

MALVERN WELLS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Malvern Wells Parish Council duly convened and held in The Village Hall, Wells Road, Malvern Wells on **Wednesday 24th February, 2016** commencing at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors Mrs H Burrage (Chairman), N Chatten, P Bennett* (until 8.15pm), B Knibb, Mrs J Smethurst, S Freeman* (until 9pm), N Johnson, K Wagstaff, J Wagstaff, J Black

Apologies for absence: S Atwell, Mrs C O'Donnell, M Victory, County Cllr Mrs L Hodgson

In attendance: David Taverner (Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer)

120/16 Declarations of Interest

(a) Register of Interests: Councillors were reminded of the need to update their register of interests: Although no changes were necessary it was noted that Cllr P Bennett had not yet completed the 2015/16 update form. The Clerk advised that he would send Cllr Bennett the relevant form for completion.

(b) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature: The Chairman and the Clerk declared pecuniary interests in agenda item 7 (a) Approval of accounts, regarding the approval of payments in their names.

The Clerk also declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda item 17 – the report of the Staffing Committee which had been held on 18th February.

(c) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature: Cllr O' Donnell declared an other disclosable interest in agenda item 5a regarding planning application 15/01166 – 2 Yew Tree Lane - in that she was a close neighbour to the application site.

Councillor Burrage declared an other disclosable interest in agenda item 7(b)- the application from the Village Hall Management Committee for community grant funding in that she was related by marriage to the Chairman of that Committee.

121/16 To Consider Requests from Councillors for the Council to Grant a Dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011): There were none.

122/16 Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 27th January, 2016

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, held on 27th January, 2016 had been previously circulated. The minutes were **unanimously approved** as a correct record of that meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

**123/16 Matters arising from the Parish Council minutes of 27th
January, 2016
Minute 111/16 27th January re Planning application
*15/01166 – 2 Yew Tree Lane***

Following the concerns that had been expressed by Members at previous meetings, regarding the manner in which this application had been dealt with under officer delegated powers, the Clerk had again written to the District Council to request that MHDC should review their processes to avoid similar Problems arising in the future.

The Chairman closed the meeting to allow Mr Rob Berry, representing the Upper Welland Action Group, to address the Parish Council(PC) regarding this issue.

Mr Berry underlined the reasons behind the ongoing disquiet of UWAG regarding the decision to grant planning approval for application 15/01166 under officer delegated powers, rather than by the Southern Area Development Management Committee (SADMC).

Mr Berry noted that whilst UWAG were aware that planning decision making procedures had been relaxed for minor developments, this particular application was highly contentious especially in view of the sensitivity of the application site.

- the site is located in a prominent position in both the AONB and the Conservation Area
- the site forms part of a continuous 'green strip' that runs from Malvern Wells to Upper Welland and acts as an important buffer zone preventing ribbon development along the northern edge of the Upper Welland Road and provides a 'soft feathered edge' to both the Conservation Area and the open farmland along the southern edge of Upper Welland Rd

UWAG remained firmly of the view that the approval of this application could risk setting a precedent regarding the future of the green 'buffer zone' and that therefore these plans should not have been subjected to a delegated decision and rather should have been submitted to a full meeting of the SADMC for consideration.

Mr Berry re-iterated that good practice should have dictated that this particular application should have been called in for consideration by SADMC thereby enabling open discussion of its merits. The key questions which planning officers had still failed to answer satisfactorily were: -

- Why was the decision on such a highly contentious planning application made under delegated powers?
- Who needs to be present to make such a decision, who was actually consulted / present and where is the evidence?
- Why was the decision progressed to such a tight deadline, what was the urgency, was a small delay to resolve matters considered unreasonable?
- Why was the application not referred to the SADMC given the strong objections made by the Parish Council and local residents?

The Chairman thanked Mr Berry for his statement and re-opened the meeting for questions and comments from PC members.

