

**At a Meeting of Whittington Parish Council held at Whittington Village Hall on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2012 at 19:30 Hrs.**

**Democratic Period/ Question Time:** In the hope of the arrival of District & County Councillor Adams whose presence was considered desirable in the light of comments anticipated from two members of the public present, the Chairman delayed this item until later in the proceedings. It is briefly reported chronologically within item 2012.31.

**2012.24 Attendance.**

Asterisks after the names of those members present indicate late arrival. Corresponding asterisks in the left hand margin indicate the point of arrival.

Present: S.L. Brooker, A. Lodge, S. MacLeod, C.A. Smith, P.J. Wood\*.

In Attendance: P.S. Roe, Clerk.

Apologies: None

**2012.25 Declarations of Interest and Ethical Matters.**

- a. There were no declarations of Personal (non prejudicial) Interests in items on this Agenda.
- b. There were no declarations of Personal Prejudicial Interests in items on this Agenda.
- c. Ethical Matters. Members were reminded of the pending changes to the ethical régime consequent upon the dissolution of the Standards Board for England.

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**2012.26 Minutes of Previous Meetings of the Council.**

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2012 having been previously distributed were taken as read, and adopted ( SLB/AL ) without amendment.

**2012.27 Co-option of Members to fill vacancies on the Council.**

There were no candidates.

The Chairman exhorted Members to seek candidates to fill the Council.

**2012.28 Planning.**

- a. New and Unresolved Planning Applications: None.
- b. Previous consultations. Members noted the Council's formal response to the Village Hall planning application.
- c. Planning Decisions:

W/11/02349/OU: Land off Walkers Lane, Whittington; outline application for the erection of 17 Houses, New access, Parking, Amenity Areas and Associated Works; Antringham Developments Ltd. Approved STC (27 Conditions)

W/11/02390/PN: Land Adjacent Kilbury Drive off, Spetchley Road, Spetchley; erection of 257 dwelling including a proportion of affordable housing, new access off Walkers Lane and Staplow Road, provision of public open space including an equipped area of play and community allotments, internal estate roads and associated works. Bloor Homes Ltd. Refused (17 reasons)

W/11/02852/PN: Whittington Village Hall, Church Lane, Whittington WR5 2RQ; Demolition of existing hall & repositioning and rebuilding of new hall; Whittington P.C. Approved STC (time, materials, car parking etc., landscaping, trees & hedges, provision of a bat box, water management statement, demolition of existing hall, boundary treatment).
- d. Other Planning Consultations:

**Worcestershire County Council: Worcestershire Waste Core Strategy-** Proposed changes following examination of the Strategy by the Secretary of State. The Clerk reported that consultation on the changes was open until 17:30 hrs. on 21<sup>st</sup> May, and indicated availability of information on the County Council website. Any points members wished to make could be brought up at the next meeting
- e. Other Planning Matters:

**City of Worcester:** Members noted that the City's "Accessibility" SPD was adopted on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012.

**Worcester F.C.:** The Clerk advised that according to Worcester City's Website this application is still "awaiting decision". The Chairman understood that the application had been referred to the Minister for Community Affairs.

**Wychavon D.C.:** **TPO 001 2010.** Members noted that this TPO which related to Trees on Land adjacent to Walkers Lane (West section) 1 oak & 1 chestnut had been confirmed by WDC on 26/1/2012

**Advertising signs at Swan Roundabout.** WDC had advised that there should now only be the one on the roundabout itself which was acceptable to WCC as the Highway Authority. Members advised that a banner had been affixed to the fencing nearer Old Road which was considered acceptable. Members asked the Clerk to ascertain if the signage on the dual carriageway advertising a "one off" event was approved.

**Tree on Crookbarrow Hill:** The Clerk had ascertained that there was no TPO on the tree on "The Tump". WDC Trees officer was to investigate the possibility of applying one; the Clerk was to pursue this matter.

**2012.29 Progress Reports/Updates on Matters Previously Resolved.**

- a. Pershore Volunteer Centre: Members noted that a Representative of Pershore Volunteer Centre (Laura Synuck) would attend the Parish Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> April to give a presentation.
- b. Sport Relief 2012: S. MacLeod noted that the event had passed but had no comment regarding possible future participation. Runners in the village had not been interested in getting involved.
- c. Other Matters: The Chairman queried whether the Council should nominate D. Hallmark as Trees Warden. The Clerk explained that the appointment was made by the County Council who had been made aware of his interest.

