

SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Monday 14th FEBRUARY 2022 at 7.00 pm in Suckley Village Hall

Present: Cllr R Hill (Chairman), Cllr P Whatley, Cllr A Lewis, Cllr P Griffiths, Cllr C Luton, Cllr L Devenish. Cllr R Hooper

In Attendance: Mrs D Taylor (Clerk), Mrs H Philpotts (Footpaths Warden)

Apologies: Dist Cllr S Rouse, Co Cllr K Hanks, Cllr J Green

- (a) Cllrs were reminded of the need to complete/update their Register of Interests
- (b) Declaration of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) in items on the Agenda – or -
- (c) Declaration of Other Disclosable Interests in items on the Agenda falling within the terms of para 12(4)((b) of the Code of Conduct. (*none made*)

Cllr P Whatley stated that as a District Cllr he would not take part in any discussions relating to Planning items on the Agenda.

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 (including planning applicant/s or their representatives)

- (1) No planning applicants or members of the public were present

Report from County Councillor - As Co Cllr K Hanks was unable to attend the meeting, she had e-mailed her report to the Clerk who had circulated it to all Councillors prior to the meeting. In her report she stated that the draft budget had been presented to the Cabinet Meeting on 6th January 2022, with the recommendation to go to full Council meeting on 17th February. It was proposed that there would be a total increase of 3.94% in Council Tax (including 3% Adult Social Care Levies). There would be an increase in the number of Highway Liaison Officers, and contact hours for Highways and Transport Control response would increase to 7.0 am – 7.0 pm on weekdays. An investment of £6,000,000 would be made to complete the full transition to LED street lighting in Worcestershire, and there would be a small discretionary infrastructure budget of £500,000. The Parish Lengthsman Scheme would also be increased by £75,000. Her discretionary budget for Suckley parish had been allocated for the new VAS unit and a contribution to Suckley SPACE. She would welcome requests for the 2022/23 divisional fund from April 2022.

Report from District Cllrs – Dist Cllr P Whatley reported that MHDC were also in their budget cycle and were proposing to increase the Council Tax for Band D properties by just under 3% i.e. £5.00 per annum. MHDC were waiting for the Government Environment Bill, and were moving into a new phase of “Wellbeing” and out of Covid. This new phase included the changes in Priory Park; a grant for Malvern Car Club car sharing scheme, and possibly something similar for E-Bikes. Apprenticeships would be subsidised at £1K per apprentice. The Malvern Theatre was planning an expansion scheme with an outreach programme promoting theatre skills in arts and drama, targeted at young people in the Malvern community. MHDC would be seeking ideas

for rural areas such as village hall car parks being available for car clubs, and offering electric charging points. District Cllrs would be making submissions to the Boundary Commission following its recommendations for the area.

Lengthsman - The Chairman, Cllr Robin Hill, reported that the Lengthsman had done some good maintenance work at Longley Green, dealing with gullies and water surface issues. A number of other tasks the Lengthsman could consider doing were raised by Cllrs, and the Clerk was asked to liaise with him on these areas which included Blackhouse Lane, Birchwood, Sindons Mill, Church Lane, and areas near to the Playing Field.

Footpaths – Mrs Helen Philpotts reported that the promised new footpath signs/posts had not yet materialised from the Countryside Dept at County Hall. The Clerk to chase. She also appealed for more volunteers to walk the footpaths and keep either her or the Clerk informed of any problems. It was suggested that dog walkers could be encouraged to report any footpath issues.

Local Police – Cllr R Hooper reported that she had not received any local crime/police reports from PC 2483 Jon Hand, as promised at the September meeting. The Clerk to chase up on this.

01/22 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 8th November 2021; the Council Planning Meeting held on 22nd November 2021 and the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 13th December 2021 were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr C Luton and seconded by Cllr P Whatley.

02/22 CHARITY REPORTS - No reports

03/22 COUNCILLOR VACANCY

Councillors considered the applications for the vacancy and after a paper ballot voted for Mr Howard Ormerod. Mr Ormerod to be co-opted onto the Council at the next meeting in April.