Following further discussion, it was **resolved** that, where there was a significant level of public or PC objections to any particular planning application, then the PC would request that the application should be called in for full consideration by SADM. Such a request should be followed up by the local Ward members to ensure that it had been undertaken.

Cllr Smethurst drew attention to an on line petition aiming to give parish councils the right to appeal planning decisions. The planning system is somewhat unfair in that it is one of the few decision-making processes that gives no right of appeal to affected third parties. The author of the petition believes that the government should introduce a limited third party right of appeal by giving parish councils a right to appeal planning decisions to the Planning Inspectorate.

The petition may be viewed and signed at <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/110489>

Withdrawal of local Bus Services

A large group residents had remained in attendance at the meeting to express their concerns regarding the proposed withdrawal of local bus services.

First Bus Ltd had announced on its website that it will no longer provide routine services between Upton and Malvern outside the main school bus times. As a consequence, villages on route, such as Welland and the Hanleys, will see the curtailment of their services to Malvern.

Buses are a vital part of life for many local residents; without them there will be isolation and real hardship. Access to work, training, healthcare and retail services will be denied to many people

The Clerk advised that the Parish Council would be registering the strongest possible representations of protest against this decision with Harriett Baldwin MP and senior officers at both First Bus and Worcestershire County Council. An update on the situation would be provided to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

124/16 Reports from Council Committees and working groups

(a) Cllr Chatten presented the previously circulated report of the **Planning Committee** meeting which had been held on **10th February, 2016**. The report was **noted and accepted** by the Council.

(b) **Gas lamps working group**
There had been no meeting of the group since the last Council meeting. Cllr Freeman advised that there was a new national requirement for individual meters to be attached to any new gas lamp installation. As these meters would need to be housed in individual enclosed units there could be issues with gaining conservation officer approval for the installation of the equipment if such work was undertaken.

(c) **Events Working group**

The Working Group had met on 9th February, 2016. The group had been asked to focus its attention on the overall running of Community Events throughout the year.

The PC currently holds, or sponsors, events during the Summer (Big Lunch), Autumn (Fete), and Winter (Carol Concert) – but there is no current annual spring event. The Village Hall Committee had been thinking about this and intend to run a “St George’s” event this year having a ‘Shakespeare’ twist. They are planning on some of entertainment and food (perhaps Fish & Chips – to give an ‘English’ flavour) – and the event would be used to raise funds for Charity.

The Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC) were happy to organise the event and had prepared a community grant application to the Parish Council to help provide some funding to help with event advertising and promotion. Following discussion, it was **resolved** that community grant funding up to a limit of £250 should be granted to the VHMC to support the event, with the actual grant payable being made on the receipt of detailed receipts for expenditure incurred.

The clerk had also circulated details of the national plans to celebrate the Queens 90th birthday. Local communities are being invited to run their own events parties and reignite community spirit in honour of Her Majesty. This could be something that could be incorporated into the “Big Lunch” event and the working group would give this topic further consideration at their next meeting

Dates for the diary in 2016 included: -

- **Big Lunch** - Sunday 5th June
- **Carol Concert** – Fri 16th Dec (Hall Dressing Tues 6th)-
- **Summer Fete** Sunday 11th September.

The organisation of the Summer Fete Actions was discussed and actions were undertaken as follows: -

Classic Cars – after such a good show last year Howard Allen offered to arrange a similar display this year – perhaps up to 50 cars with competitors being invited to attend the event in fancy dress.

Site layout – Ken Beecroft offered to supervise the site layout on the evening of 10th September.

Action progress sheet Cllr Johnson agreed to draw up a list of the actions he normally undertook, both prior to and on the day of the Fete, so that these could be undertaken by others this year.

Better Event Signage – Cllr Johnson agreed to look at the costs of providing for better directional signage for the day of the Fete.

Event advertising- Cllr Smethurst had agreed to work on the design of posters and flyers advertising the event.

Liaison with local schools – Cllr O’Donnell would be asked to carry out liaison work promoting the fete with the local schools.

