

# SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022 at 7.00 pm in Suckley Village Hall

**Present:** Cllr R Hill (Chairman), Cllr P Whatley, Cllr A Lewis, Cllr C Luton,  
Cllr R Hooper, Cllr H Ormerod, Cllr P Griffiths, Cllr A Mansell  
Cllr L Devenish

**In Attendance:** Mrs D Taylor (Clerk), Mrs Lynn Butler (new Clerk from 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2022)  
Mrs H Philpotts (Footpaths Warden)

**Apologies:** Co Cllr K Hanks, Dist Cllr S Rouse

Four members of the public attended the meeting.

- (a) Cllrs were reminded of the need to complete/update their Register of Interests
- (b) Declaration of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) in items on the Agenda – or -
- (c) Declaration of Other Disclosable Interests in items on the Agenda falling within the terms of para 12(4)((b) of the Code of Conduct. (*none made*)

**No requests had been received by the Clerk for any Dispensations relating to items on the Agenda. (Sec 33 of the Localism Act 2011)**

**The Chairman then adjourned the Meeting for Public Question Time/Participation (including planning applicant/s or their representatives)**

(a) A concern re groups of cyclists taking up large parts of the narrow roads in the Suckley Knowl and other areas of the parish was raised. If any accidents happened, generally car drivers were blamed when this was not necessarily the case. The Council noted this complaint, and agreed to contact cycling clubs in the area to raise the issue, as Cycling Clubs should report to West Mercia Police when organising club rides. A Speeding Petition was handed to the Chairman by Mr S Gray to send on to Co Cllr K Hanks, plus a copy for the Council. A proposal for the Council to run a Council Small Society Lottery was also raised, but would be considered at the next meeting of the Council as it was not on the Agenda for the present meeting.

(b) **Report from County Councillor** - Co Cllr K Hanks had e-mailed a report to the Clerk, and this had been circulated to All Cllrs. **Highways** – the work outside Bridge Cottage was scheduled to start on 26<sup>th</sup> September. She had attended a meeting in Longley Green with the Highways Liaison Officer, Cllrs Robin Hill and Peter Whatley to discuss concerns over the work schedule and diversion requirements. Blackhouse Lane – she was hoping for a further update in time for 26<sup>th</sup> September meeting. Birchwood Lane – Worcs Co Council do not have any infrastructure in that area, but could look at getting a couple of spillways put in. However, if this was field run-off, as Highways suspect it was, then it is the landowners responsibility to prevent water entering the highway. District may need to investigate and have the powers to enforce action as well. **Divisional Budget** - £1,317.56 had been offered to Suckley School to purchase waterproof jackets and trousers for children during their Forest School sessions. Support was also being offered to Suckley Playing Fields subject to quotations. **Boundary Review** – A Boundary Review of County Council wards will be taking place. Meetings will be held with all Councillors, Officers and Parish Councils to assist in deciding how many Councillors should be

elected. From May 2023 the public will be asked for their views on the numbers of Wards and boundaries. The new Wards would be effective from County Council Elections in 2025.

(c) **Report from District Cllr** – Dist Cllr P Whatley reported to the meeting. The Boundary Commission had published its final recommendations for Malvern Hills District Council Wards. In our local area, the current Alfrick & Leigh Ward would lose Knightwick & Doddenham PC to a new revised Martley Ward, but add the Parish of Rushwick. The new Ward would be known as Alfrick, Leigh & Rushwick and have two District Councillors. The number of District Cllrs would be reduced to 31 from the present 38. This would take effect from the 2023 MHDC elections. BT Open Reach Full Fibre connection was now on offer in Blackhouse Lane, and hopefully would be moving towards Longley Green in the near future. The Director of Planning had resigned due to ill health, which might affect the production of a revised SWDP plan due to be submitted to the MHDC at its October meeting. Included in this revised plan was a proposal for 18 houses on land at Stocks Cross Roads, with a percentage being affordable housing. The effect of increased fuel costs would cost MHDC an extra £100K in this current year, and together with an increase of 6.8% in staff costs, the Council would be £500K above budget from a year ago. As MHDC was very well run financially, this increase could be met, but many other Councils would not be in such a fortunate position.

(d) **Lengthsman** - The Clerk reported that gully clearance of grates and general clearance of vegetation had been undertaken by the Lengthsman in July and August. Areas of work were Suckley Road, Church Lane, Acton Road, Suckley/Mousehole, Birchwood, Blackhouse Lane, Crews Hill to viaduct. Cllr A Mansell to send the Clerk a map re drains in Blackhouse Lane which were still silted over.

