

**DRAFT Minutes of Annual Parishioner Meeting &
Minutes of Severn Stoke & Croome d'Abitot Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 20th March 2024 at 7.30pm
Meeting at St Denys' Church, Severn Stoke**

- Present:** Cllr Faulkner (Acting Chair), Cllrs Garrard, Hill, Preston, Sumner and Williams.
CCllr Martin Allen. DCllrs David Harrison and John Michael.
- In Attendance:** Mrs L Stevens (Clerk and RFO). Paul Jones, Environment Agency, Partnerships and Strategic Overview Advisor. Simon Bott (Parish Lengthsman), Michelle Fullard (National Trust), John Henderson (St Denys' Church Warden), Laura Hill, representing the Parish Hall Committee. Paul Mills Ring Master at St Mary's Kempsey, 10 other members of public.
- Apologies:** Cllr Freeman. PC Jon Hand SNO Kempsey & Alfrick. 4 Parish Council vacancies.
Tea and coffee available.

Annual Parishioner Meeting – 7.30pm

- 1 **Welcome and nomination of Chair.**
No nominations from public. Cllr S. Faulkner chaired this resident meeting.
Standing orders remained suspended throughout meeting.
- 2 **Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th May 2023**
Duly **approved**.
- Open Forum**
No questions
- 3 **Paul Jones, Environment Agency (EA) update on progress with the flood bund.**
The flood bund is going ahead with the contract to be signed within the next 2 months. Issues with quality and spec of materials on site are being addressed and the contract will not be signed before this is resolved. Previous contractor pulled out to do costs and other reasons. Newt trapping will continue next month (negotiations are ongoing for reducing this period), with fencing being repaired. Exploring options for soil stabilisation on site. A timeline for the construction stage will be available as soon as the contract is signed. Construction will take approx. 9 months. If construction is not complete within the 9 months, then the contract will be considered to have not been fulfilled, with appropriate penalties. The County Council are still proceeding with Ham Lane project and the EA budget still includes this aspect – delays at EA end will not impact on funding for Ham Lane aspect. Damage caused to residential access lanes and drives will be repaired by the EA once construction starts: A grill will be installed at relevant sections to stop access road surface damage occurring again and help surface water flow away.
- **Action** - MHDC contributing £50,000 towards bund project and EA are confident that the rest of the funding is in place. A meeting is to be set up between EA, David Harrison and Charlie Chandler to confirm MHDC funding and discuss other financial aspects.
- The above summary covers responses to a number of public questions. Parish Cllrs thanked Mr Jones for attending.*
- 4 **Bell ringing.**
Introduction by Paul Mills, Ring Master at St Mary's Church Kempsey. Intro on Bell Ringing at St Denys', explain plans for ringing there for Sunday Services, weddings and for other events as well. Thanks given to John Slater, who has recently retired and handed over to Paul – building on his hard work. Work is underway to get all the bells at St Denys' back to a wholly ringable condition, via repairs, safety reviews and getting all aspects fully operational, including access, floors and bell infrastructure. The next wedding at St Denys' is in June and the bells will ring for this event. The bells will also ring for the final D-Day memorial event. Volunteers and new members are always made very welcome. Looking for support from Parish Councils towards this project.

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4 cont.
**Bell ringing
cont.**

- The Clerk was handed a copy of a letter from the Worcestershire and Districts Change Ringing Association to the PCC Treasurer dated Jan 2024, concerning notification of a new scheme to award Grants to assist with maintenance and inspection of belfries.
- The Clerk was handed a copy of a letter from the Worcestershire and Districts Change Ringing Association to the PCC Treasurer dated Jan 2024, detailing the increase in subscription to the Association from £15 to £20 for each ring of bells under the care of the PCC.
- **Action** - Parish Council will add this to their next agenda – parish councils are permitted to contribute towards bell maintenance if required and requested.

5 **Footpath warden volunteer opportunities.**

Opportunity for a resident volunteer to become the parish council footpaths warden. It was explained that the parish needs one or more appointed residents to walk all the rights of way in the parish once a year and complete a survey of their condition, note any broken stiles/gates/finger posts and note any that need clearance of vegetation. This will allow the parish council to better report and chase action by the County Council. Training will be provided for this volunteer opportunity by the County Council, based at the Worcester Woods Country Park.