The next meeting of the working group was due to be held on Tuesday 10th May.

- (d) **Play and Open Spaces Working Group.** The Clerk advised that some liaison work with Malvern Hills District Council's legal team still needed to be completed with regard to the removal of the restrictive legal covenants relating to the Scout Hut Site at Assarts Road. The matter was due to be progressed with MHDC before the end of March.

125/16 (a) Financial matters – payment of accounts

Chq	Payee	For:	NET	VAT	GROSS
			£	£	£
3322	Sight Designs Ltd *	Watery Lane lamp	665.00	133.00	798.00
3323	Sight Designs Ltd *	Gas lamps Mtnce Dec and January	1,423.20	284.64	1,707.84
3324	Martin Thomas	Outdoor Work January & February	195.04	-	195.04
3325	Steve Maund	Outdoor Work January & February	979.90	-	979.90
3326	Prysmian Group	Electricity Feeder Pillar for Jubilee Garden	1,858.35	371.67	2,230.02
3327	Worcestershire CALC	Clerk & Councillor Training Administration and Broadband Connection reimbursement	75.00	5.00	80.00
3328	D M Taverner	Clerk's Salary January, 2016	1,521.84	-	1,521.84
s/order	D M Taverner				
TOTALS			7,247.35	883.64	8,130.99

* Chqs 3322 AND 3323 were approved at the January meeting. Payment had been withheld pending satisfactory inspection of the works undertaken

125/16 (b) Purchase of Chairman's Regalia

Cllr Freeman advised that he had been in contact with a company which manufactured regalia items and he would be liaising with them with them with a view to the production of an appropriate item of regalia to be worn by the Chairman at events where the Council was being officially represented. The costs would be contained within the £500 budget allocation originally approved.

126/16 Actions undertaken by the Clerk since the previous meeting.

(a) Assarts Road – New play equipment

The Contractors had now completed the installation of new equipment which had been purchased. The release of the Section 106 funding for the project had been agreed by the District Council and the funds were due to be received by 28th February.

(b) Community access defibrillators.

The defibrillator unit at the Wells school had been installed and was now available for use. Two further cabinets were being installed at the former SPAR shop on the Wells and at the Wyche Institute. An order had been placed for the

two new cabinets required, which were due to be received from the suppliers by the middle of March.

(c) Jubilee Garden Water supply.

A quotation in the sum of £780 had been received from Watren Ltd for the installation of a standpipe at the Jubilee Garden. Members **unanimously resolved** to accept this quotation. The work was due to be undertaken by the 7th March.

A quotation in the sum of £1,480 for work to extend the length of water supply pipes in the parish cemetery to the new graves area was also **unanimously approved**.

(d) Parish boundary signage.

Cllr Bennett had agreed to ascertain the costs of new Parish boundary signage and he had agreed to report back on this issue to a future meeting of the Council once further information was to hand.

(e) Electronic banking.

The Clerk advised that he had now taken steps to open an electronic banking account with Lloyds bank PLC. Arrangements were being put in place to establish the necessary levels of security for authorised users. It was intended that each member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee would have access to approve payments that were made electronically. Further information of the mechanics of the operation of the account and relevant training for users was awaited.

127/16 Report of District Councillor – Mrs C O’Donnell

Syrian Refugee update

Worcestershire County Council has agreed to lead the programme and will be commissioning someone to co-ordinate and prepare Worcestershire’s bid to the Home Office. MHDC have also, together with county, put together a Syrian Refugee FAQs page which every district council in Worcestershire has been asked to place on their website. Ours can be found by visiting <http://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/syrian-refugee-resettlement>.

Members of the public can go to this page which will answer the vast majority of their questions and will be updated as the bid progresses.