(e) **Footpaths** – Helen Philpotts reported a tree blocking the footpath No 545, with footpath Nos 547 & 548 crossing it where the blockage is. The landowner concerned was not able to remove the tree. The Clerk to contact the Lengthsman who is qualified to use a chainsaw to see if he could do this work. Helen to notify the Clerk of the landowner address and location for a new gate on footpath starting 776. Jon White of the Countryside Dept had asked Helen and her team to improve the waymarkers on the Geopark Circular Trail.

(f) **Local Police** – Cllr R Hooper stated that a Land Rover Discovery had been reported stolen, but had since been recovered. Nothing further to report. A parishioner reported that a Meter Reading scam was in operation in the Suckley Kowl area. A warning to be posted on the Suckley & Surrounds Facebook site. Cllr A Lewis reported that she had been approached via the Good Neighbour Scheme, to set up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme for the parish, and asked for volunteers.

### **The Chairman re-opened the meeting**

#### **71/22 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022 were approved and signed. Proposed by Cllr P Whatley and seconded by Cllr H Ormerod

#### **72/22 POLICIES**

The Council agreed to adopt the following Policies (relating to the new Clerk) :-

- (a) Sickness & Absence Policy - Proposed by Cllr C Luton and seconded by Cllr A Lewis
- (b) Grievance Policy – Proposed by Cllr P Griffiths and seconded by Cllr P Whatley
- (c) Equality & Diversion Policy – Proposed by Cllr R Hill and seconded by Cllr C Luton

### **73/22 HIGHWAYS & BYWAYS**

The Clerk had circulated an update to Cllrs re Parish Highways issues up to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022. This update had also been sent to Co Cllr K Hanks. At the PC Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021 the Council agreed to focus on the following three areas for the time being, which were :-

- (i) **Ref: 1079646** – Drains/flooding Scheme in Birchwood Lane
- (ii) **New Ref No – 1256851** - following a meeting held on 16/10/20 with Hannah Davies, the gully outside **Bridge Cottage** had been earmarked to be lowered. Hannah Davies/WCC Highways had reported this as having been completed on 15/10/21, but this was incorrect, and it was still outstanding.
- (iii) **Ref No: 982598** – road erosion between Blackhouse Lane and Lower Tundridge Farm. Concrete posts do not appear to be fully supported. WCC Highways have marked the site with tape and cones, but this is becoming a hazardous situation with the onset of winter weather/flooding.

Cllr P Whatley expressed his general disappointment that very little had happened on resolving the Highways issues which had been repeatedly brought to the attention of Co Cllr K Hanks and WCC Highways. The view of WCC Highways re flooding/drainage problems in Birchwood Lane (Ref 1079646) was inaccurate. The area of the road concerned was in a dip and was nothing to do with land drainage. He suggested a meeting with the landowner to construct a deeper channel would help solve the problem. The Blackhouse Lane/Lower Tundridge Farm item (Ref 982598) was still of serious concern. The Clerk was asked to write again to Co Cllr K Hanks and also to Mr Mike Rouse, Head of Transport at Worcs Co Council, to repeat the Council's ongoing and repeated concerns relating to safety issues, as the road surface was continuing to erode and some of the cones had disappeared into the stream. As previously minuted in Co Cllr Hank's report, Bridge Cottage item (Ref 1256851) was being dealt with as from 26<sup>th</sup> September. However, many complaints had been received about the enforced closure of the road, signage etc. and the effect on local businesses in Suckley.

### **74/22 VAS DETECTOR /SPEEDING**

(a) **VAS Stats** - The speeding stats for July 2022 and stats up to 14<sup>th</sup> August 2022 compiled by Richard Ashton (Alfrick parish) had been circulated to all Cllrs. and were noted by the Council. Following on from the presentation of a Speeding Petition containing 91 signatures earlier in the meeting, the Chairman Cllr R Hill proposed that the Council support this Petition for WCC Highways to impose a 30 mph speed limit from a point fifty metres south of the entrance to White House Court extending north on the Knightwick Road, C2070, to the parish boundary and west across Suckley Knowl to the parish boundary with Herefordshire. This proposal was unanimously approved by the Council. The Clerk was also asked to write again to Co Cllr K Hanks re the placing of rubber strips on roads to monitor vehicle numbers. This to be done in school term time to achieve an accurate picture.

(b) **20's Plenty for Worcestershire** - Cllr R Hill had offered to represent the Council at any future local meetings of this campaign.

