**Minutes of the Throckmorton Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 19th May 2022**

There were 16 members of the public present including Parish Councillors Boocock (Chair), Hodgkiss, Argyle and Tucker (arrived at 19.25) and District Councillor Tucker and County Councillor Boatright

In attendance:Julie White, Parish Clerk taking the minutes

1. **Welcome and Apologies.**

The Chairman welcomed everyone and reminded those present that whilst the Parish council hosts this meeting, it is not a council meeting but a public meeting giving all parishioners the chance to raise, discuss and share views, thoughts and ideas concerning our village, our community and environment, and to ask questions or make suggestions about how things could be improved.

Cllr Boocock said that the 2020 meeting was cancelled due to Covid and the virtual Zoom meeting of 2021 was not quite the same! These meetings along with events like the Bishampton Cares coffee mornings, fete and village events help us to understand the things which are of greatest concern to you, the things you feel we are doing right – or wrong and help us to get your input.

Cllr Boocock then introduced the members of the parish council who were present, including the new parish clerk, Julie White.

Apologies were received from Cllr Carol Wood, Cllr Amoroso, Cllr Davis, Cllr Poulter and Tony Jones

**2. To approve the minutes of the 2021 Annual Parish Meeting**

The minutes of the 2021 meeting were agreed as a true record and Cllr Boocock signed the minutes.

1. **Chairman’s Report – A review of the past year - Key themes in 2 minutes.**

The Chairman gave the following report:

I said this is your meeting ….so the more we talk the less time we have to listen …. but I just want to take a couple of moments to reflect the year remembering that…

* **…. 12 months ago, we were in the grip of the pandemic**
  + Lockdown forced this forum online such was the impact of the virus.
  + Our villages responded with willing volunteers supporting friends and neighbours a real spirit of community - a thousand acts of kindness
  + And we must also remember those lost and those deeply affected by Covid
* The restrictions on meeting and gathering highlighted the importance of information and communication across our community
  + we continue to develop our website and social media presence …
  + Also, to reach those not on-line, the newsletter and information leaflets distributed throughout the villages
* Restricted travel also highlighted the important role played by Paul and his team at Bishampton Stores – and whenever possible Gina and Marc and those at the Dolphin – true, valuable hubs of the community
* **Now as things get a bit closer to “normality”**
  + our community coffee mornings are back and as popular as ever
  + We can all enjoy our wonderful outdoor spaces – Shorthorn Wood, the Nature Reserve and our huge network of footpaths, whilst teams and working parties are again able to work together on improvement projects
  + Our community spaces – the Villages Hall and Parish rooms are again hosting events and gatherings for all

But also throughout year are the less visible tasks which support life in the villages

* Work on planning proposals, the solar farm, Main Street development, works at the airfield – plus of course our opposition to the SWDPR plans for Throckmorton New Town
* Also coordinating with Highways and police, Wychavon and county council
* Work on the communities behalf on challenges like the Light escapes, problem burning and fumes
* Maintaining the safety of the play areas
* Coordinating changing personnel – our Lengthsman, Footpaths Warden, council members and most recently our clerk
* And of course …. managing our responsibilities as landlords for the Shop, Pub and Flat

I’m sure we don’t always get things right for everyone …. but I do know that both the council and our community remain committed to working together to look out for each other and make our corner of the world a little better, a little more caring, safe, respectful and enjoyable.

It would be remiss of me not to also take a moment to express sincere thanks from myself, the council and the community,

* not only to our current clerk and those serving on the council but also to
  + Our former clerk Eleanor Morrish
  + Gordon Kingston who stepped down as Footpath Warden after many years and Phil Poulter for taking on the role
  + To the teams at the Villages Hall – Bev and Chris Churchill & Mark Platts …. And the Parish Rooms Peter and Ros Chatterton
  + All the volunteers tirelessly serving our community – those on our volunteer programmes, litter pickers, painters, neighbourhood watch and all those leading clubs and societies which add to enrich life in our community.
  + And to everyone in the community who has done their bit to support each other through these challenging times

That’s all I intent to say formally, of course we are happy to take your questions on these or other topics – and if we can we’ll provide a straight answer – if not we will note it and get back to you.