04/22 HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS

The Clerk had circulated an update to Cllrs re Parish Highways issues up to 31st January 2022. This update had also been sent to Co Cllr K Hanks and Hannah Davies at WCC Highways. A further update had been received from Hannah Davies on 10th February 2022. At the last PC Meeting on 8th November 2021 the Council agreed to focus on the following three areas for the time being, which were :-

- (i) **Ref: 1079646** – Drains/flooding Scheme in Birchwood Lane
- (ii) **No Ref No** but following a meeting held on 16/10/20 with Hannah Davies, the gully outside **Bridge Cottage** had been earmarked to be lowered. Hannah Davies/WCC Highways had reported this as having been completed on 15/10/21, but this was incorrect, and it was still outstanding.
- (iii) **Ref No: 982598** – road erosion between Blackhouse Lane and Lower Tundridge Farm. Concrete posts do not appear to be fully supported. WCC Highways have marked the site with tape and cones, but this is becoming a hazardous situation with the onset of winter weather/flooding.

Re item (i) – A survey had been completed and the Drainage Engineer had designated two weeks in the new financial year for drainage works.

Re item (ii) - Bridge Cottage was still with the team. Hannah Davies was unable to provide an update, but pressure would be put onto the Drainage Team for an answer.

Re item (iii) – Blackhouse Lane/Lower Tundridge Farm. Hannah Davies apologised for the delay and will be chasing the team for an update.

The Council felt that very little actual progress had been made on any of these items. The Clerk to chase up Highways yet again, emphasizing the hazardous situation with road erosion at Blackhouse Lane.

05/22 VAS CAMERA

VAS stats up to December 2021 had been circulated to Cllrs. The Clerk reported on malfunctions problems Alfrick had been encountering with their new VAS camera. Alfrick had e-mailed the suppliers who were taking back the camera for rectification or supplying a new one. If this did not come up to expectations, then Alfrick would be requesting a refund. This could pose future problems for Suckley. The new VAS for Suckley had not yet been put into operation, but after some discussion it was agreed that this should be done to see if the camera worked correctly. The Clerk to liaise with Alfrick Clerk on this matter. Alfrick had valued the old VAS circa £500, and had suggested that it could be sold to another parish or, if Suckley wanted to keep it, then a payment of £250 could be made to Alfrick for it. The Council agreed that Alfrick should try and sell it on if at all possible.

06/22 COMMUNITY

- (a) **Queen's Platinum Jubilee – 2022** - An extended bank holiday, from Thursday 2nd June to Sunday 5th June 2022 had been set aside to celebrate the Queen's seventy years of service to the country. The Chairman, Cllr Robin Hill, reported that the Hammonds had completed the planting of 1,000 trees to create Almshouse Wood. The Clerk to write to them and thank them for their efforts. Suckley School had contacted the Chairman asking for help with tracking down pupils who were attending Suckley School in 1952, so they could be invited to the School Tea Party on the 27th May. The Council would be giving all the pupils (and those of 1952 vintage) a Jubilee Mug at this Tea Party. Cllr Hill would be speaking to Mark Armstrong again about the 70 trees footpath trail, as a number of issues needed to be resolved before this project was started. The Chairman asked for any further suggestions regarding Jubilee projects that the Council could support. It was agreed that any outdoor public event would not be manageable for the Council due to the high levels of insurance and safety requirements. Cllr A Lewis had been looking at other options, including 70 Acts of Service (within the community) that could be a possibility.
- (b) **Suckley Post Office & Shop** - the Chairman Cllr Robin Hill reported on the current situation regarding Suckley Post Office and Village Shop, which at the moment was not looking financially sustainable in the long term. Cllr P Whatley reported that the shop had greatly increased levels of custom during the Covid crisis with the assistance of volunteers to deliver groceries to parishioners, but had now gone back to pre-covid levels of trading. Mark and Julian had tried diversifying into other products as the profit margins on general groceries were minimal. Julian intended to keep the shop and post office service running, but potentially best way forward would be for volunteers to assist the shop/customer service side of the business. As ever, parishioners needed to support the shop on the basis of "use it or lose it." Cllr P Whatley agreed to speak to Julian about this suggestion.

07/22 BOUNDARY COMMISSION

The Council considered the proposed draft from the Boundary Commission for new wards to be used from 2023. These would group Bransford with Rushwick, and Alfrick would be separated from Lulsley, with Lulsley forming part of Martley Ward. It was apparent that the Boundary Commission team did not understand the historical and geographical links within the parishes concerned. Parish Councils and other interested parties had until 21st March to make further submissions to the Boundary Commission. The Clerk to resubmit Suckley Parish Council's views that Leigh & Bransford and Alfrick & Lulsley should not be split, with Suckley being included in a reconstructed Leigh & Rushwick Ward, with a preference for two District Cllrs for the Ward area..

