

SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Monday 9th MARCH 2020 at 7.00 pm in Suckley Village Hall

Present: Cllr P Whatley, Cllr J Green, Cllr R Hill, Cllr A Lewis, Cllr P Griffiths,
Cllr C Luton, Cllr R Hooper, Cllr L Devenish, Cllr A W Huband

In Attendance: Mrs D Taylor (Clerk), Mrs Helen Philpotts (Footpaths), Co Cllr P Tuthill
Dist Cllr S Rouse

Apologies: None received

Two members of the public attended the meeting.

Declaration of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) or other Disclosable Interests falling within the terms of para 12(4)(b) of the Code of Conduct – None Declared. No requests had been received by the Clerk for any Dispensations relating to items on the Agenda. (Sec 33 of the Localism Act 2011)

The Chairman then adjourned the Meeting for Public Question Time/Participation

Two members of the public attended the meeting and raised their concerns about the use of the land at the Barn, Applegaard Fruit Farm, Suckley, where the owners had applied for a change of use and associated conversion of an existing agricultural building to a live/work unit. Planning Permission had been granted at a meeting of the Northern Area Planning Committee on 5th February 2020.

Report from Co Cllr - Co Cllr P Tuthill reported to the meeting. The Worcs Acute Hospital Trust had now produced its strategy. Back in March 2018 the then Chief Executive had secured an extra £20M for the hospital, but so far only £9M of this had been spent on the bridge building and the refurbishment of the wards, giving an extra 100 beds. A wide range of improvements in Worcester and Redditch had taken place. The CQC made an unannounced inspection just before Christmas 2019, and as a result of its report Worcester Hospital was issued with a Section 31 notice, which was very serious situation and the hospital had gone back into Special Measures. The recently appointed Chief Executive had already stated that the hospital is not big enough to cope with the demands being placed on it. In addition to the £20M already in hand, a further £40M is being sought to increase the size of the A & E Department, paediatric Department, and increase the capacity of the medical assessment, ambulatory care and stroke units. The hospital has about 700 beds with an average rate of stay of seven days. The Ambulance Trust took on the 111 non-emergency service number in November 2019 and was working to integrate the service with 999 so that patients can be diverted away from acute hospital settings if appropriate. Because of the A & E difficulties, about 12 ambulances can be queuing at any one time with patients needing assessment.

Report from District Cllr – Dist Cllr S Rouse reported to the meeting. MHDC had now adopted its five year plan, with its main aims being to reduce emissions and become carbon neutral. A huge amount of effort was being put into community transport. The budget had been approved, with a £5 per year increase to Band D householders. During the recent severe flooding in the area, all sections of public services and the communities themselves had pulled together in

an amazing way. £100K had been allocated to support communities affected by the flooding. An emergency plan was in place to deal with the Coronavirus should it become necessary.

Lengthsman - Cllr J Green reported that all was okay with the Lengthsman. The Lengthsman's Contract was due for renewal from 1st April 2020. The Clerk had spoken to him and he was willing to keep his hourly rate at £12 per hour. The Council agreed to renew the contract with the present Lengthsman (subject to the Worcs Co Council Grant being available). Proposed by Cllr C Luton and seconded by Cllr A Lewis.

Footpaths - Helen Philpotts reported that tree branches which had been cut from elsewhere had been dumped at the gateway of the Worcs Wildlife Trust owned woodland and were blocking the footpath at Crews Hill. A large expanse of tree roots were exposed on the side of the banks at Crews Hill, which could prove a hazard if the trees fell over into the road. Cllr A Lewis agreed to talk to the Trust about this. A replacement of the field gate between Lower Grove Farm and Grove Hill was still an ongoing issue, which despite her best efforts, Helen had been unable to resolve. The Clerk had contacted Jon White at the Countryside Dept asking him to act as a negotiator between the two parties.

Local Police – Cllr Rosemary Hooper reported that stats for the Police Neighbourhood area of Kempsey & Alfrick (which includes Suckley) for January/February 2020 revealed 48 reported incidents. Suckley had 1 theft in February

The Chairman then re-opened the Meeting

The Minutes of the extra Parish Council Meeting held on 24th February 2020 were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr C Luton and seconded by Cllr R Hill.

