

BROOME PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Broome Parish Council held on Wednesday 6th September 2023, 7.00pm, Broome Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs. A Allen (AA) (Chair) D Billington (DB) (Vice Chair), M Billingham (MB) and S Breeden (SB).

Also present were: The Clerk Mrs B J Drew (BD), District Councillor Mr R M Drew (RMD) and Lengthsman W Waldron (BW).

In attendance: Sarah Riding, Robert Clarke and Michael Whitehouse (and joining the meeting after Minute 4 the signing of declaration and acceptance of office)

1. Resignation: The Clerk advised of a resignation letter received from George Brown due to work commitments. The Chairman thanked George for his work in his time as a Parish Councillor. Resignation was accepted.

2. Apologies: County / District Councillor M Hart, District Cllr. Mr I Hardiman.

3. Declarations of Interest and dispensations:

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

4. To discuss applications received for co-option to fill casual vacancies for a Parish Councillor:

The Clerk advised that following the uncontested election and now the resignation of Cllr Brown, Broome Parish Council have three vacancies. Following advertisement, the Parish Council have received three applications, Sarah Riding, Robert Clake and Michael Whitehouse. Their application forms had been circulated to existing Councillors prior to the meeting. The Chairman invited all three to say a few words on their background and why they would like to be a Parish Councillor for Broome. Following this it was proposed AA, seconded MB and unanimously agreed that all three be co-opted. They duly completed and signed the declaration of acceptance of office and joined the meeting.

5. Public Question time: None

6. Minutes of the last meeting held on 10th May 2023: These were duly approved and were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

7. Police Report:

Written Report previously circulated;

Please find our Police Report for August 2023. Nicky is showing on a late so hopefully will be attending the meeting job allowing of course! Should she be unable to attend, as always please let us know of any issues that may arise for us.

00333_I_30082023 – Burglary – Broome Lane – Between 1300-1700hrs on 30th August, unknown persons have gained access to a property and stolen jewellery from within.

At around the same time another burglary was reported nearby in the Worcester Road, Clent area, cash and bank cards were taken however it is unknown if the unknown offenders were after car keys for vehicles. The suspects for this burglary arrived in a Red Nissan Juke.

Our colleagues that cover Belbroughton/ Clent have also made us aware that a farm that sits between both West Mercia and West Midlands police have had a substantial amount of irrigation pipework stolen, running into thousands to replace.

Please remain vigilant and continue to report any suspicious activity to us.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It's that time again, where we will need your priorities for the next quarter OCT – DEC inclusive. You currently have Speeding and Burglaries. Can I suggest that with the dark nights approaching you have Burglaries (light up campaign) as one going forward. We would also suggest a PUSH towards locals signing up to Neighbourhood Matters, so that we can keep them abreast of goings on in the area

We are renewing our parish council contracts and need to check we have the current up to date details for Chair, Clerk and Councillors. If you could send these to us please on Kidderminster.east@westmercia.police.uk thank you by end of September latest.

Police priorities were agreed as Speeding, Burglaries, Increased Police Patrols.

8. District Councillor's Report:

District Councillors Report previously circulated;

Wyre Forest Issues:

Re: The Lea castle Quarry appeal on 5th May, whilst the Planning Inspector dismissed the appeal, the applicant has appealed to the Secretary of State and we await the outcome.

There is no update yet as to when the 800 homes planned for Lea Castle Village will be determined by WFDC following the submission of the planning application some months ago. Likewise, the Woven Oaks application has yet to be determined.

ALSO:

WFDC Planning Officers will be offering training on recent changes to planning laws at Churchill & Blakedown Parish Council meeting 10th October (provisional date); Broome Councillors are invited to attend this.

9. County Councillor's Report:

County Councillor Report previously circulated;

Broome Issues

Regarding the speeding issues at Hackmans Gate I have said previously I am not happy with the 39mph northbound and 37mph westbound and have asked WCC to liaise with the police on this. This is ongoing and likewise I am working with Cllr. Karen May, my county council colleague who represents the neighbouring division of Client Hills which includes Hagley, to try and get a speed limit review from the Cross Keys on the A450 up to the 30mph zone, with a view to a reduction from the national speed limit to 50mph. I feel that any reduction lower than this will be unrealistic.

I am pleased that at last the new VAS pole on the A450 at Hackman's Gate is finally in situation and at the second time of asking in the right place!

I am aware of the inconvenience of the road closure in the village due to utility work. If there are any issues that I need to address in respect of this please do not hesitate to contact me.

I have been liaising with a resident and your clerk regarding the pavement on the A450 between Hackman's Gate and Broome Lane being overgrown and have been chasing WCC to get the overgrown verges cut back. WCC's initial response to the resident was poor and misleading and I did secure an apology for this diminution of service, having raised the matter with a senior highways officer.

Wyre Forest Issues

In respect of Lea Castle Quarry, despite the planning inspector dismissing the appeal on 5th May, the applicants have appealed to the Secretary of State by way of a Judicial Review and the hearing will be held on 28th September in Cardiff.