08/22 FINANCE - The following cheques were approved :-

- (a) **Gen Fund** – - proposed by Cllr P Whatley and seconded by Cllr P Griffiths :-
D W Taylor, Clerk's expenses November/December 2021 & Jan 2022 - £147.52 R Wilks Lengthsman – November/December 2021 - £446.40 (paid, but to be approved); HMRC PAYE – Oct/Nov/Dec 2021 - £411.60 (paid but to be pproved); Stocksignsd Ltd (new VAS camera) £3,249.00 – approved for payment at PC Meeting on 13/12/21; Communicorp - £788.45 (108 Jubilee Mugs)
- (b) **Playing Field** – Proposed by Cllr A Lewis and seconded by Cllr R Hooper :-
Water Plus – Nov 2021 - £11.74 (Direct Debit)
- (c) **Accounts to 31st January 2022** were approved. Proposed by Cllr P Whatley and seconded by Cllr C Luton.
- (d) The Council approved the appointment of Duffy Regan (Worcester) as the internal auditor for Suckley PC Accounts for the year 2021/22. Proposed by Cllr P Griffiths and seconded by Cllr C Luton.

09/22 HILL TRUST/VILLAGE HALL

Cllr R Hill reported that the proposal for a nursery/play group to use the hall was moving forward. The Trust was still waiting for the Charity Commission's view re using the hall on a more single use basis. However, the hall would still be required to be available for Parish Council Meetings and elections. The Revd Anne Potter had been appointed the new Chairman of the Trustees and Cllr Hill was hopeful that together with new appoinments the Trust could make positive plans for the future of the hall. He assured the Council that any modifications which might take place to assist the Nursery/ Play Group to use the hall would be designed to be removable in the future without damaging the fabric of the hall. The potential income from the Play Group would be considerable.

10/22 PLANNING

The Council considered the following Planning Application :-

- (a) App No: M/22/00083/GR
Location: Sindons Mill Farm, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5EQ
Proposal: Crop Storage

The Council had “no comment” to make on this application.

For information only:-

- (b) App No: 21/02045/FUL
Location: Cold Store at Park House Farm, Suckley, Worcs
Proposal: Extension to existing building to create a vehicle maintenance workshop

MHDC Planning has **Approved** this application, subject to conditins relating to operating hours and the use of the workshop only for vehicles used in association with the transport depot

- (c) App No: 21/00452/FUL
Location: Tundridge Mill, Blackhouse Lane, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5DP
Proposal: Machinery & Wood Store

MHDC Planning has **Approved** this application, subject to conditions relating to private use only. Not to be used for any non-incidental trade or business or commercial enterprise or converted to any form of habitable accommodation whatsoever.

- (d) App No: 21/02036/HP
Location: The Nook, Birchwood, Storrige WR13 5HA
Proposal: Erection of single storey extension & replacement garage

MHDC Planning has **Approved** this application, subject to conditions.

- (e) App No: 21/01862/HP
Location: Exmoor, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5DJ
Proposal: Replacement of 3 windows on front elevation, including the change of 2 of the windows to bow windows.

MHDC Planning has **Approved** this application, subject to conditions.

11/22 PLAYING FIELD

Cllr C Luton reported that two teams from Malvern were now using the all weather pitch. A new mains driven light had been installed on the building at a cost of around £50.00. Mole activity was presenting again and she would get the pest controller to have a look at it. The Clerk reported that a RosPA Safety Inspection would be taking place some time in March.

12/22 RISK ASSESSMENT

Cllr R Hill reported no issues re risk assessment for the bus shelters, trees in quarry. Cllr C Luton reported all was well with the Playing Field. Cllr R Hill reported that BT had contacted the Clerk regarding the map board which had fallen down in the recent gales and was leaning over the BT fence next to their exchange building. BT was planning to erect a new fence and also install a new gate, so this needed to be removed. Cllr Hill had contacted Pete Fletcher back in December and he had agreed to remove the map board. Cllr C Luton to contact him about this.

13/22 SUCKLEY CHURCH

Cllr A Lewis reported that as building materials were very difficult to source, work had been delayed but should start within the next week or two.

14/22 SUCKLEY SCHOOL

No report in time for the meeting, but the Head Teacher e-mailed a report to the Clerk the following day which is attached to these Minutes.

15/22 MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Review of Defib/Resusc facilities (Cllr A Lewis)

Date of next meeting – Monday 11th April 2022 at 7.00 pm

