

2020/20

LITTLE COMBERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes from a meeting of the Parish Council, held via Zoom on Tuesday November 3rd, 2020 at 7pm

PRESENT – Chairman C Rabbette, Vice Chairman L Haycock, Cllrs S Britten, N Jamieson, A Dermont, M Kibble and P Morris, County Cllr A Hardman, District Cllr T Rowley and three parishioners

1. **APOLOGIES** – None recorded

OPEN FORUM:

- Parishioner reported that some tree works were required in Wick Road – suckers to be removed and a new tree stake on one tree – Cllr Kibble offered to look at this in the first instance
- Weeds were reported in gutters / road edges – the parishioner in attendance would make the areas known to the clerk to get the LM to spray off
- Way marking – It was reported that there was some way marking required – the clerk asked for details to be forwarded so that she could liaise with the Footpath Warden
- Parishioner paid credit to Cllrs and the clerk for all the hard work they put in, devoting time at meetings and the background work done behind the scenes, all voluntarily (aside from the clerk who is paid). Despite the difficult times we all find ourselves in, the parish council works tirelessly for the benefit of the village and the resident wanted to say a very big thank you, on his behalf, and he believes on behalf of the majority of residents in Little Comberton
- Parishioner asked for clarification of the accusation made in the email: ‘behaviour we condemn’ which had been previously circulated to parishioners. Cllr Rabbette replied that no accusation had been made, but the point of the email was to high-light that the incident referred to was unpleasant and disturbing for the Cllr involved, and the parish council, as a whole, did not find the actions acceptable. Cllr Haycock re-iterated this and added that the incident had been discussed by the parish council and agreed mutually that a message be sent to this effect.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – None declared

3. **MINUTES** from the previous meeting of October 6th were approved, proposed Cllr Kibble, seconded Cllr Britten – all in favour

4. **PROGRESS REPORTS**

a) Highway Matters

- Lay-by Pershore Road – Cllr Rabbette reported that this had not yet been resolved and there was to be further discussions between the residents and WCC
- VAS Sign - Cllr Dermont had circulated data downloaded from the sign, with little change to the data that was taken 6-months ago. Average speed comes out about 36mph with 65% of motorists exceeding the speed limit. The current position of the sign is not ideal and needs to be more visible; mounted on a taller post 100-200 metres before the Great Comberton junction. The clerk has been in contact with WCC regarding this. He did feel that the VAS had little effect on traffic coming in from Elmley Castle because vehicles are already slowing down to navigate the bends. The clerk also referred to the point a parishioner made at the previous meeting regarding police enforcement – the response from the police was that at the moment their speed guns are being calibrated and weather conditions had been difficult to carry out the speed checks safely.

The police officer had advised that if there were any further queries regarding the lack of speed checks, they could contact her direct as she was also a member of the road safety team. Cllr Haycock suggested that a poster / sign with basic data, to raise driver's awareness that data is collected – to be updated every six months. Clerk to check with WCC regarding the legality of this.

