

# **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EARLS CROOME PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30 PM AT EARLS CROOME VILLAGE HALL.**

**PRESENT:** Cllr Mark Smith (Chairman), Cllr Penny Green , Cllr Charlotte Bloomfield, Cllr Ian Wilson, Cllr Tom Goodwin, Cllr Giles Steiger, Cllr Margaret Herbert, Malcolm Tomkins (Tree Warden) and Ann Smith (Advisor to PC).

**In attendance:** County Councillor Martin Allen & Nikki Nicholson (The Clerk)

## **1) APOLOGIES**

District Councillor Owenson

## **2) PUBLIC**

One resident in attendance.

Matters raised: Blue Bell Farm industrial units advertising board, very large does it require planning permission. Martin advised it does and has been referred to MHDC enforcement.

Faded road names signage at North Quay & Orchard Close – the clerk would report to MHDC.

Footpath finger point sign needs replacement at west of Quay Lane – requires reporting on WCC Hub.

Area of waste land at North Quay with scrap gathering. Unclear who owns the land.

The Clerk advised members and the public that these items can and should be reported to the relevant authorities at any time during the month. The Clerk would provide a notice for noticeboard, facebook and members outlining which authority was responsible for each item and links to the report it pages. If there was not the required action it was then a good idea to raise to the clerk with a reference number.

## **3) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

## **4) MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were proposed by Charlotte, seconded by Tom, agreed by all and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

## **5) REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS**

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

### **COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS:**

#### **ON DEMAND BUS**

On Monday 08/01/2024, the bus service has started to charge and is now considered to be live. I am still waiting for leaflets showing the areas that the service cover.

Tewkesbury is now a destination that residents can travel to.

The last Community Bus will run week this week.

#### **HEREFORD & WORCESTESHIRE FIRE SERVICE CONSULTATION**

HWFS have put out a consultation to make changes and reductions to the service.

The consultation closes on 04/03/2024. I have emailed you the link to make your comments.

The fire stations that would lose a vehicle are: Wyre Forest, Hereford, Redditch, Droitwich, Leominster, Bromyard and of more concern to us, Worcester (reduction from 3 to 2) and Malvern (reducing from 2 to 1).

My group at county hall will put in a joint response. We have two County Councillors sitting on that committee and I will leave it to them to draft our response.

This is the link if you need it again:

<https://www.hwfire.org.uk/your-right-to-know/consultation/>

### **COUNTY COUNCIL BOUNDARY REVIEW**

You may be aware that the boundary Commission have now proposed no change in the Division of Croome. They appear to be looking at a minor change in the Division of Trinity in Malvern.

This is good news for your residents, consistency is important.

### **QUAY LANE ENTRANCE TO LANE FROM THE A38**

As I reported last time this is now with Tina at WCC, she is looking for funding.

This matter is with Jacobs who will produce an initial price to design the alterations.

Members asked if this was to improve the first passing bay, and Martin explained as the passing bays were not official WCC ones, they were looking at widening and changing the junction.

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

As you know I have agreed to pay for the signs, I am waiting for an install date.

As for planning enforcement, this is now in the hands of MHDC and Cllr David Harrison.

I would suggest you contact Cllr Harrison directly for an update.

It was noted that Defford Mill had improved its own entrance signage.

### **EARLS GRANGE 2 X GULLIES NEED TO BE RELOCATED OR ADDED TOO #6016**

I have been given an update as to when the work will be carried out, it is expected the work will be done between 13.05.24 and 17.05.24.

There will need to be a road closure but access to properties will be ensured.

Margaret advised that she thought there was still water accumulating outside the entrance to the Church. The clerk would check the status of this report on the interactive map.

### **DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS:**

#### **SUNSHINE & MELLOW FESTIVALS**

I understand that the Mellow Festival will no longer take place for the next two years.

#### **PLANNING MATTERS**

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

- a. Furrow Close – This planning application was turned down by 11 votes to 1.
- b. 70 Homes of the A4104, Tunnel Hill – This was refused by 13 votes to 0.

Removal of hedge and part planting back, you should have received information that due to the nature of the work no planning permission is required.

#### **SWDPR UPDATE**

The two inspectors, Mr Dean and Mr Lewis appear to be happy so far. They have asked a few questions; replies have been sent just before Christmas.

#### **DISTRICT COUNCIL FINANCES**

**MHDC is having to make savings over the next five years of £1.55M to balance the books.**

**The good news is that MHDC do not have any debts hanging over them.**

There were no further questions for Martin and he left the meeting at this juncture.

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

Margaret advised that the road surface from Quay Lane into Earls Croome was in a poor state of repair, she would report on the WCC hub.

#### **7) PARISH PATHS**

WCC consultation - proposed diversion and partial extinguishment of footpaths in the parishes of Earls Croome and Ripple, under sections 257 & 261 of the town and country planning act 1990. Members had submitted no objection to this.

#### **8) PLAYING FIELD**

Maple Tree removal – The quotes obtained were discussed. It was proposed by Maragret and seconded by Penny for the clerk to spend up to £350 plus VAT and have the maple tree removed to ground level. The cords would be taken away by Giles.

The owners of 3 Earls Grange had been written to requesting they address their tree overhanging the Playing Field.

