

**WOLVERLEY & COOKLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council**

**Held at Wolverley Church Hall, Wolverley on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at 7.00pm**

Present:

Mr R Drew (Chairman)  
Mr D Cox  
Mr J Hart  
Mr M Hart  
Mr D Jones  
Mrs L Jones  
Mr C Sherrey  
Mr S Sherrey  
Mr P Smith  
Mr W Southam  
Mr J Wood

County / District Councillor: Ian Hardiman  
West Mercia Police: Inspector Jacob Wright / PCSO Kate Easthope and Zara Williams

134. **Apologies.** Apologies received from Councillor T Botterill, Mrs C Lewis and Mr C Nicholls.

135. **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.

The meeting will now be adjourned for PUBLIC QUESTION TIME - please see notes after the minutes.

The meeting now reconvened to conduct the items of business listed below;

136. **To consider the adoption of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018 at 7.00pm. (minutes previously circulated).**

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 as such by the Chairman.

**Matters for Discussion / Decision:**

137. **Wolverley Memorial Hall Constitution - Presentation from Wolverley Memorial Project Group**

Councillor Peter Smith welcomed Graham Wallis from the Wolverley Memorial Project Group to talk about the new legal form and constitution for the Wolverley Memorial Charity.

The arrangements that the charity currently operates under are outlined in a deed dated 31<sup>st</sup> October 1961, but this is outdated and doesn't recognise the Charity which was formed later. After consideration by the Committee and Trustees it was agreed at the AGM that the Charity should change to an incorporated form of charity, with the most appropriate legal form to carry out the future objectives of the Wolverley Memorial Project being a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The new constitution is based on the Charity Commission's model for CIOs and a model for Village Halls from ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) and advice from Community First (Herefordshire and Worcestershire). Mr Wallis went on to explain the significant changes in the new CIO constitution from the current deed.

The new constitution:

- updates the narrative and removes redundant references
- incorporates the requirements of relevant charitable legislation since the 1961 deed
- reflects latest Charity Commission best practice guidelines.
- is purely a governance document not a combination of lease plus management arrangements. (N.B. A new 99 year lease between the Parish Council and the current Trustees is being finalised as a separate document)
- clarifies the charitable objects and reflects the current and future objectives of the Charity
- clearly defines the area of benefit of the Charity
- improves the arrangements for and the number and age distribution of both the elected and appointed trustees, retaining the existing Trustees but adding some Committee members.
- clarifies the respective governance roles and remit of the trustees, members and inhabitants of the area of benefit.
- details the arrangements for general meetings and the AGM.

There were no questions.

138. **To receive report from Local Representative West Mercia Police.**  
The Chairman welcomed Inspector Jacob Wright and Zara Williams, newest PCSO.

The Inspector apologised for not attending before but thanked the Parish Council for inviting him back.

Regarding the fatality at Cookley yesterday the Inspector thanked all for their patience following the incident and advised that as it was a fatality it was vital for the police to get as much evidence as possible from the scene.

Jacob Wright has been the Local Policing Inspector for Wyre Forest for one year and prior to that in a strategic role for 11 years.

He advised on the demands faced in policing with priorities ever changing. They face an ever-increasing challenge to prioritise due to lack of resources. The local policing team are focusing primarily on drug dealing, the need to tackle vulnerability and to drive gangs out of Wyre Forest. They do not want harm to communities. Burglaries are the second priority and they do try to attend every single burglary in the whole of Wyre Forest and hate crime the third priority, there has been an increase in this. As seen in the news some communities are not tolerant to others,

The Police cannot get to everything they would like to, the officers are saturated with work, experience with 101 can sometimes be good and sometimes not so good and they are trying to improve this. Jacob has given direct mobile numbers for all his local policing officers, which are available to all, available on website and on leaflets.

