

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING FOR THE PARISH OF WOLVERLEY AND COOKLEY**  
**HELD AT COOKLEY FIRST SCHOOL, COOKLEY**  
**ON TUESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> APRIL 2018 AT 7.30PM**

1. **Welcome**

Councillor Mr David Jones, Chairman of the Parish Council, welcomed all present and presided over an attendance of 26 Local Government Electors together with the Clerk to the Parish Council and District/County Councillor Ian Hardiman.

2. **Apologies**

Apologies, T Botterill, L Jones, Keith Lawrence.

3. **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on April 2017**

The minutes of this meeting were read and it was RESOLVED that the minutes be accepted as a correct record of that meeting and that they be signed by the Chairman.

4. **Chairman's Annual Report**

The Chairman reported on a very successful year for the Parish Council;

Thanks were expressed to retiring Councillors Mrs Joanne Cox and Mr Gordon Yarranton for all their work and Councillors Bill Southam and John Wood who have replaced them were welcomed.

During the year the Parish Council agreed to support a Neighbourhood Plan for Cookley and Causall and also agreed to start a Community Governance Review.

Planning for up to 600 houses on the Lea Castle site was passed with further development possible with the Local Plan review.

There have been issues with the Cookley Bus Service - Diamond Buses have now got the contract and the Parish Council have been assured they should run same service as before.

Dementia Café - now up and running at Cookley village hall, there has been a lot of support and they are well attended.

Thanks were expressed to Councillor Drew for the gateways and planters which look attractive in the villages.

5. **Reports**

**Annual Report for Wolverley and Cookley Annual Parish Meeting from the Wyre Forest Rural Ward Councillors:- Cllr. Ian Hardiman, Cllr. Marcus Hart and Cllr. Stephen Williams**

Wyre Forest District Council approved its budget at full council on 21<sup>st</sup> February. There is continued investment in services across the District including the continuation of the Community Leadership Fund and Localism Fund. Council tax is increasing by a modest 1.9%,

£3.98 per year for a Band D equivalent property. It has been frozen for 5 of the last 8 years and all increases kept to 1.9%.

The net revenue budget is £11.2 million and since 2010, we have had approximately a 40% reduction in Government funding which shows the pressures that we now have to deliver services in. We do continue to try and continue those services despite the reductions but sometimes difficult decisions have to be made as to where resources are allocated. We have a £1.6 million funding gap over the medium term (next 3 years). Our unallocated reserves are currently approximately £2 million. We have a number of work streams in place to balance the books over this period, including greater efficiencies, a digital first strategy, growing our income, reducing costs and more commercialisation.

We now have a capital portfolio fund, where if it is financially advantageous we invest in capital projects in order to bring a net revenue return to the council.

We are pleased that we were able to support a £50,000 localism fund for 2018-2019, building on the last two years, which Wolverley and Cookley Parish Council has substantially benefitted from, working in partnership with the Parish Council to part fund village gateways, planters and tourism signs. We have worked with the Parish Council to ensure that WFDC gives a grant to the Parish Council to enable it to undertake its own litter picking and bin emptying on a local level.

We were also pleased that each district councillor has been allocated £1,000 community leadership fund to spend within their ward. We all spent our £1,000 allocation in 2017-2018 and to be open and transparent published this in one of our local newsletters.

We are pleased that we are part of a Council that is supporting a programme of economic regeneration across Wyre Forest. The former Glades leisure centre site, now referred to as Lion Fields is due to be redeveloped as a multiplex cinema and restaurant offer. This is great news for kick starting the regeneration at this side of the town. We are also committed to opening up Worcester Street to traffic and revitalising that part of the town. We have seen greater confidence over the last 12 or so months with major jewellery shop chains opening and restaurants/bars and coffee shops opening. We also have a new market operator and have visiting and international markets as well. We are also currently consulting local businesses at making Kidderminster a Business Improvement District which will see investment back into the town centre.

We are also pleased to be working with the rail operators and Worcestershire County Council in respect of the new Kidderminster Railway Station, a circa £4 million investment which is being funded by the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP's). Work will start later this year.

We are delighted to be part of a Council that has secured the demolition of Crown House, funded by the tenants and so no cost to the tax payer. We are already looking at options for that site to ensure the Council continues to receive an income from it.

We hand deliver 3 blue A3 local newsletters to all Wolverley and Cookley residents keeping them up to date with our activities on yours' and resident's behalf.

We attend local PACT meetings and TCC meetings.

