

SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

Held on Monday 8th MARCH 2021 at 7.15 pm

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

In Attendance: Mrs D Taylor (Clerk), Dist Cllr S Rouse, Co Cllr P Tuthill, Bryony Gaskell & Andy Wood (Brookes Memorial Fund Trustees)

Apologies: None received

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. Nothing 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)

Cllr P Whatley informed the Council that as District Councillor he would not vote or express any opinion on Planning Applications in case they had to be sent to MHDC Northern Area Planning Committee. He would, however, Chair the meeting.

He further informed the Council that he would not be seeking re-election as Chairman at the Annual Council Meeting in May. He would remain a member of the Parish Council but he would be putting his name forward as a County Council candidate for the Malvern Link Ward in the County Council elections on 6th May.

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

Brookes Memorial Fund - Bryony Gaskell and Andy Wood attended the meeting to explain more about the Fund, how it operated and to answer questions from Councillors. The Fund was set up around 1980 by a Suckley lady – Mrs Brookes - to create bursaries for local Suckley pupils to attend independent schools in the area. If there were insufficient applications from Suckley pupils, the remit would extend to other pupils in Worcestershire. After the first year at an independent school a pupil report would be received by the Fund, and on the basis of this report extended funding would be available. It was unusual for continued funding to be withdrawn, as pupils were initially selected primarily on their high level of academic achievement and potential. The bursaries were made for fees only, and were mainly match funded by the independent school or from other sources. Contact had been made with Suckley School, especially as the school now had a new head teacher. The Trustees were trying to raise more awareness of the Fund in Suckley, and hoped the Parish Council would help with this to increase the number of Suckley pupils who could benefit. There is an application form to complete, and the Trustees meet annually in early May to consider applications, which should be sent to Bryony Gaskell as the Trust's administrator. Cllr P Whatley suggested using social media as a way to reach out. It was agreed to put together a draft with input from Bryony Gaskell. The Clerk to liaise with Cllr P Whatley and Bryony Gaskell. The Chairman thanked both Trustees for attending the meeting and answering all the questions raised by Councillors. Cllr R Hill agreed to bring a copy of the Trust Deed to the next meeting.

Report from County Councillor - Co Cllr P Tuthill reported to the Council. As previously reported in the January meeting, a new Chief Fire Officer had been appointed starting at the end of March. At the moment the Fire Service had capacity to help the Ambulance Service due to fewer fire callouts. Covid numbers were going down, relieving some of the pressure on Worcester Royal Hospital. However, the maternity unit had been inspected and downgraded. Cllr Tuthill had donated part of his parish fund to Suckley School for buying books. A number of the outstanding highways issues would have to wait until the new budget in April. WCC Highways putting together a trial database covering all aspects of Highways work. Cllr P Tuthill had suggested to them that Suckley Parish be used as the first parish data to be trialled. As Co Cllr P Tuthill was retiring as a County Councillor, the Chairman, Cllr P Whatley, thanked Co Cllr Tuthill for all his hard work and support to Suckley Parish Council over recent years, and wished him well for the future.

Report from District Cllrs – Dist Cllr Sarah Rouse reported to the meeting. Due to Covid activities taking priority, many other projects had been delayed. The Council was having to start again with Town Centre work, apprenticeships and mental health projects. The Splash had been completed. Council Tax had also been done. The SWDP had been delayed by a year. Dist Cllr P Whatley reported that a travellers camp set up in the Priory Road car park (opposite the Splash) had been moved on.

Lengthsman - Cllr R Hill reported that he had been in touch with the Lengthsman who had provided a schedule of maintenance work (circulated by the Clerk to Cllrs). He had hoped for a more detailed schedule, but this was a good first step. However, both he and Cllr P Whatley had noticed some good ditching/digging work the Lengthsman had done in the Longley Green area. Cllr R Hill agreed to liaise with Cllr John Green and Rob Wilks to work out a more detailed plan for the future.

Footpaths – No Report

Local Police – Cllr R Hooper had circulated the January – February 2021 Police Crime/Incidents Stats to all the Cllrs. There were 78 incidents across all the 11 parishes covered, with Kempsey having the highest incidents of anti social behaviour (49). Suckley had 2 incidents of burglary – both in January.

15/21 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Parish Council Zoom Meeting held on 11th January 2021 were approved and signed (subject to an amendment re WCC budget spend to £350M (not £30M), together with the Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 22nd February 2021. Proposed by Cllr R Hill and seconded by Cllr L Devenish.

16/21 HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS

The Clerk had circulated an update to Cllrs re Parish Highways issues still outstanding up to 1st March 2021, including the response from Hannah Davies WCC Highways and the Lengthsman's comments. As previously reported, some of the issues would not be resolved until new funding in April 2021. Cllr P Whatley confirmed that Drain No 16 had finally been dealt with by WCC Highways so it could be deleted from the list.

17/21 VAS CAMERA

VAS Suckley stats from 23rd November 2020 to 21st January 2021 had been circulated to Cllrs by the Clerk. These showed that the highest rate of speeding was along the Knightwick Road by the Village Hall.

18/21 CHARITY REPORTS

Cllr P Whatley reported that the Suckley Charities Meeting scheduled to be held on 20th April had been deferred to October. Cllr R Hill reported that the Hill Trust would be re-opening the hall for the elections on 6th May, and would remain open for bookings after that date, but subject to Covid safeguards.

