

BROOME PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman – Cllr Nick Norton

Clerk – Mrs Bev Drew

Draft Minutes of the Meeting of Broome Parish Council Held on Wednesday 2nd December, 2020 via ZOOM at 7:30pm

Present:-

Cllr Nick Norton (NN) (Chairman)
Cllr Don Billington (DB) (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Amanda Allen (AA)
Cllr Mark Billingham (MB)
Cllr Sherida Breeden (SB)
Cllr Warren Edwards (WE)

Also, present were Mrs Bev Drew (Clerk), District/County Cllr Marcus Hart (MJH) and District Cllr Lisa Jones (LJ).

1. Apologies:-

Cllr Michael Clark (MC), West Mercia Police and District Cllr Ian Hardiman (IH).

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:-

DB and SB in village hall as members of the committee.

3. Public Question Time:-

None.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting 2nd September 2020:-

These were agreed as a true and accurate record and will be signed by the Chairman when Co-vid 19 restrictions allow.

5. Police Report:-

Report had been circulated.

Suspicious Circumstances – on 10/11/2020 at around 17:00hrs 2x males wearing black track suits, approximately 30 yrs, wearing sunglasses were seen acting suspiciously on Broome Lane thought to be looking at properties. Officers attended but the males had already left the area. No further reports.

Suspicious Circumstances – On 20/11/2020 at approximately 15:00hrs a dark blue Fiesta was seen driving though the village thought to be looking at houses. No further reports.

Op Prospero - We have recently seen an increase in telephone fraudsters claiming to be from various police services. The caller will claim to be from the police/HMRC and ask that the respondent purchases a gift card or they will be arrested. Those who are elderly/ vulnerable appear to be the most at risk from this type of scam. The police will NEVER ask you for your money. If someone does. It is a SCAM.

6. District Councillor's Report - District Councillor Mrs L Jones reported;

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, albeit it has actually been pretty quiet since our September report on this front, unlike in some of our other parishes, long may this continue!

Wyre Forest District Issues

In respect of the WFDC's draft Local Plan, the Public Hearings by the Planning Inspector will begin being held from Monday 11th January on selected days into early February 2021. Information can be found on the Wyre Forest District Council website.

We hope you responded to the Government's Planning White Paper consultation, we believe this paper is ill-conceived and feel that actually it will be amended and we understand many MP's have concerns and feel that this is at least a consultation and that there is a lot of water to go under the bridge before it receives Royal Assent! Please have your say and feel free to give your views on this to our MP Mark Garnier. WFDC's overview and scrutiny panel also looked at this matter.

The Progressive Alliance who presently run the Administration of the District Council are to hold a Public Consultation on their intention to make the activity that the District Council undertakes smaller, inevitably entailing redundancies and the transferring of services to Town and Parish Councils. This consultation is currently running. We are very concerned at the scale of some of the reductions.

The Progressive Alliance want to make home working the norm post Covid and we have some concerns regarding this. This matter was looked at by the cross-party overview and scrutiny panel recently and overwhelmingly voted for the Cabinet to look again at this matter and recommend to Council that this process is paused and looked at further in April 2021 when hopefully we will have a clearer picture on Covid.

The Progressive Alliance want to look at a commissioning a business case to look at options to sell all or part of Wyre Forest House!

Local residents and businesses are being urged to share their views about Kidderminster as part of a major consultation to shape the future of the town centre. Town centres throughout

the UK have and continue to experience the challenges of a societal shift in changing shopping habits as well as the influence of Covid-19.

The online survey launched on Thursday 5 November at 9am at www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/towncentresurvey is an opportunity for anyone who lives, visits, works in or has a view about Kidderminster to have their say on how they think the town centre could be made into a better place over the next twenty years. It is designed to establish current views on the town and includes questions about shopping habits before and during the Coronavirus pandemic, reasons to visit the town and more.

Wyre Forest House is still closed to the public as is the Green Street Hub save for dealing with housing and homelessness applications.

