

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF EARLS CROOME PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> MAY 2022 AT 7.30 PM AT EARLS CROOME VILLAGE HALL.**

**PRESENT:** Mark Smith (Chairman), Penny Green, Margaret Herbert, and Charlotte Bloomfield (Members) and the Clerk. Malcolm Tomkins (Tree Warden) Ann Smith (Advisor to the Council)

**1) ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Margaret proposed Mark, Penny seconded the proposal, which was agreed by all. Mark signed the declaration of Acceptance of Office form, specified under Section 51 of the local Government Act 2000.

**2) APOLOGIES**

Cllr Tom Goodwin, Cllr Katie Etherington, County Councillor Martin Allen & District Councillor Jeremy Owenson Note Martin had presented his report earlier as part of the Annual Parish Meeting.

**3) REGISTRATION AND DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

- (i) The Clerk advised members of the need to update their Registration of Interest forms which are provided and kept by the monitoring officer of the Malvern Hills District Council Standards Committee.
- (ii) No declarations were declared.

**4) TO NOTE THE CODE OF CONDUCT, STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Code of Conduct for Members, which had been adopted by the Council in 2018/2019, and the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, which had also been adopted by the Council in 2018/2019 were noted.

**5) PUBLIC:** 2 members of the public were in attendance, they had nothing specific to raise.

**6) DELEGATION OF PLANNING AND OTHER MATTERS**

- (a) It was agreed by all members that the function of responding to the Local Planning Authority be delegated to the Clerk.
- (b) It was agreed by all to re-adopt the terms of reference for the Staffing Committee, including delegated powers for recruitment, performance reviews and disciplinary & grievance procedures.

**7) REPRESENTATIVES TO BE APPOINTED**

Mark asked Members if they were happy to stay with the current responsibilities and review these once the vacancy was filled and more members were in attendance. Members agreed and asked that this was moved to the July agenda.

**8) LEGAL DOCUMENTS AND CONTRACTS**

All legal documents regarding the ownership of the Village Hall and Playing Field are kept with Whatley Recordon, Solicitors in Malvern.

The contract with Worcestershire County Council to provide a Parish Lengthsman is effective until 31 March 2023, and the Parish Council's contract with Mr A Millward to provide the services of Parish Lengthsman is effective until 31 March 2023.

The contract with Worcestershire County Council to provide a Parish footpath clearing service via P3 scheme is effective until 31 December 2022, the members agreed to continue using the services of Mr M Tomkins for the P3 work. The Clerk confirmed that as a contractor Malcolm was covered by the PC insurance for this service.

The insurance contract with Zurich is due for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022. The Clerk advised that despite approaching a specialist broker she had not received any prices as yet. It was agreed that she would circulate alternative options for members to discuss and decide, Penny noted that the Zurich renewal was only a £5 increase on the previous year.

**9) MEMBER VACANCY**

The Chairman advised that Robin had resigned; he thanked Robin for his many years of service. The Clerk confirmed that the formal 14-day Vacancy notice was on display and on the notice board and website. If after 14 days a formal application by 10 electors for an election had not been made the PC can then advertise the vacancy with a view to co-opt a new member at the July meeting.

#### **10) MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2022 were proposed by Penny, seconded by Margaret, agreed by all and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

#### **11) REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS**

**Worcestershire County Councillor Martin Allen had reported during the Annual Parish Meeting.**

**Malvern Hills District Councillor Jeremy Owenson – Jeremy’s district report had been circulated prior to the meeting a summary was included in the Annual Parish meeting.** The Chairman asked if there were any queries, there were none. The Clerk noted that she had asked Jeremy to confirm when the now occupied barn conversions at Dunstall Common would be contributing towards the ECPC precept, they didn’t appear to be as yet.

Margaret made comment to the apparent frustration the District Councillor had regarding MHDC taking over the ex-quarry lakes.

#### **12) SWDPR**

The Chair advised that a press statement announcing that the consultations and subsequent dates have all been delayed.

