

SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING Held on Monday 24th JULY at 7.00 pm in Suckley Village Hall

Present: Cllr P Whatley, Cllr A W Huband, Cllr C Luton, Cllr P Griffiths,
Cllr L Devenish, Cllr V Bradley, Cllr A Lewis, Cllr J Green
Cllr D Findlater (after co-option)

In Attendance: Mrs D Taylor (Clerk), Dist Cllrs A Warburton & S Rouse, Co Cllr P Tuthill,

22 members of the public also attended the meeting to put forward their views on item 7(b) on the Agenda.

Apologies for absence – none received

Co-option onto the Council - Mr Darran Findlater was formally co-opted onto the Council and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

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.

Cllr Mrs P Griffiths declared a Pecuniary Interest in item 7(b) Cllr Dr A Lewis also declared a Disclosable Interest in item 7(b)

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

Lorry traffic on Knightwick Road - 22 parishioners attended the meeting to put forward their concerns about the increase in size and number of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) using the Knightwick Road over the last few years, plus the possibility of a further increase should an application for an Operating Centre at Griffiths Cold Store be approved. It was stated by parishioners that (1) it was becoming unsafe for families and children, cyclists and car users alike to use the road and that it was only a matter of time before a serious accident happened; (2) the road was too narrow for lorries and cars to pass; (3) there had been a number of near misses, especially on the bend at Suckley Green; (4) there were a number of pinch points in the roads in Suckley, with one of the narrowest being only 4.3 metres wide; (5) verges were being destroyed and householders wall and fences damaged with vibration causing long term damage to buildings. Complaints were also made about the noise of lorries very early in the morning (around 3.0 – 4.0 am) and that Griffiths Transport lorries were on the move seven days a week. A parishioner had logged 9 HGVs of the tractor/trailer type passing his house, roughly 1 per hour, but it was suggested by several parishioners that HGV movements had been reduced in recent months, the fear being that current data might understate likely future problems.

The Chairman had surveyed vehicle movements on Friday 21st July and again on Monday 24th July, the results of which are appended to these Minutes. HGVs represented just under 2 movements per hour on average, with Griffiths Transport vehicles forming 50% of the observed HGV traffic over the two periods. Mr T Griffiths (owner of Griffiths Cold Store) assured those

present that the Operating Centre application would not increase the number of vehicles: it was a re-allocation of siting for existing trucks and trailers that would reduce the present movement of vehicles between Chapel Farm and Park House Farm. Mr Griffiths further stated, when asked, that the cold store provided employment for 20 persons. Dist Cllr S Rouse explained that this was an application for an Operators Licence that would be granted (or not) by the Traffic Commissioner to whom representations had to be made – in this case – by 23rd July, the previous day. Cllr P Whatley informed the meeting that Parish Councils were not allowed under current legislation to make objections to the Traffic Commissioners.

Litter picking project - The Chairman invited Mrs Catherine Armstrong to present her ideas to the meeting for a litter picking project in Suckley. She proposed splitting the parish into areas, with people volunteering to look after their particular road, or choosing an area to cover. She would be prepared to be the organiser for this activity, under the auspices of Suckley Parish Council. A full risk assessment would need to be carried out, with volunteers being supplied with hi-viz jackets, gloves, picking equipment etc. The timescale for this would be critical, the best time being after the verges had been mown, with the end of August/early September as a possible date for the first litter collection. She hoped that it could be made into more of a fun event, perhaps on a Saturday. The Chairman asked all those present if they would be interested in supporting this, and a positive response was received. It was agreed that Catherine speak to the two District Cllrs – Sarah Rouse and Anthony Warburton, who had offered their assistance to obtain help with safety clothing and disposal of waste collected.

In view of the number of parishioners attending the meeting, Co Cllr Paul Tuthill suggested that item 7(b) on the Agenda be taken early, and he would speak later in the meeting.

The Chairman re-opened the formal Meeting of the Parish Council to discuss item 7(b)

As Cllr P Griffiths had declared a Pecuniary Interest in this item on the Agenda, she left the room and did not take part in the discussion of this item.

47/17 HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS - Lorry Traffic on Knightwick Road

The Chairman asked the Parish Council members for their views on this matter. All Councillors were aware of issues raised by the quantity and size of goods vehicles travelling through the Parish, with one Councillor recently experiencing a near miss between a foreign lorry and her car. However, there were other business based in Suckley employing local people in addition to the Cold Store, a number of which also created HGV activity.

