

SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Monday 11th APRIL 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 R Hooper, Cllr H Ormerod

In Attendance: Mrs D Taylor (Clerk), Mrs H Philpotts (Footpaths Warden), Dist Cllr S Rouse
Co Cllr K Hanks

Apologies: Cllr L Devenish

Three members of the public attended the meeting

Mr Howard Ormerod signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, and was formally co-opted onto the Council. The Chairman welcomed Mr Ormerod onto the Council.

The Chairman paid tribute to the faithful service to the Parish Council of Cllr John Green who died on 10th March and will be sorely missed by all. A Minute's silence was held.

- (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)

(a) No planning applicants were present. Three members of the public from the Suckley Knowle/Green area of the parish spoke to the Council. They felt that this area of the parish was not being represented on the Council, and questioned the co-option process of the recent vacancy now filled by Cllr H Ormerod. The unsuccessful candidates to join the Council at the 2019 elections came from Suckley Green. It was the opinion of the members of the public present that they should have been contacted and made aware of the vacancy. The Chairman replied that the Council had followed the Worcs Calc guidance which did not recommend interviews for co-opted Councillor vacancies. The Council welcomed applications from all areas of the parish, and took a holistic view of the parish. Notices advertising the co-option vacancy had been posted onto the Parish website, Facebook and notice boards in the parish. In 2019 all Councillors stood down from the Parish Council and the new Councillors were voted onto the Parish Council by the electorate of the parish, which was not the same as being co-opted onto the Council. Both he and Cllr P Whatley were regularly in the Suckley Knowle area should any resident wish to speak to them.

(b) **Report from County Councillor** - Co Cllr K Hanks reported to the meeting. The County Council was committed to offering full education and health services to all Ukrainian guests arriving in Worcestershire. Government funding was available for hosts and for local government under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The Here2Help support team had seen an increase in people contacting them for a wide range of support. Roll out street lighting had been taking place in Malvern and all Parish Councils were being encouraged to register any street lighting. She would be arranging an on site meeting in Suckley with the new Highways Liaison Engineer Kieran Waldron to view the outstanding key issues in the Parish. The new gully mapping system had been delayed. She would welcome applications from her new divisional budget from 1st April.

(c) **Report from District Cllrs** – Dist Cllrs P Whatley and S Rouse reported to the meeting. Generous funding was available for environmental, community enhancement and tourism projects within the area. MHDC was working hard to encourage tourism and to bring young people into the area. Over 50 applications to house Ukrainian refugees had been made in the Malvern area, but only 3% of visas had been approved so far. The Boundary Commission had closed for comments in March and a report would be published on or about 5th July. 20 electric vehicle chargers had been commissioned for MHDC car parks, but the Council was looking for suitable rural sites such as village hall car parks.

(d) **Lengthsman** - The Clerk reported that the Lengthsman had been mainly clearing gully grates from Suckley Station to Suckley, Acton to Mousehole, Birchwood, Blackhouse Lane, Crews Hill, Longley Geen, Grittles End and Suckley Road. Sign cleaning at Suckley Station to Suckley and Acton to Mousehole.

(e) **Footpaths** – Mrs Helen Philpotts reported on a range of footpath blockages and other footpath issues in the parish, together with a request for the supply of a kissing gate to replace some fencing. Co Cllr Karen Hanks offered to arrange a site visit by Jon White from the countryside department. Helen to e-mail a list of the problem areas to the Clerk who would liaise with Co Cllr K Hanks re times/dates etc. for a visit.

(f) **Local Police** – Cllr R Hooper reported she had received an update re crime in Suckley from PC Jon Handon. Stats revealed that as at 11th March there had been one burglary and one dog out of control. Suckley remains a very safe area in which to live. The Clerk reported that she had completed the Safer Neighbourhood Team Contact contract from 1st April, emphasising speeding as the main issue of concern in the parish. She had invited the team to attend the Annual Parish Meeting on 16th May.

17/22 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 14th February 2022 were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr C Luton and seconded by Cllr R Hooper. The Minutes of the Planning Meeting held on 7th March 2022 were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr C Luton and seconded by Cllr A Lewis.

18/22 CHARITY REPORTS -

Cllr P Whatley reported that a meeting of Suckley Charities would be held on 12th April. There was a strong possibility that the Charity would be wound up.

19/22 COUNCILLOR VACANCY

The Clerk formally reported to the meeting that due to the death of Cllr John Green on 10th March, this would now create a vacancy on the Council. She would be notifying MHDC Electoral Services. This would also mean that there was a vacancy for a Vice-Chairman to be considered at the Annual Council Meeting on 9th May.

20/22 HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS

The Clerk had circulated an update to Cllrs re Parish Highways issues up to 5th April 2022. This update had also been sent to Co Cllr K Hanks and Hannah Davies at WCC Highways (who had forwarded it on the new Liaison Engineer Kieran Waldron. At the 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.