#### **13) HIGHWAYS MATTERS**

It was noted that the footpath resurfacing at Orchard Close had been rescheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

Mark advised that Robin had reviewed the area past Emblem Villa on Quay Lane as raised by Margaret at the March meeting and had reported that narrow road warning signage would be a good idea and that some additional reflective verge masters would be of benefit, if there was space as there was very little verge in some places the Clerk was asked to progress this request.

Mark advised that he had attended a WCC Highways liaison meeting regarding the roundabout development and he had raised the concerns regarding Quay Lane being used as a cut through and lack of diversion signage. The response had been that it was not the liaison meeting remit.

Margaret raised concerns regarding the traffic chaos caused by the two sets of temporary lights running during the busy Spring Show at Malvern Three Counties. It was suggested that the Clerk raise this formally in writing to Martin Allen as it needs much more thought as many weekends during the summer will see a few events in Upton as well as Three Counties Events.

#### **14) PARISH PATHS**

The Clerk confirmed that the WCC P3 allocation of £450 had been confirmed.

There was a volunteer PPW identified by WCC who would be trained and would work alongside Malcolm to keep the public rights of way clear.

Malcolm reported that all blockages reported in March had now been cleared.

(Charlotte joined the meeting)

#### **15) TREES**

Malcolm reported that all the tree planting had been completed.

Mark reported that the tree planting near the new roundabout had increased in cost by 165% and that a contribution of £600 had been sought from the Parish Council. Members decided this was not within the PC budget and that although a mixture of species was the ideal ECPC cannot afford to contribute to the cost. Malcolm thought it most important to stress that they should not use imported trees due to the risk of disease to the existing local trees. Members thought that maybe WCC should seek a grant from the Queens canopy fund towards the planting.

## 16) LENGTHSMAN SCHEME

It was reported that Andy had agreed to continue as the lengthsmen and that the relevant paperwork had been completed and signed.

## 17) COMMONS

### a) Smithmoor

Legal matters - The Clerk advised that the Land Registry had advised that the access track was covered by Ad Filium law. There were various unanswered questions that the Clerk was awaiting from the solicitor and would report further on this in the July meeting.

Maintenance – Margaret and Tom had yet to assess the maintenance requirements at Smithmoor Common but would do so in order for a maintenance agreement to be arranged with Steve Coole in return for harvesting the hay.

Margaret reported that she had spoken with Worcestershire Wildlife and they would come out and walk the common to ascertain if there was any scheme suitable to help with the costs of maintaining the common.

### b) Dunstall – Members asked Malcolm if there was any ditching requirement to maintain the anti-access ditches. Malcolm thought not this year.

### a) Marsh – N/A

## 18) PLANNING

### a) Bluebell Farm vision statement

Mark advised that the PC had been approached by a development company seeking to gain the support of ECPC regarding a residential development on land at Bluebell Farm. Mark thought this was too large an issue for the Members to decide within the council and thought a public meeting should be held to gain the views of the residents of Earls Croome as a whole.

Charlotte was concerned that at this stage there was not enough detail to take to the public and perhaps ECPC should take the same stance as Ripple PC and decline to make any comment until an actual planning application was submitted.

Margaret raised the query of the additional site adjoining this but not within ECPC boundary. Mr Ball confirmed there was permitted development.

Mark raised his concern that the sites were adjoining and that the entire development needed to be considered as a whole. A development of this size would have considerable impact on the nature of Earls Croome village/parish as a whole and had the potential to change the category 4 status of the village, thus opening the door for even more development into the future.

It was decided that the Clerk should write back stating that ECPC were not in a position to comment on the development at this stage and that the planning working group would do some more detailed research to present to the full council in July's meeting.

### b) 20/01370/FUL Earls Croome Garden Centre, Erection of new replacement 1.8 picket fence, and entrance gates and removal of 7 conservatories and hard landscape areas and these areas to be replaced as hard standing level ground. REFUSED. Members expressed their surprise; it was noted that this was a retrospective application. The Members thought the appearance had been improved by the development.

c) 21/01970/FUL Elgar Inn, Worcester Road. Creation of new agricultural access – NO OUTCOME

d) 20/01827/FUL Baughton Stud, Smithmoor Common. The Clerk advised that despite enforcement visiting the site and the proprietor being advised that all works were at his own risk, development of the site continued and action would be required by MHDC enforcement to return the land to its previous state. The last enforcement notice was due to expire 31<sup>st</sup> May.