15/20 HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS

- (a) Outstanding repair for drain cover No 137 – Blackhouse Lane. Clerk had chased this up with Hannah Davies yet again. Ref: 636955. *(Hannah Davies (HD) stated that this work had been done, but this was not the case so a further reminder had been sent by the Clerk HD had requested the Clerk to send in a new report – new Ref 817848 – no response yet from Highways)*. Cllr J Green reported that Highways had positioned black and white posts each side of the drain (presumably as a hazard warning). *Clerk to contact HD again.*
- (b) Sign for Longley Green (opposite the bus shelter). *(Clerk has e-mailed Hannah Davies about this three times. Clerk to continue to chase).*
- (c) Blocked drain No 57. (Acton Beauchamp Road) Clerk had reported this to WCC Highways Ref: 688543. *(Hannah Davies reported that this was jetted on 29th May – Lengthsman inspected again and it was still blocked – further e-mail sent to HD by the Clerk and New Ref 817870. This is now on the list for jetting)*
- (d) Blocked drains at Birchwood Lane – Re-reported by Clerk as requested. Drain No 16 – Ref 817853 – response from WCC Highways dated 21 Feb – *still working through a backlog of enquiries*. Drain No 17 – Ref 817856 – WCC response dated 22 Feb – *now on the WCC list for jetting*. Drain No 20 – Ref 817859 – response from WCC Highways dated 22 Feb – *drain was clear on date of inspection (20/02/20)*. These drains have now been reported again – Ref Nos 843326; 844033 & 844578.
- (e) Lengthsman had reported pipework blocked to Drain Nos 107 & 108 – Clerk reported to Highways Ref 817875 – WCC Highways response dated 4 Feb – *this has been sent to the drainage section for further investigation.*

- (f) BT – blocked ditch at Stocks Cottages – this has now been fixed.
- (g) Failed Drains on Sindons Mill Lane (C1140), Cllr P Whatley had reported this to WCC Highways Ref 786353. *(HD had asked for specialist investigatory contractors to visit and clarify any issues – Clerk has chased)*
- (h) Ice hazard at Stocks Cross Road – 4-5 metres into Sindons Mill Lane due to water across the road. Clerk reported to Highways that this been fixed in March 2019, but the problem had now re-appeared. Ice Warning signs were needed. WCC Highways response – 13 Feb – *Ice signs to be erected (which has been done). Meeting with HD to discuss the issue and see what else can be done following previous installation of land drains.* Ref 829205
- (i) Fence at the lower car park/field at The Bruff in need of repair (Ref 787833). *(Map & photo have been sent to the repair section for action – Clerk has chased again!)*
- (j) Grit Bin – Suckley Crossroads – Cllr J Green has purchased a new grit bin. The Lengthsman would be collecting this Cllr Green’s home and filling it with the remaining salt/grit left on site.
- (k) Drain No 138 – Blackhouse Lane. Clerk reported – Ref No 817888. WCC Highways response 22 Feb – *drain on the WCC list for jetting.*
- (l) Clerk reported Drain Nos 53; 58 & 59 – WCC Highways response dated 4 Feb – *drains now on WCC list for jetting.*
- (m) Clerk reported Drain No 42 - Ref 817862 – WCC highways response dated 22 Feb – *on day of inspection (20/02/20) the drain was clear at given location*
- (n) Clerk reported Drain No 43 – Ref 817866 – WCC Highways response dated 22 Feb – *on day of inspection (20/02/20) the drain was clear at given location*
- (o) Blocked drain No 15 (Birchwood Road) – Ref No 852673 – (Reported by Cllr P Whatley on 2nd March 2020). No response back yet from WCC.
- (p) Lengthsman reported a blocked drain at entrance to Bramble Cottage – reported by the Clerk to WCC Highways Ref No 817896. No response back yet from WCC.
- (q) Extra cutting back of hedge at White House Cross Roads. The Clerk had contacted Hannah Davies, but the response was that there was no Highways policy on the height of a hedge; when the hedge meets the carriageway the WCC only requires for the hedge not to encroach. After some discussion, the Clerk was asked to write to the landowner requesting the hedge be cut back a further 5 metres.

The Chairman wished to have Minuted the outstanding work of Cllr R Hill who had single handedly dug out drains in Birchwood Lane to alleviate the flooding in the road.

16/20 VAS CAMERA

Alfrick & Lulsley Parish had taken over the scheduling and stats analysis for both parishes. The Suckley stats for the period 16 Dec 2019 – 26 Jan 2020 had been produced and circulated to all Cllrs by the Clerk. The Clerk was asked to send a copy of these figures to the Safer Roads Partnership and to the Police Inspector at Malvern Police Station.

17/20 CHARITY REPORTS

- (a) **Suckley Charities** - Cllr P Whatley reported that the next meeting of Suckley Charities would be held on 7th April.
- (b) **Brookes Memorial Fund** - The Clerk reported that Mr Andy Wood, one of the Trustees, would attend the PC Meeting in July.