Questions followed;

Thanks were expressed regarding Cookley Bonfire, organisers met with officers before the event and everything was covered very well,

Bike thefts is a problem in Wyre Forest - is anything being done about this? Inspector Wright commented that when you look at crime in Wyre Forest it is good except for bike theft and shop lifting, which are at a very high level. They have deployed some technology into Kidderminster town centre, which has been successful resulting in an 80% reduction in November in bicycle thefts,

6 / 8 months ago person had building broken into and tractor stolen, they rang police and nobody came out, went to police station to report and was given no empathy, discovered tractor had been dumped in Stourton, again police didn't turn up, why? The Inspector apologised for this and said it is not the service they would want anybody to get, there was probably simply no resource but not an excuse.

Threat, Harm and Risk there is a National Model used to prioritise jobs they respond to. We are dealing with so many more social issues than had to previously,

Thanks were expressed to Jacob for our local team and a request not to change them, also thanks for response following theft of Poppy Box.

Clarification was sought about crime numbers - are they still given? The Inspector confirmed they are, every call that needs a response should have a log (incident) number, a crime number is then allocated if appropriate,

PCSO Kate Easthope advised on a burglary in Wolverley, attended to just prior to the meeting, rural crime day on Thursday in Gils café, Wolverley, Cookley - van break in's Caunsall Road, burglary Island Pool pub, case is ongoing, burglary Cookley social club, bonfire went really well, Cookley Beavers had a visit last night to police station and this week starting young cadets scheme in Cookley Primary School.

The Chairman advised we have been approached to be the first hosts of a "Road Focus" event which is a joint road safety promotion between Worcestershire County Council and the Police. It will be held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> November, 4 - 6pm, Wolverley Church Hall and anyone is welcome to raise any Highway and Traffic Issues. Police Crime Commissioner, John Campion will be in attendance, together with Alan Amos, Cabinet Member for Highways, County Councillor Ian Hardiman, Highways and Police representatives.

It was again reiterated about the safety of the A449 / Castle Road following the fatality yesterday.

139. **To receive Councillors Reports.**  
**County Councillor Ian Hardiman reported;**

Cookley and Caunsall Vehicle Speeding: I am pleased to report that The Safer Roads Partnership have responded to request for regular speed checking in Cookley and Caunsall and have again carried out enforcement where appropriate to remind drivers that speeding through the villages is unacceptable,

Also, I had asked for calming measures for Castle Road, however assessment has now been carried out showing that whilst a small number of speeding vehicles is occurring, this has not reached intervention levels with The Safer Roads Partnership, unfortunately,

A449 Pavement Siding Out: Whilst I am grateful for Highways cutting back of the pavement overgrowth, I am concerned that no work to remove or trim back the overhanging brambles and branches has been carried out and therefore invited the Highways Engineer to inspect and arrange for landowners to be asked to attend to these. The Engineer has agreed to do this,

Wolverley approach to the Primary School: I have agreed to contribute from my Divisional Highways funding Allocation to ensure that new lining and signing (tigers' teeth) is introduced in Franche Road at the approach to the school which has been advised as an appropriate means of reducing traffic speeds. I arranged this following local resident's concerns in the interests of safety of the children,

Wolverley, Franche Road/Mill Lane Replacement Grit Bin: The original bin was unfortunately destroyed by a vehicle collision, I have been reminded that a replacement is overdue and therefore have asked the Highways engineer to speed up this important bin replacement,

Councillor Hardiman responded to a question on the speeding in Castle Road and is happy to share results from recent speed enforcement. Thanks were expressed for the siding out work, the metal bridge Caunsall seems to have stalled, the delay is with the contractor not the County Council, would like it to be painted at end of job, Paintwork by Wolverley Primary School very welcome, thank you.

**District Councillor Marcus Hart reported;**

### **Wyre Forest Issues**

#### **Kidderminster Train Station**

Work on the £4,000,000 transformation and redevelopment of Kidderminster train station is to continue soon after the highway work has been completed.

