

SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

22nd MAY 2023 at 7.00 pm in SUCKLEY PARISH CHURCH

- Present: Fifteen people attended the meeting including four parish councillors District Councillor and County Councillor
- In attendance: Mrs Lynn Butler, Clerk
- Chairman: Cllr Steve Gray welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- Apologies: Cllr Lewis

Suckley Primary School – presented by Helen Field, Headteacher

Numbers are very good for September. The school is oversubscribed so the county council have increased this years numbers and there will be 91 pupils in September.

The curriculum is being enhanced with engaging, exciting activities including trips and workshops to motivate the children in their topics. Years 5 & 6 have visited Dyson Perrins IT and Tech department and Music studio. Six children were involved in a Bromyard poetry event where their poetry was displayed on shop windows. Various workshops have been undertaken looking at rivers, water, pond dipping, the Fish park at Diglis and Worcester Wildlife Trust. Explored Birmingham where the environment is very different to Suckley. The children have competed in local sporting festivals in Worcestershire including Tri-golf, Rugby, Hockey, Football and multi skills. Our new Trim Trail has proved to be extremely popular and is challenging children of all ages to encourage balance and extend their confidence and ability. To celebrate the Coronation each child has made a tile which will be installed in the school. Forest School which every child attends once a week is one of the only schools in the country to provide the provision for KS2 as well as KS1. Waterproofs have been provided from Cllr Hanks' Community budget and £215 was raised for the air ambulance.

West Mercia Police Report – a report was not available.

County Councillor's Report – presented by Co Cllr Karen Hanks

Since Last May, I report the following County Council activities directly contributing to the Parish and Parishioners of Suckley.

Budget: We increased the Parish Lengthsman's budget by 15% in 22/23 and a further 5% for 23/24, so a combined increase 20%.

Divisional Fund: I have visited Suckley School and Suckley playing fields to discuss their needs. As a result, I was able to arrange funding for:

The Supply of Outdoor Clothing for their Forest School £1317.56

Tennis posts and net and basketball hoop for Suckley Playing Fields £744.51

Suckley Space Broadband improvement £1,275.00.

Highways Improvements: We have arranged several visits from highways liaison and engineers to Suckley over the course of the year. We have also collected speed data.

We have completed drainage work at Longley Green.

I am aware of some outstanding concerns and I am looking to arrange a date for our highways and traffic management officers to meet with the new members of the Parish council to work on your priorities over the coming year.

District Councillor(s) Report – presented by Dist Cllr Peter Whatley

Dist Cllr Peter Whatley was in attendance and offered apologies from Cllr Sarah Rouse who was attending another meeting. Recent elections have seen Sarah and myself re-elected. Changes in the administration of Malvern Hills council will make little difference. Planning policies, which are always of interest to residents, are national not local. The Green Party have replaced a lot of the other 'groups' making the Green's the joint second largest party after the Independents. A big ongoing subject is the South Worcestershire Development Plan which includes a proposal for more housing at Suckley Green. These are to be entry level developments on green sites, which get approved through existing planning controls though in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty they can be stopped. A Neighbourhood Plan is good at deflecting planning applications and a clear policy is needed for Suckley settlement. The bottle banks have now gone. Council tax has been kept down and is now one of the lowest.

Chairman's Report - Robin Hill, outgoing chairman – read by Cllr S Gray

Suckley Parish Council – 2022 – 2023 Report

During the past year your Council has met on six occasions, with comprehensive and wide-ranging agendas and plenty to discuss and decide. In between these general meetings there have been meetings to review planning applications and to act as Council representatives on other bodies, such as the Alfrick Educational Trust, the Hill Trust and Suckley School, as well as plenty of work to do behind the scenes.

As in previous years the Council has spent considerable time and effort on highway issues. We have regularly reported defects with road surfaces and drains, and progress chased these when action was not forthcoming from the County Council's team. Whilst there has been some success with minor improvement schemes at Sindon's Mill, Birchwood Road and Longley Green there are still a number of outstanding problems elsewhere in the parish to be resolved in the future.

The other road-related challenge, as in previous years, is speeding. The Council-owned speed recorder is regularly moved around the parish, but just as regularly finds motorists exceeding the 30mph limit. Other persuasive measures to encourage drivers to comply with the law are under discussion. The Council is also a member of Worcestershire's 'Twenty's Plenty' lobby group, which is campaigning to get a reduction in the speed limit from 30mph, and we supported the petition signed by residents of Suckley Knowl and Knightwick Road to create a 30mph zone in that area too.