- **Action** - Councillor Susan Faulkner agreed to take on this role.

6 **Biodiversity - A notice from the Parish Council to residents.**

Noted with no Motion: All parish councils are now legally required to consider biodiversity in all projects and also in all planning application responses. This reflects the general increased concern amongst the population of climate change and species decline. As a first step, the Parish Council is approaching farmers and land owners with an introduction letter and survey. Councillors see this as an opportunity to engage and get a bit of a feel for what might already be going on (eg encouraging 'rewilding'). Residents who also want to receive this survey or who have been conducting their own projects to increase biodiversity, are encouraged to take part.

- Resident S.Watkins provided the parish clerk with a list of all local farmers to approach and enquire if they would like to be involved. This information will not be retained if no response/permission is forthcoming from each individual.
- **Action** - DCllr Harrison to put the Clerk in touch with the MHDC Biodiversity Officer.

7 **Ketch Housing.**

Resident request that the permitted housing at the Ketch A38 roundabout be subject to a retrospective internal enquiry at MHDC/Worcester City Council: This 3-story housing development not being in any way suitable for this location, a blight on the surrounding countryside and, the adjacent traffic and pollution being of likely significant detriment to the residents who will live there.

- Residents agreed to support these concerns, as they have no reflection of Worcestershire architecture, no recognition of the need for local, low-lying design and raised real concerns that these will become the slums of the future.
- **Motion:** to write to Vic Allison, Chief Exec MHDC. and Marjory Bisset, Joint Leader Vice-Chair for Worcester City Council, Ward Member for St Peters, Planners at Worcester City and to copy in Harriet Baldwin MP and the Chairman of the County Council. Content: Future planning must be more sympathetic to surrounding areas AND subsequent alterations to all applications must be thoroughly scrutinised AND 3 to 4 story buildings are not suitable for this location. Proposed: (PC) Cllr Preston. Seconded: (supporting resident) JH. No abstentions from residents or PC.
- **Motion:** delegate to the Parish Clerk to take action unless a resident wishes to take this on. Duly agreed.

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8 County Councillors' Report

See Appendix 3.

9 Report from DCllr David Harrison and DCllr John Michael

SWDP held in abeyance until new traffic survey is completed. Planning – in last 12 months, there have been 16 planning apps submitted. MHDC are in a reasonably secure financial position and has no debts and has reserves. Likely to be a 5% increase in council tax this coming year for Band D. 2024 Ward Budgets will be £1,000 per district councillor. Thank you to residents for planting the daffodil bulbs in Kinnersley. Reminder that DCllr Michael also represents local Housing Association residents – any issues please get in touch.

10 Report from St Denys' Church, John Henderson

The church continues to face many setbacks, including flooding earlier in the year, theft of lead from the roof in February 2022 and, storms further damaging the roof and letting rain in. Quotes are being sought to replace the roof. St Denys' improvement proposals include a hope of modernising the church. The bund must be completed before this work would proceed and the church continues to explore whether there is the will in the parish to manage and contribute to such an operation. Next service is Easter Sunday 10.30am, all welcome. Councillors thanked the Friends of St Denys' and the PCC for keeping the church up and running, so that residents can use it for meetings such as this one.

11 Report from Parish Hall Committee, Laura Hill

Since the last residents meeting, the committee has been working with the parish council to look at options. A flyer was sent out to eh all, detailing the reasons for why rebuild could not go ahead. A project to look at another site is still possible. The Committee is a charity set up in order to run the hall and is now seeking legal advice on how to move forward now that the hall is demolished, the future purpose of the charity and how to manage funds properly on behalf of residents. Looking at changing the nature of the charity within Chairty Commission guidelines. Current creating a brief for 1st meeting with solicitors. Councillors thanked the Committee for their work and commitment over the past year.

12 Report from Croome Court – National Trust, Michelle Fullard, General Manager S.Worcs.

9,000 more visitors this year than previous year. Celebrations planned for the bi-centenary anniversary of the guidebook by head gardener at Croome. This will include an exhibition in the house and will include elements about the 6th and 7th Earls of Coventry. It is 10 years since the museum was set up at RAF Defford. The Changing Places facility is open for Easter, with an official press launch planning for 19th May 2024 (National Changing Places Day). The bells at Croome Church will come down in May for 20 weeks for refurbishment. A number of outdoor cinema events are planned. Additional support has been sought from the Police and Highways to assist with coping with additional visitors over Easter – the overflow car park is still soggy. Police cones will go out along the main road over Easter.