Cllr Whatley felt that it was essential to have more data concerning vehicle movements at differing times of the day. Cllr Darran Findlater volunteered to help with this. A discussion then followed covering what might be possible in terms of weight limits, driver education, site relocation, setting limited times for lorry movements, signage and the impact on other roads. Dist Cllr S Rouse advised that even if restrictions were placed on the Knightwick Road, businesses already in the Parish would likely have “inherited rights” which permitted their vehicles to use the road, irrespective of new restrictions.

The Chairman proposed (as the best option available at the present time) that the Parish Council ask WCC Highways to evaluate the section of the road from Stocks Cross Roads to Knightwick, taking into account the pinch points which had been highlighted by parishioners and identify how the road could be improved by any or all of: better/additional signage; creating improved sight lines; selective widening of the road to provide better passing places. These measures being for the benefit of all vehicles using the road. This was seconded by Cllr C Luton.

The Chairman adjourned the Meeting for continuation of Public Question Time/Participation

Report from County Councillor - Co Cllr Paul Tuthill reported a Worcester Rail Infrastructure Investment strategy had been put forward by the County Council to enhance County rail connectivity for both local and long distance services. Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust under the leadership of the Chief Executive Michelle Kay had produced a plan for improving the performance of hospitals in Redditch & Bromsgrove, NHS South Worcs and NHS Wyre Forest. A business case bid for capital funding of £29.6M to achieve this new plan had been finalised and would be put forward in the summer months. All changes were planned to be implemented by May 2020.

Report from District Cllrs – Dist Cllrs Sarah Rouse and Anthony Warburton reported that MHDC now had over five years supply of land, which meant that the area was safe from speculative developers for the moment. The question of Fire Service provision at Malvern was raised. Co Cllr P Tuthill stated that in his view the service was extremely well run, and what was being proposed would be an improvement to the service with efforts to have five fire engineers to cover the majority of fire outbreaks. Cllr S Rouse reported that the new proposals would mean that Malvern Fire Station would be manned by a retained crew at night. However, negotiations were still ongoing and she felt that eventually an acceptable solution would be forthcoming.

Lengthsman - Cllr J Green reported that Lengthsman Mr Rob Wilks was steadily getting to grips with the problem drains in the parish and was planning to get round them all in due course. Cllr V Bradley requested that the Lengthsman look at the drain at the entrance to the Playing Fields, which gets blocked with silt very quickly. She also asked that the Lengthsman cut back the nettles along Church Lane near to the school. Cllr A Lewis offered the services of the Community Team to do this.

Footpaths - Helen Philpotts reported on the activities of Malvern Hash House Harriers - a group of runners. A trail had been laid through the Parish recently, across fields and footpaths, using sawdust contaminated with broken glass and screws. She had received a number of complaints from landowners about the obvious dangers to walkers, children and livestock. Samples of the sawdust had been obtained, together with photographs. She had contacted the Clerk about this situation, who had reported it to the Police and WCC Countryside/Footpaths Dept. Cllr P Whatley reported that following these complaints, he had managed to find a contact person for the Hash House Harriers. They had apologised profusely to all concerned, cleaned up the contamination as much as they could and explained that it was absolutely not in their remit to create health & safety/environmental problems and the cause was the sawdust being used had not been sourced from their usual provider.

Local Police – Cllr P Whatley reported that the Police stats for April showed 1 ASBO in the White House Court area of the parish. Cllr Darran Findlater agreed to take over the task of retrieving crime stats for the area.

The Chairman re-opened the Meeting

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 8th May 2017 were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr J Green and seconded by Cllr P Griffiths.

47/17 HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS

- (a) White House Cross Roads – junction safety. Co Cllr P Tuthill reported that both Gerry Brienza and David Jew from WCC Highways had visited the White House Cross Road site in June. Their view was that the junction was well signed and there had only been one injury collision in the last 3 years. They did not recommend moving the junction lines and due to lack of verge space it would be difficult to accommodate the advance warning signage necessary for a change of priorities.
- (b) Lorry Traffic along Knightwick Road - see item 47/17(b) above
- (c) Horse Sign – Knightwick Road - The Clerk and Cllr J Green to mark on the Highways Map the proposed new site for this sign and to forward this to David Jew at WCC Highways.
- (d) Drainage problems at The Steps, Blackhouse Lane - Co Cllr Paul Tuthill reported that this had now become quite a large project and had been moved to another group for resolution. He had asked for the Clerk to be updated via e-mail.
- (e) Salt & Grit Storage - Cllr J Green confirmed that so far he had obtained one IBC container, and he was on the lookout for more.
- (f) Winter ice on the Cradley arm of Stocks Cross – this was still ongoing with WCC Highways. The Council confirmed that the water coming to the surface was not chlorinated – it was a spring.

