

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EARLS CROOME PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 21st MARCH 2023 AT 7.30 PM AT EARLS CROOME VILLAGE HALL.

PRESENT: Cllr Mark Smith (Chairman), Cllr Penny Green , Cllr Margaret Herbert, Cllr Charlotte Bloomfield, Cllr Ian Wilson, Malcolm Tomkins (Tree Warden), Ann Smith (Advisor to PC) and the Clerk.

In attendance: County Councillor Martin Allen.

One member of the public attended.

1) APOLOGIES

District Councillor Owenson & Cllr Tom Goodwin

2) PUBLIC

Malcolm raised advised that the annual litter pick had been a great success and it was noted the amount of litter collected and a remarkable number of highways road signs.

3) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

4) MEMBER VACANCY

Mark advised that the vacancy remained and there had been no interest as yet. The vacancy was advertised in the Bridge and on Facebook. Margaret advised that the people she thought maybe interested could not spare the time at the moment.

The clerk advised that she was investigating how to set up a way to put things on facebook from ECPC rather than her personal account, but it wasn't simple and she was liaising with Lisa the clerk at Severn Stoke PC – Lisa is already putting the police reports on the Facebook notice board which is Severn Stoke, Kinnersley & Earls Croome so no need to duplicate this.

5) LOCAL ELECTIONS

The clerk distributed nomination packs to each member and explained that they would all need to be re-nominated and the forms delivered to MHDC by 4th April in order to retain their seats.

6) MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th January were proposed by Margaret, seconded by Ian, agreed by all and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

7) REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

County Council Report

Martin advised that he had secured funding for the Community Bus until the end of the year and he advised members there was one regular user from EC.

Martin advised that he could not make any progress on the Quay Lane passing bays. Penny queried why not and Martin advised they are not official passing bays, Penny asked if they could become official but Martin thought with the current budgetary constraints the request may result in a one way review or other solutions, which residents would not want.

Martin thanked Margaret for attending the green infrastructure meeting and her subsequent report. Martin advised that it was a multi-agency living document and it was disappointing how little interest had been shown in it.

Martin advised that the Highways liaison officer would review the roadside ash die back at Marsh Common at the appropriate time and advise on what action, if any, was required to keep the highway safe.

Martin had secured £278 additional funding for ECPC, the Chairman & members thanked Martin for this.

Martin gave an explanation regarding the new district boundaries and how ECPC would have x2 District Council voices going forward.

Malcolm thanked Martin for his communication on Facebook regarding fly tipping but suggested that it was a good opportunity to tell the public that they themselves can report any fly tipping they see directly on MHDC website.

District Council Report – District Councillor Owenson had not sent a report (due to Purdah) but had asked the Chairman to remind people of the need to bring photo ID to vote.

8) HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Margaret advised that the new missing verge masters on Quay Lane were still missing. The clerk suggested Margaret report this to WCC. Any Highways item can be reported by any individual by going to www.worcestershire.gov.uk and going to the 'report it' section.

Members enquired if the VAS was able to capture any data, Malcolm thought it should record the number of cars exceeding the speed limit. Which could be noted at the weekly battery change.

The location of the pole was queried, it was thought it maybe more effective further out of the village – the clerk was asked to contact Highways and see if another pole can be installed.

9) PARISH PATHS

Malcolm advised that Croome Estate was doing a lot of work at the bottom of Donkey Lane. Malcolm advised that he would continue as the P3 contractor for now but advised members that he was thinking of retiring later in the year.

The Clerk asked members to consider who, if anyone, could take over the P3 roll or does ECPC move to the WCC managed footpath clearing.

10) TREES – Ash die back

The clerk advised that she and Malcolm had met a man from the forestry commission on site, they were unable to help us with grants or anything due to size and shape of the trees layout. He advised that it was a good idea to have the trees surveyed every 5 years from a safety perspective. The clerk had obtained a quote for a safety survey. However the clerk thought that if WCC Highways were going to do the safety survey, having another survey was not necessary. The clerk suggested that it be noted that a survey should be requested every 5 years and that ECPC now await the outcome of the Highways survey to decide what, if any, action is required. Members agreed.