### **75/22 CHARITY REPORTS**

- (a) Brookes Memorial Fund - the report & accounts were noted by the Council. Proposed by Cllr H Ormerod and seconded by Cllr C Luton.
- (b) John Palmer Trust – the accounts were noted by the Council. Proposed by A Mansell and seconded by Cllr C Luton.

## 76/22 COMMUNITY

- (a) **Parish Map Board** - As discussed at the Council's meeting in May, the Parish Map Board needed updating, with the possibility of using copies of the updated map to sell as prints. The Clerk had received an unsolicited sales approach from Platform One - a creative agency for Map Creation and Heritage Interpretation. Cllr H Ormerod offered to take this project forward and report back to the Council.
- (b) **Village Hall** - Cllr C Luton reported to the meeting. Improvements to the hall were being planned, using the support money received from the Government during the Covid pandemic. The pre school nursery was continuing to make plans to re-organise the interior of the hall, but still waiting for firm quotes from the builders. The Charity Commission would also have to be involved before any definite move could take place.
- (c) **Remembrance Day – 11<sup>th</sup> November** - The Clerk had ordered the poppy crosses to be delivered to Cllr P Whatley. Cllr A Lewis agreed to ask her husband to arrange the bugler recordings for the ceremony. Details to be published in the Sphere.
- (d) **Future projects**
- (i) Ladies Football Team - Cllr C Luton reported that an approach by a (male) football team had been made earlier in the year. However, the costs involved to refurbish the Pavilion with new showers and toilets for both male and female players, plus marking out the pitch, increased electricity charges, and mowing the playing field at approximately £800 - £900 per year would not make the idea viable when charges for using the pitch were so low at c£23.00 per booking. In the past, a lot of work had been done voluntarily by the local Football Team, and the playing field had been maintained free of charge. There was a reduced demand for pitches, and although Suckley Playing Field was in a beautiful location, generally speaking teams did not like to travel very far to use a pitch. Cllr P Whatley reported that Malvern Town Council who own a number of sites in Malvern, also struggled to attract teams. The Chairman Cllr R Hill suggested that this idea be held in abeyance for the time being.
- (ii) Classic Vehicle Event on the Playing Field – Cllr C Luton thought this was a great idea. An outside bar would be required. The Chairman Cllr R Hill suggested that a small committee be put together to look at dates, publicity and capacity etc. with a view to this being a Spring event.
- (iii) Suckley Nine Mile Run – In the past, this had been organised by a local Harriers Club and the Nelson, and was nothing to do with the Parish Council, with money raised going to local charities. Cllr P Whatley suggested that an event of this nature would raise community togetherness, with the Parish Council acting as co-ordinator. He agreed to have a chat with the Cross Keys and Cllr R Hill agreed to talk with the local brewery, as a first step.
- (iv) Jubilee Daffodil Planting - Cllr A Lewis reported that the daffodil bulbs for planting around the parish this Autumn had failed their health check. Planting would now be delayed until next year.

## 77/22 FINANCE - The following cheques were approved :-

- (a) **Gen Fund** – - proposed by Cllr H Ormerod and seconded by Cllr A Lewis :-  
D W Taylor, Clerk's expenses July/August 2022 - £112.50; Clerk's expenses September £41.44; HMRC – PAYE July/August/September - £423.60; R Wilks – Lengthsman – July/August 2022 £152.00; Clerk's Office Apr – Sept 2022 - £150.00; Zurich Insurance Renewal (2<sup>nd</sup> year) £1,049.13; WEL Medical – electrode pads for defib at Suckley School - £55.08; Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal - £30.00.

- (b) **Playing Field** – Proposed by Cllr H Ormerod and seconded by Cllr A Mansell :-  
D Reynolds (DJR Farm Services) – topping Playing Field - £96.00 (paid, but to be approved); Water Plus (DD) - June/July £8.18; E.On Next (DD) - £44.46; EDF (new supplier) –20 June – 17August 2022 - £39.55 (paid but to be approved);  
EDF – 18 Aug – 16 Sept 2022 - £19.91.
- (c) **Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022** were approved. Proposed by Cllr P Whatley and seconded by Cllr L Devenish.