## **2012.30 Finance.**

The Clerk reported as follows: -

- a. Receipts: since the last meeting: WCC re. Lengthsman - £277.20 +£184.80 (Nov, Dec. Jan.); HSBC Interest c22p/month.
- b. Payments: a list of invoices and requests for payment totalling £1151.16 was submitted. Payment was approved (SLB/SM).
- c. Proposals for Expenditure. To consider proposals for expenditure.
  - i) Budgeted expenditure: None
  - ii) Other expenditure: None
  - iii) Requests for funding:

A request had been received for a donation to "The 'Bobby Club'. S.L. Brooker declared a personal but non prejudicial interest due to his past involvement with the scheme and the current involvement of his grandchildren. A donation of £25 was agreed(SM/AL - SLB abstained)  
Wychavon CAB had again requested funding. Members continued in their previous view that Parishioners were more likely to be involved with the Worcester CAB and declined to make a contribution.
- d. Annual Accounts. Although these had not been included on the agenda the Clerk sought informal comment on the Annual Accounts sent to Members on 6<sup>th</sup> April, prior to their publication at the Parish Meeting. Members had no comments.

## **2012.31 Highways & Byways.**

### **a. Highways Matters:**

Bus Shelter: Members considered the adoption of a bus shelter to be supplied by Worcestershire County Council on Whittington Road, but declined to accept responsibility for its future upkeep and maintenance.,

"Gating" of Village: Members considered contribution to the provision of "gates" on the entrances to the village, noting the Highway Authority's proposal to share equally the purchase cost of £1,600. Members agreed (by majority vote) to continue to seek the "gates" but considered the purchase cost exorbitant and requested the Clerk to see if WCC would allow WPC to purchase and install the "gates" and to split the entire costs 50/50.

At this point, since R.A. Phillips had a prior appointment to attend, and since R.C. Adams seemed unlikely to appear soon, the Chairman adjourned this item and with the agreement of Members suspended the meeting to receive the comments of the Public under the delayed ...

### **Democratic Period/ Question Time:**

R.A. Phillips queried the increase in the precept which he had heard suggested was due to a grant being made to the Village Hall. He was assured that this was not the case. He wondered why the Lengthsman was litter picking outside the village, for which he paid his council tax to WDC. He was informed that this would be discussed at item 2012.38. He informed the Council that some function (nature presently not resolved) would take place on 3<sup>rd</sup> June to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee, the Village Hall having been reserved therefor; and he endorsed the Council's decision not to adopt a bus shelter. He closed by referring to the possible need for funding for the redevelopment of the Village Hall, about which he had already spoken with the Clerk and the Chairman, explaining that his investigations were of an exploratory and contingent nature.

N. Hodgetts then spoke, referring to the Public Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> January regarding Neighbourhood and Parish Planning. He put forward a suggestion for the development of land at Pond Farm which he believed would provide a real "village centre" incorporating a relocated Village Hall, Church and Hall car parking, a playing field, allotments & open space. Under this proposal, the cost to him, as owner of the land, would be largely offset by the profit on enabling development of a number of houses on the existing Village Hall site and on other areas of the Pond Farm site. Brief discussion took place, there being a degree of sympathy for the proposals which it was stressed were in a very early stage of development and open to review and change during the Neighbourhood/Parish Plan process.

M. MacLeod spoke regarding assertions made that traffic did not speed on Church Lane. He was adamant that some vehicles did exceed the speed limit, especially at the end of evening Village Hall functions, but accepted that many did not. It was generally felt that the speed limit of 30m.p.h. was too high and that vehicles which did drive above or near this speed around the bends near Church Terrace, were being driven in a dangerous manner. The Chairman indicated that the national criteria for implementation of a 20 m.p.h. speed limit had been relaxed, but that this needed to feed through into the culture of the Highway Authority if a successful bid for a reduced speed limit, &/or traffic calming measures, within the village was to be launched.

M. Macleod also queried how Parish Council funding for the Village Hall might affect Parishioners, no answer could be given in the current stage of the redevelopment project.

Thereafter the Chairman re-convened the meeting

### General:

Swan Roundabout improvements: Members noted the commencement of the works. Disappointment was expressed that the Highway Authority had not responded regarding some outstanding matters, the Clerk pointed out that their representative had been scheduled to attend the meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> March which had been cancelled due to inquoracy.

The Clerk reported that he had seen evidence of the renewal of the Lengthsman's P.L. policy (£5m Limit of Indemnity)

### M5 Noise

Members noted advice from a Parishioner that WDC had commented - in response to proposal for a wind turbine generator near J6 of M5 WDC - "... that any noise from the turbine would be 'drowned out by the motorway'" which might be construed as an acknowledgement from WDC that there was a noise issue"

### Maintenance:

Works for the Lengthsman: None proposed

Previous Matters:

B 4084/M5 Motorway J7 roundabout

The footway outside the entrance to the gateway was inspected by WCC in September 2011. Despite requests from the Clerk no further information was available

Drains along Church Lane

It was reported that the gullies along Church Lane, and more specifically their location and levels, were inspected on 27/2/2012 in company with Roy Fullee & Mr Dave Denning Highways Mtce. Manager. DD was to try to have slopes into & out of offending gullies more ramped, but could not promise at the time.