- **Action** – Parish Council to ask for third time for yellow lines outside Croome car park entrance. The Police are willing to support this.
- **Action** – NT to redouble efforts on complementary passes for local residents of High Green etc. NT will be in touch soon.

13 Report from Tarmac

Minutes of a recent meeting will be published soon and will be provided to the parish council. A move to the eastern side of the A38 continues to present challenges. A HGV crossing in theory has been approved one month ago. This will now go through planning. A road safety audit has been conducted and raises no real issues. The crossing is planned to be a give way junction for the lorries. Next stage is to test commercial viability, but if viable, looking to start extraction on the eastern side of the A38 at the end of 2024.

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- 14 **Report from West Mercia Police**
PC Jon Hand is covering the whole area at the moment as PC Stanley and PCSO Knight have moved on from Local Policing. Parish Councillors for Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot have contacted the Police Crime Commissioner to state how entirely unacceptable it is that we have just one single police officer covering the Kempsey and Alfrick ward. No response so far.
Encourage all to sign up for the Police Online tool, Neighbourhood Matters. This is a free service available to all and it is where West Mercia Police will provide community messages, crime prevention advice and details of community engagements. Residents can sign up to receive messages via this link <https://neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk/>



- 15 **Report from the Lengthsman, Mr Simon Bott**
Reminder in respect of rights of way – use them or lose them! The system in Kempsey works well, where the footpaths officer there liaises with Simon to keep access along footpaths and rights of way clear. Councillors thanked Simon for his work the past year.

- 16 **D-Day Commemorations – remembering commitment and sacrifice**
6th June will see a beacon lighting event on Kempsey Common. Beacons will be lit 9.15pm. The RAF museum, the Scouts and both parish councils are involved. A fish and chip wagon will be on site, along with a 40s Singer Ruby Rouge and the Malvern Hills Brass Band. The team putting all this together are still looking for volunteers, including moving banners around both parishes.



- 17 No additional comments or questions from the public. Clerk asked residents if they would like to receive parish updates via email and asked anyone interested to leave their email address. Meeting closed.

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Monthly Meeting of SS&CDA Parish Council – 8pm

