

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EARLS CROOME PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 14<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2023 AT 7.30 PM AT EARLS CROOME VILLAGE HALL.**

**PRESENT:** Cllr Mark Smith (Chairman), Cllr Penny Green , Cllr Charlotte Bloomfield, Cllr Ian Wilson, , Malcolm Tomkins (Tree Warden), Ann Smith (Advisor to PC), Andy Milward (lengthsman)

**In attendance:** Nikki Nicholson (The Clerk)

**1) APOLOGIES**

County Councillor Allen, District Councillor Owenson, Cllr Tom Goodwin, Cllr Margaret Herbert & Cllr Giles Steiger

**2) PUBLIC**

Two residents in attendance, nothing to raise.

**3) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**4) MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September were proposed by Penny, seconded by Ian, agreed by all and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**5) REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS**

Mark gave a summary of the following report on **COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS**

**COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS**

**ON DEMAND BUS**

Martin and Cllr Tom Wells have now had their meeting, this has taken months to be organised.

The fourth official launch is to commence soon. Once I have the leaflets, I will be able to give you more information. But it now looks like the buses will take you to anywhere within the designated County Council Divisions of Croome and Powick.

Also, it will take you to: Tesco's in St Peters, St Peters Garden Centre, B&M Bargains and Aldi. County Hall/The Countywide Centre, Croome Court, Worcester Parkway Railway Station, Upton Upon Severn, The Retail Park in Malvern, both of Malvern's Railway Stations. Not all of these destination may yet be on the App but should be soon.

It is hoped that Tewkesbury may be added in December 2023.

**DEFFORD MILL RE SITE VISIT 04.08.2023 COUNTY COUNCIL AREA**

We have been waiting for Severn Stoke Parish Council to discuss this with the owners of Defford Mill. The owners are not willing to contribute to the signs, therefore I have now agreed to fund the work. This now means I cannot part fund the work for the passing bay on Quay Lane.

**QUAY LANE PASSING BAY**

I have asked if WCC will now use project Heart funding to cover the engineering design. Once we have a design we can look at raising the funds to do the work.

WCC have not deemed the over hanging brambles/branches bad enough for any further action and suggest deploying the lengthsman if need be.

#### LIVE TRAFFIC COUNTER

You wanted to know what the box on the pole that has appeared on the northern spur of the roundabout is. It turns out it is a live traffic counter that sends real time information to Highways.

#### **DISTRICT COUNCIL**

##### PLANNING MATTERS

##### SWDPR

This has now gone off to the Secretary of State.

Re the planning application 23/00725/FUL Dog Field. this was approved, but I did ask for some restrictions to be applied, which the applicant accepted.

I would respectfully remind you that planning applications can only be refused if there is a Lawful Planning Reason why it should be turned down.

Although not in your area, I though you would be interested to know about these planning applications.

- a. Furrow Close – This will go to SAP at MHDC on Wednesday.
- b. 70 Homes of the A4104, Holly Green – I have no more news at present.

##### PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement Case No: M/ENF/23/0266 Site: Stables At The Old Manor, Baughton Hill, Earls Croome, Worcester, WR8 9DG, Alleged Breach: Alleged unauthorised ground works

MHDC Officer Michael Croxford is dealing with this matter, and I have asked to be kept informed. I did send you the email on 23.10.23.

##### SOCIAL HOUSING INFORMATION.

I sent you an email about this on 10/11/23.

As at 08/11/2023, there were 9 households registered with a connection to the Parish of Ripple (an increase of 5 households since 01/03/2023). These households have the following bedroom need:

1-bed – 4 households 2-bed – 3 households 3-bed – 2 households

As at 08/11/2023, there were 68 households registered with a connection to the surrounding parishes/grouped parishes and Upton-upon-Severn (an increase of 5 households since 01/03/2023). These households have the following bedroom need: 1-bed – 43 households 2-bed – 15 households 3-bed – 9 households 4-bed – 1 household

#### **6) HIGHWAYS MATTERS-**

As discussed under County Council reports.