Since the beginning of 2023 the Parish Council has been meeting at the Church, taking advantage of the recently completed refurbishment and enjoying the

space and warmth that it offers. This has allowed a comprehensive scheme of repairs and upgrading to take place at the Village Hall. Now finished, this has enabled Fledglings Nursery School to be based in the building as the prime daytime user. This arrangement will still allow for other bookings to be made in the evenings and weekends, as well as occasional alternative daytime use, such as the Polling Station earlier this month.

In September 2022 our long-serving Clerk, Diana Taylor, retired after some 18 years in Suckley. We wish her well. We have been very fortunate in recruiting an experienced local replacement, Lynn Butler, who has settled in quickly.

Finally, this month's elections saw the retirement of six members of Council, with an impressive record of over a century of collective service behind them. On behalf of the Parish I would like to thank them for their efforts on our behalf over many years, and wish their successors well in the future.

Reports from local organisations & Trusts:

Suckley Church/Space/PCC Report – a report was not available.

Suckley Playing Fields – presented by Mrs Carol Luton

Another quiet year. Spasmodic vandalism including broken padlocks and just recently one of the boards around the all-weather pitch had been kicked in. A temporary repair has been done. Perhaps a camera would be a deterrent. I have asked Rob Wilks to quote for clearing the area outside the all-weather. Bramble bushes and general debris are not helping the longevity of the boards. I cleared the inside last year, but it needs clearing all year round. I will advise the clerk when I have the quote. A new basketball hoop and backboard have been installed and the new tennis nets are ready to go. These have been purchased with the help of County Councillor Karen Hanks.

Anyone interested in booking the tennis court can contact me.

I want to record the success of the Suckley Quarter Marathon, which was held on Sunday (21st May). There were over 200 runners and it was well organised.

Many thanks to the organisers for taking it on.

The Hill Trust (Village Hall) – a report was not available.

Alfrick Educational Charity – submitted by Andrew Duncan

The Charity came into existence following the closure of Alfrick Primary School in or about 1984. Following inquiry by a Lulsley resident (Derek Thomas) who, in researching the history of the School, discovered that the land on which the school was built had been given by a local landowner on condition that if it ceased to be used for the site of a school the land and any buildings on it would revert to the donor.

After protracted correspondence with the County Council, the proceeds of sale plus such interest as it had earned were handed back by the County Council and the sale proceeds were returned to the Parish and an educational trust was set up for the exclusive benefit of children permanently resident in the parishes

served by the School - namely Alfrick, Suckley and Lulsley. The income of the Charity is just over £10,000 in the year.

Over the years grants out of income have been made to a number of schools attended by children from the three parishes named in the Charity Scheme and to support pre-school ventures. The main beneficiary has been Suckley School where grants of £1,000 or more are given most years for special projects not covered by the local education authority.

In addition, children resident in the three villages aged 25 or under at the start of the academic year who are pursuing tertiary education or equivalent are invited to apply each year for a grant in writing giving details of the courses and the university or college being attended. The trustees consider applications at their meeting in early October and last year grants of £800 were made to 10 Students. Subject to the tertiary education continuing, students are eligible for three years and are occasionally awarded a half grant if pursuing a doctorate or post graduate course.

The Brookes Memorial Fund – submitted by Bryony Gaskell

The charitable income for the year to 9 October 2022 was similar to prior years but the expenditure has decreased due to a reduction in awards given to students, due to fewer applications being received. However, I am excited to report that a bursary offer has been made to a child currently attending Suckley primary school, who hopes to start their chosen independent school in September 2023 and we have already been contacted by families looking for bursary support for September 2024. As always we are grateful for any suggestions you have to increase our profile in the area but are pleased we have quite a strong connection with the current headteacher at Suckley primary school.

Public Questions

Just one point was raised that more attention is needed when clearing ditches. The debris should be removed rather than left on roadside to wash back into the ditch. Clerk will contact the Lengthsman.

Close of meeting

The chairman concluded the meeting by commenting that all councillors had chosen to serve. Any ideas to make the community better, please get in touch, the parish council will listen. Everyone is welcome to come to parish council meetings.

The Parish Council Minute Book - Accounts for 2022/23 (internally audited) - The Annual Accounts & Reports for local Charities/Trusts - were available for inspection