mean no future funding as previously explained.

Cllr D Jones advised that Item 9 on the agenda relates to the Wolverley Memorial Charitable Trust / Wolverley Tennis Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Cllr M Hart clarified that the two charities are involved but it is a commercial matter between the two charities due to the Landlords and Tenants Act. He also advised that there have been no discussions on developing the site although there may be in the future. Cllr J Hart stated there is no intention to deprive anyone of playing tennis and suggested contacting Mr Wallis, Chair, TWMCT. Mr T Price asked if the Parish Council took advice on the legal documents, the Clerk confirmed they did.

The meeting was reconvened.

158. **To consider the adoption of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9th January 2024 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 and these were signed by the Chairman.

Matters for Discussion / Decision;

159. To fill vacancy by co-option for a Parish Councillor (Wolverley Ward).

The Chairman welcomed Mr Ian Jolly and Mrs Julie Hicks who had applied for the Vacancy.

The applicants left the room and were then invited back separately to give a short presentation on why they would like to become a Parish Councillor and what they could offer to the Parish Council.

Each Councillor was then given a secret ballot paper to mark with their chosen candidate. This was then collected by the Clerk and votes counted. The Clerk declared Mrs Julie Hicks - 6 votes, Mr Ian Jolly - 5 votes. Mr Jolly was thanked for his application and invited to apply again if a vacancy occurs in the future. Mrs Julie Hicks was congratulated, signed the declaration of acceptance of office and joined the meeting.

160. **Police Report.**

PCSO Nicky Thomas reported;

WOLVERLEY

Blakeshall Lane - Solcum area - 00093_I_04012024 offenders have accessed paddock at the address and used a battery from the victim's own tractor to steal an old Land Rover Discovery (It was a SORN off-road farm runaround). The vehicle was driven all over the gardens nearly crashing into the house, before breaking out of the main driveway gate.

Nothing of note for Cookley

Can you please let us have your priorities for the next quarter JAN - MARCH. Your previous are listed below. Speeding / ASB / Shoplifting (Tesco).

After a short discussion it was agreed to replace Shoplifting with Parking around schools.

161. **County / District Councillor Reports.**

District Councillor Report;

Local Issues

Robin, Marcus and Ian continue to liaise with WFDC and Worcestershire FA to resolve the parking issues in Brown Westhead Road. WFDC enforcement officers have made several visits to Wolverley CE Secondary School and Sixth Form to address parking issues there. Fly-tipping has been reported

around the parish including a large number of builder's sacks on Drakelow Lane. On 1st February, the Planning Manager, Planning Team Leader, Tree & Biodiversity Officer and Conservation Officer gave a training session which those who attended found very helpful and informative.

Wyre Forest Issues

The District Council has been consulting on its budget; we are proposing increasing council tax by the minimum 3% allowed which is circa an additional £7 per year for a Band D property!

We are proposing investing in services that are important to the public, unlike the previous administration. For example, we are proposing two full-time litter pickers across the District to act as a litter blitz squad responding to non-routine work. We are also proposing an additional Civil Enforcement Officer to tackle parking on double yellow lines. We plan to be more open and transparent than the previous administration and will be funding the webcasting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

We are further proposing 1-hour free car parking Monday - Friday between 8am -6pm in one car park in each of the District's 3 towns. We will also be investing £50k in accessible play equipment at Brinton Park and Stourport Riverside. Each District Councillor will also have £1,000 for the community leadership fund to spend on projects or organisations in their ward.

We are proposing additional commercial income from a wide variety of areas to fund our investments. We will still have circa £ 3 million of unallocated reserves in 2024-2025 and indeed will still have reserves at the end of the 3-year medium-term financial strategy.

We are also taking a different approach to localism and not simply transferring services to town and parish councils unless they want to.

Cllr Drew added the eyesore of white bags littered over the farmers field at the bottom of Highlow Bank has been reported, regulatory inspectors visited and a clean up operation has commenced.

County Councillor Report;

Local issues:

Lea Castle, A449/ The Crescent S278 Reconfiguration:

I need to update the Parish Council, further to my Report last month. I have now been informed that there will NOT in fact be a central reservation incorporated at this junction to assist with pedestrians' crossings of the A449! I am most unhappy with this update and have expressed my view accordingly. And will continue in this vein.

Also, regarding the request for the present 50mph limit to be reduced to 40mph, I am informed that this will not be considered in relation to the present Development Phase 1 (for 600 homes) but will be considered should the application for 800 further homes be approved. And that at that point, further consideration may be held in relation to the installation of a pelican crossing!

Cllr Hardiman advised that since writing this report he has now had a further update which confirms their WILL be a central reservation for pedestrians on the A449 near The Crescent junction. The 50mph to 40mph will not be considered in Phase 1 but will be when the additional 800 homes are built, also a Pelican crossing will be considered.

Lea Lane Landslip:

I, together with Cllr Marcus Hart met with the County Council's Director for Highways and two Solicitors of the Council to press for definitive action on this issue where the roadway has been closed for almost 5 years.

I am now able to confirm that the County Council are committed to restoring Lea Lane to full vehicular access and in order to achieve this will pursue positively the gaining of access to the strip of land between the highway and the canal and if necessary, will use Compulsory Purchase Powers to achieve this.

