

Wickhamford Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting, 11th November 2009 No. 11/09

Clerk to the Council, Mike Smith, 12 Pitchers Hill, Wickhamford WR11 7RT

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Present T. Waller, Chairman, J. Poulter, V. Chairman, Councillors, J. Newbury, R. Gilks, D. Heeks
A. Smith, D. Folkes and M. Smith, Clerk
Also present P.C. G. Greenhouse

1. Apologies

Liz Eyre

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. The meeting was adjourned for Progress Reports and also the Public Question Time, notes of which are appended to these minutes.

Progress Reports.

P.C. Greenhouse reported on the theft of tractors locally and in the surrounding area Also it seems that the fires had now stopped.

Emailed report from Liz Eyre,

Revenue and Benefits Performance for Period to 5 October 2009

Benefits

73% new claims processed in less than 2 weeks, none older than 4 weeks, backlog 451.

76% change in circumstances less than 2 weeks, none older than 4 weeks but 625 changes outstanding – target 500.

Revenues

Backlog on recovery (674), billing (9010), non-domestic (1141), very high volumes of post incoming; additional contractors helping.

The relocation of 3 Councils Revenue + Benefits Services to create the South Worcestershire's shared services provision has reduced staff numbers by 27%, with a cost savings of £1million per year.

Worcestershire Hub Update

Call Wait Times

Increase in demand 2008/9 38,500 per month period April-August, 2009/10 52,000 calls per month same period. This increase correlates with increase in benefits and revenues.

19% answered within 20 seconds.
 Average speed of answer 2 mins, 14 secs
 Voice mail messages around 50/day

Actions to Improve Response Times

Extended opening hours: Mon-Fri 8am-8pm, Sat 9am-5pm. 11 new customer services staff. One contact centre in Worcester.

34,722 Highway calls made to the Hub – Utility calls are passed to the appropriate utility company.

Buses

4-5 year contract – re-tendering around May 2010 to go live Sept 2010.

Subsidy £3million. NHS have removed their subsidy.

Locally 3 commercial buses Evesham to Worcester 551

Evesham to Broadway

Evesham to Stratford

Usage in towns is increasing but levelling in villages. Maps will be produced after the Review May-Sept 2010. Timetables on bus stops (7000) – controlled by commercial operator, audit undertaken – new system being piloted Worcester.

Service to Cheltenham – discussions going on with Stagecoach

Late Service from Worcester – are being explored but funding dependent

551 to Worcester Hospital being reviewed, especially in view of bus lane in Newtown Road, Worcester.

Early buses for workers an issue in some places.

School buses – review to improve routes and accommodate after-school clubs.

As review are going on and retendering will take place next year, I am pleased to receive any detailed queries, concerns re school or other bus services – eeyre@worcestershire.gov.uk

Detailed information proves more helpful than generalisation.

Rules about Sale of Alcohol in Village Halls (Changes)

Community premises can now operate without a Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) by transferring responsibility for the sale of alcohol to their Management Committee. The cost is £23.00 for a community already with a DPS.

CABINET – 2/11/09

Pershore Day Centre – 3 residents – a more detailed range of options, assessment of need and staffing needs is required in the context of future user services following a Judicial Review on closure.

Diversity Work – The County Council and District Councils are to work in partnership in this area, reducing duplication, improving engagement, gaining greater efficiencies. There is a grant to help with work £230K.

Climate Changes – Cabinet signed up to the 10:10 Campaign – as the Council has Climate Change Beacon Status, the aim for Carbon reductions is at the 3% level. Scrutiny recommendations May 2009 were supported.

Education Inclusion Policy

A Policy Framework has been approved for consultation. Concerns re variation in Speech and Language and communications therapy, the criteria for Special Educational Needs (SEN) being applied equitably across the County and the distance some SEN youngsters travel in some parts of the County are to be reviewed.

Home to School Transport Policy 2011/12

Approval was given to consult on this and possible changes 2012/13 in respect of 14-19 transport as part of the diploma arrangements in the County.

School Admissions Policy Changes – Revisions to Published Admission Numbers 2011/12 were approved for consultation.

Early Years Funding Changes were approved. The main change funding on participation rather than place will take place over a transition period. This affects maintained nurseries in the main.

Residents' Parking Policy was approved. The enforcement authority can be altered to second tier authorities through Civil Parking Enforcement Legislation. The criteria are tight, e.g., 80% of kerbspace under consideration regularly occupied by extraneous vehicles for over 3hours. Less than 50% of residences have a facility to park off road, 80% of residents in the streets agree to its implementation, etc.

Policy for Speed Management was approved. Its aim is to reduce further road casualties through engineering, enforcement and education. It identifies the review of speed limits to ensure consistency. The strategy covers A and B roads – urban and rural, unclassified roads, 20mph zones, residential roads and sets out policy for enforcement, signage, vehicle activated signs, engineering measures, road safety education on speed. I believe it will be more pro-active and will make a difference.

Winter Service (Cutting) Facility was approved – I believe this will clarify where gritting does and does not take place. The total budget is £1.25m by careful management the revised more extensive policy can deliver within this provision.

Pay Awards – an increase of 1% backdated has been agreed. The Chief Executive, Members and 26 most senior staff of the Council, excluding those working in schools, will not receive a cost of living increase this financial year, in view of the recession.

Pensions – the average annual pension payable is £4563.

4. The Minutes of the meeting held on the 14th October 2009 were approved.

5. New and Ongoing Items.

a) Play Area. The following work has been carried out by Councillors, J. Newbury, D. Heeks J. Poulter and a work colleague of J. Newbury.

Ply frame replaced as necessary, undercoated including existing bare wood on the Spring Bike and Dog.

Ply panel turned, Top safety rail fitted, Toe space rectified, Welded extra uprights, and all metal undercoated on the Multi-Play.

Springs tensioned, Gaps between post & gate reduced, Rubber slam stops replaced on bottom & side gate.

Ground bolt added and stop fixed on Double gate.

Toggle gap on large side partly filled.

b) Pact. Waiting on Badsey re VAS.

- c) Rate Relief. It was agreed to grant the rate relief for Wayside Farm Shop.
- d) Insurance. The Clerk had informed the Insurance company of the need to add items to our policy, these being the new Sandbag Containers and their contents, to increase the number of Bus Shelters to three and to increase the sum insured of the Play Area Equipment to £40,000
- e) Sandys Avenue. Another inspection is due to take place re the Yellow Lines issue.

6. Planning.

W/09/02300/PP. 1 Longdon Hill and W/09/02399/PN, Orchard Farm Pitchers Hill
Comments uploaded to WDC website.

7. Finance.

Balance sheets handed to Councillors.
 Proposed precept handed to Councillors for discussion and acceptance at the next meeting.
 Cheques signed,
 Zurich, Upgrade of insurance
 M. Smith, Travel expenses.
 J. Newbury, Play Area materials.
 Wickhamford Memorial Hall, Hall rental.

8. Date of the next meeting confirmed as 9th December 2009

Meeting Closed at 7.30pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Chairman

Notes of the Public Question Time

None