

## 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 Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2017** commencing at 7.30 pm.

**Present:** Councillor N Chatten (Chairman)

**Councillors:** Mrs J Smethurst, N Johnson, B Knibb, Mrs C O'Donnell, T O'Donnell, Mrs H Burrage, S Freeman

**Apologies for absence:** Councillors K Wagstaff, J Wagstaff, M Victory, County Cllr Mrs L Hodgson

**In attendance:** David Taverner (Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer) Paul Esrich (Malvern Hills AONB) Robert Deri (Worcestershire County Council) Andy Pitt (Upper Welland Action Group), Paul Ditchburn (Prospective Parish Council candidate)

### **256/16      Declarations of Interest**

**a) Register of Interests: Councillors were reminded of the need to update their register of interests:** No changes were necessary.

**b) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature:** None were declared.

**c) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature:** None were declared.

### **257/16      To Consider Requests from Councillors for the Council to Grant a Dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011):** There were none.

### **258/16      Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2016.**

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, held on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2016 had been previously circulated. The minutes were **unanimously approved** as a correct record of that meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

### **259/16      Matters arising from the Parish Council minutes of 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2016.**

There were none

### **260/16      Highways Verge Management**

Paul Esrich (Malvern Hills AONB Partnership) and Rob Deri gave an informative presentation on ways in which the AONB partnership could potentially work with others to help to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the local landscape. There are growing concerns national around the health of the many insects such as

honey bees that do a critical job in pollinating crops and the AONB was keen to support Worcestershire County Council's commitment to being a pollinator friendly county.

The Malvern Hills AONB Unit had been in discussion recently with the Highway Authority in Worcestershire about how the management of grass verges could be modified to improve their value for wildflowers and pollinators whilst ensuring that the road network is safe for all users.

Around 70 fruit, vegetable and cereal crops in the UK are purely insect pollinated and the economic value of insects as pollinators to the UK was close to £400 million. The AONB and the Highway Authority had agreed to undertake a pilot project during the forthcoming spring and summer which would aim to increase the numbers and diversity of wildflowers and grass species growing on the verge and so benefit pollinators.

The pilot project would see the local highway verges having: -

- One annual cut in late August-September once flowers have set and dropped seed
- Arisings removed to prevent mulching, smothering and nutrient input
- Tailored management to control undesirable species in problem locations

Members agreed that the Parish Council would assist with the project as far as practicable, and this would include lending the support of the Parish Council Lengthsman to assist when available.

## **261/16**

### **Reports from Committees**

#### **(a) Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2017**

Cllr Johnson presented the report from this Committee and proposed that the following recommendations made by the Committee to the Council should be agreed: -

**Recommendation 1- that the Parish Precept for 2017/18 should be set as £78,500**

**Recommendation 2 -that the Cemetery fees and Charges Should be increased by 2.5% with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2017**

**Recommendation 3 – that the Council's Outdoor Contractors Hourly rates should be increased by 2.5% with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2017**

The report and **the recommendations** set out at 1 to 3 above were **unanimously approved** by the Council.

**(b) Planning Committee meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2017**

Cllr Chatten presented the report from this Committee which was **noted and approved** by the Council

**262/16 Reports from Working Groups**

**(a) Gas lamps working group**

The clerk advised that there had been some issues with the performance of the lanterns on the Holywell Road in particular. Cllr Freeman suggested that members of the working group should undertake their own survey to obtain some empirical evidence of the scale of the problem.

Cllr Freeman also that David Armitage of the AONB was completing discussions regarding the method of metering for the proposed new lamps.

**(b) Communications working group.** A meeting of the working group had taken place on 5<sup>th</sup> December and it had been agreed that: -

- Cllr Freeman would compose a new gas lamp article for website
- Tim Henley would be asked to give Cllr Smethurst administrator rights on Joomla
- Tim Henley to be asked to confirm that the website is running the latest version Joomla
- That the website should be backed up monthly
- That the feasibility of a Parish Blog should be examined
- That an e-mail protocol should be drawn up
- SMTP e-mail settings to be obtained to enable Councillors to reply to e-mails using their generic Malvern Wells e-mail addresses.

**(c) Open Spaces working group.** There had been no meeting of the group since the previous council meeting. Completion of the signing of the scout hut lease still needed to be addressed and action was needed regarding the lifting of restrictive covenants which had been incorporated in the original transfer document for Assarts Road field from the District Council.