- b) Footpaths / Rights of Way - An email had been sent to the clerk by a parishioner regarding the overgrowth on the footpath from the conker tree leading to Mongcroft Road, where it crosses the small bridge. Criticism was made over the length of time that it had taken WCC to action the missing 'way marker' disc, but the clerk did say that she had reported it earlier in the year and again when it was raised more recently. WCC had replied that they would action it as soon as possible but the Covid situation had had an impact on priorities within WCC
- c) Lengthsman – the LM had been working throughout the village, and had attended to overgrowth at speed signs by Porters Cottages – he had done this but there was a need for the adjacent landowners to cut their hedges back.
- d) Planning -
 - Fence at Orchard View, Manor Lane – in hand but we are not sure of timescales
 - 20/01959 – 13 Orchard Drive – single storey extension – approved by WDC
 - SWDP – Cllr Rowley explained that a new timescale had been released following the restriction imposed by the Covid situation. Planning reforms had opened up a 3-month window of opportunity and a need to get this through urgently, taking on board the old housing figures as opposed to the projected new figures
 - Planning Reforms – White Paper Consultation – The three joint councils, WDC, Malvern Hills and Worcester City Council had collectively put together a response to both elements of the consultation. The parish council had worked hard on a response which had been approved under delegated powers as we were working within time constraints, and this has been submitted
- e) BHCG – Cllr Britten reported on the application for the Ashchurch Bridge which would be associated with the 'Garden Town' which has not yet received approval. BHCG are planning to submit an objection.
- f) Ditches/ Water Courses:
 - Drainage Junction Orchard Drive / Pershore Road – the clerk had been in contact with WCC drainage officer, they are aware that there is work that still needs doing at the junction but this not likely to be done until the next financial year.Cllr Dermont and resident from Pool Close confirmed that there were no further issues in Pool Close

5. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT – Cllr Rowley had already reported on planning issues above. Covid cases are increasing in Wychavon with a new testing station in Pershore, by appointment only. Local businesses and the self-employed may be eligible for support during this second lockdown. Those eligible are encouraged to contact Business Support at WDC. Cllr Rowley advised that as soon as he received information, he would circulate this to parish councils, for circulation within the communities. Car parking in Wychavon car parks are free until the New Year.

6. COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT – Nothing to report

7. FINANCE – Payments for approval / made since last meeting:

(a)

Lengthsman Sept	739	144.00
Defib pads	741	94.74
Poppy Appeal	742	50.00
Clerks Expenses	SO	12.00
Clerks Salary	SO	333.08

New defibrillator pads had been purchased and now fitted. An agreement had been reached that we increase the donation to the Poppy Appeal to £50 due to their lack of street and door to door collections.

The clerk asked for authority to purchase the usual wine gift of thanks to those who take the time through the year looking after the Memorial Garden. This was approved

(b) Village Hall lease – Cllr Morris reported that the renewal next year would be in the joint names of the Village Hall Trust and Little Comberton Parish Council. The clerk asked if the cost is to be shared with the parish council, but Cllr Morris felt that this would still be covered by the VH committee. Problems have arisen as to the location of historic documents. Cllr Morris would speak to a village resident with a lot of historic knowledge with a view to putting together a ‘record of events’ regarding the acquisition of the land on which the village hall was built. The clerk would also look in the cupboard in the village hall with a view to sourcing any historic papers and finding a ‘more secure’ place for the old minute books

8. HEALTH & SAFETY – Nothing to report

9. GRASS VERGE CUTTING – Cllr Rabbette recapped on the request from a parishioner who was having difficulty maintaining the grass verge outside their property. WCC currently make five cuts per year on the central parts of the village and two cuts on the outlying areas. They have advised of a grass cutting grant which would cover the cost of the five cuts to central areas of the village at £110 per cut (so an annual grant of £550). Lengthy research and discussion had taken place on the best way forward. It was agreed that five annual cuts would not be enough for many residents who prefer to cut their grass on a weekly basis over the warmer months. The only way to finance a fully acceptable mowing programme would be to raise the village precept. This would lead the parish council wide open to criticism from those residents who do not have verges that need cutting. It would also mean the parish council would have to take on more responsibility than it has the capacity to manage. We have two options – a) to stay as we are with WCC doing the cutting as currently carried out (with the resident who raised this with the parish council to look at their own grass cutting options), or b) to take the grant and ask a contractor to take over the service (at a cost to the parish council and council tax payer of between £2,000 and £2,500 per annum – depending on the number of cuts) – which would have an impact on all council tax payers of between £15 and £25 per annum (just for the grass cutting and dependent on the number of cuts per annum) – this would not take into account any other cost increases to be considered in next years budget. Cllr Kibble offered to keep an eye on the verge in question and offered to run his mower over it when he was doing his own cutting, or if need be speak to local residents to help out. He proposed we leave the situation as it is and he will talk to residents nearby if it needs further consideration. Cllr Dermont seconded the proposal – all in favour of this.