#### **Worcester Street**

Work to enhance the public realm and improve the infrastructure on Worcester Street has now commenced. This is a £2 million capital investment between the GBSLEP and County and District Council working collaboratively to lead the way in attempting to get the land holdings in that area to act differently and redevelop the redundant empty shop units. We would like to see more accommodation and in particular affordable housing in this area as it is a sustainable location. We are looking carefully at the Chancellor's budget announcement at his £675 million High Street fund and would look to be making a bid into this to support further regeneration in this area as this is exactly what we need to get this scheme off the ground from a Council perspective as these regeneration issues especially transforming brown field sites always come down to matters of viability.

#### **Crown House**

We are bitterly disappointed to report that the demolition of Crown House, Kidderminster has been put on hold for an indeterminate period. The tenant of the building, Telereal Trillium, has pulled out of a demolition deal at short notice. By way of background, In September 2017, WFDC announced that a deal had been agreed in principle with the tenant, Telereal Trillium. It would have seen Telereal fund the demolition of the building, in exchange for which the council would accept a surrender of the lease. This would have allowed Telereal to walk away from the site and enabled the council to progress redevelopment. However, Telereal has now pulled out of the deal citing financial reasons. Earlier in the year Telereal Trillium successfully applied to the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) to have Crown House taken off the ratings list. This means they no longer have to pay any business rates on the building. The council has submitted counter-proposals to the VOA to ask for the building to be brought back onto the list. It believes the building is economically viable for the tenants to use, whether for offices or another commercial purpose.

At the moment, Telereal's only regular financial outgoing on the building is the rent it pays to Wyre Forest District Council. Telereal has decided not to fund the demolition, preferring to retain the empty building.

We are very angry and frustrated at what Telereal Trillium has done. The Conservative led WFDC have spent the last 12 months negotiating very complex arrangements in good faith with Telereal to reach a position where the council would accept the surrender of the lease and they would undertake the demolition of the building. All the legal paperwork was in place and in fact the council had signed it all off, but when it came to Telereal signing, they pulled out.

Rest assured we will pursue Telereal Trillium in respect of this matter.

#### **Capital Portfolio Fund**

We touched on last month our acquisition of a property in Shirley. WFDC are purchasing a number of commercial properties. We have now purchased retail premises in Kidderminster town centre of £1.1m, office accommodation in Shirley of £6m and office accommodation in Bromsgrove of £1.6m. All of these investments have undertaken substantial due diligence and are in line with approved Council policy. You may be wondering why we are doing this and in particular why are we doing this outside of Wyre Forest, well the answer is with the Government's revenue support grant disappearing we must find new ways to fund local services for residents. We firmly believe this proactive and ambitious approach to raising income will help protect local services. We are taking advantage of borrowing cheaply to invest in property. We get immediate income from rents and once

we have paid off the loan we then own the asset. It is the same as paying for a house with a mortgage, but on a much larger scale.

We are certain residents would much prefer that we grow our income from sound commercial investments as opposed to constantly increasing council tax to the maximum, increasing fees and charges or alternatively cutting very important and well regarded services. This is something that we clearly want to avoid and it is worth remembering that these three investments alone are bringing in circa £180,000 income after all costs and expenses are taken out. This money is going right back into providing important local services for you our residents. We are committed to doing all we can to provide services that are important to you as opposed to having to make service reductions or increase council tax to the limit. We have a £1.6m funding gap over the next 3 years which we need to plug and rather than cuts we would much prefer to grow our income and wish to see even more acquisitions over the next 2 years to increase this income. We are also actively seeking to complete on several opportunities here in Wyre Forest but we are finding that some of the margins to invest in properties in Wyre Forest are even less.

It is important that we have a mixed portfolio that is why we are investing in offices, retail, employment and housing and that we have a mixed geography in order to manage risk.

As we have no working capital we have to borrow 100% of the acquisition cost from the Public Works Loans Board at 3% which means that any yield we are able to achieve is much lower and is only ever going to be about 2%. In fact given property values in Wyre Forest we are finding that the yield is even lower and around the margins hence why we are purchasing outside of the Wyre Forest as well as it is essential that the deal stacks up financially as many of the potential properties we have looked at in Wyre Forest have not.