1. **Report from the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), West Mercia Police**

The Clerk read out a short email from PC Kennedy. He introduced himself and said that he is from Evesham Police Station. He has worked in Evesham for the past 6 years so has a good understanding of the area’s geography and issues. He apologised for not being able to attend tonight’s meeting, but if anyone has any issues or concerns, please let him know.

1. **Reports from the County & District Councillor**

**Cllr Boatright gave the following report:**

It has been a busy year getting to grips with the rules and changes that are coming along for us in the next few years. Thankfully we still have 40 years of Liz’s experience to help out!

**School system**

The county has undertaken a consultation on the move from a three tier to two tier system in the Pershore area. While there were some reservations, the general view was that this would be beneficial to young people.

The county is currently reviewing how to undertake this change as funding of approximately £7 million would be needed to update facilities in some schools (particularly Pershore High).

The original timetable is now on hold with the council working with the department for education to look at options. It is expected that the earliest date for any change will be starting in September 2025.

**Highways**

Northern Link road is progressing well. The cycleway and footpath along Wyre Road is expected to open in the next 6 weeks, while the road connecting to the A44 is expected to be fully operational in September. Some delays have been caused by Network Rail but everything is currently moving forward. There will need to be one more night closure for the rail line to pour the concrete and the date should be booked in very soon.

The council has pledged to spend £4 million more on footpaths over the next few years. Cllr Boatright has been very busy working with residents to make a list of footpaths that need resurfacing and has also prioritised dropping curbs for access with wheelchairs and prams.

Highways is also aware of an issue regarding subsidence on Upton Snodsbury Road just north of Long Lane. A patch job was done but it is quickly disintegrating. Options to solve the issue are being sought.

Regarding the Upton Snodsbury Road/Long Lane junction, Cllr Boatright has been looking at options with Highways as there are numerous reports of damage only accidents, and there is plenty of public concern. As there are also vulnerable users of the road (as there is a junction opposite for homes and children have to cross to get to the path). The junction is now incredibly dangerous as we have HGV's turning and young people walking to school.

The council has accepted that these points are valid and will now pass this onto the safety team. There is still a long way to go but we can at least see some movement. Dan thanked everyone who has helped with the information and hopefully we will get some positive responses soon.

Long Lane is continuing to be an issue with large numbers of HGVs. The road has been degrading on the sides and any remedial work has quickly degraded. The Highways team has acknowledged that there are no quick fixes and any changes will require a major project- this is not forthcoming at this time but will continue to pursue.

The fence that is overhanging onto Highways land at Church Farm House is awaiting a traffic light permit but it is hoped it will be sorted in late summer.

The ongoing visibility issues on The Lea are currently being discussed at length with the various stakeholders and it is hoped a resolution will be found soon.

**Council Tax**

In February the county increased council tax by 3.94%, with 3% on social care and 0.94% on general services. It should be stressed that given the current rate of inflation this is effectively a cut and many services are being put under pressure. The issues in Redditch with their library is just one immediate example. Social care in particular is under considerable pressure. Over 70% of our contributions to council tax go to social care and yet, we are still finding it very difficult to recruit carers and maintain a high standard of provision. It is clear that wages are not the only issue as staff are just not available. There remains issues with children’s services, with a recent Fostering Ofsted report deeming the service inadequate and SEND services remain in a very difficult situation, being very closely monitored by Ofsted and being behind schedule on ensuring children have the right school places. It is clear that finances are being squeezed with funding in this area much lower than in nearby councils.

A resident said that she felt that the speed limit along Long Lane should be reduced to 30mph to the Camp gates to try and prevent the huge potholes that are occurring at the side of the road.