1	<p>Attendance, Declarations and points of order. <i>Attendance as previously listed. Some residents remained to observe. Standing Orders in place. Nil Declarations.</i></p> <p>To note one additional parish cllr vacancy arising at this meeting. Cllr Russell has been absent due to work commitments for the past six months and so this position is now considered vacant. This position will be advertised shortly as an opportunity for election. The other 4 vacant positions are available for immediate co-option and interested parties can apply to the Clerk for information.</p>	Clerk																
2	<p>To express condolences on the passing of long serving Council Chair Hugh Hanmer. It was with great sadness that we have learned of the death of our valued college and friend Hugh. We thank his family, with deepest gratitude, for the many years of his dedicated parish contributions, both as a resident and as Chairman of the Parish Council. Family flowers only. Funeral on 10th April 13:00.</p>																	
3	<p>Planning M/23/01764/LB Barns Clifton. Overhaul of roof coverings to curtilage listed stables/barns. Councillors had no questions or concerns. Motion to support. Prps: RW. Scnd: RG. Duly carried.</p>	Clerk																
4	<p>Annual Review of Standing Orders and Committees/Working Parties.</p> <p>i. Motion for Standing Orders to be amended. Currently states: “A meeting shall not exceed a period of 3 hours”. Motion: “A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours with non-urgent matters deferred to the next full parish council meeting”. Prps: PP. Scnd: NS. Duly carried.</p> <p>ii. Motion to adopt ‘Working Party Terms of Ref’ & ‘Committees Terms of Ref’. Prps: PP. Scnd: RW. Duly carried.</p> <p>iii. To note (& take as read) existing Committee/Working Party/Reps. Duly noted with amendments proposed and accepted as below (changes underlined). Committee Membership/Working Party/Representatives:</p> <table><tr><td>- Finance Committee</td><td>– 3 reps. RG, LF, <u>RH</u></td></tr><tr><td>- Planning Advisory <u>Working Party</u></td><td>– All Cllrs.</td></tr><tr><td>- Staffing <u>Working Party</u></td><td>– 4 reps. LF, PP, <u>RH</u> 1 vacancy.</td></tr><tr><td>- Tarmac Liaison Committee</td><td>– 1 rep plus Clerk invited. LF</td></tr><tr><td>- Parish Hall Representatives</td><td>– 2 reps (Hall Constitution) (Not a PC group) SF. 1 Vacancy</td></tr><tr><td>- CALC Representative</td><td>– 1 rep. normally the Chair. LF</td></tr><tr><td>- VAS caretakers working party</td><td>– RG, LF and SB.</td></tr><tr><td>- Biodiversity Working Party</td><td>– Created in mid 2024 <u>open to public</u></td></tr></table> <p>iv. To note (& take as read) the current process for handling planning applications. Duly noted with no amendments proposed.</p> <p>v. Motion for projects/3rd parties to submit a report prior to meetings. Prps: PP. Scnd: NS. Duly carried.</p> <p>vi. Motion that regular items (eg. VAS and items of news/correspondence) be distributed to the Councillors for info and listed in the Minutes, but not dedicated meeting time unless a decision is required. Prps: PP. Scnd: rg. Duly carried.</p>	- Finance Committee	– 3 reps. RG, LF, <u>RH</u>	- Planning Advisory <u>Working Party</u>	– All Cllrs.	- Staffing <u>Working Party</u>	– 4 reps. LF, PP, <u>RH</u> 1 vacancy.	- Tarmac Liaison Committee	– 1 rep plus Clerk invited. LF	- Parish Hall Representatives	– 2 reps (Hall Constitution) (Not a PC group) SF. 1 Vacancy	- CALC Representative	– 1 rep. normally the Chair. LF	- VAS caretakers working party	– RG, LF and SB.	- Biodiversity Working Party	– Created in mid 2024 <u>open to public</u>	
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5	<p>Community Engagement Strategy. Clerk to note any amendments received prior to meeting and Motion to adopt in principle and to invite public comment and suggestions to be received via email to the Clerk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clerk to add to AGM for further input. - Motion to adopt in principle: Prps: RH. Scnd: NS. Duly carried. 	Clerk
6	<p>Finance a. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting. 24th January 2024. Motion: Prps: PP. Scnd: RH. Duly carried.</p> <p>b. To consider/motion to approve payment of accounts made in the previous month &....</p> <p>c. To consider/ to approve payment of outstanding accounts this month 2024. Including Clerk wages/expenses, monthly lengthsman, £40 T.Hughes for installation of bin at Clifton. Vote amalgamated. Motions: Prps: RW. Scnd: PP. Duly carried</p> <p>d. To receive the latest bank reconciliation. Motion: Prps: RW. Scnd: NS. Duly carried.</p> <p>e. Staffing Committee to arrange clerk annual review and assess Clerk contract with NALC Clerk payscales in mind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Action - Clerk to distribute to Staffing Working Party for inspection and recommendations to full council. 	Staffing Working Party
7	<p>Date of next parish council meeting 22nd May 7.30pm SOQ room at Croome National Trust visitor centre.</p>	

Signed ChairmanDate

Appendix 1. Items already paid Feb/March 2024 since last PC meeting *(Approved under previous agenda or required payment under contract monthly)*

And Appendix 2. Amalgamated. Item for payment March 2024:

19/03/2024	Mr Simon Bott	Lengthsman invoice Feb 2024 claimed 19/03/2024	Feb worksheet	369
12/03/2024	Glasdon	Bus Shelter replacement glass	SI880811	225.88
12/03/2024	Glasdon	Bin Clifton Layby replacement of damaged one.	SI880084	593.26
19/03/2024	Mr Tim Hughes	Tim Hughes to install the bin at Clifton Layby	38	40
19/03/2024	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Expenses March 2024	Expenses sheet provided to Cllrs	42.82
Standing order	Mrs Lisa Stevens	Clerk wage Feb 2024. No Payment due to HMRC as clerk pay below thresholds	Month 12	311.84