**(d) Events working group.** A meeting had recently taken place where initial arrangements had been discussed and put in place with a view to building on the successful 2016 event. The date for the 2017 Fête and Classic Car show was confirmed as Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September.

**(e) Jubilee Gardeners working group**

Although there had been little activity in the garden during the winter months, it had been agreed that the Council's outdoor contractor would be carrying out work to improve the edging around the grassed area. It was noted that the Christmas Tree

which had been illuminated in the garden during the Christmas period had now been removed.

**(f) Cemetery Working group**

Cllr Burrage reported that the working group had met on 9<sup>th</sup> February and had agreed to: -

- 1.** Obtain final costings for, and begin the laying of the path in the new part of the Cemetery
- 2.** Obtain quotes for the repainting (this summer) of the light green fencing to match the dark green in use.
- 3.** Purchase additional granite kerbstone of plain for the Remembrance Garden plaques
- 4.** Design the location for a new spoil area
- 5.** Strengthen and amend Memorials Procedures & include Plaques application forms
- 6.** Cease the use of Kerbstones with integral flower vases once the existing kerbstone is full
- 7.** Arrange re-siting of a misaligned headstone in the ashes grave Plots area

**262/16**

**Chairman's Correspondence**

**(a) Adoption of former telephone Kiosk – junction of Watery Lane and Upper Welland Road**

British Telecom is about to remove its unused Red Telephone Boxes (RTBs) and this includes Upper Welland's kiosk on the junction of Watery Lane and Upper Welland Road. Recognising red telephone boxes as iconic street furniture, BT is offering these heritage assets (minus the phone) to suitably recognised organisations for adoption for the sum of £1 and an initial response was required by BT by 28 December, 2016.

A letter had been received from the Upper Welland Action Group (UWAG) to the effect that the Group would like to be able to adopt the box for use as a community asset.

Having considered the request the Parish Council agreed that UWAG:

- 1) should undertake a survey to determine if residents were in favour of keeping the red telephone box and, if so, what practical function it could fulfil to benefit the community
- 2) assess the condition of the Kiosk and explore options for restoration if required

Precedent for the adoption and operation of a Kiosk as a community facility in Malvern Wells had already been set by the Malvern Wells Village Hall Management Committee which has been converted for use as a notice board /book exchange.

It had been agreed that further consideration should be given to UWAG's request once the items mentioned in paragraphs 1 and 2 above had been fully assessed.

The results of the survey, which UWAG had now undertaken, showed a strong community feeling towards retention of the Kiosk and its use as a community asset. A majority of Parish Council members had also previously shown their support for the project.

Following further discussion it **was resolved** that the Parish Council would

- (i) liaise with British Telecom to complete the formal adoption of the Kiosk
- (ii) approve a community grant to UWAG of up to £250 to assist with their costs of the restoration of the kiosk

**(b) Traffic Speed throughout the Parish and use of Vehicle Mobile Activated speed (VAS) sign**

The Clerk reported that following complaints from residents regarding traffic speed on local arterial roads in the parish, the Council's mobile VAS sign was being moved around various locations locally to act as a deterrent to those drivers ignoring the prevailing speed limits.

The VAS units can store data which can be downloaded and presented as evidence to the Safety camera partnership and the police in relation to both traffic speed and volume at various times of day.

**263/16**

**Parish Council Member Vacancy**

Two applications had been received for the Parish Council Member Vacancy in the St Peters Ward of the Parish. Copies of the applications had circulated to each existing Member of the Council for their consideration

One of the applicants, Mr Paul Ditchburn, attended the meeting and spoke to highlight the reasons behind his request to join the Parish Council. Following further discussion it was **unanimously resolved** that Mr Ditchburn should be co-opted to serve as a Councillor for the St Peters Ward of the Parish

**264/16****Financial matters****(a) Approval of the schedule of accounts payable**

The following accounts were unanimously approved for payment:

<b>REF</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>FOR</b>	<b>NET</b>	<b>VAT</b>	<b>GROSS</b>
			<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>PAYMENTS MADE BETWEEN MEETINGS 30/11/16 AND 31/1/17</b>					
L25	First Paige Ltd	Carol Concert Printing	54.00	-	54.00
L 27	S Maund	outdoor work & materials - December	457.60	-	457.60
L26	Martin Thomas	Cemetery Work Novenber/ December	207.23	-	207.23
L28	Print Plus Ltd	Wells News printing	1,580.00	-	1,580.00
L29	Collett Accountancy	Payroll Preparation	302.50	60.50	363.00
L30	Staples Ltd	Stationery	11.14	2.23	13.37
L 32	cash for carol service accompaniest	carol service	70.00	-	70.00
L 31	Staples Ltd	Computer Keyboard	40.82	8.17	48.99
L 33	Staples Ltd	Printer Ink	51.96	10.39	62.35
L 34	NAMESCO Ltd	SMTP - e mail upgrade	21.00		21.00
<b>TOTALS 30 /11/16 TO 31/1/17</b>			<b>2,796.25</b>	<b>81.29</b>	<b>2,877.54</b>
<b>PAYMENTS APPROVED 31/1/17</b>					
L36	Martin Thomas	Cemetery Work January	207.23	-	207.23
L37	HMRC	paye and nat ins december qtr	1,140.00	-	1,140.00
L38	Steven Maund	outdoor work december & january	1,372.80	-	1,372.80
L39	Coddington Christmas Trees	Jubilee Garden Xmas Tree	190.00		190.00
L40	British Gas Trading Ltd	Gas Lamps Gas -Dec Qtr	1,283.88	256.78	1,540.66
L41	Malvern Wells Village Hall	Room Hire , Oct, Nov, Dec	84.00		84.00
L42	Grant Thornton	external audit fees	400.00	80.00	480.00
L43	Severn Trent Water	Cemetery Water Supply Meter 1	41.28	-	41.28
L44	Severn Trent Water	Cemetery Water Supply Meter 2	38.78		38.78
L45	N Power	Cemetery Electricity	79.20	-	79.20
L46	David Taverner	Admin expenses December & January	235.64	30.54	266.18
L47	David Taverner	Clerk/RFO salary - January	1,539.06		1,539.06
<b>TOTALS APPROVED 31/1/17</b>			<b>6,611.87</b>	<b>367.32</b>	<b>6,979.19</b>

Following a query from Cllr T O'Donnell it was agreed that competitive quotations should be sought for the printing and production of the bi- annual Wells News magazine, prior to work being undertaken on the 2017 summer edition.

**265/16****Report from Clerk on Actions undertaken since the previous meeting**

**(a) Wells News** – delivery of the magazine to residents had been completed by 9<sup>th</sup> December and invoices for advertisements placed in the magazine were being dispatched.

- (b) Vehicle Activated Speed signage.** The mobile VAS equipment had been moved and installed on the Hanley Road, about 200 metres before its junction with Green Lane
- (c) Clerk's CiLCA submission.** The clerk had submitted his CiLCA portfolio for making by the Society of Local Council Clerks assessors. Results were expected in mid-February.
- (d) Neighbourhood Development Plan**  
An application had been submitted to the District Council for the formal designation of the Parish as a Neighbourhood Area. The first meeting of the NDP Steering Group was due to take place in mid-February (date to be confirmed)

**266/16**

**Report of County Councillor**

**Cllr Mrs L Hodgson had submitted the following written report:**

**Outcome of the Ofsted Inspection on Worcestershire's Children's services**

Services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers underwent an Ofsted inspection at the end of last year. The inspectors have judged that Worcestershire's children's safeguarding services are inadequate. This isn't the case for the adoption services but overall Children's Services have been rated as inadequate.

The council will be saying sorry to our children and families where the level of service that we have provided has not been good enough and are accepting the report's findings and together they will work really hard to improve outcomes for our children.

Ofsted have recognised that the recent changes in the Children's Families and Communities leadership team, with the arrival of the Director Catherine Driscoll and Tina Russell the new Assistant Director Safeguarding Services are already providing a much-needed focus and drive. An improvement plan is already in place which has made more robust to accelerate the pace of delivery. Ofsted recognised progress is being made. For example a new referral model for all agencies has been in place since July last year. They have significantly reduced the time it takes to complete care proceedings when they are required and we have made good progress in recruiting more permanent front line Team Leaders. The report recognises the impact made by the reconfiguration of services at the 'family front door', children being offered return home interviews following episodes of missing, the implementation of the 'connecting families' programme and the setting up of a strategic workforce board.

The senior Management is committed to putting in place the systems and processes that are needed to provide our teams with the support that they need to be the best that they can be. With this in mind the Cabinet is proposing to invest an extra £3.5 million next year into safeguarding children focussed on management oversight, support for front line staff and the IT to enable work to be done more effectively.