South Worcestershire Development Plan update

On 4 February the Inspector, Roger Clews, published his report on the plan, concluding that it is sound and legally compliant, following an Examination that began in October 2013, and can now go forward with a recommendation for adoption. All three Councils will now be asked to formally adopt it their meetings on 23 and 24 February respectively. The plan sets out a long term vision for south Worcestershire, with the emphasis on boosting the local economy and delivering sustainable housing development, up to the year 2030. It includes plans for 28,400 new homes as well as land for retail and employment.

IESE Certificate of Excellence

MHDC were recently nominated for an award at the Annual Improvement and Efficiency Awards, run by the local government and public sector social enterprise consultancy, Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (IESE). The nomination was for the Council's innovative approach to the contract with leisure operator, Freedom Leisure and how this has lifted the cost of delivery off the public purse with a particular reference to Tenbury Swimming Pool. The panel was very pleased to see the submission of the Community Services project and deemed that the project was an excellent example of a high quality service in the sector, and we were awarded a 'Certificate of Excellence'.

133/16 Village Hall heating

Cllr Knibb pointed out difficulties which had arisen with the Village Hall heating system, due to the blockage of the coin payment meter, and requested that the Village Hall Management Committee should investigate the matter so that hirers of the Hall were not inconvenienced in the future.

At this stage of the meeting the Council passed a resolution that the remainder of the meeting should be closed to the public and press under the Local Government Act (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. The reason being the consideration of staff contracts.

Publication of the minutes of this item are restricted

134/16 Report of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 18th February, 2016

A meeting of the **Staffing Committee** took place on **Tuesday 18th February 2016 at 7.00pm.**

Present: Cllrs: Simon Freeman (Committee Chairman); Helen Burrage (Parish Council (Chairman) and Neil Chatten.

Apologies: Cllrs: Barry Knibb, Jackie Smethurst and Keith Wagstaff,

In Attendance: Mr David Taverner (Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer)
The meeting was closed to the public and press because the purpose of the meeting was the annual review of the performance of the Clerk.

Executive Summary of the meeting:

The Clerk's job descriptions, contract of employment, calendar of work, targets performance and progress on the CiLCA training course were subject to a detailed Appraisal review by the Chairman of the Parish Council and the Clerk on 18th January, 2016. The review included the submitted CiLCA-format Appraisal Forms from Council Committee and Working Group Chairmen. The Chairman's full Appraisal Report was then presented to the Staffing Committee on 18th February 2016.

The Committee considered the Appraisal Report and found it to be a favourable analysis of the Clerk's performance. When the Clerk was in Attendance, the Committee & Clerk discussed the Appraisal Report, reviewed the Clerk's working environment assessment by Cllr Chatten and endorsed the recommendation which had been made.

The Clerk's performance was considered to have been very satisfactory for the year 2015-2016. Both of his roles as Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer had been carried out diligently. The Clerk was thanked for his efforts and commitment to his work and for obtaining another very positive Internal Auditor's Report.

The Clerk was additionally commended for his hard work underpinning the successes of the Fete and the Wells News.

Councillors were very pleased with the Clerk's work and considered him an asset to the Council.

The Clerk expressed his thanks to the Chairman and all members of the Council for their ongoing support and stated he enjoyed working with the Council.

Performance Targets 2016-2017

The Staffing Committee is currently working with the Clerk to agree his Projects & Targets List in the areas of "Projects with Others" and "Self- Managed (personal) Projects" for the year 2016-2017. This list will be agreed between the Clerk & The Staffing Committee before the end of the Council year 2015-2016.

The Staffing Committee recommended the following Resolution for Council Approval at the meeting on 24th February 2016
"That the annual pay increment for the year 2016-17 for the Clerk to the Council, David Taverner, as set out in his contract of employment, should be authorised to take place as from 1st April 2016 following his satisfactory Performance Review for the year 2015-2016.

This resolution was **unanimously approved** by the Council

Annual Appraisal Review 2017

The Clerk's next Appraisal Review will be due on or after 1st February 2017

There being no other business the meeting the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.40pm.

Minutes approved Wednesday 23rd March, 2016

Signed
Cllr Mrs Helen Burrage Chairman of the Council