

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EARLS CROOME PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 21st SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 7.30 PM AT EARLS CROOME VILLAGE HALL.

PRESENT: Mark Smith (Chairman), Penny Green, Margaret Herbert, Robin Tomkins, Charlotte Bloomfield and Katie Etherington (Members), Martin Allen (County Councillor) and the Clerk.

1) APOLOGIES

District Councillor Owenson & Cllr Tom Goodwin.

Malcolm Tomkins (Tree Warden), Andrew Milward (Lengthsman) & Ann Smith (Advisor to PC)

2) PUBLIC: One member of the public was in attendance.

3) MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2021 were proposed by Penny, seconded by Margaret, agreed by all and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

Margaret updated Members on her initial investigations regarding grants or assistance available towards maintenance of the Commons. She advised that Natural England had suggested looking at the Agri Environment Scheme, Meadows Groups and Wildlife Support groups. Margaret would update Members further at the next meeting.

4) REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Worcestershire County Councillor Martin Allen

Martin gave the following update:

Martin advised that there are 120 thousand drains that WCC look after. There is now a program going forward to identify which drains need to be checked or jetted more often, and which can be left for a longer period of time. This is intended to reduce the number of blocked drains.

Martin updated Members regarding Bow Farm gravel extraction in Ripple Parish.

Martin circulated some details about addressing the Planning and Regulatory Committee.

Martin advised Members that he was unable to vote on the Digaway application to remove the doors when it returns to the Planning and Regulatory Committee at the end of September, he has asked another Councillor, Tom Wells to stand in for him. Martin advised that he was dismayed to find that although Officers were instructed to find reasons on the dust issue to turn this application down, they have not sent one single consultant to site claiming this would cost the County Council money! Martin advised that his latest letter of objection highlights this serious omission. Martin also advised that he has been unable to continue to object on the noise issue, Worcester Regulatory Services have said that there is not an issue and because they are the Statutory Consultancy that issue is now dead, and his objection would carry no weight.

Martin advised that since his last report and the subsequent work there had been no further reports of flooding on Quay Lane. He advised that should the lying water reoccur; it would require a new report. Members commented that until there was some serious rain fall it would be difficult to tell if the work had solved the problem.

Martin gave an overview as follows regarding the restrictions imposed by WCC on Croome Composting.

Operating Hours 7. The development hereby approved shall only operate between the hours of 08.00 to 16.00 Mondays to Fridays with no operations including crushing, pulverising, shredding and chipping on Saturdays and Sundays, Bank Holidays or Public Holidays with the exception of deliveries which can be made to and dispatched

from the site between the hours of 08.00 to 16.00 on Mondays to Fridays and between the hours of 10.00 to 16.00 on Saturdays only, with no deliveries on Sundays, Bank Holidays or Public Holidays. Martin advised that if movements occurred outside of these operating hours this should be reported with a photograph to the enforcement officer.

Martin advised that the A38 roundabout was due to complete in August 2022.

Martin reported that Malvern Hills County Councillors have agreed to work together to tackle the terrible speeding issue in our area. Unfortunately, the planned meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner has been delayed until November. Martin advised that the July WCC meeting motion put forward to demand that the Police and Crime Commissioner take action on speeding, this was heavily voted down, Martin expressed his regret on this.

Martin advised last Thursday WCC held their full council meeting for September, he asked a question of Cllr Alan Amos the Conservative Cabinet Member for Highways, would he agree to instruct WCC officers to conduct a speeding review. Martin asked if this could be within three months of the completion of the new roundabout. He said that he would agree to a speeding review once the roundabout had been completed, however he would need to consult with officers as to when the timing of the review should be carried out.

Martin advised that both Upton Town Council and Ripple Parish Council have expressed an interest in having a work of art/monument being erected on the new roundabout. This will be discussed with the officers and Martin will update Members at the next meeting.

Martin advised that the Orchard Close pavement had been put on the list for siding out and it would then be reviewed again.