48/17 VAS CAMERA

The Clerk had circulated an e-mail to Cllrs from PC 3366 Paul Kennedy, who had reported he was patrolling the Knightwick Road and conducting speed assessments. The VAS camera had been moved from Alfrick to Suckley on 10th July,

49/17 CHARITY REPORTS - No reports received.

50/17 COMMUNITY

- (a) Defibrillator signage & training - Cllr A Lewis had sourced a defib training unit costing £325.00, but she would look at the BHF price for this (at the suggestion of Co Cllr P Tuthill). It was proposed by Cllr C Luton and seconded by Cllr P Whatley that Suckley Parish Council fund half of the cost of this training equipment, with Co Cllr P Tuthill offering to fund the other half from his Parish Fund. It was also proposed by Cllr P Whatley and seconded by Cllr C Luton that the Parish Council commit to a recurring authorisation for the future purchase of electro pads for the defibrillator.
- (b) SuperFast Broadband – Nothing to report at the moment.
- (c) Memorial Service 2018 – Cllr C Luton reported that the Revd Michael Vockins had agreed to conduct the Memorial Service on 11th November 2018. The Clerk to write to the Revd Vockins confirming this. The time for the start of the service was provisionally set for 10.45 am. More detailed plans to be decided nearer the date and the Revd Anne Potter to be kept informed.
- (d) Memorial site – Cllr P Whatley reported that he had consulted a structural engineer about the type of slabs which had been laid down at the site, and was told that these were the best material available. Co Cllr P Tuthill also confirmed that these standard slabs were used extensively across the county. However, it was noted that a regular cleaning and inspection regime was necessary to keep the slabs free from algae, especially as they were underneath a canopy of trees. It was agreed that the Lengthsman be asked to keep an eye on the situation as it was important to keep the site well maintained.

51/17 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 May/June 2017 - £52.68; Lengthsman services April/May/June 2017 - £633.60; Clerk – Annual Parish Meeting expenses £82.10; Linda Cotterill LCCA Ltd Audit Fee £84.00; Mrs A Lewis – Defib Signage £105.96.
Playing Fields – DJR Farm Services (D Reynolds) Mowing & Strimming £372.00; Adam Cross – Mole Control - £90.00; Water Plus (Severn Trent) £28.09; Npower £83.56; J Green – Bench removal/post fixing £95.00; DJR Farm Services (D Reynolds) Mowing & Strimming £432.00.
- (b) **Accounts to 31st May 2017** were approved. Proposed by Cllr C Luton and seconded by Cllr J Green.

52/17 RISK ASSESSMENT

Cllr J Green had undertaken risk assessments – no problems except for Playing Fields issues – see next item.

53/17 PLAYING FIELD COMMITTEE

Cllr C Luton reported that she was still looking for another quote for the Pavilion electrics. Cllr J Green reported that he had found broken glass in front of the Pavilion, which he had removed. Three posts were missing. He had also moved the bench. Cllr V Bradley had photographed damage to the play equipment, possibly caused by mowing/strimming close to the play area. It was agreed that Cllr Bradley together with Cllr C Luton and Cllr J Green inspect the equipment to see what damage had been done, and what repairs (if any) were needed, and for Paul Nightingale to contact Cllr C Luton re mowing the play area with a small mower. Cllr V Bradley raised the question of the extremely poor road surface leading down to the Playing Fields. As this was a public highway, the Clerk to raise this matter (again) with WCC Highways.

54/17 SUCKLEY CHURCH

Cllr Anne Lewis reported that the new architect had created a more tangible impression of how the project would look. The first phase was about to go out to tender.

55/17 SUCKLEY SCHOOL

The school now had 84 pupils, with a September intake of 16.

56/17 MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

None raised

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 11th September 2017 at 7.00 pm