#### **78/22 PLANNING (for information)**

- (a) Proposal: Certificate of Lawfulness for existing use of land as domestic garden & use of building as a yoga studio.  
Location: The Boat House, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5DL  
MHDC Planning has **Refused** this application.
- (b) Proposal: Erection of a two storey extension  
Location: Little Chapels, Suckley, Worc WR6 5EH  
MHDC Planning has **Approved** with conditions
- (c) Proposal: Single storey extension, insertion of two dormer windows, removal of roof light, replacement oak frame & fenestration to garden room and replacement of windows/French doors.  
Location: Woodland Cottage, Blackhouse Lane, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5DP  
MHDC Planning has **Approved** this application with conditions.
- (d) Proposal: Two storey rear extensions and internal alterations  
Location: Applegaard Fruit Farm, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5DJ  
MHDC Planning has **Approved** this application, with conditions.
- (e) Proposal: **Permission in Principle (PIP)** for proposed new dwelling  
Location: 2, Bearcroft Cottages, Longley Green, Suckley, Worcs WR6 5EF  
MHDC Planning has **Approved** this initial application, subject to conditions.

Cllr P Whatley outlined the PIP process re 2, Bearcroft Cottages. This was a relatively new part of the planning process, but very much at the beginning stage. The applicants still had to put together a detailed planning application and get the technical details approved. Consideration would be taken into account as to appropriate land use and the amount of development involved.

#### **79/22 BOUNDARY COMMISSION – final report**

This had been reported on earlier in the meeting by Cllr P Whatley under District Cllrs Report.

#### **80/22 PLAYING FIELD**

Cllr C Luton reported that she had received a complaint re rubbish and a large nitreous oxide cylinder being left near to the children's play area on the Playing Field. She had gone down to investigate, and had cleared up numerous bags of rubbish including bags of nappies and dog mess. She had also removed the nitreous oxide cylinder and taken it home for disposal. This was totally unacceptable behaviour. Cllr A Lewis suggested asking for volunteers to keep the Playing Field clear of rubbish. Helen Philpotts offered to speak to the school about this, as it was likely that school children/parents were mostly using the Playing Field. The Clerk was asked to report to West Mercia Police about the nitreous oxide cylinder, as this might be part of a larger problem in the area. Cllr C Luton was still looking into the replacement of the Pavilion wooden door as the door was not a standard size. The metal grid in front of the door would prevent any access into the Pavilion building. Cllr Luton also reported that Co Cllr K Hanks had agreed to fund Tennis Nets (£100) and posts (£334) plus a Basket Ball Hoop. The preferred Hoop was £459.99 + VAT, and Cllr C Luton suggested that the Council pay half towards the cost of this hoop, with

Co Cllr K Hanks funding the other half. This suggestion was agreed by the Council. Proposed by Cllr A Lewis and seconded by Cllr P Whatley.

### **81/22 DEFIB FACILITIES**

Cllr A Lewis reported that there had been a product recall of defibrillators whose software would be too old for the battery to be reliably safe. The Suckley School cabinet had been identified as needing to be recalled and to have its software upgraded. Now this had taken place we needed a replacement battery at a cost of c£180.00 + VAT. The battery should have a 5 year life. Cllr A Lewis offered to source a new battery, and contact the Clerk re invoicing/payment procedures etc. The Council agreed to this cost. Proposed by Cllr C Luton and seconded by Cllr R Hooper. Cllr A Lewis also drew the attention of the Council to other defibs in the area – including at the Bruff and Alfrick Post Office. Both of these units were kept locked and can only be opened with a code via a 999 call. Delays could occur when anyone wanting access to the defib does not have a phone, or there is a problem with getting mobile phone coverage. The new cabinet for the Suckley School defib is not locked. The Clerk had managed to get new electrode pads for the School defib at a cost of £55.08.

### **82/22 RISK ASSESSMENT**

Cllr R Hill reported no issues re risk assessment for the bus shelters, trees in quarry, Map Board. Cllr C Luton reported no risk assessment problems with the Playing Field.

### **83/22 SUCKLEY CHURCH**

Cllr A Lewis reported that the toilet and kitchen facilities were not yet in place, but with the builder they now have she was hoping for completion fairly soon. The Church would then have a useful community space. The BFG event had taken place on 10<sup>th</sup> September despite the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II. The Event paid tribute to the Queen with illustrations of her life and loops of her Christmas broadcasts over the years.

### **84/22 SUCKLEY SCHOOL**

The Head Teacher Helen Field had sent in a report to the Clerk re Suckley School (which is attached to the Minutes). This had been circulated to all Cllrs.

### **85/22 MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDA**

- (a) Small Society Lottery
- (b) Funding request from Suckley School re new notice board
- (c) Funding request from Broadwas village hall
- (d) Further future projects

**Date of next meeting – Parish Council Meeting – Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 7.00 pm**