To Clarify: The County Council will not be consulting residents or the Parish Council further on this subject.

Flashing Speed signs, Wolverley Village:

I am pleased to report that these new signs should be installed during early March this year.

162. **Financial Matters.**

a) To agree financial scheme of delegation. Cllr Sherrey advised this was set up during covid and may be needed to approve March payments to be made in the current financial year. He proposed Cllr Bordewich replace the vacancy left by the sad passing of Simon Sherrey. This was unanimously agreed.

b) The following accounts were agreed to be paid;

73	B J Drew – Salary January 24	£1248.26
74	B J Drew – Ink/Paper	£10.00
75	Leedan Packaging (Black Sacks)	£108.00
76	Morgan Cullen & Ball Ltd (Cookley Allotment Gardens)	£1473.00
77	Smith of Derby (Clock Service)	£327.60
78	David Waterworth (Inspection Cover)	£40.79
79	DM Payroll Services Ltd (Administration of Payroll Oct 23 – March 24)	£90.00
80	Wayfair (Cookley Planters x 7)	£736.05

163. **Local Government Boundary Commission – Consultation on draft recommendations.**

Cllr M Hart advised that the last time Worcestershire was reviewed was in 2005 and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England has now published proposals for new electoral arrangements for Worcestershire prior to County Council elections in May 2025.

Cllr M Hart outlined the proposals and after discussion proposed;

1. Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council formally write in to the consultation currently being run by the LGBC in respect of Worcestershire County Council and wholeheartedly support the proposals for Wyre Forest.

This was agreed with 9 for, 1 against, 1 abstention.

2. In respect of the proposals for Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council, the Parish Council oppose the current proposal and request that the LGBC make no changes at the current time as Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council will formally request that Wyre Forest District Council undertake a Community Governance Review in respect of the current Parish Council, given the housing growth at Lea Castle, with a view to undertaking a poll of all Parishioners to consult on what electoral arrangements they support.

This was unanimously agreed.

Clerk to respond to consultation and write to Wyre Forest District Council to request they undertake a Community Governance Review.

164. **The Wolverley Memorial Charitable Trust / Wolverley Tennis Charitable Incorporated Organisation.**

Cllr R Drew, J Hart and C Sherrey left the room.

It was proposed Cllr D Jones and unanimously agreed Cllr B Brookes take the Chair.

Cllr Brookes invited Cllr Jones to speak. He recapped that the dispute between the two parties has been going on for a considerable time and he is concerned that tennis is not removed from this site now or in the future. He would still like to meet with both charities, together with a Wolverley representative, to mediate and get both sides talking. Cllr Brookes questioned the outcome of the previous offer of mediation. The Clerk confirmed this offer had not been taken up.

Cllr Jones also asked that the Parish Council are furnished with copies of minutes of any meetings where this matter was discussed. Cllr M Hart advised that as a charity the minutes are not public documents, they are for the trustees. He also stated that the Parish Council as Custodian Trustees are the freeholder, not leaseholder, this is a regrettable situation where the two charities cannot agree that may end up being decided by a judge.

Cllr Jones reiterated his view that minutes should be made available to the Parish Council and proposed that the Council write requesting these. This was seconded by Cllr Nicholls and agreed with 2 abstentions.

Cllrs R Drew, J Hart and C Sherrey were invited back to the meeting.

Cllr R Drew took the Chair.

165. **To discuss and agree a Biodiversity Policy.**

Cllr R Drew reported this is a new requirement for Parish Council's to have a Biodiversity Policy. A draft policy had been circulated and it was unanimously agreed this be adopted. Clerk to put on website.

166. **Christmas Decorations for Cookley Village 2024.**

Cllr Jones advised that several groups and businesses in Cookley are looking at the purchase of Christmas decorations and asked for a contribution from the Parish Council from the Cookley Village Improvement Budget. Cllr Jones proposed £1500, this was seconded by Cllr Southam and agreed. The Clerk advised they will not be able to be attached to the street lighting columns.

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

PC No

WFDC No/Details

3707

23/0928/OUT: Outline application for the construction of 3 self-build dwellings (all matters reserved except access) at land at Os 381880 279160, Lowe Lane, Wolverley,
Wolverley & Cookley Parish Council recommend refusal and concur with the comments from Planning Policy. The site is on a reserved housing site in the green Belt, WFDC has fulfilled its requirement for self builds and therefore there is no requirement and not a need to review the local plan.

3708

24/0015/TDC: Technical details consent pursuant to planning approval ref: 21/1002/PIP (Construction of a new dwelling) at Cattery, 2 Webbs Cottages, Caunsall Road, Caunsall.

Recommend deferral for additional information requested by Highways.

Parish Matters for Update Only - no decisions required.

168. Clerks Report. (Clerk) Digitisation of Parish Lengthsman Database, Cookley Allotments, Road Closures, We can funding, PCC Newsletter, Creative Arts Social Group.
169. Planning Training. Cllr Drew advised of a very informative session and thanked those who attended.
170. Lengthsman. Cllr Southam / Drew have given the Lengthsman work this month.
171. New Issues / Items for Next Meeting. (All)
172. Date of Next Meeting - to confirm the date of the next meeting which is scheduled for Tuesday 5th March 2024.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.10pm

Signed by Chairman - 5th March 2024