### Local Plan Update

You will no doubt be aware that on 30<sup>th</sup> October, the WFDC cabinet approved the 'preferred options' consultation from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 17<sup>th</sup> December.

There are 8 drop in sessions planned across the District and there is a drop in session most local to our Parish is at Cookley Village Hall between 3pm-7pm on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> November. Residents are free to attend any of the sessions to meet with Council officers and look at plans.

You can send your response in writing to WFDC at WFH, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster or by email to [LPR@wyreforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:LPR@wyreforestdc.gov.uk)

All of the information is available from the hub at Kidderminster town hall, Wyre Forest House or the website.

By way of background, the cross party Local Plans panel has been undertaking an awful lot of work to look at all possible sites for development for the period up to 2036 and these were recommended to the cross party scrutiny panel on 25<sup>th</sup> October. They approved that these go onto cabinet who duly approved them for public consultation.

The 'preferred options' consultation is already underway, running from 1<sup>st</sup> November until 17<sup>th</sup> December and will be an opportunity for the public to have their say before the proposals go before an independent inspector for the Examination in Public (EIP). It is anticipated that Full Council will make the decision to approve the proposed plan for submission in July 2019 with the EIP taking place in September - December 2019, with adoption of the final Local Plan taking place in February 2020, by Full Council.

It is essential we have a sound Local Plan to ensure we steer development in a planned and measured way. Obviously, the Lea Castle site will no doubt be the most topical in this area with the proposed 1400 houses in total, 600 have of course already been approved.

We believe that it is vital that where there is a major development of this nature that we ensure that the necessary infrastructure is put in place, new amenities, such as shops, doctor's surgery, new school, employment, access to public transport, public open space and highway improvements. What has come across to us loud and clear is that residents are prepared to support development on a large scale if this is in place and hence we have both been very instrumental in acting on your concerns about this.

We will be arguing very strongly for this on your behalf and also for some affordable housing as it is vital our children and grandchildren have somewhere where they can live. There are circa 3,500 on the housing waiting list and we must do all we can to tackle this. The issue of affordable housing seems to be attracting some interest, especially the proposed revision in policy. It is important to make clear that existing policy for developments over 10 is **up to 30% not 25%** and that the revised policy is proposed to be a **minimum of 25% not 20%**. We must be absolutely realistic on land values and viability issues, we have struggled on some sites in recent times to get anywhere near 30%. We believe that everyone who strives to have their own home should have the opportunity to get on the housing ladder.

WFDC need to allocate circa 6,300 plots which includes some flexibility for non-delivery of some sites which is inevitable over the lifetime of any plan as we need circa 5,520 plots. The 'Government figure' is 276 per annum per year using the standardised methodology between 2016 - 2036. It is essential we are not challenged by developers, have a 5 year land supply and pass our Housing Delivery Test. Land from the greenbelt will have to be strategically released but we will be ensuring we develop on all Brown field land available as we do not want more development in the Green Belt than is required. Approximately 2% of green

belt will have to be released and it can only be released in very special circumstances but given the above it is inevitable that that criteria will be met.

As your local representatives we are determined to ensure that Cookley and Kidderminster are not linked and that there is a gap between Kidderminster and Lea Castle and Lea Castle and Cookley and that the integrity of the greenbelt is maintained all along the A451 on the right hand side and on the left past Axborough Lane and along the A449 on the left hand side and on the right past Axborough Lane as greenbelt was introduced in the 1970's to prevent 'urban sprawl'.

Finally, we would encourage everyone to take part and have their say.

#### **Wolverley and Cookley Issues**

We have been dealing with the usual routine casework, reporting litter on the main A roads and along the country lanes and also fly tipping, dealing with planning enforcement issues such as at Copes Lane.

Clearly the Local Plan is a big issue for the Parish and we have covered it above.