**District Councillor Tucker gave the following report:**

Cllr Tucker reported that she is enjoying just being a District Councillor and not also a County Councillor and she is very much enjoying working with Cllr Boatright.

Tucker spoke about the proposed New Town in Throckmorton:

There has been very little progress since the last public meeting back in 2019. The District Council published proposals for a new town for 2000 houses to be built between 2031 and 2041 and a further 4000 to be built after that, which would result in a town bigger than Pershore. A consultation took place and an excellent report was commissioned stating why it was a bad idea. Documents can be found on line on the Parish Council website – [www.batpc.org.uk](http://www.batpc.org.uk) Since the consultation there has been silence from Wychavon District Council (WDC). WDC has been working towards preparing for the New Town, but there has only been a small amount of information made available to councillors and that has be treated as confidential. When the consultation took place, a map was published which showed a star in the middle and potential development area surrounding it. Since then, 1 plan has been leaked which showed some parcels of land within the development area but it is not known exactly what is planned. The number of houses has been reduced from the original 2000 followed by a further 4000 to a total of 3000. Cllr Tucker said that the implications of this town is serious and the vision of WDC should be made public by September this year.

Cllr Tucker confirmed that the plan does include a shop, access road to the A44 and a school but until the vision of WDC is made public it is difficult to comment. Once the details are out in the public arena there will be a 6 week consultation period. Cllr Tucker commented that she believes that if they are proposing 2000 fewer houses than originally planned then there should be strong planning arguments for the plans to go before the Planning Inspector. Cllr Tucker then invited questions:

A resident asked if the proposed development was confined to the airfield. Cllr Tucker said that for shops, school etc to be included in the plans it would have to go beyond the airfield. Landowners were asked at the beginning if they wanted to put their land forward for development.

On other planning matters the airfield request for more storage for cars is still outstanding and an application for 23 Long Lane, Tilesford is still awaiting determination.

The planning departments of Malvern and Wychavon have merged which means a loss of valuable local knowledge.

Council tax has been frozen for the 5th year running and WDC has a lot of money in reserves due to clever use of resources.

A resident mentioned the footpath on the road which comes out the airfield is unwalkable. It is overgrown and a wagon is parked blocking the path. Charles Tucker said that the previous Footpaths Officer had looked at the path and taken photos.

1. **Parish Paths Warden Report**

Phillip Poulter was unable to attend the meeting but forwarded the following report:

In the early months of 2021 Covid restrictions curtailed working party activities however individual members continued to trim vegetation around gates, stiles and over paths where possible.

However in late summer we were able to restart working parties free from restrictions. Some trimming of blackthorn starting to restrict the bridleway between Bishampton and Shorthorn Woods was done. Also, with the support and help from Linda and Robert Tarver, we placed some aggregate in three gateways on the bridleway and the Jubilee Walk. As a result these gateways have since remained free of the deep mud that has been a problem in several previous winters. We also replaced the ditch crossing on Gunnings Lane just after the farm building gate.

In autumn 2021 Gordon Kingston retired from the position of Parish Paths Warden and I took over the role. I would like to thank Gordon for all the sterling work he has done over his many years in the role and for the help and support that he is continuing to give to me. His wealth of experience and knowledge are invaluable.

Since October, as well as the general management of vegetation around gates and stiles, 3 further ditch crossings have been replaced. Thank you to Bob, Nigel, Russell and John for their help with these installations. A further 2 ditch crossings are in the pipeline along with some other longer term projects that will require help from the above and the other people who have kindly offered their service as volunteers. Bob Teasdale also completed the Worcestershire County Council strimmer and brushcutter course.

Thanks also to the Parish Lengthsman, Carl, for the work he did on clearing the mass of brambles on the footbridge behind the Severn Trent installation in Throckmorton.

