**Minutes of the meeting of Earls Croome Parish Council held at Earls Croome Village Hall on Tuesday 21st July, 2020**

**Apology** An apology was received from Jeremy Owenson our District Councillor who has a meeting at MHDC this evening. He sent an update which has been circulated to members.

**Those Present**  Jonathan, Mark, Penny, Margaret, Charlotte, Robin, Tom, Malcolm Tomkins our lengthsman, Paul Middlebrough our County Councillor and the clerk.

The chairman introduced Nikki Nicholson who was also present and who is to take over from Ann as the new parish clerk from 1st September, 2020.

**Declarations of Interest** None were made.

**Public Participation** No members of the public were present.

**Minutes of the last Meeting** These were unanimously agreed and signed by the chairman.

**South Worcestershire Development Plan** We have been informed that the timetable is still on track and the update following the last consultation will be published in late summer.

**Highway Matters** 1. Paul reported the progress of the roundabout at the A38/A4101 Junction. The whereabouts of the great crested newts has been identified and a reduced amount of land is needed to be purchased from the Croome Estate. Griffiths have been given the contract to carry out the work. It is hoped that planning permission will be given on 3rd December and that work will start in the new year. It will be a four armed roundabout. 2. All Highway Team are now back in action. 3. Astons Bus contract runs out in December. 4.The tip has now re-opened, and it is hoped the Library and the mobile Library will open soon. 5.Paul has visited Kempsey and Upton Schools and found everything to be running well. The majority of schools will be open when schools return in September. 6. Paul reported that because money has been received from Central Government spending has not been effected too much by recent events. 7. Hill Croome P C have recently complained about speeding traffic and Margaret added that motor bikes often speed along the A4104 across Marsh Common. Paul suggested that we keep reporting these matters to the police and also consult with Hill Croome concerning their correspondence with the police regarding speeding. The chairman thanked Paul for sending us updates throughout the virus which have been forwarded to members.

**Flooding**  It was reported that after a recent downpour the A 38 was flooded at the point where Mr. Ball has created an entrance to his field between the junction and the garage. Malcolm said there is a blocked drain at this point and the clerk was asked to put it on the website.

**Parish Paths** It has been confirm that we can claim up to £440 towards the maintenance of the footpaths this year, but all invoices must be submitted to the C.C. by 31st.December. Penny asked about the stile at the court entrance. The clerk entered this on the website under reference 666069 but nothing has been done and it is understood that there is a huge backlog because none of this work done by volunteers is being done at the moment. Paul asked the clerk to send him details about outstanding paths.

**Lengthsman Scheme** This continues to work well and our thanks go to Malcolm for his hard work.

**Trees** Malcolm said he had plans to plant more trees this year but had not met with Trina and Bob. He said he had in mind planting some trees on the triangular piece of land on the approach to the M5 Bridge on the left hand side. Also about three trees on Marsh Common on the left hand side of the track leading to the wood, and he will confer with Steve Coole to make sure this does not impinge on his mowing of the area. Some planting on Smithmoor Common was also in mind, but it was suggested that we need to know what is happening with this common before this goes ahead. The trees that Malcolm and his volunteers planted last year are all doing well and the chairman thanked him for looking after them and giving them plenty of water.

**Commons**

**Dunstall Common** Malcolm reported that people were throwing dog poo bags on the common. After a discussion it was decided that the clerk would contact MHDC and see if some appropriate signs could be displayed on the byelaw sign and the gate. Bins were also discussed and the clerk will make enquiries.

**Marsh Common** Steve Coole has cut both Dunstall and Marsh Common this year and done a very good job. Margaret mentioned that the ditch along the wood side of the common would need cleaning out next year. It may that this is the responsibility of Croome Estate and the clerk will look into this.

**Smithmoor Common** Although members had suggested the topping of the common was left until late summer this would not give it time to grow and provide any winter feed for grazing and Tom and Steve had said it would be better cut now. However, Paul Jakeman wanted some of the grass for mowing and this has been done today. Steve will then get straight on to topping the remainder and the cost to us will be about £200. Tom is hopeful that a friend of his might then be interested in putting some sheep on it to graze through the winter.

**Track to Smithmoor Common** Three weeks ago we had an enquiry from a solicitor on behalf of a prospective purchaser of one of the fields off the track to Smithmoor Common asking if we were the owners and would we grant them a right of way, vehicular and pedestrian along the track to the field. They had also made a similar enquiry to the C C legal department. Fiona Morgan a solicitor with the C C replied to the effect that we were only the owners of the part of the track that was within our Parish. We did however raise the question in 2018 with regard to confirmation of our ownership of all the commons. We then received a reply from Wade Muggleton, A Greenspace Officer which states, “CL32 Smithmoor Common & lane connecting common to Upton/Pershore road consisting of 56 acres registered owner is Earls Croome Parish Council.” We seem to have conflicting responses from 2 departments of the C C and the clerk has today sent Wade a copy of his e-mail and asked if he would try and clarify the position. After a discussion it was felt we need to await a reply to this question before we can do anything. Paul is happy to help us clarify this and we will keep him up to date with our progress. The field in question has horses grazing in it and a caravan, and someone was seen cutting the hedge. It would seem that a dispute has taken place with the new owner and Mr Spry from The Willows.

**Registration of Village Hall & Playing Field Deeds** The solicitor has been instructed to register these properties with the Land Registry. There is a back-log at the moment so it is uncertain how long this will take. The cost will be around £700.

**Planning**

**19/01878/FUL**  6 Traveller Pitches at Baughton. This plan has been refused.

**20/000011/CM** Clearaway Digaway Ltd. Remove the necessity to have roller doors closed and remove the need to have roller doors on the building. Members are appauled at this amendment because it affords the only protection from noise, dust etc to the flats in very close proximity and the wider area. The clerk will respond accordingly

**20/00807/MH** The Rectory, Earls Croome, Erection of a conservatory, extension to terrace and adjacent garden room. Members have been sent this plan yesterday and were asked to feed comments back to the clerk.

**20/000009/CM** Cemex – Extension to extraction of aggregate with restoration of agricultural land to a lake suitable for water sports. The plans for this have been displayed in the hall and all members have had an opportunity to look at them. All seven members had submitted comments and the response has been four members in favour of the project and three against. The clerk and the chairman will produce a response to this effect and will also state that we look forward to receiving a detailed planning application for the lake in the near future. Also the point will be made that the access to the site has not been shown.

**Litter Pick** The meeting after our Spring Litter Pick was cancelled due to corona virus. It was a good turn out and a very good job was done. Malcolm suggested that we might plan another one in the autumn and it was agreed to put this on the next agenda.

**Car Park Signs** The signs on the car park alerting people that the car park is at owners risk and for use of village hall users have disintegrated. It was suggested that we have some permanent ones made. The chairman asked Penny if she would make enquiries about this and Nikki said they had just had some at Drakes Broughton and she would get a comparable quote.

**Audit** We have received confirmation from the auditors that they have accepted our exemption from audit, a certificate has been issued and all the documents are displayed on the C C website.

**Cheques** Two cheques have been written between meetings:-

1. Malcolm Tomkins. Lengthsman 11 hrs June £132.00
2. Cash for playing-field mowing. £40.00

One cheque was signed at the meeting for Lengthsman payment at the end of the month.

**Date of the Next Meeting** Tuesday 22nd September, 2020 at 7.30.p.m.

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