

# Hill & Moor Parish Council

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## Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held Thursday 12th May 2022 at 7pm at Lower Moor Village Hall

Present: Cllrs T. Betteridge (Chair), P. Jeanes, Mrs A. Jeanes, D. Saunders, D. Nuttall and Mrs P. Stone

Also present: J. Adams, Clerk; District Cllr L. Tucker; 19 residents.

**1. Apologies:** Apologies had been received from County Cllr D. Boatright, Mrs R. Bucknell, Mrs C. Martin (St Thomas' Church), Mr S. Guy and Mr M. Hayes (Allotments)

**2. Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021:** The minutes of the meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021 were agreed as a true record.

**3. Chairman's Annual Report:** Cllr Betteridge welcomed those present to the meeting. He presented his report for the year, which is attached to these minutes.

**4. District and County Councillor's Annual Report:** District Cllr Tucker reported that she held roles on the Audit Committee and the Rural Matters Advisory Panel - this included looking at agrotech and agriculture in the district i.e. the industry of food. This had seen economic success in Wychavon although not all of these developments were welcome on a local level. For example at Pinvin there had been objections to the arrival of Walsh Mushrooms as, although the mushroom growing areas were within the fields, the soil itself was not being used for growing.

Cllr Tucker reported that Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils were sharing more services. There was now a joint management team. The two planning departments had now combined into one, although there was still a shortage of planning officers overall. Many had left the council to work for developers. With regard to the SWDPR, she was frustrated that much of the information was kept confidential.

Wychavon had frozen council tax for the fifth year in a row and the post-covid recovery plan was a key focus.

In the parish, the residential site at Upper Moor still had no planning status so was unregulated. This meant that any planning breaches could not be enforced. It had no licence; this would need to be issued by Worcestershire Regulatory Services but with no planning status it could not be licenced. She continued to ask Wychavon to regularise the site.

County Cllr D. Boatright had sent apologies.

### 5. Reports from Village Organisations

#### St Thomas' Church

Cllr Betteridge presented the report from St Thomas' Church on behalf of Mrs Martin who had sent apologies. The report is attached to these minutes.

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## Village Hall and Events Group

Cllr Pat Stone presented the report from the Village Hall and Events Group, the full report is attached to these minutes.

## Allotments

Mr Hayes had sent apologies but had sent a report which is attached to these minutes.

**6. Presentation on proposed New Town at Throckmorton:** Cllr Nuttall gave his presentation. Notes are attached to these minutes.

## **7. Parishioners Open Forum**

A resident asked, where were the other larger sites on the SWDP? Cllr Tucker replied that there was a large development planned for Worcester Parkway of 5,000 houses initially, with a further 5,000 to follow.

A resident noted that a united front against the proposals was important. In the past, efforts to oppose planning applications had been unsuccessful. Cllr Nuttall said that many of the surrounding parishes were already on board; others were being approached; it was suggested that The Lenches also be approached as there would be local concerns that it would become a rat-run if the development at Throckmorton went ahead.

A resident asked, how could more people be made aware of the Throckmorton proposals? Lots of people did not know about it. The councillors advised that they would continue to raise awareness and, when the time came, would encourage and help residents to put forward objections.

A resident asked, who owns the land that the development was to be sited on? Cllr Tucker explained that at the start of the process there had been a call for sites so the opportunity to use the land for development had been secured or at the very least was available. The Wychavon planning officers involved in creating the plan were involved in discussions with the landowners. Cllr Betteridge urged everyone present to make their opinions known when the consultation happened, as every objection counted. Cllr Tucker advised that it was unlikely that objections would influence the District Council's decision on the plan but they could influence the inspector's decision, and that was what counted.

A resident asked if motorists could be stopped from parking on pavements? Cllr Tucker replied that the law that prevented this had not been introduced outside London, so it was currently not an offence in Lower Moor. Police could investigate instances of obstruction but would not be doing this on any routine basis. There was also the issue that cars parked at the top end of Cherry Orchard Road would most likely block larger vehicles from coming up the road if they parked entirely on the road.

Mr Izod, organiser of the Hill and Moor Parish Games, reported that the parish was entering the Games in 2022 and entrants had been found for almost all categories. They were seeking an entrant for the cross-country run.