11) LENGTHSMAN SCHEME

The clerk advised that Andy was happy to continue as the lengthsman for the 23/24 contract.

Members asked the clerk to ask Andy to sweep or blow the pavements whenever strimming or hedge cutting occurred in the village as the cuttings were unsightly and a potential slip/trip hazard.

12) COMMONS

Margaret asked that her action to contact Natural England to investigate further the benefits of joining the scheme discussed in January's meeting be extended and she would report back at the meeting in May.

Smithmoor Common had not been fully assessed in the report and Margaret would follow that up at the same time.

Members noted that there was a horse jump on Smithmoor Common and asked the clerk to write to the three local residents and that if it was theirs could they please remove it.

Margaret had been approached by a resident asking to fell a tree that is on ECPC land but affecting their property near Turnpike, a scraggy tree of no significance. Members unanimously agreed that the resident could fell the tree.

13) COMMUNITY LITTER PICK

The Chairman thanked all those members and residents that turned out and helped collect the astounding amount of litter on the first Sunday in March.

A small note with pictures had been submitted to the Bridge.

Thanks to Tom for organising the annual litter picking banner was noted.

14) PLANNING

22/01878/AGR Surmans Farm. Prior approval, internal access track on agricultural land. Approved. It was noted this is restricted to agricultural access only.

22/01692/CU – Land at (Os 8730 4267) Quay Lane – change of use to dog walking field. Objection. Ian was asked to check that the ECPC comments were uploaded to the planning portal.

22/01865/FUL The Yorkshire Grey – Provision of external staircase – Approved.

23/00155/LB Stonehall Cottage, Orangery – No Objection.

Planning Inspectorate APP/J1860/C/21/3279663: Baughton View Caravan Site, WR8 9DX. Amendments allowed.

Members expressed their shock and displeasure that the inspectorate had allowed the changes to the conditions. Concern was raised that the generally peaceful families residing in Baughton may change going forward. Ian advised that upon reading the appeal report it was clear that MHDC not fulfilling its land supply for travellers combined with a damning view of the MHDC policy regarding travellers were the reasons for the inspectorate decision. Members agreed that a letter should be compiled and sent to MHDC regarding the inadequate policy and asking the policy be reviewed and rewritten ASAP.

20/01827/FUL Baughton Stud, Smithmoor Common. Enforcement on going. Concern was raised regarding the floodlights again, the clerk would forward the correspondence to Margaret as confirmation of light type had been requested. Margaret also advised of a lot of digging on site.

15) FINANCE

The monthly reconciliation of cash and other monies was undertaken for January & February by Charlotte & Penny.

Payments made since last meeting:

Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary- January (S/O)	£233.77
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance January (S/O)	£20.00
Mr A Milward – Lengthsman Payment – January	£264.00
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Salary – February	£233.77
Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk working from home allowance February	£20.00
Mr A Milward – lengthsman payment February (includes £27.98 for VAS padlocks)	£171.98

To review and authorize the following payments:

a) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk salary – March (S/O)	£233.77
b) Mrs N Nicholson – Clerk Working from home allowance March (S/O)	£20.00
c) Godwin & Sons – reimburse for litter pick banner	£55.44
d) Mr A Milward – lengthsman payment – March	£TBC
e) Mr A Malward – Lengthsman payment – April	£TBC

Remittance:

WCC Lengthsman reimburse December £48.00

WCC Lengthsman reimburse January £264.00

8. CORRESPONDANCE

The Chairman drew members attention to and thanked Malcolm for his report on how ECPC was managing its woodlands.

19. INFORMATION AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 16th May 7.30pm at Earls Croome Village Hall preceded at 7pm by the Annual Parish meeting.

Margaret asked that Croome Estate feasibility study for a solar farm on a 30 acre sight in ECPC be added to Mays agenda.

The Meeting closed at 8.55pm.