**Budget setting for 2017-18**

At the full council in February the Council will be setting its budget for 2017-18. At the start of the budget process a gap of over £35 million was identified and after careful consideration the gap was reduced to just below £3 million. This has now been closed by careful use of one off balances, an increase in New Homes Bonuses as well as an increase in a number of grants and funding streams. It should be remembered that as a council we still have a budget of over £323million and still spends just under £1 million pounds a day.

Cabinet is minded to recommend to Full Council in February 2017 an increase in Council Tax Precept by 2.94% in relation to two parts:

- 0.94% to provide financial support for the delivery of outcomes in line with the Corporate Plan Shaping Worcestershire's Future and the priorities identified by the public and business community
- 2% Adult Social Care Precept ring-fenced for Adult Social Care services in order to contribute to existing cost pressures in 2017/18 due to demographic changes and an increased demand for more complex services

The budget is not all about savings, the council is also investing in services which includes a number of infrastructure projects, these include

- £6 million of new money to be spent on pavement repairs and a further £1 million added into the base budget for Highways repairs.
- £2 million on town centre regeneration which includes funding for the centre of Malvern
- £10 million towards the completion of the Southern Link Road
- £5 million toward tackling congestion across the county.

The council's budget will be set at the council meeting on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February.

### **Business confidence high despite EU referendum vote**

Almost half of businesses in Worcestershire are confident that their turnover will improve in 2017 - despite the result of the EU referendum last summer.

A total of 1,250 surveys were completed by the business sector from mid-October to the end of November last year, according to the findings of the largest survey of Worcestershire's businesses since Brexit.

Worcestershire has one of the fastest growing economies in the country and one of the best performing Local Enterprise Partnerships. The new plan for the county, 'Shaping Worcestershire's Future' (Link to plan) identifies economic growth as one of four key areas to support delivery of 'a prosperous Worcestershire'. To achieve this objective it is essential that the Council and Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) understand what the business community thinks should be prioritized so that resources can be targeted most effectively.

The results of the Business Viewpoint Survey show that 40% of businesses expect their turnover to improve in 2017 and one third



(34%) expect profitability to improve over the next 12 months. This is down slightly from 2015, when the last Business Viewpoint Survey was carried out.

Feedback from participants shows that there is considerable uncertainty amongst businesses as to the impacts of the EU vote.

As a result of Britain voting to leave the EU, a third (31%) of businesses cited increased costs as a risk; this was followed by exchange rate volatility (24%) and political uncertainty (21%). A further third (31%) said it was too early to say.

Also total of 41% of businesses said they do not expect the EU vote to have an impact on their business in the next 12 months, whilst the majority (75%) of businesses expect their workforce size to remain the same over the next 12 months, just under a fifth (17%) anticipate that additional staff will be recruited.

### **Eastham Bridge works reach milestone**

Worcestershire County Council's project to replace Eastham Bridge, which collapsed in May, has reached a key milestone, with the piling of foundations now complete.

The piling process is one of the most vital and time-consuming elements of the construction, with secure foundations underpinning the integrity of the entire structure. Foundations at Eastham are now secured into the bedrock, meaning work on the main span of the bridge can begin.

The next major milestone will be the lifting of the first beams into position, which is due to take place in late February.

The contractors are also currently cleaning some of the stonework that was recovered from the original bridge and this will be re-used as cladding to the new structure. Approximately 10,000 of the 12,500 bricks have been dressed so far and are currently in storage.

Works are currently progressing well despite the winter weather, thanks to the efforts of everybody on site and involved behind the scenes, and the new bridge is on track to be open to road users from spring 2017.

Traffic lights on the A443 will remain in place 24 hours a day until further notice to enable works on the northern section and to facilitate the bridge lift. Additional Highways gritting has also been carried out on the roads around Eastham

The Next Stage to the Southern Link Road

A report is coming to the February Cabinet meeting setting out the plans for the next stages of the southern link road developments, phase 3c and phase 4

**Phase 3c** is around replacing the railway bridge and footway bridge with this due for completion in spring 2018

**Phase 4** involves the completion of SLR Dualling from the Ketch roundabout to Powick roundabout including the construction of a new bridge over the River Severn parallel to the existing Carrington Bridge, major engineering earthworks and other significant structures. The cost of this project is estimated to be c£70 million the majority of which is intended to be funded through the Department for Transport (DfT) local major schemes bid process

and this will be announced in the summer of this year. This stage of the project is due for completion in 2019.

