

Parish Council of Alfrick and Lulsley

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held at 19:30hrs on Thursday 25th March 2021

Under the provisions of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, the meeting was held electronically using ZOOM software.

Councillors and members of the public were advised of access arrangements in advance.

Present: Chair: Cllr B Martin

Cllrs: Ms C Bradley, R Ashton, T Clarke, A Crockford, G Lowe, G G Messervy-Whiting, E Mutter.

Dist. Cllrs Ms S Rouse, P Whatley, D Bradley (Parish Tree Warden), G M Brewin (Clerk).

Apologies; C. Cllr P Tuthill,

Visitors: five parishioners.

Public Question Time prior to the formal meeting;

Several parishioners raised the continuing matter of the un-maintained public road Sandy Lane and the response of WCC to formal complaints of inaction. The Chair said that this council will continue to support the residents in that locality whenever it can do so appropriately.

Reports: County & District Councillors et al.

District Cllrs Ms S Rouse and P Whatley reported on the activities of the MHDC during the epidemic emergency noting the progress of regeneration planning following the pandemic and the financial situation.

The Tree Warden's report is attached as appendix -a,

There were verbal reports from; Footpaths Warden, Community Shop and Knightwick Surgery Patient Participation Group. It was noted that part of the parish is supported by the Cradley Surgery and a suggestion made that this could be included in future.

The formal meeting commenced at 20:00hrs

Co-option to fill the vacancy on the council

The Chair noted that taking into account the restrictions on social contact etc at this time and the fact that two months elapsed between the last vacancy being declared and the post filled, he has decided that the matter of co-option to fill the vacancy declared at the February meeting will be postponed to the April meeting.

AGENDA

1.

Members' Apologies for absence

All members were present.

2.

Members' Declarations of Interest

There were no declaration of interest in agenda items.

3.

Confirm the minutes of the last meeting held on 25th February 2021 (circulated in advance)

The minutes had been circulated in advance and were agreed as a true record

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4.

Financial Matters;

a) Note the following payments made under the 'Delegated Actions' procedure since the last meeting.

08/03/21 R Wilks - Lengthsman £428.40 inc vat.

11/03/21 I M Goldsmith - Repairs to council property £78.14

b) Note - the council's bank balance is £30,116.40 at 20/03/21

These were noted

5.

Planning and Environmental Matters;

a) Review status – Clay Green Farm development. There was no formal news but it was expected that matters were in hand to begin work in the near future.

b) Cllr Ms C Bradley to report on the Alfrick Pound and Jubilee Spinney projects and environmental issues.

It was hoped that work in the Spinney would restart when restrictions were limited. She requested help in improving ground cover with plants such as primroses, bluebells and snowdrops.

6. Committee on New Public Facilities and Community Engagement.

a) Cllr R Ashton to report on the latest meeting. Cllr Ashton's full report is attached as appendix-b

Key points are:

Meeting 3rd March 21

The tennis court needs substantial renovation. Could funds, both S106 and other, be configured to achieve this? What contribution could the Village Hall Committee make to this if a tennis court renovation were supported substantially by the Parish Council?

Would a different MUGA/Tennis court plan reduce costs which could then be applied to a path, children's play area and gym equipment?

The Chair would discuss with MHDC S106 officials the possibilities for a 'new' tennis court funded by S106.

Cllr E Mutter would review the playing field layout

Ms B Gaskell would discuss with the Village Hall Committee the joint renovation of the tennis court.

The clerk was asked to withdraw the current S106 application.

Meeting 16th March 21

We were pleased to welcome Mr R Steele, Chair of the Village Hall Committee.

In discussion with M Hammond – MHDC, there was no possibility of the renovation of the Tennis Court being covered by S106 funds.

Cllr E Mutter had reviewed the situation with other cricketers. 'Pop-Up' nets which could be erected around a matting pitch in the centre of the field looked a better possibility than a permanent structure and would cost less. A removable matting pitch and nets would probably attract new facilities funding. Cllr Mutter's report is attached as appendix – c.

