|  |
| --- |
| **The Minutes of Annual Great Witley and Hillhampton Parish Meeting** |
|  |
| **Held at the Great Witley Village Hall on Thursday 16th May 2019** |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Present: Chairman**, Cllr F Chapman (FC). |
|  |
|  |
| **In Attendance:** Clerk, J Evans, Cllrs C Shaw (CS), C Dermietzel (CD), A Goodman (AG), N Drew (ND), C Jones (CJ), B Dallow (BD), A Symonds (AS), C.Cllr K Pollock (KP) arrived late and D.Cllr P Cumming (PC) |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1.** | **Apologies:** none. | | | | | |
|  |  | |  | |  | |
| **2.** | **Progress Reports: FC opened the meeting**   * FC gave an update on the proposed 175 housing development. He said the Parish Council objected to it and advised that a development such as this will now not take place for some years as it is outside the settlement plan of the village and not in the SWDP. However, the SWDP ha identified that there are insufficient sites and have asked for sites to be offered. We do not need to develop in these rural fields, but this is not ‘set in stone’. There will be a review in 2021. After this date sites will be submitted, and it is expected that this site will be submitted again. FC read out the Parish Council’s response, a copy of which is attached to these Minutes. The Parish Council will still resist this development. They will support residential planning if it does not affect surrounding neighbours. An example of where residential planning has affected neighbours is the Old Bakery and the felling of tress, to which we objected to in our response to MHDC. * Velo – We objected to this event mainly due to the unacceptable road closures it posed. A subsequent event was redirected and Great Witley was not affected. * The Hundred House – Work has been delayed on this development as planners said that the work carried out did not conform to plans and standards required. Investors deposits have been refunded and 50% of the properties cannot be occupied until the bar has been fitted out. Work on the bar has still to be started. * The Carodoc building is now standing empty. It has been suggested that its use may be changed into a restaurant. * The Donkey field – Permission was given for affordable housing to be built on this land. The Notice says this must be done by next year, 2020. There are concerns that if no work is started the developers will try for any marketable housing which goes against the original permission granted. * Parish Council Elections – The Parish Council consists of 9 councillors, 7 for Great Witley and 2 for Hillhampton. Currently we only have 1 councillor representing Hillhampton, Nigel Drew. Anyone wishing to fill the vacancy for the other position should contact the Clerk, Jo Evans. | | | | | |
| **3.** | **District Councillors Report: Paul Cumming**  The past year has seen continued efforts at Malvern to improve services in spite of the difficult financial background.  Although many councils in Worcestershire have experienced difficulties, we have continued to build our reserves and have a robust five year plan in place to ensure we continue to have a balanced budget in the light of expected future grant reductions, by means of genuine efficiency savings.  As part of this we are bringing telephony back in house and have just opened a reception facility at the Council House to welcome local residents now that all the Council Offices are in one building. We also played an important part in bringing about a business rates retention pilot scheme for one year, which will result in the County receiving an additional £5m to help with Adult Social Care and Children’s services. Additional funding has also been put aside for rural transport schemes in light of further reductions in bus services.  The alternative weekly waste collection has been implemented during the year and we have now seen a reduction in general waste being produced as well as a substantial increase in recycling.  I feel privileged to be elected to represent Woodbury Ward for another four years , albeit without a contested election on this occasion.  There is now no overall control on the Council as a result of changes in Malvern and elsewhere. A coalition or partnership (according to which of the members you listen to ) has been formed between a most of the Independent councillors plus the Green and Liberal groups. This was announced last night and further details are awaited. I will therefore not be retaining my portfolio responsibility for finance and resources. This does however give me more time to concentrate on the revision of the SWDP, which needs to be completed this year, as the outcome of this will have an important bearing on our rural area. There will be a formal consultation period, but getting points considered at an early stage is important and I welcome any input at this point.  As always, I am available at any time to deal with issues concerning local residents and Parish  Councils and should be pleased to answer any questions that anyone may have this evening.  Regarding The Hundred House PC responded by saying that once the bar is fitted out, if the current owners cannot make it work as a business it will be offered to someone else to run as a bar. | | | | | |