WFDC has implemented a further Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) which is District wide and now prohibits the walking of 3 or more dogs. There is also an expansion to certain areas in Stourport and Bewdley where the consumption of alcohol in a public is prohibited.

WFDC has also launched a lottery for good causes.

Shoppers can take advantage of free parking at all Wyre Forest District Council car parks after 3pm during the festive period. The Christmas parking offer is running from Friday 20 November to Sunday 3 January 2021. It does not include Weavers Wharf.

There will be no Christmas light switch-on ceremonies in Kidderminster, Stourport or Bewdley this year due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

NN enquired what impact potential changes to make the activities of the District Council smaller would have on rural Parish Councils, LJ advised very little, it will affect Town Councils more.

DB sought clarification on the dog PSPO and LJ, MH confirmed it is 3 dogs per person allowed to be walked.

AA questioned the introduction of car parking charges in Blakedown, which does affect Broome residents, MH advised that the three District Councillors had totally opposed these charges but they have been introduced by the Progressive Alliance. Previously under the Conservative administration there had been 1-hour free parking. AA also expressed concern over future development in Blakedown resulting in more traffic and congestion.

7. County Councillor's Report - Councillor M J Hart reported;

Broome Issues

Further to my last 4 reports when Paul Green said that the work regarding Watery Lane and the reinstatement of the bank where the road meets the stream would take place in the Autumn, I have chased him repeatedly throughout the lockdown period as it hasn't been done. He assures me it will be done this Autumn, but as we approach winter it hasn't been but rest assured I will chase this.

Regarding Egg Lane and the flooding issues, again, nearly a year on and still no progress from WCC highways despite me pressing and I did at my last meeting with Paul in July as I said in my September 2020 report raise Bill's suggestion again and he has promised to look at this further. I am still pressing for an answer.

Likewise the land drainage issue further up Egg Lane regarding the bund and water and silt run off onto the highway is still ongoing.

I have asked the pavement from the boundary with Blakedown to Hackman's Gate on the Belbroughton Road be inspected at the request of Bill. As a result of Bill's excellent work siding out the pavement it has exposed that in many areas the integrity of the pavement is poor with it being worn away and in parts crumbling. I am awaiting the report of this but suspect large parts will need to be resurfaced and will be pressing that this is added to the programme for next year as we have allocated further capital monies for pavements.

I am investigating the lay-by outside Cloisters on the A450 at the request of a local resident. Local knowledge suggests it was there for the purpose of the bus that serviced the village pulling in there, but that is over 45 years ago now. The resident would like it removed. I feel this will be easier said than done as there will be a lengthy formal legal process and it will not be a high priority but nevertheless I have asked the question and await the answer!

I have also reported the drains information from Mark that need attention on the A450 and in Egg Lane and Watery Lane to highways for urgent inspection.

Wyre Forest Issues

WCC highways work on the Churchfields site continues with the creation of the spur road off the island which will take traffic out of town. If you know this area of Kidderminster you will see for itself that in fact work is very nearly complete and the one way system in and out has been in operation for some time.

As reported previously, the additional funding for the Hoobrook island has now been agreed as part of the budget and we should see this scheme commence this year to tackle this major congestion hotspot in Kidderminster. I have now seen a design scheme at an officer briefing and have a further one at the end of September and it is anticipated that work could commence before Christmas this year. Indeed an update report confirming this went to the County Council's Cabinet meeting of 22nd October. As previously stated, this will be great news for thousands of motorists coming in and out of Kidderminster.

WFDC has received circa £1.8 million of Government support to deal with Covid 19 in terms of additional cost pressures and major loss of income.

Strategic Issues County Wide

Since I wrote my last few reports it is fair to say that things are ever changing and after a period of 'unlocking' things have now tightened up again with the 4 week national lockdown but of course with a difference as schools remain and by the time of the meeting we will be out of national lockdown and in Tier 2.

As stated, schools remain open and attendance is circa 90% but 'bubbles' are collapsing and as I write this we have circa 5,000 students at home self-isolating out of a school population of 84,500.