## **Chairman's Report to the Annual Meeting**

**12<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

Welcome everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting. As Chair I have the job of presenting an Annual Report to the meeting. Although I have been Chair for the last 3 years this is the first of these meetings I have done face to face due to previous COVID restrictions. During restrictions the Council's business continued with our usual meetings taking place via Zoom, something we all had to get used to in our lives. However, it is a great relief that things have now returned to normal and we are able to meet in person again.

We have, as usual, had a number of planning applications to deal with that we have responded to on your behalf. In addition, we have continued to take forward and put into place schemes to enhance facilities within the Parish. We have also directly responded to two issues of concern raised by Parishioners and, where appropriate, advised residents of the best process to follow to facilitate resolutions to these.

In the last few years, a number of projects have been undertaken by the Council. A perimeter path around the field was put in place and most recently a new access gate has been installed at the top of Cherry Orchard Road. This was added at the suggestion of a resident and has greatly improved access to the field, as well as giving an alternative safe route down into the village. I would like to give my thanks to Dan Boatright, our County Councillor, he was able to provide a grant to us which made this project possible. We have also undertaken the planting of wildflower seeds and spring bulbs on the bund in the top corner of the field, which gave an attractive display recently.

We receive many compliments from residents about the excellent condition of the playing field, which has become a real asset to the community. In particular here I would like to thank Darren Fincham who can be regularly spotted whizzing round the field on our mower keeping it at a perfect length. Whilst mentioning our lovely field I must also thank David and Lynne Saunders who not only litter pick the field but also the rest of the parish, spending many hours enthusiastically clearing what is probably years of accumulated litter in all the hedgerows.

Events within the Village and on the field or now organised by the Village Events group who have also taken over the running of the Village Hall. The next event will be our Jubilee celebration which takes place on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Parish Councillors for their support in the last 12 months and issue a reminder but we still have a vacancy for a Parish Councillor should anyone be interested. My thanks also to Liz Tucker, our District Councillor, and Dan Boatright, our County Councillor, for all the work they have undertaken for the Parish and last but not least to Jo Adams, our Parish Clerk, who worked tirelessly on behalf of the Parish Council but more particularly for all the support she continues to give us.

Cllr Tony Betteridge  
Chair of Hill and Moor Parish Council

Report from St Thomas's Church to the Annual Meeting 12th May 2022

The church was closed for most of lockdown and we are now trying to open most days 10am to 4pm. Anyone is always welcome to pop in and stay awhile in the peaceful atmosphere.

We do not have as many services now as we used to; we are allowed four. Last year we had Harvest, Remembrance, Easter and an evening service. We have been very lucky with helpers up to now, to open and close the church each day and to cut the grass to keep the garden nice, and I thank the parish council for looking after the two tubs of flowers outside.

I am sorry but we are now short of helpers as the two ladies who opened and closed for us for a long time feel it is time to call time, and the gentleman who has cut our grass feels he must finish too.

I thank them all for their hard work but we are now in need of a few willing volunteers help us keep our church garden tidy and to be open for anyone wishing to visit.

We are hoping with all the new people coming to live in our village a few might give us a try.

## LOWER MOOR VILLAGE HALL REPORT

For the

PARISH MEETING 12 MAY 2022

During 2020 & 2021 the hall was forced to close for most of the time for hiring and so consequently, our income was severely reduced.

To help offset this Wychavon Council awarded us two grants, £10,000 & £8,000.

The committee voted to use some of this money to improve the facilities and refurbish the hall. We had already installed the new kitchen in early 2020 so we moved on to the main hall and replaced the old electric radiators with new, more efficient heaters. One of the air heaters became irreparable and was also replaced. We have completely re-decorated the main hall and cloakroom hallway together with the outside, including plastic cladding the facials and soffit boards to reduce future maintenance costs.

As our hall is now a more attractive space we decided to install a security system consisting of a burglar alarm, fire alarm and CCTV all linked wirelessly to members of the committee and Parish Council for monitoring. The PC paid to install a top of the range camera to cover the playing field and car park, in the hope of deterring anti-social behaviour.

You may notice that we have not re-hung the old photographs. Some of these were becoming very faded so we have decided to have them digitally copied and then printed onto canvas to be hung in the hall for all to see. We believe these will look more in keeping with our new space. All the originals will be archived for anyone to see.