| **4.** | **County Councillors Report :** **Ken Pollock (read out by FC in KP’s absence)**   1. **County Council Affairs - personnel**   At this time last year, we were about to welcome our new team of senior officers, comprising the Chief Executive, Paul Robinson, the Chief Finance Officer, Michael Hudson, the Chief Commissioning Officer, Andrew Spice, and the Interim Director of Adult Social Care Services, Avril Wilson. In addition we have since confirmed Richard Taylor as Head of Human Resources.  They joined John Hobbs, director of Economy and Infrastructure, Francis Howie in charge of Public Health, and Catherine Driscoll, the director of Children’s Services.  I can report that the new senior management have settled in well, working with the Cabinet to produce a viable range of services appropriate to the County’s needs, and consistent with our income of around £330 million a year.  That is not to say that we have not faced substantial difficulties in balancing the budget, and Great Witley residents will be aware of some of the stress points that have been encountered during the year. Despite the controversy, I think we can be assured that the necessary range and depth of services will continue to be delivered as required.  .   1. **County Council Affairs – council tax**   Once again we find it necessary to increase Council Tax, this time by 3.99% overall. Within that sum, there is a 1% rise dedicated to Adult Social Care, as the government recognises the increasing burden of an ageing population, some of whom require council support. This overall increase is equivalent to £0.93p per week for a Band D property.   1. **Council County Affairs – expenditure**   Many people will be aware that our Children’s Services have been judged as requiring improvement and as a result we have found it necessary to place the department into a wholly owned company, named Worcestershire Children First. This will formally come into operation in October, although it now exists in shadow form.  This new venture has to be seen in the context of two years of continuous improvement in Children’s Services, as a result of concerted effort of all staff, under the leadership of Catherine Driscoll and her colleague Tina Russell. We are hopeful that the new company will assist in this continuous improvement, so that the whole department may be returned to the County Council in a short while.  The Government has promised a Green Paper on adult social care for some time, but its publication is still imminent. This is an area of increasing need, but there is the crucial matter of the boundary between County Council funded care and the National Health Service. Clearly both organisations should be working towards the same goal, but there are occasional conflicts about responsibilities and allocation of expenditure between the two organisations.  As I observed last year, all other services are paid from the residue of income after these two departments are financed. This has resulted in difficult decisions on funding for libraries, archives and the possible need to charge for parking. It should be emphasised that there are no plans to close any libraries, and the archive service is adequately funded to carry out its essential and valuable work.  That said, we are very keen to run an efficient and effective council, and this is resulting in a detailed examination of our ways of working, aimed at maintaining or improving the service with fewer personnel and resources.  We naturally hope that this endeavour will be supported by all residents, and I would encourage everyone to let me and the officers know of any deficiencies in our performance over the year.   1. **Infrastructure**   One of my Cabinet responsibilities concerns infrastructure, and, unlike my colleagues who are concerned with children and vulnerable adults, it means that I get to work on some exciting big physical projects.  In the last year we have doubled the width of the railway bridge on the Southern Link Road between Whittington and Norton. This manoeuvre has been recognised as a difficult project well executed by the receipt of two awards for excellence already.  We have also had confirmation of the Government’s financial support for the 4th phase of the link road, so that is now steaming ahead, aiming for opening in 2021. This will involve dualling the road between the Ketch and the Powick roundabouts, including a second Carrington Bridge and the flood overflow viaduct, as well as the widened causeway for some 1.2 miles.  By the end of this calendar year, Worcestershire Parkway Rail Station should be opened and fully operational. This will mean many trains to and from London stopping there, and some initial services on the Cross Country line also stopping. We are hopeful that more of the latter will join them, giving residents of the County the chance of joining trains to and from the south west and north east without leaving Worcestershire.  In addition, we are in process of a complete renewal of Kidderminster Station, as well as starting on the improvement of the A38 through Bromsgrove.  Meanwhile, there are exciting developments at our Game Changer sites at W6, Redditch Gateway and the Malvern Hills Science Park, all related to improving the economy of the County and increasing our business rate income and the number of good jobs available for our residents.  **Cllr Ken Pollock**  **Cheltenham,**  **Gloucestershire,**  **GL50 2BZ**  **16.05.19** | | | | | |