We have dealt with a wide variety of casework of which fly tipping, dog fouling, litter and planning enforcement issues are almost certainly at the top of the pile. We meet regularly with local residents about local issues and respond to casework by letter, phone and email whenever we are contacted and attend village events in both Cookley and Wolverley.

We all have a 100% attendance for official council meetings and members forums (councillor briefing meetings) in 2017-2018. Ian and Marcus sit on the cabinet, Ian sits on Ethics and Standards, Steve chairs the planning committee and sits with Marcus on this.

We have ensured that there has been at least one of us at all Parish Council meetings throughout the year, despite the fact that Wolverley and Cookley is one of six parish councils within our ward. We do the same with our other five parish councils. We very much enjoy a positive and professional working relationship with your clerk and yourselves, for which we are most grateful.

By way of information the political make up of WFDC is 22 Conservatives, 3 Labour, 3 Independents (Spennells), 2 Liberal Democrats, 2 Health Concern and 1 Independent (non-aligned).

Local residents and the Parish Council will be aware that WFDC is going through the process of a new local plan which is important for the future of all residents in the District. It affects us all wherever we live but of course, the closer one is to a site the more affected one can be. We know that there are implications for the Parish of Wolverley and Cookley, especially surrounding the Lea Castle site which now has approval for 600 houses, but importantly it is essential that the necessary infrastructure is implemented in respect of school places, highway improvements and places at such things such as doctor's surgeries. It is also important that locations are sustainable.

Regrettably there will have to be a strategic release of greenbelt land across the District, but we are lobbying to ensure that this is the least amount as possible and that all available and developable brown field land and green field land is all allocated into the next local plan. We are still awaiting the Government's revised figures and the standard methodology which is vital before WFDC goes to the next stage of its plan. This process is currently planned to finish in the latter part of 2019.

6. **To receive Charity Accounts and Accounts of the Parish Council for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017**

Audited accounts were presented for inspection;

Sebright Educational Foundation  
Anne A Mitchell Fund  
The Wolverley Charity  
Wolverley Memorial Hall

### Parish Council Accounts

The audited Parish Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 were received, examined and approved.

#### 7. Any issues residents would like to discuss:

Cookley Bus Service - Steve Rushton expressed thanks that this issue has now hopefully been resolved and gave thanks to the drivers from who are excellent.

Ian Hardiman confirmed there will be a new timetable and there will be a bus before 9.20am, there was an admin error on the timetable that has been put out by Diamond bus.

Concerns were expressed from Lea Lane residents over Cookley playing fields beer festival, the duration, noise and antisocial behaviour, they are also concerned about the Party in the Park, events seem to be growing in days and it is very upsetting for residents. Councillor M Hart advised he has had a lot of comments from residents with concerns over licensing, camping, noise, duration etc. He has a meeting with Worcestershire regulatory services, also meeting with the social club. The social club are the organiser of the event but the Parish Council does take an interest in all local events. Councillor David Jones is the Parish Council representative on the trustees of the Cookley social club and advised if you have concerns please write to the trustees who work alongside the club. All the money that is generated goes back into the facilities. This matter will be put on the next Parish Council agenda.

There was a comment about the servery which is rather large and has a big extractor fan, it was confirmed planning permission has been complied with.

Residents were informed that anyone can apply to become a trustee by writing to the Secretary.

Steve Rushton asked if the Bus Shelter by the Bulls Head could be re painted and possibly look at moving the noticeboard at Elizabeth Bache Corner to the bus stop?

There was a question about Neighbourhood Plan whether the Parish Plan relates to this. John Wood advised the Parish Plan has no legal standing but the Neighbourhood Plan will influence whatever is put into the local plan, sustainable housing, greenbelt etc.

Katrina Willets advised of a meeting a few weeks ago, there will be a lot of work but will be well worth it, it will enhance the village and gives some protection from future development.

Speeding Caste Road - there were lots of concerns about this, people were urged to attend PACT. It was also mentioned this is an issue by Wolverley Primary School.

Ian Hardiman has spoken to the police who have on more than one occasion used a radar gun, he has asked police to step up on this, criteria is bad because something only done if someone loses their life, Clerk to put on next agenda.

Division of the Parish Council - there was lots of discussion on this.

Marcus Hart advised that the Parish Council at their last meeting voted a unanimous decision to ask the electors of Wolverley and Cookley if they would like WFDC to undertake a Community Governance Review.

The first stage is to get 7.5% of the electorate to sign a petition which then requisitions WFDC to take a report to Full Council.

Ultimately there will be a referendum where every elector will vote on whether they want the Parish to split. There is also a wide consultation with stakeholders, people will have a choice, there will be some benefits and some disadvantages.

Meeting closed at 8.55pm.