

BROOME PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman – Cllr Nick Norton

Clerk – Mrs Bev Drew

Minutes of the Meeting of Broome Parish Council Held on Wednesday 27th January, 2021 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 Ian Hardiman (IH).

1. Apologies:-

Agree and accept the apologies from Cllr Michael Clark (MC) due to ongoing health issues, also apologies from West Mercia Police and District Cllr Lisa Jones (LJ).

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 December 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. No crimes in Broome however other areas have had reports of vehicles being stolen and outbuildings broken into.

6. District Councillor's Report - District Councillor I Hardiman reported;

Local Issues

We have been dealing with the usual routine casework, reporting litter and fly tipping on the main A roads and along the country lanes.

Wyre Forest Issues

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

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!

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

The Progressive Alliance are proposing scrapping the Localism fund and Community Leadership fund, the later allocating all district councillors £1,000 to spend in their ward on community groups.

The Progressive Alliance are deleting a number of officer posts and they are not being replaced. They are proposing funding only statutory services moving forward and they continue to seek to transfer largescale assets and services to Town and Parish Councils.

It is proposed that Council tax is increased by £5 which is the maximum it can be (2% or £5 increase, whichever is the higher) otherwise the local referendum principles apply.

Budget Council will be held on 24th February.

We have a suite of alternative proposals, including a pay freeze, senior management review, more shared services and further investment in environmental protection allocating resource for a further officer post to tackle fly tipping, littering and dog fouling and more investment in infrared CCTV and also funding for community projects and the councillors' £1000 per member community leadership fund which is spent in our local communities which we feel is very important.

WFDC has been successful in securing £20.5 million from the Future High Streets fund something we are delighted about as this will transform and regenerate Worcester Street in Kidderminster town centre and was a bid that Marcus signed off in 2018 when he was Leader of the Council.

The Leader of the Council has removed the Deputy Leader of the Council, Cllr. Fran Oborksi and there has been quite a public falling out. The 3 Liberal Democrats have therefore left the Progressive Alliance and they are in minority control now with 16 members. There are 17 opposition members, in three groups, 12 Conservatives, 3 Liberal Democrats and 2 Labour. The next few weeks and months will certainly be interesting but rest assured we will continue to fight hard for you and our other 5 rural parishes.

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

Broome Issues

Further to my last 5 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 this repeatedly. Paul has sadly been off sick since December and I have raised this with our stand in highways engineer, Alex. This work was down to be done by a Parish Gang which is a two man team. He says this is a bigger job and an engineer is going to go and assess it but they aren't doing any non-urgent site visits at present due to lock down, so we continue to wait for something that should have been done 18 months ago!!!

As stated in my December report, 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 have raised this with Alex and he is going to look at this again and liaise with Bill again and we are too arrange another site visit post lock down.

Likewise the land drainage issue further up Egg Lane regarding the bund and water and silt run off is as above.

I raised the issue of the pavement from the Parish Boundary to Knoll Hill to be inspected and I am promised this will be done and resurfacing will take place.

The lay-by outside Cloisters on the A450 is ongoing and we are still looking at a potential speed reduction to 50 mph on this stretch and more junction warning signage from the Hagley direction.

I have been in liaison with the countryside service in respect of the style Warren raised and they replied and confirmed, "Just to let you know we have inspected this now. It's not too bad (there were some worse ones nearby). Are you able to give you any further details on the ownership/tenant? We have always struggled to pin down who owns what around there as a lot of it is farmed by people who don't live in the area. If we can't track anyone down we might just knock some timber in to make it stable."

Wyre Forest Issues

WCC highways work on the Churchfields is virtually completed and the new network is flowing well.

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. This work which is a £3.6 million project is starting now and will see the 3 A road arms be signalised.

Strategic Issues County Wide

Primary Schools and Secondary schools are all teaching remotely save for key worker's children and vulnerable children. The latter definition has recently been enlarged to anyone who cannot learn at home due to no lap top or no work space. There is a lot of variation on how many pupils are in schools but it is broadly ranging between 20%-50%.

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

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.)

Our household waste sites both remain open and the Worcester Road is still operating a booking system.

Libraries are remaining open, but largely for essential IT and digital services to residents who cannot get on line at home.

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

The County Council will set its budget on 18th February. Council tax is proposed to go up by 1.5% and there will be an Adult Social Care levy of 1%, effectively giving a 2.5% Council tax increase. The maximum increase allowed without a referendum is 5%. On a Band D, the increase will be £32.78 per annum, 63pence per week. The County Council makes up 70% of the overall bill.

There will be an allocation of £500k towards flood defences at Beales Corner in Bewdley. We will be investing a further

We continue to apply the National Funding Formula for mainstream schools and since 2018 schools funding for Worcestershire has increased from £314.6m to £368.2m so very much going in the right direction but still more to do to ensure fair funding across other Local Authority areas as we are still near the bottom. Higher Needs funding still remains a pressure, despite an additional £8m from Government taking our allocation to £68.4m.

The overall budget is proposed to be a net revenue budget of £355.5m. In addition, there will be a capital programme of £382.3m, local to Wyre Forest are Kidderminster Train Station, Hoobrook and Churchfields.

The percentage spent on Adult's and Children's social care in total is 60.4%. That is £140.1m net for Adult's social care and £74.6m net for Children's social care giving a total of £214.7m out of a total net budget of £355.5m.

As it presently stands, County Council elections are scheduled for 6th May, but I think they will be delayed by at least a couple of months. We await a government announcement, watch this space!