#### **9) ANNUAL LITTER PICK**

The litter pick would take place on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March at 10am. Tom would erect the banner and advertise on Facebook, Charlotte checked all the equipment and the clerk was asked to arrange for the rubbish to be collected from the Village Hall Car park on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March.

#### **10) LENGTHSMAN SCHEME**

Penny asked if the hedge cuttings could be addressed from Glebe Barn to crucifix. It was hoped the wind from storm Jocelyn may assist in this!

#### **11) COMMONS**

Smithmoore – It was noted that sheep were now grazing the common.

The Clerk gave an update on the winter maintenance progress agreed with Steve Coole in return for the hay. He needed to return to finish the topping and would work with Paul Jakeman to tidy the far end of the common as agreed. Brambles have been removed from gateway and by-law signage.

Steve would review the ditches sometime this year with a view to addressing any requirement next winter.

Dunstall – The Poplar trees raised by the commons report at the end of the summer were prohibitively expensive to remove. It was noted they were not near a public footpath or adjacent to the Highway and had not been raised to the Council by any members of the public. Members asked the clerk to investigate via CALC

if the Parish Council were owners or custodians of the Commons and how expenses could be met when they were likely to be over a quarter or more of the precept.

It was noted that some flying tipping in the ditch at Dunstall Common had been reported to MDHC and removed swiftly.

The Clerk advised that the signage should now link to the by-laws as advised by Peter Hill at MHDC.

Marsh – nothing to report

## 12) PLANNING

23/00815/FUL Hollybeds Farm, Worcester Road, Earls Croome. Erection of agricultural building – AWAITING OUTCOME

23//01610/HP South View, Worcester Road, Earls Croome. Demolition of kitchen extension, conservatory and garage; loft conversion, internal remodelling and adaptations to glazing, new entrance porch. No Objects from PC, MHDC APPROVED

WCC Application Ref: 23/0000046/CM Applicant: CEMEX UK Operations Limited NO COMMENT

24/00001/HED The Yorkshire Grey, Worcester Road, Earls Croome, Removal of hedgerow. Withdrawn as planning was not required for small hedge removal.

## 13) REVIEW STANDING ORDERS

Ian advised that he would have a copy for members to review prior to the March meeting with a view to fully adopting the revised Standing Orders at the Annual Parish meeting in May.

## 14) FINANCE

Clerk salary review – Mark advised that the authorities had agreed the clerks 23/24 salary increase and this would be spread in increments across 24-25 to assist budgetary controls.

24/25 Precept requirement – The draft precept budgets were reviewed. Costs for trees, and potential planning consultants, legal fees and cost of living increases were discussed. Charlotte raised queries regarding the annual grants to the Church & Village Hall, it was noted that it may be advisable to pay per meeting rather than the grant to Village Hall. Charlotte noted that there was a surplus to budget last year and felt this could be put against the budget deficit showing for 24-25. Options to increase by 5% or 10% were voted on with a majority choosing a 10% increase. It was proposed by Penny and Seconded by Margaret to request a precept of £4950 this year, this was agreed by all and the clerk was asked to fill in in the relevant paperwork.

The monthly reconciliation of cash and other monies was confirmed for November & December by Charlotte & Penny.

Payments made since the last meeting were noted as follows:

Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary- November (S/O)	£269.57
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance November (S/O)	£20.00
Mr A Milward – Lengthsman Payment – November	£201.50
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk salary – December (S/O)	£269.57
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Working from home allowance December (S/O)	£20.00
Mr A Millward – lengthsman services – December	£117.00

To review and authorize the following payments:

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|--|---------|
| a) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk OPE   | £27.85  |
| It was noted that £20 of this was the Poppy Wreath for Remembrance Sunday. |         |
| b) Mr A Milward – lengthsman payment – January                             | £TBC    |
| c) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary – January (S/O)                          | £269.57 |
| d) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance January (S/O)       | £20.00  |
| e) Mr A Milward – Lengthsman payment – February                            | £TBC    |

#### **18. CORRESPONDANCE Received since the last meeting.**

- WCC Local aggregate assessment. Advising regarding the ongoing CEMEX gravel extraction.
- WCC Worcestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy Issues and Options Consultation.
- WCC Natural networks funding – Mark asked Margaret to review and see if there was any funding that could be used towards maintenance of the Commons.
- Boundary Commission consultation Worcestershire County Council, Martin advised the proposals did not affect ECPC.
- Age UK Flyer, Malvern theatre fundraiser. A discussion regarding the loss of the Bridge and how to get information out to residents. Ideas for using Facebook and the Upton News were suggested.
- H&W Fire and Rescue service consultation. Martin summarised the proposals to cut services and suggested all should complete the consultation to have their say.
- SNT (Police) Parish Contract, clerk advised three key priorities submitted, Speeding, thefts from farm buildings & anti-social driving.
- Office of Police & Crime Commissioner - Newsletter and funding survey & Grants round2
- Ryall resident regarding Bluebell farm advert – The chairman had discussed the marketing board and the inclusion of the site within emerging SWDPR with the correspondent.
- National Highways M5 Junction 8 repairs. Now completed.

#### **19. DATE FOR THE NEXT MEETING:**

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March at Earls Croome Village Hall, 7.30pm

The Meeting closed at 8.50pm.