|  |  | | |  |  | |
| **5.** | **Village Hall : Charles Shaw**  CS reported that the Village Hall is financial stable. The floors have been varnished, new chairs have been purchases and the film and bar nights are successful and are an asset to the community. There is a coffee morning to which everyone is welcome, but it is also there to encourage those who are alone to get out and meet people for chat and company. CS would like to thank all the volunteers who help run the Village Hall and events held and the users who make it such a success. | | | | | |
|  |  | | |  |  | |
| **6.** | **The Church:** **Angela Snow**  Great Witley Church and the other churches in the parish, Little Witley and Shrawley, have continued to develop their ministry as part of the 4 Rivers Group of Churches and continued to take part in joint ventures and training. The bible study classes held in Great Witley are proving to be very popular and the congregation has acquired several new members this years.  The Priest in Charge of the 4Rivers Group is the Rev. Ted Whittaker who lives in great Witley. We have recently welcomed a new Licensed Lay Minister/Reader, Christine Clarke, who will be assisting Ted in his ministry. Other ordained ministers, including Robin Walter, assist as required. There are three regular Sunday services held in the church each month and one Family Service in the Village Hall. An early morning midweek Communion Service is held once a month in the church and details are available on the church website.  At the moment I am the only church warden although we should have two. The responsibility for the maintenance of the church lies not with the Diocese of Worcester or English Heritage as many think, but with all the parishioners of Great Witley. We still struggle to find enough people to act as stewards and are very grateful to those that we do have as without them we could not keep the church open to the public. We are still welcoming thirty five thousand visitors a year to the church, despite closing during the week from November to March, so the stewards do a very important job. As do various other people beavering away in the background. There are areas still needing help including publicity, the website, fundraising and cleaning. It is still a very beautiful church but it does take a lot of looking after.  A new organist and director of music, Michael Oakley, joined us in September and he has been developing the choir. Our music programme for this year includes seven recitals and four concerts, details of which are available on our website and on the back of the Art Show leaflet.  The Church Art & Craft Exhibition organised by Anne Walter will this year be held at the end of June instead of the August Bank Holiday and there will be an additional show of amateur artists and workshops running concurrently in the Village Hall. This event continues to raise much needed funds for the churches in the parish. There will be a youth concert in the church on Sunday 30th June with the collection going to The Anna Wilkinson Mockingbird Trust.  The lighting at the east end of the church has this week been improved and LED spotlights installed. We have plans to install steps up the steep slope to the back door to make the access safer. Various minor works have been and will be undertaken but at the moment we do not have the manpower to push forward any major projects such as conservation work on the windows and the organ rebuild. The crypt display has some new computer colourized pictures of Witley Court in past centuries so do pop in and take a look.  The Tea Rooms run by Gill Edmunds continue to be very popular and are open April to October. A marble statue of Hagar and Ishmael will soon take up residence in the gardens as an added attraction. This is a copy of one that once stood at Witley Court.  The access road to the church continues to be a major problem but we live in hope of improvements. | | | | | |