During the recent winter storms several trees came down on rights of way. The larger of these were dealt with by County Council contractors arranged by Fiona Argyle at Countryside Services but thanks also to Phil Day for removing the large tree that came down across a gate on the path from Abberton Road towards Ab Lench.

Fiona also arranged for several new fingerpost waymarkers to be installed in the parish in March, although the one at Throckmorton is still on the ‘to do’ list.

The Parish Footpaths Noticeboard was also the victim of one of the named winter storms and will be re-erected when two new posts are available from the County Council.

Further thanks are also due to the Tarvers of Hayes Farm for their help with receiving and transporting materials to where they are needed and I would also like to thank Gina and Marc, The Stoneland Trust and the Parish Council for helping to resolve my equipment storage issues.

I would urge residents to continue to report any issues they come across on our footpath network either directly to me or through the Parish Clerk. Also any offers to join the footpath volunteers group would be gratefully received.

**6. Reports from Bishampton organisations**

Cllr Tucker gave an update on Shorthorn Woods. Wychavon District Council owns the freehold but the Parish Council is leasing it for 50 years until 2068. It is intended as a woodland and not a Country Park, recreational amenity or Nature Reserve, so there are trip hazards and you can’t expect the paths to be too tidy. It is well used by horseriders and dogwalkers and also by people who enjoy a quiet walk to enjoy the tranquility. The volunteer work parties have started up again after Covid and Cllr Tucker invited anyone to get in touch if they would like to join the working parties. Cllr Tucker also invited any comments or observations on Shorthorn Woods.

**Reports were received from the following organisations. All reports are appended to the minutes**

* **Throckmorton Village Charity –** Peter Chatteronread out a report.
* **The Dolphin Pub –** The Clerk read out a report submitted by Gina, Landlady of the pub.
* **Bishampton and Village Hall Trust (BATVHT)** submitted by Bev Churchill, Chair of BATVHT,
* **Bishampton Village Store** submitted by Paul Blackburn.
* **Throckmorton Parish Rooms** submitted by Peter Chatterton
* **Neighbourhood Watch** submitted by Clare Elwell
* **Community Speedwatch** submitted by Clare Elwell

**7. Open Session**

A resident mentioned the bus service. There used to be bus each day in to Pershore but now you can get there but there is no bus back. WCC put in for a huge bid to improve transport, but were not awarded any money. It was pointed out that people can contact the Voluntary Help Centre in Pershore for a lift. Tracey Stevens, Community Builder at WDC mentioned the Ticket to Ride event which is looking at ways to improve community transport. She mentioned that Fladbury has a scheme with a volunteer driver which takes a minibus into Pershore and back again and said that this is something that could be looked at developing. Tracey said that she is happy to see if there is a way to move things forward.

A resident asked if there was any truth in the rumour that the Wrubble business was re-locating.

Cllr Hodgkiss mentioned the current traffic issues and said that the situation is very dangerous. The roads are unsuitable for heavy plant and if the hedges were lower you would be able to see cars approaching. Traffic currently moves into the centre of the road on the bend which is very dangerous.

The New Town was discussed again and Cllr Boocock mentioned the degree of secrecy together with the availability of underpinning data is unsatisfactory. A resident said that rather than look at the proposal negatively, what about making the airfield desirable in some other way and asked if WDC could look at encouraging other uses. Cllr Boocock said that in terns of location there are better uses for the land eg solar or geo-thermal but the value of building land is far higher than it is for other uses.

The area where the cows are buried is still protected and Cllr Liz Tucker said that she is quite sure that any New Town proposals will keep clear of this area. Cllr Charles Tucker spoke about migrating gases and said that there is still a question of whether the site is contaminated and the Planning Inspector will need to be satisfied that all hazards have been addressed.

Cllr Boocock then asked how many people look at BaTPC social media – just 3 people raised their hands. Cllr Boocock then asked how many look at the BaTPC website – 5 people. 50% of people said that they receive the newsletter. No-one said that they used the Information Kiosk for putting forward any views and only a handful of people said that they looked at the noticeboards.