**267/16**

**Report of District Councillor**

**Cllr Mrs C O'Donnell had submitted the following written report:**

Heartstart Malvern was formally launched on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017 in Malvern Theatre. They are still looking for support or for you to become a volunteer. Richard is willing to come one evening for 2 hours to train all councillors how to do CPR, please contact Richard on 07716 345300 or at [richardvakislowe@gmail.com](mailto:richardvakislowe@gmail.com)

**Member iPad update**

Councillor iPads are now ready for collection, MHDC have arranged drop-ins before the Northern and Southern area committees in January for those members who are receiving them to collect and learn how to use the modern.gov app. However, MHDC are aiming to go completely paperless from 1 February Northern Area Committee.

**Major Emergencies Plan Revision**

A full review has now been completed of our Major Emergencies Plan. The appropriate staff have been issued with copies and the document has now been uploaded to the West Midlands Resilience Forum for emergency responders.

Visit [www.malvernhills.gov.uk/emergency-planning](http://www.malvernhills.gov.uk/emergency-planning) to view the plan.

**Five Year Plan update**

On 2 February 2016, it was agreed at Extraordinary Council that MHDC would re-evaluate our Five-Year Plan annually. In October 2016, MHDC conducted a comprehensive consultation with over 300 residents to gauge their views and perceptions on our priorities, particularly for our five-year plan review and service planning. MHDC also consulted Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 November 2016 and held a productive meeting with members and managers to look at the evidence of local needs as well as the consultation results. From this MHDC have developed seven new actions for the plan, which MHDC approved on 24 January 2017.

**Work begins to create Route to the Hills**

Work has begun on the creation of a special heritage trail to showcase Malvern's history and encourage visitors to explore more of what the town has to offer - made possible thanks to National Lottery players. A sod cutting ceremony was held on Wednesday (7 September) to mark the start of work on the Great Malvern: Route to the Hills. The project is being mainly funded by a £482,800 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and is overseen by ten key organisations, led by Malvern Hills District Council.

### **Thank you to all of you who contributed to MHDC fundraising efforts in 2016**

The council raised over £900 for numerous worthy charities and MHDC hope to continue our fundraising work throughout 2017.

Details of charity events and the money raised listed below:

- Jeans for Genes raised £65.00 for Genetic Disorders UK.
- Macmillan Coffee Morning raised £186.78 for Macmillan Cancer Support.
- Children in Need raised £131.96.
- The Poppy Appeal raised £45.22 for The Royal British Legion.
- Cupcake Day raised £106.30 for The Alzheimer's Society.
- Sport Relief raised £113.05.
- Christmas Quiz raised £66.00 for the Salvation Army Malvern.
- Mental Health Day event raised £50 for our Chairman's chosen mental health charities - Positive Thoughts, Link Nurseries and Jigsaw.
- Staff at Malvern Tourist Information Centre also raised £161 for Acorns Children's Hospice with their post a letter to Santa event.

### **Fund raising event The Be Epic Ball**

The 'Be Epic Ball' is a night of enjoying all things fabulous whilst making a significant difference to the lives of children with epilepsy. The aim of the ball is to raise enough money to set up a support facility in Worcester for families of those suffering with epilepsy. In addition, a programme to educate teachers and school staff about the requirements of children with epilepsy. The fundraising event takes place on Saturday 11 March 2017 at Malvern St James School.

BBC Radio Hereford and Worcester have been helping promote the Ball and helping "Young Epilepsy" to arrange for Gary Barlow to attend the event. Gary is aware of the Ball and "Young Epilepsy" are now in talks with his Publishers.

Please visit <http://beepicball.co.uk/> for more details.

## **268/16 Report of Elected Conservator**

Cllr Freeman advised that the Conservators were due to be undertaking a consultation with Parishes on their plans for a "re-branding" exercise aimed at making the body more up to date and emphasising its charitable status.

The new name, with a new logo, will be featured on its information boards, publications and a completely revamped website.

The Café at St Annes Well was to be re-furbished and would be closed for approximately 16 weeks from mid- July. A temporary facility would be open close to the existing site during the refurbishment period.

The Conservators Board was looking to review its conflicts of interest policy where individual members' relationships and affiliations can create difficulties where there may be crossover between the need to declare a prejudicial interest and the impact such a declaration might have on an individual's loyalty to any other organisation on which he or she might serve

**269/16 Reports from Representatives on other bodies**

**(i) Worcestershire CLAC** – Cllr Knibb advised that he had attended a recent CALC are meeting which had focussed on the type of difficulties which had arisen during the development of a Kempsey Parish Council's Neighbourhood Development Plan

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.35pm

Minutes approved.....

**Chairman**

28<sup>th</sup> February,2017