

ELDERSFIELD PARISH

Minutes of the Annual Assembly
held on Tuesday 10th May 2022, 7.00 pm, at Eldersfield Lawn School

Present:

Chairman:	Cllr Mrs Carole Joseph
Parish Councillors:	Mrs W Burr, Mrs D E Holt, Mr C Mills, Mrs T A Owen
In attendance:	Mr Kevin Smith, Chairman Cheltenham Motor Club
Members of the Public:	6

1. Report of the Chairman of the Parish Council

[this item was dealt with after item 4.]

The Chairman presented the following report:

“Firstly, I would like to thank our Parish Clerk, Joseph Gabbott, for his sound counsel, support & patience in my first year as Chair of Eldersfield Parish Council (EPC). Joseph is a font of all knowledge regarding process and procedures for a Parish Council (PC), and has guided me on my way when I have asked numerous questions. Secondly, we could not operate without working together as a Council. The support of my five Councillors has therefore been paramount in getting projects off the ground, bouncing ideas off each other, and using their knowledge and experience of living in the Parish to great affect.

What has the PC been up to this year that, hopefully, has and will benefit the Parish:

1) Parish Marquee: The purchase of a marquee for community events within the civil parish of Eldersfield. The marquee is contracted out to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) who manage and promote its use on behalf of the Parish, not the Parish Council. Community events do not extend to events such as weddings, funerals or baptisms.

2) Parish Plan: We undertook a complete review and refresh of our Parish Plan (PP). We added more detail around the history of Eldersfield, our regulated pasture (The Marsh and The Lawn (Corse Lawn)), Eldersfield CofE Primary School, Corse Lawn House Hotel, our future plans – some of which is set out below – and services. As a Category 4 settlement with limited services, we will continue to review and update, and monitor whether we need to develop a Neighbourhood Plan at some point in the future. The PP is published on our website <https://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish>

3) Litter Picking: Through Malvern Hills District Council – Adopt a Street, we have organised a Litter Picking group via WhatsApp that meets, formally, twice a year to tackle unwanted litter in and around Eldersfield. This has led to many of our dog walkers, and walkers, now also picking up litter when they are out and about. This has also been a great way to meet new people, share experiences, and build new friendships. Anyone is welcome to join this group.

4) Parish Assets Working Group: As a parish we do not have many assets, but we do have a shed located in the school grounds full of crockery which is hired out for local parish events, and even across neighbouring parishes. However, everything needed a thorough review and sort & sling! A small working party was set up to review, report & recommend any changes needed. We worked with the school and Chair of the PTFA to identify who owned what, get non-parish items moved out of the shed, check electrical items for compliance, sort and box crockery to make it easier to hire out, review hire form & charges. Contact eldersfieldpc@yahoo.co.uk for hire information.

5) Tree Planting Working Group: As part of EPC contribution to the Queen's 70th Jubilee to be celebrated in June this year. The Council decided to plant trees around the Parish under the 'Queen's Green Canopy' initiative. The key objective is that any trees planted must be accessible to the public, not on private land. A Working Group was set up to include Councillors and parishioners. Working mostly with the Commoners Committee (Reeves), the Wildlife Trust, we identified patches around The Lawn, the triangle at Bridgend replaced some fallen oaks along a footpath off Moorend Road. After a lot of hard work, we secured a free pack of 50 mixed trees from an organisation called i-Dig plus the PC purchased 15 Black Poplars. Volunteers were invited to help us plant these in March and we now have a rota of people looking after them. More free trees have been ordered from the Woodland Trust for the autumn and we will plant some around the entrance to the Poolhay nature reserve (off Link End Road) and hopefully more around the Parish, including looking at creating a Green Canopy Walk working with our Footpaths Officer.

6) Defibrillator: A donation to purchase a defibrillator was given to the PC a couple of years ago, and this is sited just inside the School gates on the wall for use by anyone who has a need. This year we have reviewed the processes and procedures needed to maintain the defibrillator, organised training in its use for Councillors and run our first training event for anyone in the parish. We have also communicated its location in the Parish Magazine, on social media and through local WhatsApp groups. A second training course will be held later in the year. We are currently working on potential locations for at least one more defibrillator. Anyone wishing to donate funds to help secure more defibrillators should contact the parish clerk at eldersfieldpc@yahoo.co.uk