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Appendix 3 - CLLR MARTIN ALLEN REPORT TO SEVERN STOKE PARISH COUNCIL AGM MARCH 2024

ON DEMAND BUS

The Community Bus to Tewkesbury ceased operations in January this year, it has been replaced with the Worcestershire On Demand Service. I have agreed to keep the Friday Community Bus to Tesco's in St Peters going for now, numbers of users may decide its continuation. The On Demand buses will take you to anywhere within the designated County Council Divisions of Croome and Powick, for example it will take you to Upton, Croome Court, Callow End, Powick, Longdon. It will also take you to points outside the zone: Tesco's in St Peters, St Peters Garden Centre, B&M Bargains and Aldi. County Hall/The Countywide Centre, Worcester Parkway Railway Station, The Retail Park in Malvern, both of Malvern's Railway Stations, Church Street in Malvern and Tewkesbury. The bus will run from 7am to 7pm, Monday to Saturday. There is a flat fare of £2.50 for all journeys, with additional passengers paying £1.25, ticket bundles are available as well as concessionary cards. There is an app, anyone who cannot use an app can phone 01905 846180 and choose option 0 for assistance.

VETERANS BUS PASSES

In November 2022 I brought a Motion to a full County Council meeting for all veterans who live in Worcestershire to receive a bus pass, similar to the pensioners bus pass. This passed unanimously and was to become live this April. The majority of veterans who live here are retired and already receive a pensioner's bus pass, so the costs will be relatively small. However, the ruling administration have now delayed the start of the scheme and intend to look at it again in September 2024. I feel very disappointed with this outcome.

COUNCIL TAX 2024 INCREASES FOR A BAND D HOME

WCC £73.14, MHDC £5.00, FIRE £2.82, POLICE £13.00

WCC BUDGET HAS NOW BEEN APPROVED

We have had the full WCC meeting on 15/02/2024 and the budget has now been approved. WCC are going to spend £98.989 million pounds of its reserves, by the end of March 2026 it is expected that the reserves left will be just £45.208 million pounds, which may seem a lot, but isn't.

HS2 MONEY TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL FOR 2025/2026 ONWARDS

Following the Government's announcement that part of HS2 is now cancelled, WCC are going to receive £209 million pounds over 7-years. Personally I believe a quarter should go into reserves, however we will have to wait and see on how the administration intend to use the funds.

300 VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCIES FOR WCC

WCC are currently looking for 300 voluntary redundancies.

150 WCC LONG TERM EMPLOYEES ARE FACING A PAY CUT

WCC are about to cut the pay of some of the lowest paid employees of WCC by 5.4% from April this year.

MOTION ON SCHOOL SAFETY VOTED DOWN

During the last 12 months, at the full County Council meeting, my group presented a motion to reduce the speed limit to 20mph outside all schools, and also to make it an offence to park on the zigzag lines. I am sorry to say that the ruling conservative administration all voted it down. I was sad to see a non-party political motion thrown away.

SPEEDING

I will continue to press for speed enforcement, and to be fair there has been quite a lot recently, especially in Clifton.

SEVERN STOKE BANK SPEED WARNING MARKING ROUNDELS

These have been painted on now the road following its resurfacing.

DEFFORD MILL RE SITE VISIT 04.08.2023 COUNTY COUNCIL AREA

The signs have now been installed, the cost was £1345.68 plus vat. Regarding enforcement of the number of HGV's using the site, this is with the District Council.

SIDING OUT OF FOOTWAY IN KINNERSLEY OPPOSITE THE ROYAL OAK #5650

I have been chasing for the siding out of the footway, the latest update I have was on 25/01/24 is below.

A work order has been raised for this path; however, it will be fitted into the programme when they have availability as it is not a safety issue and other work will take priority.

SIDING OUT OF FOOTWAY IN SEVERN STOKE #6359 21/12/2023

Again, I have requested a small section of footway to be Sided out. The Parish Gang are going to do it. I am still waiting for a date when this work will be carried out.

ROAD BY THE ROSE AND CROWN PUB #5964

As I have reported in the past, it is in a poor state and needs repair. I now have a date; it is to be done sometime this April. -end-