New Matters:

Grit Bins: WCC "Highways" had advised that the bin on Old Road at the school entrance was provided by the school (possibly the LEA in the past) and is their responsibility. The Clerk had not informed the school as he felt this would be better coming from the liaising Parish Councillor.

### Traffic Management:

Previous Matters:

M5 Motorway J7 roundabout: Contrary to advices over many years from WCC the Highways Agency advised that the speed limit on the roundabout was a matter for the County Council. It was understood that WCC were to address the speed limit anomaly.

Speed enforcement B4084: The Chairman advised that a non co-operative response had come from the Safer Roads Team.

The criteria used by the Safer Roads Partnership seemed to indicate that "occasional" speed enforcement was appropriate, but before taking the matter further the Chairman wished to ascertain the Council's view and authority. Members considered that the matter should be pursued and instructed the Clerk to write to Councillor Adams asking him to take this up as the Parish's representative at County and District level.

New Matters: None raised

DFS: The latest report was in the Circulation file

Road Names: Members considered a request from a Parishioner for the re-naming of the dead end section of Walkers Lane. The Clerk advised that street naming was a District Council responsibility. Members suggested that the person concerned re-direct the request to Wyckavon District Council.

### **b. Byways Matters:**

#### General:

Members noted the appointment of a new Countryside Access Maintenance and Improvement Officer for the area; Philip Coulson at WCC Countryside Service

Bridleways: } no specific

Footpaths: } matters raised.

### **2012.32 Training.**

The Clerk reported a Clerks' gathering on 18<sup>th</sup> April. He was not sure if he would be able to attend but Members agreed to fund the cost (£7.50) if he did.

### **2012.33 Amendment of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.**

a. The draft revised Standing Orders put forward by the Working Group were distributed to Members on 17<sup>th</sup> January with a request that any comments be advised to the Clerk. None had been received.

In the light of this the Chairman moved to suspend existing S.O. 37.2 which was seconded by A. Lodge and agreed unanimously.

Thereafter adoption of the draft revised Standing Orders was agreed (SLB/CS) unanimously.

b. Members agreed that a similar procedure to that used for the Standing Orders be used for review of Financial Regulations, and S.L. Brooker and Carl Smith were appointed to carry out the initial review with the Clerk/RFO.

### **2012.34 Parish/Neighbourhood Plan.**

Members noted the Chairman's intention to begin drafting an outline Neighbourhood Plan to be used as a basis for its further development. In doing this he would include reference to the proposals put forward by N. Hodgetts

The clerk had obtained a license from Ordnance Survey under the Public Sector Mapping Agreement (PSMA), which entitled WPC to download some O.S. maps for the Council's use. Software was required to make use of this and the Clerk sought approval for expenditure of £30 for the "Parish on Line" software at a cost of (£20 initial + £10 p.a).

The Clerk advised in accordance with previous agreement, that his time/charge to date was 19.08 hrs/£194.61. He asked how the Council wished to deal with payment of this, and it was mutually agreed to pay quarterly. The Clerk was asked to see if WDC were able to fund the cost from the "Front Runner" funding they had obtained.

### **2012.35 Parish Magazine/Parish Council Newsletter.**

The Clerk reported that he had received 9 requests to be kept up to date by e-mail, and sought instruction as to what was felt to be appropriate content. Members suggested Agendas, Minutes, event notifications, invitations to meetings, and some public notices.

C. Smith suggested that the Council might consider using "Facebook" and undertook to find out more details of the appropriate arrangement for the next meeting. The Clerk was to include a suitable item on the agenda.

**2012.36      Worcestershire Agreement.**

A copy of the Worcestershire Agreement having been sent out with Summons, the Chairman proposed, despite misgivings voiced by the Clerk, that the Council sign up to all aspects of the Agreement. This was seconded by C. Smith and agreed.

**2012.37      Lengthsman.**

The Clerk reported that the 2012-2013 WCC contract had been received and was generally similar to previous ones. Members agreed (SLB/PJW) to renew the WCC contract on the revised basis, this would provide a slightly increased level of funding.

The Clerk advised that the Lengthsman position was advertised on the Parish Council notice boards for approx 1 month from 6/2/2012, and that there had been no expressions of interest. Steve Gwilliam was happy to continue next year and it was agreed (SLB/PJW) that his contract be renewed.