Response from Co Cllr K Hanks :-

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 is now in the hands of the Rapid Response Team which means action should be taken within the next 5 – 6 weeks.

Re item (iii) – Blackhouse Lane/Lower Tundridge Farm. Subject to further chase for an update.

Cllr C Luton stressed that the road erosion between Blackhouse Lane and Lower Tundridge Farm was a serious problem and should be given the highest priority. Co Cllr K Hanks agreed to set up a site meeting with Kieran Waldron to look at the major highways issues in the parish. She would liaise with the Clerk re a convenient time and date.

21/22 VAS CAMERA

The Clerk reported that VAS stats up to 22nd March 2022 (from the old VAS camera) had been circulated to Cllrs. The new VAS camera was now up and running (from 10th April) starting at just below the village hall along the Knightwick Road. Alfrick & Lulsley PC would be siting the old VAS opposite the Nelson in Longley Green for any prospective buyer to see. The Clerk had sent the Safer Neighbourhood Team a copy of the VAS stats, together with a request to attend the Annual Parish Meeting on 16th May. Cllr C Luton suggested that perhaps the old VAS (if not sold by A & L) could be sited in Suckley Knowle to help reduce the speeding on the road from the White House Cross Roads through to the Herefordshire boundary. The Clerk to contact WCC Highways about this possibility, bearing in mind that speed cameras as a rule were not allowed to be erected along roads without a speed limit in force. Cllr P Whatley pointed out that the main factors involved with speed limits were the number of recorded accidents at any particular location and what the percentile speed is for that area. In Suckley both these factors were not high enough.

22/22 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 reported that the Hammonds had completed the planting of 1,000 trees to create Almshouse Wood and would be lighting a beacon. Suckley School would be holding a Tea Party on the Playing Fields on 27th May and inviting anyone who was a pupil in 1952 to the party. The Council would be giving all the pupils (and those of 1952 vintage) a Jubilee Mug at this Tea Party. A request had been received that all school age children in the parish be given a Jubilee Mug, not just those attending Suckley School. The Clerk to check on pupil numbers at the school plus former 1952 pupils. 108 mugs had been ordered. Cllr A Lewis reported on a project of Jubilee verge planting, possibly around the White House Cross Roads. Planting would have to take place in the Autumn, with bulbs being provided.
- (b) **Suckley Post Office & Shop** - Cllr P Whatley reported that input from the Parish Council from the previous meeting had been provided to the village shop owners, who will solicit community assistance when that is appropriate.
- (c) **Parish Council website** - The Clerk confirmed that the PC website could be easily found by typing Suckley PC into a search engine and the Worcs Co Council website with Suckley PC would be first on the list. Cllr P Whatley confirmed that contact information and photographs of Councillors (since the murder of Jo Cox) was down to personal discretion – there was no obligation to give out personal details and the main contact should be the Clerk. The Clerk confirmed that six out of eight Councillors on the website had landline numbers for contact. The Chairman suggested that as a first step, mobile numbers (which were more anonymous) be provided rather than landline. The Councillors present all agreed to this. The Clerk to confirm mobile numbers for Cllr P Whatley to post on the website.
- (d) **Parish Map** - A suggestion had been made that perhaps the Parish Map could be printed as a limited edition and sold to parishioners to raise funds for Parish good causes/activities. The Council agreed to look into this possibility, but artwork might have to be updated and permission obtained from Ordnance Survey.
- (e) **Parish Lottery** – another fundraising suggestion. However, a licence would have to be obtained from the Gambling Commission and running the lottery would take a great deal of administrative time and effort. The Council was not minded to pursue this project.
- (f) **Parish Council Notice Board** - The Chairman reminded the Council that a number of notice boards were available for use throughout the parish. However, a site for a new notice board in the Suckley Knowle area was discussed. Helen Philpotts agreed to speak to Douglas Roper to see if he would be willing to have a notice board erected at Lower House, Suckley. Cllr R Hill agreed to speak to the village shop owners re posting Minutes on the Notice Board, though this was not mandatory and depended on the availability of space on the board.

23/22 FINANCE - The following cheques were approved :-

- (a) **Gen Fund** – - proposed by Cllr P Whatley and seconded by Cllr C Luton :-
D W Taylor, Clerk's expenses February/March 2022 - £72.22; R Wilks, Lengthsman – January/February 2022 - £460.80 (paid, but to be approved); R Wilks, Lengthsman March 2022 - £230.40; HMRC PAYE Jan/Feb/March 2022 - £411.60; D Taylor Clerk's Office - Oct 21 – March 2022 - £125.
- (b) **Playing Field** – Proposed by Cllr A Lewis and seconded by Cllr R Hooper :-
Water Plus – 19 Nov 2021 – 19 Feb 2022 - £9.91 (Direct Debit); RoSPA Annual Inspection Playing Fields Report - £105.0-00 (paid, but to be approved); Adam T Cross – (Mole Control) £97.00 (paid, but to be approved)

- (c) **Accounts to 28th February 2022** were approved. Proposed by Cllr R Hooper and seconded by Cllr C Luton
- (d) The Council noted the internal audit schedule for the year 2021/22.
- (e) Donation request – Suckley BFG 2022 - The Council agreed to a donation to the BFG. An appropriate amount to be decided in time for the meeting in May.
- (f) Lengthsman Scheme & Contract. The Clerk reported that funding for the 2022/23 Lengthsman Scheme had been increased by £300.00 for Suckley. She had issued a new contract for Rob Wilks for 2022/23. His hourly rate had increased to £15 per hour, and digger rates would be £20 per hour. The Council approved this contract. Proposed by Cllr P Whatley and seconded by Cllr C Luton.