WCC highways have been out doing their second highway cuts over the last month and there have been considerable road and pavement resurfacing over the summer months, together with new white lining.

Bewdley Bridge is currently closed for the next month due to some preliminary Severn Trent works for the flood defences. It will then be operating one way over the bridge into the town for approximately 18 months whilst the Environment Agency undertake the work for the construction of the flood defences. This is a circa £6.6m scheme, £6m from the Government and £500k from WCC.

Strategic Issues County Wide

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.)

Here2Help is now also co-ordinating our Ukrainian Refugee programme working with the 6 District Councils. We now have several hundred refugees in the County and a number of families have now come to the Wyre Forest and young people are taking up places in local schools.

OFSTED have now finished inspecting our children's social care services. We were rated inadequate in 2017. We were removed from being inadequate in 2019 and from intervention from the DfE last year as a result of our progress and I am delighted to say we have received a 'good' rating. This has slightly been overshadowed by the sad death of my cabinet colleague Cllr. Andy Roberts the Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care who had held the post since 2017.

WCC have undertaken a raft of lining and carriageway and pavement resurfacing now over the summer months.

WCC are embarking on a 'programme of libraries unlocked' following the success at Droitwich and Stourport. Libraries remain open for longer but are unstaffed. Access is by a secure swipe card. After the 12-month trials at Droitwich and Stourport the scheme is being extended, most locally to Chaddesley at Hagley and Bromsgrove.

The boundary commission have kick started a boundary review for the 57 divisions across Worcestershire. The proposal is to retain 57 divisions. The first stage of the process is for WCC to agree its response at Full Council on 14th September. There is a need for better elector equality across all divisions and all divisions need to be contained within the district council area boundary.

The proposal for Wyre Forest is that it will retain its 10 county councillors but there will be some changes to the boundaries to get better electoral equality. For example, in the St Mary's Division my colleague has 9,614 electors compared to my 6,819 electors.

The Chaddesley Division currently includes the parishes of:-

Broome

Chaddesley Corbett

Churchill and Blakedown

Rushock

Stone

Plus, the whole of the Spennells Estate. The number that every division will need to work to to achieve elector equality is circa 8,600 but + or – 10% to take into account local circumstances ie. Parish communities or estates.

The Boundary Commission will then further consult on the proposals and the final order with the new divisional boundaries is scheduled to be made in July 2024 with the elections on 1st May, 2025.

AA raised the following which were also commented on by DB and which were to be dealt with following the previous meeting in May

- Little Lane – condition of road surface
- Blocked Gullies – previously reported by Lengthsman
- Speeding Hackman's Gate

AA queried whether the Report on Here 2 Help was still relevant?

RMD will refer these back to County Councillor Hart.

10. Lengthsman Report:

BW reported undertaking general maintenance, clearing footpaths and footway works. He reported the appalling road condition of Little Lane. Cllr R Drew will liaise with County Councillor M Hart regarding this and report back.

BW also reported that the previously reported blocked gullies have still not all been attended to.

11. Planning Report:

The Planning Spreadsheet had been previously circulated. Clerk reported on Planning since last meeting:

23/0282/PNH Lowood, Belbroughton Road, Hackman's Gate – Proposed enlargement of a dwellinghouse by construction of additional storeys. Pending.

23/0293/TPO Little Knoll, Belbroughton Road, Hackman's Gate – Tree Works. Approved.

23/0302/HOU Pinelands, Worcester Road – Remove existing rear conservatory and replace various existing outbuildings with a two-storey side extension. Application Withdrawn.

23/0343/HOU & 0344/LBC Top Farm, Watery Lane – Proposed garage conversion to form habitable accommodation including internal works and new entrance. Approved.

23/0363/CLP Lowood, Belbroughton Road, Hackman's Gate – Construction of outbuilding. Certificate of Lawfulness.

23/0390/HOU & 0391/LBC Top Farm, Watery Lane – Addition of a dormer roof to match existing. Clay tiled mono pitched roof with roof light and ship lap timber front and side cheeks. Approved.

23/0479/HOU Pinelands, Worcester Road – Side extension to replace various buildings and removal of existing conservatory. Refused.

The Planning Sub Committee to remain as MB, DB, AA

12. To agree appointment of new website provider and creation of separate Parish Councillor email addresses.

AA had produced a paper, previously circulated, for Councillors consideration regarding new website and email addresses.

Currently the PC website is hosted through Worcestershire CC. It is out of date, basic and uninformative. It does not in any way promote the Parish as a whole and even if a resident did choose to visit the Website it provides little in the way of relevant information. It is apparent that Town and Parish Councils throughout the country are updating their Websites.

Parish Councillors are currently using their own (often private) email addresses for correspondence and the GDPR implications as well as the risks if there were to be a Freedom of Information request have been previously highlighted. The need for councillors to have .gov.uk email addresses has been discussed at a number of meetings. However in addition to the registration of the domain name the PC requires a dedicated email hosting service.