In Wyre Forest cases continue to reduce and as I write this there are 227 per 100,000, that is about 50 less than just a week or so ago.

The County Council has been heavily involved in the response to the Coronavirus pandemic working with our other statutory partners.

Our Hospitals are still coping very well with capacity on all 3 sites and despite our increases, as you would expect given the more nature of Worcestershire we still have been less affected by infections than many other authorities in the West Midlands region but there are now deaths again on the acute site and we should not be complacent given our rise in cases and that we are not in the lowest Tier.

Worcestershire has a fantastic website Here2Help which is a community action response to Coronavirus. There is also a dedicated phone number 01905 768053 for those without access to the internet. There is now a Here2Helpbusiness scheme as well. (simply google Here 2 Help Worcestershire and it comes straight up.)

Free School Meals has been a very topical issue nationally as you will have seen as the Government have ceased the voucher scheme for the recent half term. We agreed as a County Council to step in with the Districts in Worcestershire to fund the costs 50:50 to ensure that no child went hungry and that they had access to food but unlike other local authority areas we did not produce vouchers but asked anyone who needed food to wither phone the Here 2 Help dedicated hotline number or go on the website and a food package would be sent out to them.

Clearly the Government indicating that the scheme will be funded up to Christmas 2021 is welcome news.

Our household waste sites are both remaining open.

Libraries are to remain open but with reduced services.

Council meetings are still taking place virtually and I suspect the first time that Full Council may be able to meet in person is next May as these measures are going to be with us for some months yet!

We are starting to plan for next year's budget. We still have significant pressures in adult's and children's social care and SEND.

We have had substantial Government grant to tackle the Coronavirus response in Worcestershire.

MH ran though his report and invited questions. He advised the latest figures on coronavirus Wyre Forest cases has, as of today, reduced to 140 per 100,000.

There was much discussion on reducing speed limits and improving signage in the Parish. MH will chase the Highways Liaison Engineer regarding a warning sign for the crossroads A450/Broome Lane but suggested the Parish Council consider match funding with MH to provide additional signage. Approximate total cost for sign and installation £3K. In addition the VAS currently on Broome Lane could be relocated to Hackman's Gate.

8. Lengthsman's Update:-

NN has spoken with the Lengthsman. Litter picking has now stabilised to one bag per week. There has been some fly tipping but this has been dealt with very efficiently by the District Council. The pavement reported in MH County report appears to have received attention, NN/MH will check. Grit Bins will be filled on 12th December by NN, MB and BW. Bill will also provide any drain/gully issues. Clerk confirmed his Lengthsman training is valid until 12th October 2023.

9. Planning Report:- (to consider the spreadsheet, note any applications since the last meeting and agree on a proforma for Councillors to provide comments to Clerk)

Planning Spreadsheet had been previously circulated. Clerk reported on planning since the last meeting;

20/0745/HOU (21.09.2020) MERE GREEN HOUSE, BELBROUGHTON ROAD, HACKMANS GATE, Erection of single storey sun room with roof lantern after demolition of existing conservatory, single storey extension to rear and wooden garden gazebo to patio.

No objection and Recommend Approval – Approved 04.11.2020

20/0451/HOU (29.09.2020) SWALLOWS, WATERY LANE, YIELDINGTREE, BROOME, Proposed conversion of open fronted storage area into living accommodation associated with the existing converted barn (known as Swallows). PC would like to draw attention to similar application that was made under 18/0087 and was refused.

20/0785/FULL (01.10.2020) MANOR HOUSE FARM, HACKMANS GATE LANE, HACKMANS GATE, Replacement dwelling. The Parish Council are concerned that the proposed replacement building is significantly larger than would normally be allowed under Wyre Forest DC Planning Policy and would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. However, we acknowledge that application(s) have been made to extend the existing footprint of the bungalow before seeking permission to build a replacement 4 storey structure and additional detached garage.

If Wyre Forest DC are minded to grant planning permission then we would suggest it would be entirely appropriate and reasonable to remove the majority (if not all) permitted development rights to ensure there is no future enlargement. We would ask Wyre Forest DC to consider if it would be necessary to deal with this restriction preventing future enlargement by legal agreement rather than a planning condition?