Ms B Gaskell and Mr R Steele noted that the Village Hall Committee had very limited funds. Even with Parish Council and Tennis Club contributions it was unlikely to be able to meet this. Ms D Ratcliffe reported opposition to the location of a MUGA by the hall.

The Committee decided that a full sized MUGA was not a viable option.

Cllr B Martin commented that without a full MUGA, funding could be available for a substantial play area.

b) The Chair to comment on the latest situation with regard to Community Engagement.

The Chair noted that there was a need for a wider distribution of details of the council's activities. A Facebook Page should be considered. Cllr T Clarke said he had already an informal 'Page containing some council information.

It was agreed that this Facebook Page become the one of council's formal method of information dissemination and Cllr Clarke would take formal responsibility for this.

7.

Highways and Footpaths. Clerk to report.

Efforts were in hand to ensure that the forthcoming closures of the A44 at Knightwick did not prevent a reasonably direct access to the Knightwick Surgery by blocking a route across the closed road at the C2065 junction with the A44. The WCC Highways and Safer Roads have suggested that we put the VAS further down the road at Lulsley to slow down the traffic. The location is at Greswolde Cottages where there is already a possibly suitable post. When the machine is moved to Lulsley next Monday we will see if it will fit at the proposed location .

8.

Clerk's Report -

a) Correspondence received. - All distributed via email

b) Actions from the previous meeting. - All completed

c) As last year the council's annual accounts would be examined by Duffy Regan Accountants of St John's Worcester with the council's agreement. Agreed

d) It has been proposed that the War Memorial be cleaned. Quotations for the work will be obtained in time for the April meeting.

9.

Items for the next meeting

a) Committee on New Public Facilities and Community Engagement.

b) Confirm the accounts for 2020-21

10.

Confirm the date of the next meeting: April 22nd 2021 - Confirmed.

The meeting closed at 20:55 hrs.

Minutes confirmed.....

appendix – a

Tree Warden Alfrick & Lulsley March 2021

Because of Covid restrictions there has been very little activity this month. Nick Denley has been selected as contractor to carry out tree work in the spinney, namely the felling of three trees and the crown lifting of another. All this work has planning permission from MHDC and will be carried out after the end of the bird nesting season.

On 29th March when Covid restrictions are relaxed somewhat there will be a working party to mulch the new hedge around the playing field using wood chip; this will complete the hedge planting project although ongoing maintenance will be necessary. Social distancing will be strictly enforced.

Derek Bradley

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Appendix-b

Since our last meeting, the 106 committee have met twice.

Meeting 3rd March 21

3 new members from the Council were welcomed and the new situation of the last Council meeting voting against the proposed MUGA on the field and asking us to look at alternatives reported.

After initial comments from members, we discussed the following:

To consider an alternative site for a MUGA, whether the Village Hall was suitable even though it had previously been rejected because of the drains issue.

Football and Cricket was considered a long-term interest even if the latter was limited in recent years.

Had a single-end MUGA been considered to save space on the playing field.

Are the needs of younger children being missed?

The tennis court needs substantial renovation. Could funds, both S106 and other, be configured to achieve this? What contribution could the Village Hall Committee make to this if a tennis court renovation were supported substantially by the Parish Council?

Would a different MUGA/Tennis court plan reduce costs which could then be applied to a path, children’s play area and gym equipment?

Agreed Actions:

The Chair would discuss with MHDC S106 officials the possibilities for a ‘new’ tennis court funded by S106.

Cllr E Mutter would review the playing field layout as a final check of space available. He would also investigate noise levels from MUGA use for football etc.

Ms B Gaskell would discuss with the Village Hall Committee the joint renovation of the tennis court (see above) and the use of toilet facilities in the Village Hall by those playing organised football and cricket.

The clerk was asked to withdraw the current S106 application.