The meeting closed at 20.25

Signed

………………………………………………… …………………………..

Chair Date

**Throckmorton Village Charity**

Report on Throckmorton Parish Rooms for the year ending 31st December 2021.

Although we were still in covid restrictions at the start of 2021 the room was only being used for 4 hours per month up to May, which was one evening per week for the Indian takeaway for collecting meals made by a local in Throckmorton. The booking then started with Wychavon Elections in May. Booking then became steady with the room being used by local businesses for meetings who were still working from home and wanted to meet twice a month instead of zoom, we had a regular booking from a band for rehearsals throughout the year, two Cycling events took place using the Hall as a base, also a couple of safety courses were run from the room taking up a whole week, and of course local bookings from the Parish Council and local residents for children’s parties etc. The Village Charity also used the Parish rooms and car park for the small Fete in September which we called “Back together again.” In total the Parish Room was used for 255 hours in the whole of 2021.

The installation of internet has been extremely helpful to Hires and we thank the Parish council for the first two years funding of this service.

Our income for the year for the Parish Room was £9,785 which included £8,000 covid grant from Wychavon. The expenses were £2,100.

The only work conducted in 2021 was for a new water heater and replacement batteries in the fire alarm. But looking forward we need to have part of the floor investigated to find out the seriousness of the crack that has developed in the floor under the floor covering across one end of the room.

Peter Chatterton - Treasurer & dogs body.

**Report from The Dolphin Pub**

* Community coffee mornings on the first Friday of the month are going well, would be great if we saw some new faces.
* Quiz night every other Sunday from 7pm is a great success and the quiz master makes it a challenge every time
* Jubilee weekend! We are celebrating the Jubilee with a long bank holiday Gin Festival from the 2nd – 5th June, we will have over 20 gins, all matched perfectly with tonics & garnishes showing the best of Britain. Our community coffee morning will still be going ahead on the first Friday of June, the 3rd, and will be featuring some classic British bakes which we cannot wait to share with everyone. We are also offering Afternoon tea boxes for 2 to pick up to enjoy at the Big Jubilee Lunch at the village hall.
* Still offering cakes for order including boxes of cupcakes, brownies, or blondies which always go down well for a birthday celebration.
* We continue to serve lunch and dinner Tuesday – Saturday and roasts on Sunday 12-4. We open at midday everyday apart from Monday’s when we are closed and Wednesdays when we open at 11am for people to come and have coffee and cake.
* Planning our August bank holiday celebration as we will be turning 2 on the 29th August. We will be holding a car show, having a beer festival with lots of local ales and ciders and will also have pop up kitchens over the weekend which we are very excited for. If anyone would like to show their vehicle can they please get in touch with me via the pub email [info@thedolphininn-bishampton.co.uk](mailto:info@thedolphininn-bishampton.co.uk)

If there is anything else you need at the moment then please let us know.

**Report from Bishampton Stores**

It has just passed 2 years since the shop re-opened, with the cafe and Post Office following soon after.

With the pandemic this was opportune timing both for the business and the surrounding villages (and the cyclists!)

That initial good trading has allowed us to heavily invest in new refrigeration and outdoor furniture with just the addition of new indoor seating to come soon.

Trading is becoming more difficult with recent world events and price rises but the business is positioned to weather this.

Thanks to gaining a small rural monthly payment from the Post Office this side is contributing better towards its costs.

I would like to thank all those who regularly support us and look forward to a healthy future.

Paul Blackburn - Bishampton Village Store

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**Bishampton, Abberton and Throckmorton Villages Hall Trust Report**

The Trustees held our AGM on 8th March 2022. Seven existing Trustees were re-elected and two new people were also elected to join us. Only two villagers attended. We gave thanks to Liz Poulter who liaises between us and the Parish Council, to Helen who cleans the hall beautifully and to the Trustees who had been meeting throughout the last two years during various covid lockdowns and restrictions enforced on us. We also said a farewell to Phil Poulter now path warden for the village.