Following the meeting in May, the clerk approached 3 organisations with experience of working with Town and Parish Councils with a brief to set up a new website, obtain a domain name and provide hosting services. Two organisations responded. Set out below is an overview of the proposal and quotation from Parish Council Websites (James Lungley) which appears to be the most suitable and cost efficient for Broome PC.

Overview of Proposal from Parish Council Websites (“PCW”)

- Sites are built for ease of use and to suit the needs of the administrator.
- Once built the site will be managed by the PC (this being the most effective solution) however ongoing technical support is provided (support costs being built into the monthly cost)
- Although the current Broome PC website is not built on a platform that is easily migrated PCW believe that moving the current content to a new website framework is easily manageable, albeit the process of moving content would be a manual one. However again this is included in the cost.

- The Website will include the follow features:

Easy to use content management system

Simple document upload.

Latest News and Events section

Contact Forms and Maps allowing the PC to receive correspondence from visitors to the website

Attachment of documents to any page

Mobile Friendly Design

- The site will be compliant with relevant accessibility regulations including GDPR and Transparency Code

Pricing:

- Initial and first year

- £569 excl VAT for the design, build and migration of all required content. This gives the PC a fully “ready to go” website that features all modern functionality and will meet all current website requirements
- Website hosting and support @ £21.85 per month excl VAT (billed annually for the first year). This includes regular (daily, weekly) backup, disaster recovery and SSL certificate. Additional Website security is also provided. There is no limit on website storage. Email accounts are included in this cost (up to 50 accounts, each with a minimum of 10GB storage space).

Second year Website hosting and support costs • £21.85 per month plus VAT

Other costs:

- Two-year registration of a .gov.uk domain - £120 excl. VAT. Thereafter renewals are every two years at a cost of £88+VAT

Timing Depending on receipt of Website Content and feedback start and complete to a site built within 4 weeks.

DB questioned whether the Parish are getting value for money as Broome is a small Parish. AA explained that the Parish Council have current reserves of over £13,000 and have previously been advised by the Internal Auditor that they should not be over twice the Precept. The website will benefit all residents of the Parish as it will promote the Parish Council and be very informative including calendar of events, planning applications, meeting dates, agenda’s and minutes as well as relevant information such as road closures, burglaries and thefts, how to report fly tipping etc After discussion it was proposed AA, seconded SB and unanimously agreed to proceed with the quote as outlined above from Parish Council Websites. It was agreed once “live” a flyer would be put through every household in the Parish advertising the new website once it was up and running.

13. Financial Report:

- a) To update on closure of HSBC Bank Accounts.
Clerk advised thanks to MB and DB both accounts have now been closed and money transferred to Lloyds.

- b) To consider bank reconciliation and bank statements since last meeting.

Balances as at 31st August 2023

HSBC Community Account	Nil
HSBC Money Manager Account	Nil
Lloyds Bank	£13,413.80

The new Cashbook is being trialled, but amendments are needed and it is not “user friendly”.
AA / Clerk to review.

- c) Lengthsman Pay – It was unanimously agreed to increase the Lengthsman hourly rate by £1.00 per hour to £17.00.
- d) Internal Audit Services 23/24 – Letter received from DM Payroll Services noted.
- e) Clerks Pay Review – Delegated approval for this to be undertaken by AA/DB prior to the next meeting.
- f) To approve schedule of Accounts for Payment.

Already Paid;

Zurich Insurance	£241.00
Mr W Waldron – Lman April	£80.00
Mr W Waldron – Lman May	£224.00
Mr W Waldron – Lman June	£208.00
Mrs B J Drew – Norton Antivirus	£20.00
Mr W Waldron – Lman July 23	£80.00

For Approval;

WFDC Election Costs	£86.32
Mr W Waldron – Lengthsman August	£96.00

14. To discuss traffic data from additional VAS located at Hackman's Gate.

Clerk has now forwarded two sets of speed data from the VAS located at Hackman's Gate both clearly showing cars travelling in excess of the speed limit. It was agreed Clerk to send data to County Councillor M Hart and Police to ascertain what action can be taken.

15. To discuss Coronation Living Heritage Fund.

Clerk had circulated details of above fund which will support local tree planting projects in communities. After discussion it was agreed that this had been looked at previously and the Parish cannot identify any land suitable that is accessible. If any Councillor identifies a suitable area, please contact the Clerk.

16. To discuss provision of a Christmas Tree and Lights.

DB to speak to Phil Able who has previously decorated the lime tree in the village to see if he will be doing this this year.

17. Provision of Parish Winter Grit.

MB reported we do still have grit. This can be reviewed in December and purchased if needed.

18. Date of Next Meetings.**Broome Village Hall**

6th December 2023, 7pm

Clerk to check availability for 2024 dates;

31st January 2024

8th May 2024

4th September 2024

4th December 2024

Meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Signed..... Amanda J Allen (Chairman)

Date.....