19/21 COMMUNITY

- (a) **Parish Information Pack** - Cllr A Lewis reported that the situation remained as previously reported, so this would be deferred to the next meeting in May.
- (b) **Second Defibrillator at The Bruff** - Cllr R Hill reported that he had met with Adrian Biggs the Centre Manager at The Bruff, who was keen to provide the defib facility for businesses at the Bruff and for Suckley parishioners. Mr Biggs had estimated the total cost would be in the region of £1,500 and he was looking for a Parish Council contribution of around £300. The defib would be installed in the porchway at the Bruff, with signage from the road so it could be easily located. He was hoping to go ahead with this project in the summer and would welcome the community tie-in. Cllr R Hill reported that Adrian Biggs had committed verbally to undertaking the maintenance of the defib. Cllr P Whatley stated that the Council would need written confirmation of this commitment. Cllr A Lewis, together with Cllr R Hill and the Clerk to draft a letter to the owners of the Bruff ready for consideration at the next meeting in May.
- (c) **Memorial Site – The Old Quarry** - Cllr P Whatley reported that he had received an offer of an anonymous donation towards the cost of replacing the wooden framework holding the red poppies in front of the granite memorial stone. The replacement work would be Portland stone, with an engraving “Lest We Forget” on the front side of the frame. The anonymous donation would be 50% of the cost (minus VAT). After some discussion, Cllr P Whatley agreed to try and get a sample of the Portland stone and perhaps a photograph or drawing of the proposed replacement in time for the next meeting.

20/21 ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING & ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 2021

Cllr P Whatley and the Clerk reported on the timing of the above meetings this year. At present Central Government had not extended the final date for Zoom meetings to be held, which meant that after 6th May the above meetings would have to take place in the village hall as face to face meetings, with all the Covid safeguards/restrictions in place. It was hoped that the Government would extend this 6th May Zoom date, but in case this did not happen, the Council agreed to hold both meetings via Zoom on the evening of 6th May 2021. The Clerk to keep the Council informed of any developments in the meantime.

21//21 FINANCE - The following cheques were approved :-

- Proposed by Cllr C Luton and seconded by Cllr P Griffiths
- (a) **Gen Fund** – D W Taylor, Clerk’s expenses January/February 2021 - £63.72; R Wilks Lengthsman - December 2020 - £259.20 (paid, but to be approved); R Wilks Lengthsman January 2021 – 262.80; (paid, but to be approved); R Wilks Lengthsman February 2021 - £313.20; HMRC PAYE – Jan/Feb/March 2021 - £388.80; Clerk’s office Oct 2020 – March 2021 - £125.00; Alfrick & Lulsley Parish Council (half cost of replacement VAS batteries) - £83.75 (paid, but to be approved); D J Reynolds – Checking & refilling PC salt/grit bins - £126.00.
- (b) **Playing Field** – Water Plus - Direct Debit - £24.75
- (c) **Accounts to 31st January 2021** were approved. Proposed by Cllr R Hooper and seconded by Cllr R Hill

- (d) **NatWest Bank Mandate** - The Council agreed to add Cllr R Hill to the Bank Mandate. Proposed by Cllr C Luton and seconded by Cllr J Green.
- (e) **Internal Audit** - The Council agreed the internal audit review form as circulated by the Clerk.

22/21 PLANNING

For Information only –

- (a) App No: 20/01918/HP
Location: Stonehouse, Longley Green, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5DU.
Proposal: Erection of a portal framed garage.
This Application has been **Refused** by MHDC Planning.

For Council consideration :-

- (b) App No: 20/02039/HP
Location: Rundell, Longley Green, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5DU
Proposal: Proposed single storey rear extension with internal and external alterations and balcony terrace to rear

The Council considered this application and had no objections to it. The Clerk to notify MHDC Planning.

23/21 PLAYING FIELD

Cllr C Luton reported she had met with Duncan Reynolds who would be fixing a couple of wall hanging bins and erecting the fencing. Due to restrictions, all very quiet on the Playing Field front but hopefully teams/sports groups would be back later in the year.

24/21 RISK ASSESSMENT

Cllr C Luton had been had been undertaking the Risk Assessments on the Playing Field and Cllr R Hill checking all other risk areas whilst Cllr J Green was in a Covid high risk category. Nothing adverse to report at the moment.

25/21 SUCKLEY CHURCH

Cllr A Lewis reported that half the funding for the toilet facilities had been raised, and the PCC was hopeful of getting match funding from other sources. If all went well, the toilet and kitchenette facilities would be in place in the summer. Fund raising was still ongoing, with a target of £60K for the North Transept. The stacking chairs had arrived and were now in place.

26/21 SUCKLEY SCHOOL

Cllr L Devenish reported that the Head Teacher Helen Field had sent her an extensive report and update for the School, which had been circulated to all Council members and the Clerk. Both pupils and staff had worked hard to keep up with their school work via Zoom, with higher numbers of vulnerable children attending the school. As the school re-opened to all pupils, a project involving the whole school linked to Farming & Spring was planned, including interactive activities linked to the NFU. Currently the school has 84 children on the roll with a number of potential pupils placed on a waiting list. The school would be looking for funding for the Early Years outdoor project and to improve disabled access to classrooms.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – See Minute 20/21 – To be advised