24/22 HILL TRUST/VILLAGE HALL

Cllr R Hill reported that the Trust now had a good body of Trustees in place. At the moment, the only groups using the hall were the Art Group, the Keep Fit Class and Parish Council meetings. Hire Fees for these three groups were not sufficient to maintain the hall. Should the nursery/playgroup become the principal user, it would bring in a significant regular income for the hall. However, no decision had yet been made and the Charity Commission would have to agree to the proposal.

25/22 PLANNING

The Council considered the following Planning Applications :-

- (a) App No: M/22/00331/HP
Location: Meadowside, Stocks Road, Alfrick, Worcs WR6 5HD
Proposal: Outbuilding to provide stabling, tack, hay and garden storage. Freestanding greenhouse.

The Clerk to send MHDC planning a “no comment” regarding this application.

- (b) App No: M/22/004232/HP
Location: Crown Cottage, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5EH
Proposal: Conversion of garage to form single storey annexe and extension

The Clerk was asked to send the following comments to MHDC Planning :-

“The Council would have liked more information regarding this applicaion, including the frequency of use, and details of access to the annexe.”

- (c) App No: M/22/00316/LB
Location: Barn at (Os 7235,5102) Stocks Farm, Suckley
Proposal: Extensions and alterations
Note: *This was for Listed Builing consent re App No 21/01199/CU which had previously been approved. The Council, therefore, had no objections. The Clerk to inform MHDC Planning.*

Delegation Comments:-

- (d) App No: M/22/00338/HP
Location: High Wood, Crews Hill, Alfrick, Worcs WR6 5HF
Proposal: Porch extesion to front of property, additional windows and terrace to rear.

Under the Parish Council Delegation Policy, the Clerk sent the following comments to MHDC Planning - "Suckley Parish Council has no objections to this application."

For information only:-

- (e) App No: 21/01199/CU
Location: Brn as (Os 7235,5102) Stocks Farm, Suckley
Proposal: Change of use of existing redundant farm building to Class B1 (business use) including construction of single storey extension.
MHDC Planning has **Approved** this application, subject to conditions.
- (f) App No: M/22/00083/AGR
Location: Sindons Mill Farm, Suckley, Worcs |WR6 5EQ
Proposal: Prior notification for a building for agricultural purposes including the storage of crops.
MHDC Planning has **Approved** this application, subject to conditions.
- (g) App No: 21/01291/HP
Location: Mandalay, Stcks Road, Alfrick, Worcs WR6 5HD
Proposal: Erection of two storey extension
MHDC Planning has **Approved** this application, subject to conditions.

26/22 PLAYING FIELD

The Clerk had circulated the RosPA Annual Safety Inspection Report re the Playing Fields. A number of "low risk" items included in the report were noted by the Council. Cllr C Luton had asked Duncan to keep on top of the mowing in preparation for the School Jubilee Tea Party celebrations on 27th May.

27/22 REVIEW OF DEFIB RESUS FACILITIES

Cllr A Lewis reported that the three signage points for the defib were not in good condition and needed to be replaced. The cabinet housing the defib also needed replacement as it was important to keep it watertight and at the right temperature. Cllr A Lewis to get a quote for replacement following an offer from Co Cllr K Hanks for some funding from her Parish budget. Cllr R Hill to chase Adrian at the Bruff Business Centre regarding signage for the defib stationed at the Centre.

28/22 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 (other than low risk items as above). Cllr R Hill reported that the Lengthsman had made an excellent job of re-erecting the Map Board in the car park. Cllr C Luton commented on the fantastic job being done in maintaining the Old Quarry Site in Longley Green. The Clerk to send a letter of thanks to Mike Baldwin.

29/22 SUCKLEY CHURCH

Cllr A Lewis reported that work should be starting in the next day or two. Revd Anne Potter's workload was increasing to cover 14 services due to lack of priests to cover other churches in the area, and the aim was to recruit two new priests.

30/22 SUCKLEY SCHOOL

The Clerk had circulated a report from Helen Field the Head Teacher of Suckley School (which is attached to these Minutes).

31/22 MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Annual Parish Meeting – 16th May

**Date of next meeting – Monday 9th May 2022 at 7.00 pm - Annual Parish Meeting Monday
16th May at 7.30 pm**

DRAFT