

**Minutes of the meeting of Earls Croome Parish Council held virtually via MS Teams on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**Apologies:** Apologies were received from Cllr Charlotte Bloomfield

**Those Present:** Jonathan Prior (Chairman), Mark Carlton-Smith (Vice Chairman), Penny Green, Margaret Herbert, Robin Tomkins and Tom Goodwin (Members), Paul Middlebrough (County Councillor) Jeremy Owenson (District Councillor) and the Clerk. Malcolm Tomkins (Lengthsman and Tree Warden).

**Declarations of Interest:** None were made.

**Public Participation:** Four members of the public were in attendance.

A question was received from one other member of the public regarding an expectation of a phone call from Paul regarding the new roundabout on the A38 – Paul took the details from Mark and would follow this up.

Two members of the public raised concerns regarding the development at Baughton Stud and the incorrect address listed by the proprietor registering his businesses.

Two members of public were in attendance to observe for information only.

**Minutes of the Last Meeting:** These were proposed by Margaret, seconded by Mark, and agreed by all.

**District Councillor Update:**

**1. Asset of Community Value**

Jeremy outlined the process for registering an asset of community value (regarding the Elgar Inn) and advised that there was a drive from central government for registrations.

**2. SWDP**

Jeremy reminded Members of the importance to review and if appropriate agree to the aspects of the SWDP that were relevant to the Council. Jonathan proposed a small subgroup be formed to review this on behalf of the PC.

**3. Baughton Stud**

Jeremy updated Members regarding Baughton Stud; MHDC served the enforcement notices within a week of the change of use application being declined. The proprietor has until 31<sup>st</sup> March to appeal. Jeremy advised there were significant issues with the site and thought it was unlikely that the decision would be overturned.

The pre-existing permission for the recently erected stable block is allowed and although the proprietor hasn't discharged the required conditions, he was building at his own risk and would be required to discharge the conditions even if it was after the building work had taken place.

Jonathan raised that it was a significant building for private usage and that the proprietor continues with his commercial operations. Jeremy suggested the members continue to register the problems formally as they have been doing.

The Members discussed the various issues at Baughton Stud and decided that the Clerk should write to the proprietor stating clearly that he did not have Commercial right of access over the ECPC owned access track and should cease usage, also that he did not have any right to use the common in conjunction with his commercial enterprises and also in the correspondence remind the

proprietor that his dogs should not be off site loose and that the ECPC would be reminding local livestock owners to use their legal right to shoot any dogs found to be worrying livestock.

The Members suggested the Clerk contact CALC, Malvern Hills Conservators and the insurance company to progress legal avenues to stop the commercial use of the track and the common itself.

**South Worcestershire Development Plan:** Margaret confirmed she had attended the virtual briefing on 1<sup>st</sup> March. Preferred options were heavily weighted towards sustainability ie areas with access to shops, schools etc and despite a proposal for 2500 houses at Strensham this was not deemed a viable preferred option site.

#### **Highways Matters:**

A38 Roundabout liaison group: Mark advised that three meetings were proposed, and one had already been held, Mark suggested this was not enough and would prefer monthly meetings. Paul advised he was surprised this group had been set up and meetings of this kind are normally limited to much longer-term developments. Paul advised that the roundabout would be built fairly swiftly starting in May with completion due in September. Paul thought the three meetings were sufficient but would ensure there were weekly updates on what the works would be. Paul suggested a more important aspect to comment on and be involved in discussion on would be the speed limits and lighting. Margaret raised concerns regarding the old A4104 and ensuring it didn't become a location for unwanted visitors or activities.

Quay Lane Ditch Clearance: Penny raised her concerns regarding the mess left by the de silting of the ditches. The spoil has been piled onto the verges leaving them unusable and unsightly. Paul suggested that the roundabout construction work could take and make use of the spoil and would follow this up. The lengthsman commented that the ditch clearance had also caused damage to a brick culvert in the area that would now need reinstating. Paul suggested getting WCC drainage team to advise.

Paul advised that Earls Croome Village Hall would be used as a polling station for Severn Stoke in addition to Earls Croome at the upcoming local elections in May. This was because Severn Stoke Village Hall wasn't fit for purpose.

**Parish Paths:** Malcolm reported that he had done some smaller jobs and asked the Clerk regarding the outstanding items reported last month. The Clerk advised these had all been sent to WCC and would be prioritised by them. Paul confirmed there had been an addition £1M into the WCC budgets for public rights of way and would expect to see this followed up in the new financial year. Members asked the Clerk to reapply for the P3 scheme and confirm the continued funding.