The potential Quarry is also a big issue. We are attending a meeting tomorrow evening having been invited by the Cookley Against the Quarry group in order to update them on what we know and look forward to attending. In essence, we have no further update and at the time of writing no applications have been submitted to WCC or WFDC.

Regarding the fatality yesterday Councillor M Hart said no one should speculate on what caused the accident, it is something the police are obviously looking into.

A meeting regarding the possibility of the Parish Council taking over grass cutting has been arranged for Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> November at Wyre Forest House.

Free car parking is available from Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> November after 4pm at all Council owned car parks.

#### **Questions -**

On the Lea Castle site a question was asked on where people will come from to fill the non social housing as they will be expensive so probably be people from out of Kidderminster, also thought affordable housing was 15% not 20% on original 600 plan of houses. Councillor M Hart advised he is not an expert in housing strategy and doesn't more development on green belt than necessary but we need a properly adopted local plan with a 5 year plan at least it is not about encouraging people from out of area but trying to protect people in Wyre Forest.

A question was also asked about extending the consultation time at Cookley as 7pm not late enough for people that work, Councillor M Hart advised the meetings are drop in sessions to speak with officers and look at plans, there is 1 event in Cookley and 7 other events, some on a Saturday so available to all.

Thanks were expressed for free parking.

#### **140. Financial Matters:**

Accounts for Payment - agreed the following schedule of cheques be approved.

48	Mrs B J Drew (Salary October 18)	904.83
49	T & A Dale (Lengthsman Fee October 18)	No Invoice Received.
50	Marvin Cox Lubricants (Works to Pound)	36.00
51	Lyndon Darkes (Managed Domain and web forwarding)	27.00
52	Wyre Forest District Council (Black Sacks)	94.50
53	Mrs B J Drew (Ink 7.99 / Large Printing 12.00)	19.99
54	The Poppy Appeal (Wreaths)	100.00

#### **141. Proposed Sand and Gravel Quarry and Restoration Scheme at land at Lea Castle Farm, Wolverley.**

There is no further information on this at present.

Councillor C Sherrey proposed Clerk contact CALC regarding advice on surveys, This was agreed.

142. **Cookley and Caunsall Neighbourhood Plan.**  
Councillor Wood advised the funding application is to be completed imminently and launch events will be held 27<sup>th</sup> January 2019.
143. **Lea Castle Site, Wolverhampton Road, Cookley.**  
This had already been covered in depth in District Councillor Report.
- Councillor Cox questioned whether any dates were set for the development on Lea Castle and can Section 106 monies be used for road structure improvements, also will The Crescent be in Lea Castle new village or remain in Cookley. It was confirmed Section 106 cannot be used for road improvements.
- Councillor M Hart advised that a number of potential highway entrances are proposed but this is only a masterplan and Wyre Forest District Council will try and get funding for road improvements and it will not happen quickly. School places will have to be provided if and when needed and Section 106 funds schools, these are stage paid and a school will be built when need for school places. He advised the local plan allocates sites, there is no compulsion for sites to be developed, some sites can fall away for a variety of reasons. After more discussion it was agreed Parish Council will agree formal response to consultation at next meeting.
144. **Wolverley Memorial Hall Lease.**  
Councillor M Hart advised that our Solicitor has now responded and advised the Parish Council should consider tightening up certain aspects of the new lease such as insuring property and alteration provisions. The Clerk, Councillor M Hart and P Smith have met to review and responded back to the Solicitor.
145. **Replacement street Light, Kinver Lane, Caunsall**  
The Clerk had previously forwarded letter received from residents of Kinver Lane, Caunsall complaining about the replacement light which took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018 which has greatly impacted on their sleep and security.
- After much discussion Councillor Cox agreed to inspect the lamp and report back with options to the next meeting.
146. **Signage - Top of Castle Road, Cookley.**  
On-going. Councillor Cox to liaise with Councillor Hardiman.
147. **Additional Noticeboards - Cookley**  
A list of suggested sites for new noticeboards had been received by the Parish Council.
- There was much discussion on this as currently there is no budget for new noticeboards, they are approximately £1,000 each and there are currently four existing Parish Council noticeboards in Cookley and Caunsall.
- The Chairman advised that if the Action Group wanted more noticeboards they would need to be different to Parish Council boards, would need permission for siting and be paid for from funds raised.
- It was agreed Councillor Cox would look into this and report back at next meeting.
148. **Wolverley Noticeboard**  
Following request for removal from Gil's Village Store the noticeboard will be relocated on the village green.
149. **Article - Wolverley & Cookley Matters**  
Chairman will write article for December edition.
150. **Planning Applications for Consideration: -**
- | <u>PC No</u> | <u>WFDC No/Details</u>   |
|--------------|--|
| 3363         | 18/0615/Full: Increase in main roof ridge height to allow for loft conversion plus dormer at 35 Castle Road, Cookley,  |
|              | Recommend Deferral until clarification received on impact on street scene of raised ridge.   |
| 3364         | 18/0619/Full: Demolition of old storage sheds, erection of one new shed, erection of storage racking and the diversion of public footpath at C G Hardwick & Sons, The Landscape Centre, Wolverley,   |
|              | Recommend Refusal in line with Planning Officer comments on impact on Green Belt, Footpaths, Ecology and Flood Risk. The Parish Council are concerned that the footpath has already been diverted and are investigating this with Worcestershire County Council.   |
|              | The Parish Council would also like to seek clarification on the Enforcement action on the original racking erected without permission at the front of the landscape centre as this was stopped due to this application being received. If this application is refused the original issue still remains and these racks need to be removed. |

