**Strensham Parish Council**

**Minutes** of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 18th March 2021 at 7:30pm via Zoom

**Present:** Councillors: N Guilding (Chairman) M Gribble (Vice Chairman) T Harris, T Potter,

H Gilder, E Voci-Bennett, C White

**In Attendance:** District Cllr R Davis, S Wingate (Clerk)

**14/21 Welcome & Apologies:**

**15/21 Declarations of Interest & Dispensation Requests from Councillors:** None

**16/21 Minutes:** The Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th January 2021 had been circulated.

Unanimous agreement of Strensham Parish Cllrs present.

**17/21 Matters Arising & Progress Reports:** We have looked at Church Road and seen the

flooding problem from the Services lorry park problem has improved.

**18/21 Planning:** None

**19/21 Other Matters:**

1. **Fly tipping, Church Road:** A suggestion has been made by Peter Reid, of Church Road, for a CCTV camera be set up in Church Road (on the bend next to Services lorry park) to monitor fly tipping.

Concerns were made over the positioning of a camera on a tree, would there be enough evidence for Wychavon CC to follow up, and the cost of a camera to SPC would be approx £350. Instead it was suggested that signage warning fly tippers might be a better option.

1. **Waste disposal at Tips:** A question was raised regarding the charges for waste disposal at Council Tips, resulting in fly tipping by contractors. It is only Commercial waste which is chargeable, where domestic disposal is free. Unfortunately there is an element of fly tipping by contractors not willing to pay the Council fee.
2. **Strensham Village Project:** John Noseworthy, owner of Strensham Business Park has offered to fund a project in the village and has asked for proposals. To be discussed in May’s Meeting.
3. **Lengthsman’s mower:** The Lengthsman’s mower was beyond repair and a new one has been purchased, costing £244.00.

**20/21 SWDP Sustainability Appraisal:** Cllr Gribble and John Barrett attended the Launch Zoom Meeting on March 1st. There are two proposals for Strensham, a new housing development of 2,500 houses including industrial, commercial, education and leisure facilities of 15 hectares. The employment land proposal, near Strensham Woods, which we opposed in Autumn 2019 is still very much alive.

The Housing Proposal spreads south from Church Road between the M5 to the River Avon, as far as the Gloucestershire border.

This is on land owned by 3 landowners, including the Gilder family who are opposed to this development. Cllr Guilding approached Wychavon DC and was advised Harry Gilder has no financial interest and is in opposition to these proposals and can therefore take part in discussions.

The Sustainability Appraisal purpose is for Consultants to score points on the various sites and put forward sustainability criteria to judge which are more suitable for development.

Any comments should be factual points within the limits of the criteria.

The Planners will take the Consultants analysis and comments received and use them to produce the final Draft of the plan this Autumn.

Objections and comments, from the autumn consultation, will be scrutinized by an Inspector who will have a final say on what should be in the plan..

The Housing Plan is low on the list of preferred sites, being N0 8 out of 9. The Strensham site is unlikely to go forward. The favoured sites are: Worcester Parkway Station, Throckmorton and Mitton.

It is still important though for the Parish Council to submit a letter of objection, picking up inaccuracies in the Consultants research and conclusions.

The Employment Plan near the woods is seen as more favourable. The conclusion of the Consultants, Lepus have reached, on page 377 of the Report is the site is suitable for selection, as it is already adjacent to an existing employment site.

There are grounds to object, one being the land is part of parkland to Strensham Court which features in Wychavon District Historic Parks and Gardens, in their Supplementary Planning Document. No reference is made to this in the Appraisal though other sites have such features taken into consideration.

Cllr Guilding spoke to Andrew Ford (at SWDP) asking if this was an oversight, or another reason? He was told that it was probably an oversight, the Consultants may have been briefed on the Park. Also, the Business Park is not thriving and Wychavon DC have listed it as less than successful.

Another consideration is increased traffic, and how far from main routes this proposal is.

With advice from a Planning professional, a draft letter of opposition will be written and put before the Parish Council before being submitted to SWDP Offices. **The deadline is 19th April 2021.**

**21/21 Highway Matters:** Flooding in Hill View Road. We are awaiting feedback from Cllr Hardman

andHighways. This issue was first logged in 2005 when the drain in 3 The Old Barns collapsed. Over Christmas & New Year (2020/21) Forge House, in Hill View Road, and the road were flooded.

Cllr Hardman, Cllr Gribble and Highways came out twice to survey. They are considering boring to install a new pipe to 3 The Old Barns. There are funds available to complete this work.

The drain outside 19 Hill View Road is also flooding – some of the water coming from the field opposite. There was a suggestion that a ditch could be dug in the field but the lay of the land makes this impossible.