20/0865/TCA (27.10.2020) 2 BROOME MEADOW COTTAGES, REDHALL FARM ROAD, BROOME, Remove 2 x Spruce, 1 x Sycamore, 1 x Wych Elm and a Mountain Ash. The site is within the Broome Conservation Area and it is the case trees are an important part of the character of Broome and inappropriate removal is to be avoided. The Character Appraisal states "many trees and hedges within and adjacent to the Area form a key component of the character and appearance of the Area. They assist in retaining and maintaining the rural character of the hamlet". However, the Parish Council are happy to rely on the Arboricultural Officers view, advice and recommendations. If trees are to be removed we would ask the Arboricultural Officer consider a requirement to provide replacement trees elsewhere on site if that is felt appropriate.

20/0933/HOU (17.11.2020) BROOMHURST, BROOME LANE, Proposed side and rear extensions and detached garage. Comments by 11th December.

20/0970/S73 (01.12.2020) Glasshouse Site to south of Hackman's Gate, Watery Lane, Yieldingtree, Minor Material Amendment to Planning Permission 20/0250/Full to make changes to fenestration, roof pitch and external materials of approved bungalows. Comments by 25th December.

AA asked if the Planning Spreadsheet circulated prior to meetings could be reduced to show the latest applications only rather than have to look through a large document dating back to 2004. After much discussion it was agreed Clerk to circulate spreadsheet for meetings showing last 12 months of applications. Planning Committee to continue NN, DB and MB.

10. Financial Report:- (to consider the spreadsheet and bank statements since the last meeting and approve invoices for payment)

The financial spreadsheet was duly circulated, and it was in accordance with the bank statements. The current bank balance is £14,122.21 (Community Account) and £953.95 (Business Money Manager Account).

Divisional Funding of £500.00 received from MH for the bench, £200.00 Community Leadership Funding from MH for bulbs and the second instalment of the Precept has been received.

Accounts for approval.

Already Paid;

Broome Village Hall (Noticeboard)	£264.00
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For Approval;

Mrs B J Drew (Salary 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021)	£1831.20
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HMRC (Tax 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021)	£457.80
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Mrs B J Drew (Expenses 1st April 2020 – 2nd December 2021)	£56.40
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Print Serve (Payroll)	£20.00
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Mr W Waldron (Litter Picking)	£360.10
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Mrs B J Drew (Garden 4 Less 5ft Heritage Oak Bench)	£330.00
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Payments unanimously approved.

11. Consultation Responses:- Budget Proposals by Wyre Forest District Council Cabinet.

Clerk had circulated proposals.

AA expressed concern over the proposals with respect to what this would mean to rural Parish Councils and what services will be provided by Wyre Forest District Council. After much discussion NN suggested AA circulate her concerns and the Parish Council can then decide if a formal response is submitted.

12. Storage of Physical Parish Council Documents:-

Clerk has ascertained documents can be deposited at no cost at County archives. They need to be logged and boxed. This will be undertaken after co-vid restrictions have been lifted.

13. Correspondence:-

Schedule of Correspondence circulated and duly noted.

14. Councillor's Reports:-

Bench – DB advised of alternative company called Gardens 4 Less that have a Heritage Oak 5ft Bench for £330.00. After discussion It was agreed Clerk place an order. Clerk to liaise with DB.

Bulb Planting – NN advised BW will undertake bulb planting around the gateways. Snowdrops are best planted in January/February so will be done then. NN asked Councillors to advise Clerk of any other areas in the Parish that would be suitable for planting.

SB has been approached about Christmas Lights / Tree for Broome. This to be considered for next year.

WE gave an update on footpaths. Improved signage and waymarking has been done and a new gate by Hundred Acre Farm. Stile needing replacement – details to be sent to MH to request action.

15. To note date of next meeting – 27th January 2021

Future meetings are still scheduled to be via ZOOM.

Meeting closed at 9:05 pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Dated.....