Our thanks go to a generous local resident for supplying the originals and also for his donation for the hearing loop which is now back working properly since the redecoration.

We have several regular bookings during the week (details can be found on the notice board) and our party bookings are beginning to increase as people feel more comfortable with face-to-face events.

The committee would be pleased to hear from anyone with a suggestion for some Village Hall events that we could put on. At the moment we are busy planning the Village Jubilee Family Day to be held on the field and in the Hall on Saturday 4 June as part of Her Majesty's Platinum celebrations we hope as many villagers and friends as possible will support this event. Any profits will go to local charities.

Thank you.

Cllr Pat Stone

## Hill & Moor Allotments – Report

The Non profit making charitable trust was set up in 1996 to administer land originally allocated to the parish by the Land Act 1833.

After falling into decline it was revived in 2008.

It consists of 2 sites

1 at Hill and currently let out on a long term lease and

2 Allotments of 10 plots situated off the end of Boggs Lane in Upper Moor north of the railway and east of the watercourse.

7 plots are currently let 1-6 and 8 but whilst interest has been high this year with 3 new tenants the overgrown state of the northern end has tempered demand.

The trust hopes to address this problem in the coming months.

The trustees have 1 vacancy

Leases per plot are £15 pa with the 1<sup>st</sup> year registration fee of £5

For further information please contact

Maurice Hayes

861967

12<sup>th</sup> May 2022

## **The South Worcestershire Development Plan (the SWDP)**

The SWDP is a plan to build a new town on the old Throckmorton airfield. The first stage of the plan is for 2000 new houses at Throckmorton. The second stage, which will come later, will be to increase that to 5000 houses.

If the SWDP goes through, it will mean there will be a new town, along with associated industry, that is at least the size of Pershore, around 1 – 2 miles away from Lower Moor. This new town is expected to use the existing road and rail infrastructure.

The Hill and Moor Parish Council, along with a number of nearby Parishes, are attempting to stop this. We want to preserve our beautiful countryside, keep our roads and rail system from being stretched to breaking point, and prevent a large influx of people coming to an area which simply cannot support them.

These notes will briefly cover the following topics:

- What is the SWDP?
- What exactly does the SWDP propose?
- How will the SWDP be adopted?
- What are we doing about it and what can you do about it?

### **WHAT IS THE SWDP?**

The SWDP is what is called a “Local Plan”. It is not a planning permission application or a green-light to a new development.

Rather, a Local Plan is the key document which will be considered when a District Council is deciding whether or not to grant planning permission. If the Local Plan says that a certain site is suitable for a new housing development, chances are that developers will receive planning permission to build there.

The current SWDP has existed since 2016. It was created by Wychavon, Worcester City and Malvern Hills. The Plan sets out how the South Worcestershire area will deliver the 14,000 new houses that the Government has told the area to build.

The SWDP was intended to be reviewed and renewed after 5 years. It is that review which is the cause of our concern, because the new SWDP is designed to be much longer term – it is intended to cover development up to 2041.

### **WHAT EXACTLY DOES THE SWDP PROPOSE?**

The SWDP review proposes various new towns in addition to Throckmorton, including at Worcestershire Parkway station.

The proposal for the Throckmorton development is described like this:

*2,000 homes and 10ha of employment land up to 2041.*

*Potential for further growth post 2041*

*A range of service and facilities including leisure, schools and shops*

*A new road link to Pershore station incorporating a high quality pedestrian and cycle link road – development will not commence until this has been built.*

The SWDP envisages that the “further growth post 2041” will be a further 3,000 houses.

The specific details are unclear, and local groups are not being provided with up to date information. The following therefore may change going forward.

The new town will be accessed via the A44. There are various options, but it seems to be either from the Landfill site roundabout or the Wyre Piddle bypass roundabout.

The proposal assumes that improved bus, cycle and pedestrian routes will connect the Throckmorton development to Pershore railway station. There is an assumption that the proximity between the development and Pershore station will mean personal car use will not hugely increase.

The proposal makes various other assumptions, including that the entire development will somehow be powered using solar energy, and that “*through good design and careful consideration of layout*” the bio-diversity of the area can be protected.