#### **7) DEFFORD MILL**

As discussed under County Councillors report – WCC would fund the roadside signage. It was noted that the site had improved its own entrance/exit signage.

#### **8) PARISH PATHS**

Mark advised that WCC were closing the P3 scheme and future options were to use the lengthsman or go onto the WCC reactive strimming scheme. It was noted that the full lengthsman budget was already being used for the current lengthsman duties. Members thought that closing the scheme would be very detrimental to the PROW's in and around Earls Croome. Members asked to clerk to request to be placed on the reactive strimming list and they would monitor and feedback on the effectiveness.

Members thanked Malcolm for his really proactive services doing the P3 work over many years.

#### **9) PLAYING FIELD**

Monkey Puzzle - ECPC had received the offer of a funded 'Monkey Puzzle' climbing wall that could be installed at the Playing Field. Members decided there was not enough children in the village to warrant the ongoing up keep costs.

Maple Tree – Malcolm had advised in his recent report that there was a large MapleTree that could do with being removed from the Playing field over the next 2-3 years. An initial quote had been obtained of circa £450. Mark suggested that three quotes were required for this type of expenditure and asked the clerk to obtain 2 more quotes. Members thought that some lower branches of the apple tree could be removed at the same time and the plum tree near 'Dugans' garden was also requiring removal.

The clerk was asked to write to the owners of the ornamental maple tree in the garden of 3 Earls Grange as it was over hanging the playing field and pushing on the perimeter fencing.

Perimeter Strimming – Members decided a second strim was not necessary and Malcolm agreed to continue to strim the perimeter as a favour to ECPC. Members expressed their gratitude for this. Ann advised that the current grass cutting was an extremely good deal but advised that 'Bob' may sell the business and that members should be mindful of that when drawing up the budget. Members discussed whether a small working party could take this over in the future as commercial rates could be quite high and affect the precept requirement.

#### **10) VILLAGE HALL CAR PARK**

Members noted that the Village Hall car park could do with a tidy up. ECPC own the car park and the parking signs at the rear were obscured by over growth much of which was over hanging from the neighbouring land. It was agreed for the lengthsman to approach the landowner and ask for the foliage/hedge to be cut back from their side and that Andy could then give the perimeter a good cut back.

The resurfacing of the car park was discussed but it was decided that it would be prohibitively expensive and that a good tidy up and weed removal was all that could be managed at this time.

#### **11) LENGTHSMAN SCHEME**

Members thanked Andy for his work clearing around the Crucifix and the path/pavement leading to the Crucifix in preparation for the Remembrance Day Service.

Members noted that the hedge from Glebe Barn to the Crucifix required cutting still, and asked the clerk to write to the owners of Glebe Barn to request this is addressed. Malcolm advised that using a lawn mower and mowing regularly could help keep the pavement neat and passable during the summer growth season.

It was noted that the grips opposite Emblem Villa need reinstating.

Charlotte suggested asking for additional lengthsman budget so that some of the P3 works could be added to the lengthsman duties if the reactive strimming wasn't addressed in a timely manner.

It was noted that the lengthsman wasn't currently available to do more hours.

Members asked the lengthsman to keep the pavement passable by 5 Orchard Close.

## 12) COMMONS

Smithmoore – Sheep grazing. The clerk advised that Tom had confirmed that the Gilders sheep would be available to graze but there was less grass due to late hay cutting. It was noted that the common was very wet currently.

Dunstall - The Clerk advised that she was liaising with Peter Hill at MHDC regarding the link to the by-laws that wasn't working on the commons signage. In his last update Peter had indicated that he was hopeful that the link would be brought back into operation and no new signage would be required.

Malcolm advised that it wasn't new signage, MHDC had placed a sticker over the old signage and there were three more faded signs that needed updating once the link was resolved.