We had several grants during covid but a vast reduction in rental income. Grants were put to good use. However, ‘what could we spend’ and ‘what do we need to save’ was down to our treasurer who I can say is very good at spread sheets and at meetings presented these to the Trustees. We have mainly carried out necessary maintenance work: Replacement boiler, new windows in the foyer and main hall, repainting internally, a card reader, wifi, acoustic panels in the main hall and a new hearing loop (to name but a few). This coming year the floor that has become problematic is due to be professionally dealt with and the outside of the hall will also be repainted. These are necessary but these costs are high. We do a lot of general maintenance ourselves – some things, you will appreciate, we cannot do!

We were obviously keen to get things going again when we were allowed. Our community seemed eager to want to return to some normality. We held a wonderful Christmas Craft Fayre that was very successful, the pantomime was brilliant. Going forward into 2022 more groups are returning. The Gardening Club Spring Show was beautiful and Mark’s Quiz was fun and raised money for local charities.

I think it fair to say that attendance is low. We are still not out of the woods yet with regard Covid and understandably some people are reluctant to return to their clubs or events. We all hope that things will be better this year. Please try and support the Village Hall. Join the 100+ club, membership is lower than last year. If you can help with maintenance when we put a call out we would love to see you. Join in events if you can such as the Movie Night, Live and Local shows, Mikron in August and the two biggies this year - the Jubilee Picnic and the Craft Fayre at the end of November. We do need help from time to time and are grateful for all the volunteers who come along. Please come to events, please hire the hall.

Bev Churchill

Chairman Bishampton Village Hall

**Bishampton & Throckmorton Neighbourhood Watch**

Was initially set up for the whole parish in mind but were unable to get a committed volunteer to help oversee Throckmorton & Tilesford.

Bishampton village was split up by roads using the village heritage house map and using volunteer deputies we leafleted houses then manually added people to the police nationally approved ‘Our Watch’ system.

Any important ‘local’ alerts can be sent out to all using this secure database. The system has slightly changed now under West Mercia and other alerts are also sent by them depending on selected preferences.

We have a Bishampton & Throckmorton Facebook page and NW WhatsApp group which villagers are also welcomed to join.

During lockdown and with people being home certain crimes like domestic burglaries decreased however, rural crime increased. Only specific local alerts are shared if deemed necessary.

We do review take up membership every so often.

Anyone in the whole parish not currently signed up can easily do so by searching for Our watch UK then join. You will then need to ‘find my local scheme’ by inserting postcode. Select Bishampton & Throckmorton NW and join by logging in.

**Bishampton Community Speed Watch**

The community speed watch group for Bishampton was initially set up in May 2017 by concerned volunteers under the West Mercia’s safer roads initiative.

With grant funding the Parish Council were able to purchase a VAS (vehicle activation sign) for Abberton Road.

Last year the parish council managed to get yet more funding for a second VAS on Broad Lane.

The third entrance to the village Throckmorton to Main Street, benefits from a shared VAS. This is shared between villages.

The VAS signs not only give a clear visual reminder 24/7 but also enable data collection.

With administration changes within West Mercia the CSW groups were then overseen by local policing teams.

New CSW groups awaiting to start in problem areas throughout the county were unable to start up due to a national shortage of equipment so those groups that were not as active had a consultation.

We were being asked to commit the group to do a minimum of bi-weekly sessions however, they’d prefer if we could do more yet only having the bare number of volunteers required we felt it no longer viable along with having the two permanent VAS it was decided that Evesham sergeants will now consult with Bishampton parish council and monitor our VAS data and if deemed necessary will conduct speed checks within the parish and issue enforcement penalties.

Note: Throckmorton was never covered by CSW as after the initial data testing Long Lane did not meet the criteria. It must be police monitored.

A sincere thank you to all that gave up their time freely and volunteered for CSW