**Trees:** Malcolm advised that he was currently undertaking hazel coppicing.

**Lengthsman Scheme:** Malcolm confirmed that the new lengthsman Andy Milward was attending his training 18<sup>th</sup> March and that the handover was progressing with a view for Andy to start his contract 1<sup>st</sup> April. The Chairman and Members thanked Malcolm for his work as the lengthsman over the years and expressed their gratitude to him on behalf of the parish for a job very well done.

It was reported that there was an electric fence obstructing a footpath nr Moat Farm – the Clerk asked for details to be sent to her to follow up with WCC.

### **Commons:**

**Dunstall** – Malcolm confirmed the dog waste was still an issue on Dunstall Common. Jonathan asked the Clerk to find out what more MHDC could do. Jonathan advised that Members monitor the situation to see if the problem reduces once lockdown restrictions are eased.

Margaret confirmed that the previously reported trees were not Croome Estate's trees and asked the Clerk to follow up with Severn Stoke PC.

Margaret advised that a tree survey had revealed that the oak on the topside of the common was ancient and of significant historical value, 500-600 years old! Members suggested applying for a tree preservation order and Malcolm agreed to take this forward.

**Marsh** –Nothing to report

**Smithmoor** – Baughton Stud and the legal matters had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

Members discussed the ongoing maintenance of the common and asked the Clerk to contact Steve Coole regarding him taking the hay in return for hedge cutting. It was reported that the access gate post had rotted and needed replacing. The Members asked the Clerk to discuss with Steve Coole and see if he could assist with this.

The Clerk confirmed that the sheep wouldn't return to graze the common until autumn.

**Registration of Village Hall & Playing Field Deeds:** The Clerk advised that the solicitor was still awaiting response from the Land Registry as there continues to be a back log due to Covid-19.

**Elgar Inn – potential for a community run asset:** Further to Jeremy's advice it was proposed by Penny and seconded by Mark and agreed by all to complete the online registration of the pub as a community asset. Mark would talk with a resident he thought might head up this project.

**Planning:** 20/01827/FUL Baughton Stud, Smithmoor Common. Change of use to commercial. Detailed objections submitted – application refused, and enforcement notices issued. (discussed earlier in the meeting).

21/00136/FUL Elgar Inn, Worcester Road, Earls Croome, Worcester, WR8 9DA. Creation of a new farm access. Objection submitted.

Proposed waste wood recycling and expansion of existing composting facility at Croome farm, Croome D'abitot, Severn Stoke, Worcestershire – planning committee. Paul advised this was to do with the operating times. Margaret raised serious concerns regarding increased traffic and clashes with the Aston Coaches operational times – Paul asked Margaret to detail her concerns in an email for him to raise at the planning committee.

21/00240/HP & 21/00239/LB The Old Rectory, Church Lane, Earls Croome. Single storey conservatory, extension to terrace and minor extension/works to adjacent existing Garden Room and Bat Roost. Members asked the Clerk to submit no objection to this application.

**Litter Pick:** Members agreed for the litter pick to go-ahead 27/28<sup>th</sup> March. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions it was agreed that families/household bubbles work together and that they stagger collection of the litter clearing kit. This could be collected from the rear porch of the Village

Hall and a laminated map would be available to cross off the areas each family had covered. Jonathan asked the Clerk to liaise with Ann Smith regarding the litter cleaning equipment.

**Finance & Cheques:**

Bank Reconciliation – Penny confirmed the bank reconciliation had been completed by her and Charlotte for January & February and it was correct.

NS&I – Jonathan suggested closing the NS&I saving account, it currently held circa £2000 and was not attracting much interest and was an administrative burden. The Members agreed. This was proposed by Margaret and seconded by Penny and agreed by all. Jonathan asked the Clerk to make the necessary arrangements.

Payments made since last meeting:

Mr M Tomkins – Lengthsman payment – January	£159.00
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary- February (S/O)	£204.30
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance February (S/O)	£15.00
Mr M Tomkins – Lengthsman payment – February	£132.00

Members reviewed and authorized the following payments:

a) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk salary – March (S/O)	£204.30
b) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Working from home allowance March (S/O)	£15.00
c) Mr M Tomkins – Lengthsman payment – March	£TBC

Remittance:

County Councillor contribution to legal fee's	-	£1500.00
WCC Lengthsman reimburse October & December	-	£282.00
WCC Lengthsman reimburse January		£159.00

**Dates of Next Meetings:** Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May to be preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting at 7pm.

Meeting closed at 9:40pm.