18/20 COMMUNITY

- (a) **Super Fast Broadband** - Cllr A Lewis reported that the Scheme on the Alfrick side of Crews Hill had raised some interest, but the projected cost of £2K at the moment was putting people off the idea, and they were waiting to see what the Government might be offering. The negative aspect of not having superfast broadband when selling a house was also raised. Cllr P Whatley reported on the joint Longley Green/Birchwood scheme. Grants were available if a community project could be put forward. There were 4 out of 11 households in Birchwood and about 21 out of 41 in Longley Green who had expressed an interest, which would raise a community grant of £51K towards the cost. Businesses at the Bruff Business Centre was another key factor. BT was in the process of replacing the old copper cabling in Longley Green.
- (b) **New Parish Information Pack** – Cllr C Luton presented to the meeting a sample of a new folder to contain loose information sheets. The Council could choose any artwork for the front cover, and a suggestion was made to use a copy of the information map from the Map Board. The quotation was £290 + VAT for 500 folders, and £400 + VAT for 1,000. After some discussion the Council agreed to purchase 500 folders. Proposed by Cllr P Whatley and seconded by Cllr R Hooper.
- (c) **The Old Quarry Memorial Stone** - Cllr C Luton reported that she had instructed Will Jones to go ahead with the repainting (in gold) of the lettering on the memorial stone as per his quote which was approved at the Council meeting on 24th February.
- (d) **Other projects** – Cllr A Lewis informed the meeting of a resuscitation training session to be hosted by St John Ambulance in Suckley Church at 6.00 pm on 6th April.

19/20 FINANCE

- (a) The following cheques were authorised for payment :- Proposed by Cllr P Griffiths and seconded by Cllr A W Huband.
General Fund – Clerk’s expenses Jan/Feb 2020 - £64.63; Lengthsman January 2020 - £302.40; Lengthsman February 2020 - £57.60; HMRC PAYE – Jan/Feb/March 2020 - £327.80; Clerk’s office – Oct 2019 – March 2020 - £125.00; J Green – Risk Assessment/L/Man management – Oct 2019 – March 2020 - £144.00; J Green – bus shelters cleaning - £60.00; J Green – Salt/Grit bin - £98.00
Playing Field - For information – D/D Npower – 2 Nov 19 – 2 Feb 2020 - £43.12. (Npower moving to E-on at the end of March 2020)
- (b) **Accounts to 31st January 2020** were approved. Proposed by Cllr A Lewis and seconded by Cllr C Luton.
- (c) The Internal Audit Review statement which had been circulated to all Cllrs was signed by the Chairman.

20/20 PLAYING FIELDS

Cllr C Luton reported that she had made further enquiries about a solution to the damaged door at the Pavilion, and had obtained a cheaper estimate of around £100 for a metal grid and a 5mm Rockwood facing for the damaged door. She had been advised against purchasing new electric showers so her recommendation was to purchase a stainless steel water tank to replace the stolen copper tank. This would cost in the region of £600. A further suggestion was to make a cover for this new tank to improve its security. New showerheads would also need to be purchased. The Council approved these recommendations. Proposed by Cllr L Devenish and seconded by Cllr R Hill. Cllr J Green reported some mole activity at the Playing Fields. Cllr C Luton to speak to the mole man. The Clerk and Chairman reported that they had agreed a quotation of £75.50 from RoSPA to undertake a safety inspection of the Play Equipment, in view of the need to get this done as soon as possible.

21/20 RISK ASSESSMENT

Cllr J Green reported that all risk assessment forms had been completed – no problems (other than those raised re Playing Fields)

22/20 CODE OF CONDUCT

The updated Code of Conduct had been circulated to all Cllrs for information. This had been recommended by MHDC for adoption by Parish Councils. Suckley PC to adopt this at the Annual Council Meeting on 11th May.

23/20 PLANNING (for information)

- (a) App No: 19/01493/FUL
Site: Applegaard Fruit Farm, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5DJ The Knowle, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5DJ
Proposal: Removal of condition 6 agricultural occupancy condition on planning permission 99/01450/FUL – Agricultural dwelling & stables

This application was **APPROVED** by MHDC Planning Dept.

- (b) App No: 19/0150/S106
Site: Applegaard Fruit Farm, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5DJ
Proposal: Application under Section 106A of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 to discharge the requirements relating to legal agreement dated 5th April 2000 associated with Planning Permission Ref No 99/01450/FUL

This application was **REFUSED** by MHDC Planning Dept.

24/20 SUCKLEY CHURCH

Cllr A Lewis reported that the Ceilidh held on 18th January had raised about £1,000. The Fair Trade Event had also raised a similar amount. She was hopeful that floor heating would be ready for Easter.

25/20 SUCKLEY SCHOOL

Cllr L Devenish reported that pupil numbers stood at 85. At the moment there were 15 applications for September admittance, with only 12 spaces available. Concern was expressed by the Council that local children might not be able to find a place at their local school. The school had applied for Section 106 funding to support the building of a classroom extension. The school was trying to recruit more lunchtime supervisors. The Head Teacher – Mrs Marshall – was leaving in July this year.

26/20 MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Code of Conduct for adoption

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 11th May at 7.00 pm – Annual Council Meeting
Monday 18th May – Annual Parish Meeting at 7.30 pm**