Marsh – nothing to report

## 13) PLANNING

23/00815/FUL Hollybeds Farm, Worcester Road, Earls Croome. Erection of agricultural building – Approved.  
23/00725/FUL Land at (Os 8730 4267) Quay Lane, Earls Croome. Change of use of land for the provision of dog walking field. Approved. Members discussed and noted that there were a number of condition attached to the approval regarding the visibility splay at the entrance and usage times.  
Members discussed and noted Martin's advice regarding ensuring that objections submitted by ECPC were fact based and material considerations.

## 14) REVIEW STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Penny advised she had compared the NALC model Standing Orders with ECPC Standing Orders and had marked up a copy with suggested alternations, personalisation and noted the changes, she suggested they now needed another member to go through and review. The clerk asked if Ian would be willing to do this, as a fairly new member it would be beneficial for him to go through the Standing Orders in detail. Ian agreed.

The Clerk advised that during her review of the Financial Regulations she had needed to contact CALC as the 'either or' sections were not very clear, CALC advised that NALC is conducting a full review of the model Financial Regulations and suggested that ECPC await the new revised model before continuing the review. Members agreed this was a sensible approach.

## 15) FINANCE

Clerk salary review – Mark confirmed that the review was completed and the new clerk salary was SCP 26. It was noted that the 23/24 pay award had been agreed.

24/25 Precept requirement – Members discussed that there maybe additional requirement for strimming and grass cutting as well as some funds for tree works discussed earlier in the meeting. Mark asked Penny to work with the clerk to draw up a suggested budget to be circulated for agreement prior to the January meeting.

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

Payments made since the last meeting were noted as follows:

Mr A Millward – Lengthsman services – September	£162.00
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary- September (S/O)	£233.77
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance September (S/O)	£20.00
Mr A Milward – Lengthsman Payment – October	£182.00
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk salary – October (S/O)	£233.77
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Working from home allowance October (S/O)	£20.00

It was proposed by Ian and seconded Charlotte by to authorize the following payments:

a) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk OPE	£21.19
b) Mr A Milward – lengthsman payment – November	£TBC
c) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary – November (S/O)	£269.57
d) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance November (S/O)	£20.00

e)	Mr A Milward – Lengthsman payment – December	£TBC
f)	Mrs A Smith – reimburse grass cutting	£75.00
g)	M Tompkins – P3 Path strimming 2023	£437.50

Remittance: WCC Lengthsman reimburse April & June £351.00  
WCC Lengthsman reimburse August £182.00  
National Grid – Wayleave payment £86.78

## 18. CORRESPONDANCE

- Request for water connection from The Willows

Members discussed the request to lay a clean water connection down the Smithmoor Common entrance track to connect the residential property 'The Willows' to the mains. The previous request had been refused for a commercial property in the area which did not have planning consent. Members agreed a letter should be sent to the resident agreeing for the water pipe to be laid down the side of the track but it was to be made clear this was permission only for one residential connection only with no commercial use and that ECPC would not be liable for any associated costs legal or otherwise. The clerk was asked to compile and circulate the letter to members to agree to the wording prior to sending to the resident.

- MHDC Polling station review

It was noted that the changes did not affect ECPC.

- Resident freedom to roam enquiry Smithmoor Common.
- Resident regarding Blue Bell Farm development.

The resident had been responded to by both Jeremy and Martin. Ian explained that there had been no formal planning application and what had been seen was essentially soft marketing - potential developers trying to ascertain what type of demand there was.

The members discussed their hopes for smaller units that may create local employment and or residential development would be preferable to the huge depots seen at M5 Junction 6, members are hopeful to be able to influence what type of development is sought.

- Bridge Magazine cessation

It was noted that the Bridge magazine's last edition would be December. Members agreed it was very disappointing and would make communications with residents more difficult for Upton and all the local villages.

## 19. DATES FOR NEXT YEARS MEETINGS:

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May to be preceded by the Annual Parish meeting at 7pm

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November

all at Earls Croome Village Hall, 7.30pm

The Clerk was asked to put the these dates on MyParishPages

The Meeting closed at 8.45pm.