There are 2 separate drain systems in Hill View Road, this drain is not connected to the one outside N0 7, next to Forge House.Cllr Gribble will email a report on all 3 issues to Wychavon CC.

**22/21 District & Councillors Report:**

1. Cllr Davis reported a freeze on Council Tax for the 4th year running. Wychavon was swift to distribute grants to Hospitality, keeping venues alive, for opening on 17th May.

The Covid vaccination programme is working and there were 12 cases out of 10,000 in 12 days, previously 59, and 46 prospectively, in Redditch & Wyre Forest.

Also reported was fly tipping in Besford, at Crab Farm and at Eckington. There is no signage at these locations and none proposed.

1. Cllr Hardman reports the vaccine rollout and continuing lockdown is having a considerable effect

on the pandemic. The numbers in our Hospital have declined to 62, and in Intensive Care, 8.

The past seven days (before 18/3/21) saw only six Covid admissions on a daily average.

In the last seven days there are no reported Covid cases in 4 Wards, including Bredon Hill and students could return to school.

The District rate is still quite high at 44 cases, though down 26% and comparable to the England rate. The vaccine will now be given to the over 55’s, with some people having to go to Three Counties Showground for it. 52% of the District population have been vaccinated, with take up rate of over 70’s of 99.7%. There are concerns over reopening Care Homes for visitors, with 27 Homes with infections of 2 residents or more, but vaccination means better outcomes.

The County Council Budget, set in February means a 21/2rise in Council Tax. There is a considerable boost to Adult Social Care and Mental Health spending, and more money directed at mitigating flooding on the Highway, and improving Public Rights of Way.

The lockdown has caused Rights of Way in the County to be used more, resulting in more defects

being reported.

As part of the County Council’s commitment to protect the environment, we officially signed the Tree Charter, a campaign led by Woodland Trust which helps people understand trees and what they can do to help. The Tree Charter launched in November 2017 and since then Woodland Trust have partnered with other organisations and community groups to demonstrate the importance trees play in society.

By signing up to the Tree Charter, we are agreeing to carry out certain environmental commitments for the country such as, promoting public accessibility to woodlands, protecting irreplaceable trees, planning greener landscapes, helping to sustain wildlife, and planting more trees. In recent years, we have carried out all of these commitments and continue to reinforce this by pledging to plant 150,000 trees over the next 5 years.

In December 2020 we teamed up with Woodland Trust to kickstart our tree -planting pledge by creating a new woodland area and planted 3,000 trees.

The Natural Networks Programme is still available to organisations and businesses across the County. The team are there to support those who want to use their land to create welcoming havens for wildlife and visitors. The team’s ultimate goal is to create a network of nature across Worcestershire.

Advice and financial support will be available at a Webinar which will guide organisations and businesses with their next wildlife step. If you know of any landowners, that may benefit from applying to the Scheme, this is the link for them to register for information.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/free-webinar-creating-a-welcoming-space-for-humans-and-wildlife-tickets-139845103469>

**23/21 Finance:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Payee*** | ***Amount £*** | ***Reason*** |
| **SWingate** | **59.62** | **Clerks Hours 12/20** |
| **SWingate** | **135.50** | **Clerks Hours 01/21** |
| **C Harris** | **89.99** | **McAffee - Laptop** |
| **N Guilding** | **59.99** | **Microsoft - Laptop** |
| **N Guilding** | **141.97** | **Speed Sign Batteries x2** |
| **N Guilding** | **244.00** | **New Mower – for Lengthsman** |
| **SWingate** | **97.56** | **Clerks Hours 02/21** |

**= £828.63**

**24/21 Correspondence:** None

**25/21 Topics raised by Councillors, Committee & Clerk:**

1. Cllr Harris raised the issue of fireworks and stress it causes nearby horses and other livestock. An unknown resident reported this to him concerned fireworks were being let off without consideration. The Parish Council advised there is Legislation in place – Animal Welfare Act 2000 (shortly to be strengthened) which cannot be enforced by Parish Councils. Cllr Gribble offered to send notice of the legislation to villagers and a request for consideration for animals before next bonfire night.
2. Cllr Potter reported OpenReach has increased it’s quote to £400.000 for installation of Broadband in Lower Strensham, involving Defford & Westmancote. Cllr Potter has written to MP Harriet Baldwin regarding Digital Rollout, to investigate OpenReach.
3. There is fly tipping in the village, including close to our village bin. (pile of domestic rubbish)

Phil Child, Wychavon Street Cleaning has informed the Clerk our 30 year old bin next to the old bus shelter will be replaced with a bin on a pole with a cover & slot (to prevent large items being deposited) There will be no charge for the new bin.

**26/21 Councillors Reports & Items for Future Agenda:**

Date of next Meeting Thursday 20th May 2021 @ 7:30 via Zoom