Martin advised that he still has monies available for flood issues.

Martin advised that pedestrian warning signage was now in place at Baughton Hill but WCC would not put in a pavement. A discussion arose about possible solutions as the area was dangerous for both pedestrians and cyclists and an idea regarding a permissive footpath was discussed. Martin was asked to suggest this to Hill Croome Parish and offer support from ECPC.

Mark thanked Martin for his comprehensive report.

5) SWDPR

Mark advised that there was no further update until he had spoken with District Councillor Owenson.

6) HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Report back from New Roundabout liaison meeting:

Mark gave Members a summary of what was agreed at the liaison meeting.

- Redundant road would have low level locked barrier installed
- Central part of the roundabout, no planting was allowed as deemed a driver distraction – Members discussed the inconsistency regarding the approach to this across the County.
- Speed limit review would not take place until after the completion of the roundabout.
- Lighting Plan – Mark explained this was not as far up the Upton/Pershore Road as first thought. The lighting was a red colour to be bat friendly and the height had been lowered in sympathy to the local residents. There was a discussion regarding how the red lighting would be for those living near the roundabout. Mark suggested visiting Warndon Wood where the type of lighting was already installed.
- Landscaping – Mark advised that the proposed landscaping was not satisfactory and proposed to approach Malcolm for some ideas.
- Oak Trees – Mark advised that he had been assured that the scheme would not affect the 2 large oak trees on the Pershore Road.
- Noise – Mark advised that a surface coating was to be used to reduce the surface noise on the approach to the roundabout.

- Mark advised that it had been agreed to allow 3 monthly review meetings and the next meeting would be held in December.

Mark advised there was a dedicated webpage that could be accessed and viewed from WCC Hub.

Temporary lights on A38 and effect on businesses:

Robin raised - that he had been approached by the Garden Centre manager regarding the dramatic reduction in business they had seen when the temporary traffic lights were in place. Mark was hopeful that most of the work was now complete that required the temporary lights but advised that there could be disruptions along the A38 and surrounding areas until the roundabout completion date next year. County Councillor Allen advised the Garden Centre could check/review their insurance to see if they had any business interruption insurance they could claim.

7) MINERALS CONSULTATION

Martin advised that this consultation was regarding a technical document and that the Members should await the next consultation invitation to make comments regarding the proposed sites. Mark and the Members agreed that Earls Croome PC would support Ripple PC in any comments or other support that they required and asked Martin to inform Ripple PC of this.

8) PARISH PATHS

Mark advised that Malcolm had reported all the cutting back was up to date but ongoing.

Malcolm had reported that the electric fence blocking the footpath at Moat Barn Farm was still in situ albeit not electrified! Mark asked the Clerk to report to the Countryside Centre.

The Clerk advised that the P3 invoice submission was due on 1st December and Members discussed problematic areas in preparation for the winter period and what would be the best use of the remaining WCC grant. Members asked the Clerk to discuss these with Malcolm.

Martin Allen left the meeting.

9) TREES

Margaret congratulated Malcolm on his excellent tree article in The Bridge magazine.

Mark advised Members that there was a variety of tree planting schemes becoming available in preparation for next year's Platinum Jubilee for the Queen.

Members discussed the restrictions regarding planting trees on the Commons and Mark reported that Malcolm had done an initial investigation into what could be available, but it appeared to be available for forests and or schools.

A discussion arose regarding the potential of planting a coppice in the corner of a field near the new roundabout.

10) LENGTHSMAN SCHEME

Mark reported that Andy had submitted a summary of activities prior to the meeting. Robin confirmed Andy was doing a good job and had no issues to report.

11) COMMONS

a) Smithmoor –

LEGAL MATTERS:

Members reviewed and agreed the Statement of Truth compiled by Ann Smith and asked the Clerk to organise this to be submitted to the Land Registry.

Mark led a discussion regarding removal of the water pipe that had been laid without permission along the access track. It was thought that the cost could be reclaimed via the insurance legal team. It was proposed by Penny and seconded by Charlotte to obtain a quote to do this.