- 3365 18/0623/S73: Variation of condition 2 attached to planning approval 18/0178/Full to substitute house type design at Hillcrest, Wolverhampton Road, Cookley,  
Recommend Approval
- 3366 18/0626/Full: Single storey front extension, alteration to roof of existing rear extension and detached garage at 16 Sebright Road, Wolverley.  
Recommend Approval
- 3367 18/0665/Certp: Lawful development certificate for a proposed detached garage at Brookfield Cottage, Lowe Lane, Wolverley.  
For Information Only
- 3368 18/0677/Full: Two storey front, side and rear extension at 69 Sebright Road, Wolverley.  
Recommend Approval

**Parish Matters for Update Only - no decisions required**

151. Clerks Report (Clerk). Remembrance Day Parades. Appeal dismissed - Lyndhurst, Castle Hill, Wolverley.
152. Update on Lengthsman Scheme. Nothing to report.
153. Update on Metal Bridge, Caunsall. Already updated.
154. Update on Grass Cutting. Grass Cutting maps received from Wyre Forest DC, meeting of sub committee next week, meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> November for a preliminary discussion with Wyre Forest DC, report back in January 2019.
155. New Issues / Items for Next Meeting. Anchor Inn Phone box,
156. Dates for Meetings:  
CALC AGM - Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018, 6.30pm, County Hall, Worcester
157. Date of Next Meeting - to confirm the date of the next meeting which is scheduled for Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018, 7.00pm. Cookley School.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.15pm

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Chairman - 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018

**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

A question was asked about whether the Parish Council would consider funding towards independent surveys and legal advice for the potential Quarry planning application, to look after the interests of the local population. It was advised that expenditure for this has not been budgeted for, the Parish Council would need to take advice from Worcestershire CALC on this and they would also need to know how many surveys and costs. It was reiterated that as yet no formal planning application has been received, the time to consider this is when the Parish Council know what is to be commented on, full knowledge of the application will be needed before any decisions are made.

Residents from Caunsall, following a letter sent to the Parish Council, spoke about a street light in Kinver Lane, Caunsall that has been replaced with a taller LED light which is now affecting resident's quality of life affecting sleep. They request it is either removed, lowered or dimmed with a shield, this matter is on the agenda for discussion.

The fatal incident at the top of Castle Road was discussed and the total traffic chaos that followed for hours after the event. Concerns were expressed this will only get worse with the proposals at the Lea Castle site.