7) Parish Paths: We have been fortunate to have a volunteer come forward who has taken on the role of Footpaths Officer, working with Worcester County Council, and reporting to the PC, to review and maintain numerous parish paths in and around Eldersfield. Stirling work has been done to build relationships with local landowners, repair and replace signage and open up walking routes. Contact Eldersfieldparishpaths@gmail.com to report any issues

8) Traffic calming: The PC is currently working with local District & County Councillors, Worcester County Council and the Safer Roads Partnership, on potential traffic calming options along the B4211 (Corse Lawn). Since the new road surface was installed last year, noise has significantly increased and traffic speeds, particularly by the School, sometimes exceed the 50mph & 20mph limits. We are taking part in ‘Operation Snap’ where anyone can report issues and are awaiting signage to go up along the road so that we can communicate how this will work. Further update on progress will be reported in Council minutes.

Finally, the PC has appointed a new Internal Auditor this year following the stepping down of our previous long serving Auditor. We have also received and commented on any planning applications received for our parish, and Councillor training continues through membership of Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils (CALC).”

The report was warmly received.

2. Presentation by Cheltenham Motor Club on a proposal to hold a car rally within the Parish

The Chairman introduced Mr Kevin Smith, Chairman of the Cheltenham Motor Club.

Mr Smith advised the meeting that it was the intention of Cheltenham Motor Club to hold the Hills Ford 3 Shires Stages Closed Road Rally on 18th September 2022. The route would pass for a short distance within the Parish. Leaflets had been distributed to each home along the route and public meetings would be held at which anyone interested could ask questions. The rally organisers were keen to minimise disruption for everyone. He then invited questions and comments.

Members of the public raised the following points:

- When the rally had been held in 2021, the organisers had assured residents that it was a ‘one off’ and would not be an annual occurrence.

Mr Smith said that although he had been one of the organisers of that rally he had not then been chairman and was unaware of that assurance.

- A survey of residents around the church indicated unanimous opposition to the holding of the proposed rally. One landowner, who had offered a field for use as a car park, would not do so again, and would not allow spectators to stand on his land.
- There was no benefit to the Parish. Spectators came and went, but – given that there were no shops, cafes or restaurants - they did not spend money.
- In 2021, cars had come off the road and gone through hedges at five separate locations. Damage had been caused.

Mr Smith assured the meeting that insurance cover was in place.

- Livestock – domestic and farm – was inconvenienced by the rally.

Mr Smith thanked the meeting for the receiving him; he had noted carefully the views which had been expressed.

3. Road safety within the Parish

Various issues were raised by members of the public.

The speed limit on the B4211 by the school was excessive.

The Chairman commented that although this was the only school within the county which gave out directly on to a 50 mph limit road there was reluctance at official level to change the limit, given that it conformed with the national guidelines.

The illuminating traffic warning signs on the B4211 by the school were occasionally illuminated when the children were neither arriving at nor leaving the school. When this happens, it is in effect ‘calling wolf’ and desensitises motorists to potential dangers.

The Chairman commented that this was a recognised problem with a long history. There had recently been a meeting with Highways and the timers controlling the lights had been re-programmed.

The sign on the B4211 indicating Moorened Road had been knocked down. The absence of the sign had caused delay to an ambulance responding to an emergency call.

District Councillor Bronwen Behan suggested that a request could be made to WCC that a sign post be erected opposite the road. Although there had been discussion about whether the site of such a sign post would fall within Worcestershire or Gloucestershire, she believed that Worcestershire County Council would be prepared to undertake the work.

Riders of horses had to time their movement carefully along the B4211 when crossing the bridge in order to avoid cars; some cars paid little or no attention to their presence.

The Chairman acknowledged these difficulties and said that an initiative to publicise Operation Snap will shortly be being undertaken; the public will be invited to provide to the police evidence of road traffic offences, such as careless or dangerous driving, and they will take appropriate action.

4. Public Comment, Questions and Discussions

Mr Andrew Holt addressed the meeting on behalf of the Parochial Church Council. He thanked the Council for the grant it had made to assist with a community event at Easter; that event had been a great success, being attended by 180 people, and had generated £275 for the charity Ring 20. He had received much positive feed-back.

He then noted that the Council had expressed to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) disquiet at the lack of information given to it when the grant application had been made. He explained that the PCC had lost £2,000 last year, in large measure because of covid, and was effectively

now broke. It was an organisation which, although cash poor, was volunteer rich. He hoped that this would inform future decisions of the Parish Council, but undertook to give more background when requesting grants in the future.

There being no further business, the Assembly closed at 8.10 pm.

JLG
12.5.22