**2012.38      Litterpicking in Whittington.**

Concern was felt that parishioners were paying for cleaning litter on the main roads in the parish which were outside the Parish's control and were more properly the responsibility of the District Council.

It was agreed (SLB/PJW) that S. Gwilliam be instructed to limit his operations to the areas of the Parish subject to a 30 m.p.h. or lower, speed limit.

The Clerk was to contact WDC to seek funding from them for any litter picking on the main roads, on a similar basis to the WCC Lengthsman Scheme.

**2012.39      Investment Account.**

Members considered opening a new investment account with National Westminster Bank plc. The Clerk had ascertained interest rates applicable to the last "tranche" of the scheme.

As RFO he took the view that the Council should not - at the present time - make a long fixed term deposit.

Although the interest rates offered were significantly above those offered by HSBC, in real terms the levels were all so low as to eliminate such accounts as significant means of revenue generation.

He re-iterated comments on "NatWest" performance received via the SLCC Forum from other Parish Councils which were generally not complimentary, and referenced the past experience of WPC with Royal Bank of Scotland (a member of the same banking group). In the light of all the foregoing he did not recommend the Council to incur the expense and effort of opening a new account

The Chairman endorsed this view and no proposal to open a new "NatWest" account was put.

The Clerk asked if the Council would wish to re-establish its previous arrangement with HSBC and it was agreed to place a reduced amount of £15,000 into a 6 month HSBC High Interest Deposit Bond

**2012.40      Whittington Parish Meeting 24<sup>th</sup> April 2012.**

Members noted the action taken by the Clerk in displaying the agenda and arranging a speaker.

It was too late to formally include an item relating to the proposals put forward by N. Hodgetts earlier this evening, but they could be presented informally during a refreshment break or after the formal part of the meeting.

It was agreed that refreshments - along the lines of those provided at the public meeting in January - would be provided - the Clerk to arrange.

The Clerk was to supply 250 Flyers to the Chairman which members agreed to help distribute, to assist in publicising the event.

**2012.41      Request from WVHMC that WPC consider funding for the Village Hall redevelopment.**

Members were referred by the Chairman to R.A. Phillips' earlier presentation and the fact that the likelihood and extent of any funding needed was very vague. In the light of this he suggested the matter be adjourned. Some Members wished to know more about how such an arrangement might work and the Clerk advised the mechanics and procedures which presently applied including the need for Public Sector Borrowing Approval, and adequate security/assurances for any loan or donation to be made. He reassured Members that they would not incur any liability as individuals if a PWLB loan were to be taken out.

**2012.42      Localism.**

The "Think Local" Document had been copied to Members. The Chairman asked members to review this and the list of questions included and let him have their views so that he could draft a response for approval at the next meeting.

**2012.43      District and County Councillors' Report – For Information.**

The County and District Councillor was not present.

**2012.44      Police Report - For Information.**

No Police representative was in attendance.

**2012.45      Reports by Councillors, and Items for Future Agendas.**

- a. Reports of Committees and Working Groups and of Councillors representing the Council on outside bodies.
  - West Wychavon PACT: S.L. Brooker reported better attendance at the last meeting a few weeks ago. He had raised the use of Walkers Lane/Church Lane & Old Road as a "rat run" despite the access only order. PCSO Allchurch had agreed to give this matter his attention.
  - Whittington Village Hall: P.J. Wood reported that some members of the VHMC were concerned at the nature of the new Village Hall which might result from the proposals put forward by N. Hodgetts.
- b. Reports of Councillors on other matters. None
- c. Inclusion of specific items on a future agenda. None

**2012.46 Inclusion of items in the Parish Magazine.**

Items to be included this month comprised: Youth Bus (31<sup>st</sup> May at WVH); Jubilee celebrations: attempts to get speeding enforcement on B4084.

**2012.47 Correspondence.**

A note of correspondence received had been periodically sent out to Members under the "Clerk's Digest" since the last meeting.

The following items were specifically reported:

Letter 18/1/2012 from WDC re Democracy & Elections scrutiny. Wanting input on why so many areas were uncontested.

Letter 29/3/2012 (received 2/4) revised Wychavon Bursary Scheme - to be included on next agenda. E-mail 2/4/2012 refers

Parish Conference - WCC County Hall 25/4/2012 - The Chairman was to attend.

**2012.48 Date of Next Meeting.**

The date of the Annual Meeting of the Council would be Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2012, at Whittington Village Hall. The Parish Meeting was scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> April.

**The Meeting closed at 22:18 hrs.**