Meeting 16th March 21

We were pleased to welcome Mr R Steele, Chair of the Village Hall Committee.

In discussion with M Hammond – MHDC,: There was no possibility of the renovation of the Tennis Court being covered by S106 funds. The location of a MUGA by the Village Hall would require planning/local consultation regarding increased noise and loss of amenity value.

Cllr E Mutter had reviewed the situation with other cricketers. Whilst the boundary was short it was acceptable if not infringed by MUGA or Play Area. ‘Pop-Up’ nets which could be erected around a matting pitch in the centre of the field looked a better possibility than a permanent structure and would cost less. A removable matting pitch and nets would probably attract new facilities funding. The Cricket Club would need to finalise the method of use, sub-pitch rolling and no football in the cricket season must be considered.

Ms B Gaskell and Mr R Steele noted that the Village Hall would prefer the Tennis Court to be moved to a new position to allow a passageway between the court and the Village Hall (The Chair had reported this would cost c£35k) but the Hall Committee had very limited funds. Even with Parish Council and Tennis Club contributions it was unlikely to be able to meet this. Whilst a MUGA including a Tennis Court would attract S106 funds the noise problem mitigated against this solution. Ms D Ratcliffe reported that in conversation with other residents near the Village Hall there was strong opposition to the location of a MUGA by the hall.

The Committee decided that a full sized MUGA was not a viable option and that improved tennis facilities would have to be left to the Tennis Club to pursue.

Cllrs B Martin commented that it was important to consider the longer-term aspects of new facilities. The Play Area had been regularly proposed in the past only to fail at the substantial cost involved. Without a full MUGA, funding could be available for a substantial play area. In addition, the Exercise Track would be a long-term benefit. Other options could also be considered including a Sheltered Social Structure on the Playing Field and a MUGA-End to facilitate Basket/Netball practice.

Agreed Actions:

Proposals were needed at the next meeting to enable some form of communication to the village to be made, possibly in April/May.

The Cricket Club would be asked to firm-up proposals for removable pitch and nets and review what equipment was available in the shipping container store.

Expanded Play Areas to be considered – A new facility at Upton on Severn was recommended for a viewing.

Costs for enhanced Play Areas to be obtained. Chair and Clerk.

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appendix -c

The committee of the Alfrick Cricket Club has now had a chance to meet and discuss various matters and felt it right to update the Parish Council on its plans.

When we first formed it was felt that the work needed to get cricket played at Alfrick in the short term was beyond our current manpower and levels of equipment. Since then it has come to light that there may be support from the group considering the s.106 funds that would allow us to play cricket in Alfrick this summer.

The s.106 group had always considered moving and or replacing the current nets. A quote was obtained for moving the nets - £3,534.50 ex VAT. On top of that cost we would then need to replace the actual net on the cage at an additional cost. The cricket Club is of the opinion that a better use of the funds would be to purchase a roll out cricket pitch and a portable "pop-up" cricket net. This would mean that we would not need a permanent structure in the playing field and that cricket could resume at Alfrick. The roll out pitch could be used both for practice and for match days. The cost of a roll out pitch is circa £3,000 plus VAT and a pop up net would be circa £1,000 plus VAT. We are getting full quotes at present.

In order to play we would need to make sure that there was an area on the pitch that was relatively flat where the grass was cut short. It is therefore proposed that the Cricket Club will use the roller currently in the corner of the field to flatten an area in the centre of the pitch. Football and other games could still be played on this part of the field. This will give the roll out pitch the best base to be laid upon. It is understood that there is a gang mower which could be used to do the outfield but we need to make sure it is in working order.

Other considerations were the need for storage space to keep the pitch and the pop up net. It was hoped that part of one of the lock up containers could be used for the cricket club as there will be a certain amount of kit that will need storing (mower, score board etc.). We understand that the storage units are rather dilapidated so will need to make sure they are fit for purpose.

The committee is delighted with the support that has been offered to the club and with the prospect of village cricket returning to the village.

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