Mark advised Members that the Severn Trent work to replace the sewage pipe in the area was planned to go-ahead in October. The Clerk was liaising with Fisher German on this and the contractor would contact the

property owners direct. The works on the track is fairly substantial as there is an access valve in the area. The contractors were hopeful of keeping the access open via a metal plate to drive across but if it was not safe to do so there may be a period of 48 hours where the track would be impassable.

Mark asked the Clerk to arrange a site visit with Fisher German.

Mark asked the Clerk to follow up with Tom regarding if the Mr Gilder was prepared to graze the Common again this autumn, and if not, could a letter could be obtained for the records as proof of loss of revenue for the insurance legal team.

MAINTAINENCE: Mark advised Members that the hay had been taken from the Common now and expected that the previously agreed maintenance would be attended to over the autumn/winter months. Members asked the Clerk to follow this up with Steve Coole prior to the next meeting to ensure it had been completed.

Dunstall – Mark advised that Malcolm had reported that the dog fouling was ongoing despite the increased signage. Malcolm has sprayed the offending items in an attempt to change owners’ behavior.

Marsh – Margret reported that the ditching that had been left proud was now looking scruffy against the back drop of Malcolm’s neat trees and potentially required some leveling off.

Margaret congratulated the Clerk on a well written letter to householders whose properties border the smaller areas of Common land throughout the parish. Mark thanked Robin for offering to deliver the letters.

12) PLANNING

21/01323/HP associated ref 21/01324/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. Variation of condition 2 and removal of condition 4 of planning permission 21/00240/HP. NO OBJECTION.

21/01434/HP The Lodge, Church Lane, Earls Croome. Erection of oak framed garage and workshop – NO OBJECTION.

20/01827/FUL Boughton Stud, Smithmoor Common. The Clerk confirmed that the enforcement notices had been extended until June 2022 following the appeal.

13) PHONE BOX

The Clerk advised that the contractor would start work week commencing 28th September. The Clerk advised she had asked Andy to cut the grass back short in preparation. The Clerk advised that the contribution from Martin had been received.

14) FINANCE

The monthly reconciliation of cash and other monies was undertaken for July & August by Charlotte & Penny.

Payments made since last meeting were noted as follows:

Mr A Millward – Lengthsman payment – July	£167.98
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary- August (S/O)	£204.30
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance August (S/O)	£15.00

It was proposed by Robin and seconded by Margaret and agreed by all to authorize the following payments:

a) Mr A Millward – lengthsman payment – August	£102.00
b) Mrs A Smith – reimburse playing grass cutting	£50.00
c) Mrs N Nicholson – OPE Jan-Sept	£25.20
d) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk salary – July (S/O)	£204.30
e) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Working from home allowance July (S/O)	£15.00
f) Mr A Millward – lengthsman payment – September	£TBC

Remittance:	
WCC Lengthsman reimburse June	£54.00
WCC Lengthsman reimburse July	£204.00
WCC County Councillor contribution towards phonebox repaint	£300.00
Village Hall – Payment for Land Registry fee for Village Hall	£366.00

22. CORRESPONDANCE

Mark advised that Tom had written in to advise that trees belonging to Earls Croome Court were encroaching onto the Highway. Tom had offered to cut the trees back. The Members asked the Clerk to write to the landowner including Tom's kind offer.

Mark led a discussion regarding the recent communication from MHDC regarding listed buildings. Mark asked Members to check the listing to see if all appropriate community assets were listed and if not come up with a list of additions. Mark asked Margaret to review the details of the requirements sent through by MHDC and report back at the next meeting.

Members asked the Clerk to ask Andy to review the A38 bus shelter and report any remedial requirements.

Members asked the Clerk to add the Parish notice board to November's meeting agenda.

21 INFORMATION AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 16th November 2021 at 7.30 pm at Earls Croome Village Hall

Meeting Closed 9:50pm