

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EARLS CROOME PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 16<sup>th</sup> JULY 2024  
AT 7.30 PM AT EARLS CROOME VILLAGE HALL.**

**PRESENT:** Cllr Mark Smith (Chairman), Cllr Penny Green, Cllr Ian Wilson, Cllr Giles Steiger & Cllr Margaret Herbert.

**In attendance:** Malcolm Tomkins (Tree Warden), Ann Smith (Advisor to PC) & Nikki Nicholson (The Clerk)

**1) APOLOGIES**

County Councillor Martin Allen, District Councillor Owenson, Cllr Charlotte Bloomfield & Cllr Tom Goodwin.

**PUBLIC** – one resident.

The resident in attendance raised concerns regarding the Holly Green development and a master plan from this developer suggesting a much bigger development that is not included in the emerging SWDPR.

Village tidiness In general was discussed, and Malcolm agreed to trim and tidy the Village Hall car park, the clerk would request the road sweeper and ask the lengthsman to cut around all the village signage.

**2) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**3) MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024 were proposed by Penny, seconded by Ian, agreed by all and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**4) VICE-CHAIR**

The Chair outlined the role of Vice-Chair for ECPC. Ian agreed to be Vice-Chair, this was proposed by Penny, seconded by Margaret and agreed by all.

**5) REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS**

County – Martin's report had been circulated, Mark drew attention to the Holly Green development 27 houses and a shop but also the hearsay as raised in public participation regarding a much larger development on the opposite side of the road. This would be raised at the planning meeting with Ripple PC.

District - Jeremy had drawn attention to further plans other than the rowing lake at Fish Meadow but no members were aware of this – Mark would contact Jeremy.

**6) HIGHWAYS MATTERS-**

Margaret drew attention to a recent circulation from West Mercia saying ECPC can ask for help regarding speeding.

The over grown visibility splays were raised and the clerk was asked to request the lengthsman address Turnpike junction, Glebe bend and check all other junctions in the Parish.

**7) PARISH PATHS**

Malcolm advised that some of the proactive strimming had taken place.

The cutting back at Donkey Lane had been mechanically done and was a high standard. However the bottom section had not be cut, encouraging walkers to walk on the field, not the footpath.

Malcolm advised the new path diversion on Hollybeds Farm been implemented and was much better.

**8) TREE SURVEY**

The tree survey had been completed and members reviewed the subsequent report. Trees were categorised by safety and maintenance. All trees marked 1S were reviewed. It was agreed to address ivy cylinder removal and

Red Deer Farm Elm felling ourselves. Quotes were to be sought for the recommended Ash removal at Marsh Common and the reduction of the hedge line poplars at Dunstall House. The T14 Ash at Dunstall Common 2S Which includes Stonehall Barn willow tree would be addressed next autumn. The clerk advised the survey should be completed every 5-6 years and a programme of maintenance followed each autumn.

#### **9) OPCC SURVEY**

Penny had completed the survey, members were to review during the meeting and if all in agreement the clerk would submit before end of July. Members agreed the submission.

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

Fly tipping was raised – the Clerk advised this was dealt with by MHDC, it should be reported directly onto their website and was usually a very efficient service, with rubbish removed within 24 hours.

The Clerk noted that the reimbursement of lengthsman claims under the new system was much faster.

#### **11) COMMONS**

Smithmoor – The Gilders had been in touch for the Parish Council bank details to pay the sum of £87.50 for the grazing earlier in the year.

Steve Coole had reported that he had topped the right hand side of the access track right back, this was left over from winter maintenance agreement.

Dunstall – Ragwort removal was reported by Margaret.

Marsh – nothing to report

#### **12) PLANNING**

Mark confirmed the meeting with Cllr England from Ripple PC was taking place early August and reported on in the September PC meeting. Notes will be circulated to members if required.

M/24/00730/LB Associated ref: m/24/00729/HP The Cottage at Earls Croome Court. Demolition of 1970's pool house/garden building and erection of new pool house/garden building. Members agreed the new design and building was better and asked the clerk to submit support this application.

#### **13) REVIEW STANDING ORDERS**

Members thanked Ian for his work on the Standing Order. These were proposed by Penny, seconded by Giles and adopted by the Council.

#### **14) WEBSITE/MYPARISHPAGES**

CALC have advised that the WCC hosted MyParishPages is likely to be discontinued and that Parish Councils will need to provide themselves with a website to adhere to legislation. Bespoke ones for Parish Council that comply to all the accessibility legislation exist but the cheapest is circa £300PA.

Penny asked about writing to the MP – it was thought they would not have much influence directly on WCC cutbacks.

It was agreed to include this cost in next year's budget.

#### **15) FINANCE**

The internal audit report has been received, with no advisories.

Annual grants – The Village Hall grant was discussed and members agreed to move to a pay as you go system, this would cost £100 for the meetings. It used to be a grant of £120 to accommodate additional meetings but none had been held at the Village Hall for at least three years.

The Churchyard grant was discussed. The treasurer of the Church had sent a grant request with annual costings for the Churchyard mowing that were considerably more than the annual grant normally given of £175.00. It was noted that Charlotte didn't agree with this grant as the higher church is a wealthy institution. Margaret explained that rural churches have to fund themselves. The levelling up act of 2023 had allowed more freedom to Local Authorities to help their local Church – Members voted unanimously to grant £175.00 this year.

Members agreed that all grants should be requested and debated on a year by year basis.

Members discussed the request for financial grant for Upton Library but it was thought with the cost of the tree felling ahead ECPC could not grant funds at this time.

The Clerk advised there was new model Financial Regulations and suggested she work with Penny & Charlotte to review the changes, she had already highlighted a version and would send that alongside the ECPC existing regulations to Penny and Charlotte.

The Bank reconciliation for May and June had been checked and confirmed by Penny & Charlotte via email.

Payments made since the last meeting were noted as follows:

Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary- May (S/O)	£289.66
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance May (S/O)	£20.00
Mr A Milward – Lengthsman Payment – May	£188.50
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk salary – June (S/O)	£289.66
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Working from home allowance June (S/O)	£20.00
Mr A Milward – lengthsman payment – June	£268.25
Re-issue insurance cheque with payee	£377.37

The following payments were proposed by Penny, seconded by Margaret and agreed by all:

a) M J Clemas – internal audit fee	£50.00
b) Unwin Forestry Consultancy – tree survey	£480.00
c) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk OPE	£36.67
d) Mr A Milward – lengthsman payment – July	£TBC
e) Mrs A Smith – reimburse playing field grass cutting	£100.00
f) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary – July (S/O)	£289.66
g) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance March (S/O)	£20.00
h) Mr A Milward – Lengthsman payment – August	£TBC

Remittance: WCC Lengthsman reimburse April £208.00

WCC Lengthsman reimburse May £188.50

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

- Upton Town Council – re Upton Library, as discussed under finance.
- Lithium battery safety Bill - members agreed to support this Parliamentary Bill

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

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024 , to be held at Earls Croome Village Hall, 7.30pm**

Meeting closed 9.10pm