The proposal accepts that there are some problems with the airfield site itself, being a brownfield site which has been used variously for military purposes and as a foot-and-mouth burial site. Additionally there are concerns that the site has archaeological interest. These issues will mean one thing - any developers will not be looking to build neatly in the middle of the site, but around the edges – i.e. closer to existing villages.

### **HOW WILL THE SWDP BE ADOPTED?**

The process for adoption of new local plans is clearly set out in statute<sup>1</sup>. As applicable to the SWDP, the process has been, and will be, as follows:

- Stage One - The rough shape of the Plan is prepared along with at least the preparation of an initial Sustainability Appraisal, which looks at the impact the Plan will have. This was happening in around 2018;
- Stage Two – Initial Public Consultation. The options for the Plan are consulted on, and some evidence is provided to the public. This occurred in around November 2019. Around the time of the consultation, this Parish, along with Bishampton & Throckmorton and Pinvin, commissioned a highly critical expert report from a planning consultant which was submitted. In particular, the report tore apart the initial Sustainability Appraisal;
- Stage Three – Publication of the Plan. The full Plan needs to be made available for public scrutiny, along with supporting documentation and, crucially, a final Sustainability Appraisal. This was supposed to be happening last year. It was pushed back to this July. It has now been pushed back again to, probably, October this year.
- Stage Four – Consultation on the Plan - A consultation will then immediately occur, where local people and groups can make representations on the plan. The councils must take these representations into account, and may change the plan as a result;

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<sup>1</sup> S19 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and throughout the *Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012*

- Stage Five – Submission of the Plan – After the consultation and any changes, the councils will submit the SWDP to the Secretary of State, who will appoint an independent planning inspector (similar to a judge) to consider it. The inspector will consider the Plan at a public hearing, and hear any submissions from people or groups. The inspector will assess the Plan against various statutory criteria. He will then decide whether the Plan should be adopted, or should be altered, or should be scrapped altogether. This is not likely to happen until early-mid 2023.

### **WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT IT AND WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?**

The position of the Parish Council is that the SWDP review proposal is bad for the parish and bad for our area.

This Parish Council, along with Throckmorton & Bishampton, Pinvin and (hopefully soon) Wyre Piddle have joined together to create an inter-council SWDP working group.

The working group meets regularly, and will now be meeting at least 4-weekly, to co-ordinate efforts and pool information. We have the support of Dan Boatright and Liz Tucker, our local County and District Councillors. It was this working group which submitted the response to the Initial Public Consultation and commissioned the planning consultant report.

The working group is currently doing the following on your behalf:

- Badgering the councils for information;
- Trying to find out what the timetables are going forward, and why the delays are being caused;
- Pooling the evidence provided by the councils and analysing it, to find holes that can be exploited;
- Looking into recruiting external help, including development experts, planning consultants and, subject to funding, counsel who can present the case to the inspector;
- Importantly, formulating a better alternative to the proposals within the SWDP. The working group is not against progress or development, however it needs to be sustainable, and not at the disproportionate expense of our local area and people. A proposal that uses Throckmorton airfield in a way which creates jobs and improves the local economy and infrastructure, has to be the way forward.

However, we are approaching crunch time, and are going to need help before the full consultation kicks off. Anyone who is opposed to the new SWDP can get involved to help. What we're looking for is:

- Anyone local, with relevant planning, development or legal expertise;
- Anyone who is prepared to volunteer to assist with preparing our case against the SWDP;
- Anyone who is prepared to write a response to the consultation;
- Anyone who is prepared to even just send a pre-prepared letter in response to the consultation.

The more that we can show local people are against SWDP, the stronger our hand will be. Going forward, we plan to hold additional meetings to help direct people in the most effective ways.

## USEFUL LINKS

1. The Bishampton & Throckmorton parish website, which gives details about the SWDP and the consultation responses. This also has a link to the excellent planning consultant report:

<https://www.batpc.org.uk/airfieldproposals>

2. The most recent SWDP Sustainability Appraisal – this is being heavily reviewed, but shows the (utterly flawed) thinking behind the selection of Throckmorton (scroll down to the link named “SWDPR Regulation 18 (III) Sustainability Appraisal Report (13.30 MB)”):

<https://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/swdp-review/swdp-review-regulation-18-3-sa-consultation>

3. The SWDP evidence base – we find the “transport modelling” document quite interesting:

<https://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/swdp-review/swdp-review-evidence-base>

*Draft*