10. VILLAGE WEBSITE – Cllr Jamieson reported that previously the village website was managed and run by 2 parishioners, partially funded by the Sports & Social Committee – Cllr Jamieson had offered to take this over and investigated this being mindful of the ‘accessibility’ requirement needed for all local government website. Cllr Jamieson has paid for, and taken over the website name and working with website developers to simplify and develop the site, being happy to fund this for twelve months and then to look at longer term funding. He also reported that an email had been sent from the village Gmail account exposing all email addresses and he confirmed that a ‘Data Breach’ had occurred. He had used the ICO website to access the breach and followed the recommended actions. A report is to be sent to the Clerk of the Parish Council recommending improved training on the use of the ‘*gmail account*’

11. RURAL BROADBAND - Cllr Jamieson had kindly offered to take the lead on this and ask villagers to consider the offer to upgrade to a faster broadband with funding available. He has been in communication with the lead at WCC and this seems to be an offer that is unlikely to be available again. We now have 49 villagers who have expressed an interest which is enough to move forward to the next stage, which is for a survey of the village, to establish how much of a grant we can get, and then to calculate how much this will cost those that have registered. Cllrs were encouraged to speak to neighbours, to get more registrations which would ultimately bring down the costs. Another email would be sent out to parishioners. Funding will be withdrawn in March. Thanks were paid to Cllr Jamieson.

12. Village Signs - Cllr Jamieson had previously raised the point of improved village 'shield' signs. The clerk had asked the clerk at Elmley Castle, and the feedback was that this was something they had engaged with via WCC. The clerk apologised for the lack of response due to overload of other parish council issues, but it was in hand.

13. DOG FOULING – following further complaints, the clerk had ordered additional signage and these had been delivered to Cllr Kibble to put in the problem areas. Parishioner had raised an issue as to whether there was a need for an additional 'dog waste' bin at the Wick Road / Pool Close end of the village. Discussion took place as to the best location in Wick Road, taking into consideration the access for the district council for emptying. Cost of bin and installation is approx. £500 plus emptying approx. £80 per annum. A suggestion made by Cllr Rabbette was for Cllrs / parishioners in attendance to consider where the most appropriate location for a second bin would be, and to bring this back to the next meeting, a suggestion was made to ask Cllr Hardman if he is able to make a financial contribution to a second dog waste bin.

14. WORKERS ACCOMMODATION HAYLOFT - Cllr Haycock voiced concerns over the living accommodation for the seasonal workers. Cllr Rowley reported that the 'living units' came from the 2012 Olympic sites and are considered to amongst the best temporary living units that he had come across and were well appointed and well equipped. Cllr Kibble was also in agreement that the facilities provided separate male and female areas, hot showers, and more than adequate washing and cooking facilities, and was of the opinion that there was nothing to suggest that the workers were inadequately provided for. Discussion took place as to whether this was a parish council issue and it was agreed that anyone with concerns should email Wick Parish Council direct so that it could be included in their meeting agenda later in the month

12. CRIME:

- Neighbourhood Watch – Nothing further to report from the NW co-ordinator

11. MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS / DISCUSSION:

- Cllr Jamieson asked if Cllrs were happy to carry on with their allocated areas under the last lockdown, to help and support parishioners where needed. . An email /notice would be circulated to this effect to whole village. Cllr Haycock suggested that contact be made to the 'groups' to make sure that previous volunteers were still happy to help. The Village Pantry will continue on a Saturday morning
- Phone Box – light was reported as not working. The clerk had got this in hand
- Cllr Rabbette reported on an email from a parishioner with regard possible enforcement issues. This was received too late to be included in this agenda but would be looked into and reported at the next meeting in January

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 12th January 2021