MH asked for any questions. NN asked if WCC will pay the cost can the Parish Council get the works in Watery Lane sorted as they did previously in 2014. MH advised that he would ask the question but is doubtful as he believes County will want to do the work, he will enquire how quickly it will be assessed though. BD to forward estimate of costs for work as drawn up by MB.

AA advised that the Watery Lane drainage has become worse due to the way one of the fields has been ploughed. Soil and water are coming into the watercourse at the side of Watery Lane. NN will ask the Lengthsman who owns the land and MH can arrange for a site visit with County Highways and North West Water Management if necessary.

SB mentioned the stile. WE provided the name of the landowner so MH can now ask Worcestershire County Council Public Rights of Way Officer to write to him.

There was discussion on the signage at the crossroads and MH confirmed he is looking at more junction warning signage from both directions, Hagley and Hackmans Gate.

8. Lengthsman's Update:-

The Lengthsman has been clearing silt from sides of carriageway, clearing grips and gullies, changing battery in VAS and bulb planting daffodils around the gates. He is going to check grit bins again as further snow is forecast. MB will assist if they need topping up. Snowdrops will be planted in February.

9. Planning Report:- (to consider the spreadsheet and note any applications since the last meeting)

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

20/0975/PNH: For Information Only. Proposed first floor addition to existing property at Manor House Farm, Hackmans Gate.

20/1051/HOU: Erection of first floor balcony with glass balustrade at Devonshire House, 1 Manor Gardens, Hackmans Gate. Recommend Approval.

21/0028/FULL: Realignment of driveway at The Sheiling, Hackmans Gate. Comments by 5th February 2021.

Decision Notices Received.

20/0933/HOU – Permitted.

20/0975/PNH – Prior Approval Given.

Due to work commitments NN wishes to stand down from Planning Committee. After discussion it was agreed Planning Committee would be DB, MB and AA.

10. Financial Report:-

a) To agree Budget for financial year 2021/2022.

DB presented the budget which had been circulated to all Councillors and explained all the figures contained therein. A request had been received from Broadcast Magazine for a grant towards the magazine. After much discussion it was agreed to include £40.00 and for Clerk to do a brief summary for the magazine after each meeting.

A letter received from Hagley Parish Council had been circulated to all Councillors. This was asking for a contribution of £565.81 from Broome Parish Council towards the cost of Hagley Library. The letter stated that Broome had 10 active users of the library between late 2019 and early 2020. The Clerk advised that Churchill & Blakedown Parish Council had also been asked to contribute but had voted against this. There was much discussion on this and various points raised. Concern was expressed that to budget for this would mean a large increase in Precept for all when only 10 active users identified from an electorate of 298, also it would set a precedent for contributing to future years. It was agreed Broome Parish Council would not contribute. Clerk to respond to Hagley Parish Council.

It was agreed to include in budget £100.00 for purchase of grit if needed.

Christmas Tree Lights were discussed and it was agreed to include £50.00 in the budget. SB to purchase.

With these revisions the budget was agreed. DB to amend and circulate.

b) To agree Precept for financial year 2021/2022.

DB proposed to increase the Precept from £5,000 to £5,500, this would be a 10% increase in monetary terms but would show on the Wyre Forest District Council Tax Bill as 7.8% as the Broome Tax Base for 2021/2022 has increased by 4 to 202.

The Clerk explained that the Tax Base is provided by WFDC each December and can increase due to the addition of new houses, decrease due to claims from the Council Tax reduction scheme or can be a mixture of both. Once set it does alter during the year.

After discussion it was unanimously agreed to increase the Precept to £5,500 which equates to £27.23 per Band D property, an increase of £1.98 per year.

c) To discuss Information Commissioners Officer (ICO) Payment 2021.

It was agreed to pay this by Direct Debit saving £5.00 a year. Clerk to liaise with DB/MB to get direct debit mandate signed.

d) To consider the spreadsheet and bank statements since the last meeting and approve accounts for payment.

The financial spreadsheet was duly circulated, and it was in accordance with the bank statements. The current bank balance is £11,303.37 (Community Account) and £953.97 (Business Money Manager Account).

Accounts for approval.

For Approval;

ICO - Data Protection Fee	£35.00
Broome Village Hall	£250.00
St. Peters Church, Broome	£250.00

Payments unanimously approved.

e) To discuss HSBC Safeguard Review.

Clerk advised of letter received 8th January 2021 from HSBC regarding Safeguard Review. A form needs to be completed by all signatories on the account, returned, code received via e mail and then an online Safeguard Review completed.

Obviously it was discovered when changing address for bank statements that only DB and MB are recognised as authorised signatories. Despite difficulties dealing with HSBC, once the review has been undertaken two additional signatories will need to provide appropriate details and id to bank to be added to enable signing of cheques.

11. Storage of Physical Parish Council Documents:-

This will be undertaken after co-vid restrictions have been lifted.

12. Correspondence:-

Schedule of Correspondence circulated and duly noted.

13. Councillor's Reports:-

Bench – NN advised the bench was delivered to WE before Christmas and has now been assembled. It will need to be secured to the ground so it cannot be uplifted, perhaps by fabricated feet bolted to the slabs, NN will look into this. SB enquired if it would have a plaque, DB to advise company previously used and Clerk to obtain prices.

Bulb Planting – NN advised BW has planted daffodils around the gateways. Snowdrops are best planted in “the green” so will be done in February. NN asked Councillors to advise Clerk of any other areas in the Parish that would be suitable for planting.

14. To note date of next meeting – 28th April, 2021

Future meetings are still scheduled to be via ZOOM. The Village Hall remains closed at present.

Meeting closed at 8:55 pm.

Signed.....(Chairman)

Dated.....