#### 19) PHONE BOX

Mark confirmed that the phone box had now been repainted. Charlotte advised that the painting was neat and tidy and that she had replaced the faded defibrillator signage.

#### 20) JUBILEE EVENT

Ann advised that the organisation of the event was progressing well and tickets were being sold. There would be 100 pork rolls. There was a quiz planned for Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June and the family event on the field being held Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June.

Members thought that a grant from MHDC or the County Councillor should be sought. Mark asked the Clerk to follow this up.

#### 21) NEW ROUNDABOUT POTENTIAL ARTWORK

Mark asked for a volunteer to oversee this alongside Upton Town Council and Ryall PC. Margaret thought that maybe they should be approaching the Morgan factory. Charlotte offered to oversee this from an ECPC perspective.

#### 22) FINANCE

- a) The monthly reconciliation of cash and other monies was undertaken for March by Charlotte & Penny.
- b) Following a review of the draft accounts, it was agreed by all that the draft accounts should be signed by the Chair and Clerk and adopted as the Council's annual accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022
- c) It was agreed that the Parish Council would use the services of Mr Mike Clemas as the internal auditor.
- d) Following a review of the AGAR exemption document, it was agreed by all to authorise the Chairman & The Clerk to sign the exemption certificate and return it to the external auditor.
- e) Following a review of section 1 of the Council's annual return for year ending 31 March 2022, it was agreed by all to authorise the Chairman and Clerk to sign section 1 of the Council's annual return for the year ending 31 March 2022.
- f) Following a review of Section 2 of the Council's Annual Return for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, it was agreed by all to authorise the Chairman and Clerk to sign Section 2 of the Council's Annual Return for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022
- g) It was agreed by members that 13<sup>th</sup> June 2021 would be the commencement date for the exercise of Public Rights.
- h) Insurance Quotes/renewal. The Clerk advised that despite approaching the broker she had not received any prices as yet, the renewal from Zurich had been received and was £403.49. Members asked the Clerk to obtain quotes and circulate to the Members to decide whether to renew with Zurich or move to a new insurer. Mark noted that it was important to renew should prices be unobtainable, the PC must remain insured.

Payments made since last meeting were noted as follows:

Mr A Millward – Lengthsman payment – March	£120.00
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary- April (S/O)	£213.36
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance April (S/O)	£20.00

It was proposed by Penny and seconded by Charlotte and agreed by all to authorize the following payments:

a) Mr A Millward – Lengthsman payment – April	£222.00
b) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk salary – May (S/O)	£213.36
c) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Working from home allowance May (S/O)	£20.00
d) Mr A Milward – lengthsman payment – May	£TBC

- e) Church Yard Grant £175.00
- Members discussed if giving a grant to a religious organization was appropriate, Margaret confirmed that the grant had always been paid, Charlotte thought it was inappropriate. The Clerk advised that as a non-secular organization the PC should not be affiliated to a specific religion and the grant for the Church Yard was for aesthetics within the community. The Chair asked the Members to vote, Margaret abstained due to her role on the PCC. The vote was a majority towards paying the grant again this year.
- f) Village Hall Grant £130.00
- g) CALC – Membership Subscription £157.28
- h) SW Norton – phone box repaint £595.00

Remittance noted:

WCC Lengthsman reimburse December	£48.00
WCC Lengthsman reimburse January	£174.00
WCC Lengthsman reimburse February incl Admin	£452.00
MDCH 1 <sup>st</sup> Precept Payment	£2090.00
WCC Lengthsman reimburse February	£120.00

### 23. CORRESPONDANCE

MHDC Parish & Town conference 17<sup>th</sup> May

### 24. INFORMATION AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022 at 7.30 pm at Earls Croome Village Hall

**Minutes of last months and previous meetings and other relevant information can be found at:**

[My Parish \(worcestershire.gov.uk\)](http://My Parish (worcestershire.gov.uk))

Meeting Closed 9.30pm.