| **7.** | **Quartergreen Report : Charles Shaw**  The Quartergreen committee consists of only 6 members who work extremely hard to provide various sport and leisure activities for Great Witley and the surrounding villages and this has been yet another very busy year for them. Thanks to donations from Councillor Paul Cumming and Ken Pollock we have purchased and installed CCTV to cover the changing room and court area; this has already proved useful in identifying youths misusing the changing room. New nets have been purchased for netball and basketball, new locks and keys have been purchased for the court to give greater security and the annual court maintenance takes place on the 23rd May. At £750 this is one of our largest maintenance costs.  Unfortunately the regular football coach is no longer using the court which has meant a significant drop in donations from users. Investigations are still ongoing with HMRC as to whether we are able to start charging a fee for the court but at present we are very much dependant on donations. Thanks must be given to the Parish Council for their offer of assistance with funding, it is greatly appreciated.  The committee have been busy with community events and have held a Children’s Fun Day, bonfire and firework display, children’s Christmas party, children’s Easter egg hunt and held a very successful Race Night this month. The children’s events are organised to help bring the community together and are not held for profit, indeed the Children’s Fun Day actually cost the QG £500 but was a roaring success and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who attended. Funds were raised from the bonfire event and a good profit was made from the recent Race Night.  A rose has been planted and a plaque added to the small garden area in front of the court to commemorate our late chairman David Pangbourne who was so instrumental in the work carried out on the new court, play area and exercise trail.  The plans for the coming year are to hopefully install a new extended patio area outside of the changing room to provide a safe passage from the changing room into the court area and the facilitation of more storage for equipment; plus of course various community events. | | | | | |
|  |  | | |  | | |
| **8.** | **1st Abberley and Witley Guides Report : Debbie Norkett Guide Leader**  The year started with going to the pantomime in Stourport to see Aladdin. yet again it was enjoyed by all.  In September starts the new Girl Guiding programme for all sections, from Rainbows right through to Rangers. It is a very exciting time for us all.  In the meantime we finished off the science “go for it’s” that the girls had started. which involved making slime, sherbet, popcorn, and milkshakes.  In February there was an International activity day where they did crafts from around the world and at our meetings tried on uniforms from different countries and had a go at singing taps in french.  In February the weather played a part in us missing a few weeks because of the snow.  In June the Girls went to Pets at home to find out more about looking after their pets. They had a wonderful night and held some Guinea Pigs, Rabbits, a Gecko, and a Roborovski Hamster. For camp this year it was the August bank holiday week end and we went in a mini bus to Wellies and Wristbands at Waddow Hall in Lancashire. It is a Girl Guiding Training center for the north. There were activity’s all day and bands played on the main stage all day as well. The girls enjoyed the water slide very much as well as backwoodsman survival. we also had an outdoor cinema when we watched The Greatest Showman. The only downfall was yet again it rained most of the time we were there. The only time it stopped was on Saturday. It took a long time drying the tents out once we got home.  In October we started to make Poppies for Remembrance Day. We made 56 with a cross on each one and on the cross was the name from the memorials of the men who died in the two wars from Abberley, Great Witley and Little Witley. Also the 5 airmen killed in Abberley. The poppies were then put all the way down the path as you go into St Mary’s church at Abberley.  This year saw the unit celebrate it’s 80th birthday. We had a tea party which the girls organized what we would have to eat and invited various dignitary’s from the villages.  We have tried some of the new programme activities just before Christmas.  We did the tom-bola stall again at Abberley Fayre. for our community work.  Some of the other activities and craft have been making and decorating clay pots and clay animals, friendship bracelets, outdoor cooking and a talent show.  This year saw Tina Firkins retire after nearly 40years as a leader. I would like to thank Tina for all she has done at Guides and wish her well. (But she still helps out as an occasional helper.) Sasha was awarded the County brouch and Debbie gained the mini bus permit.  I would like to thank Tina, Sasha, and Alan for all they have done for the girls and all the support I have had.  This concludes this years report. | | | | | |
| **9.** | **Great Witley CE Primary School : Karen Banford**  Dear All,  Thank you for inviting the school to submit a report for your Annual Meeting, in May. I can hardly believe another year has passed by since my previous update to you all. The school continues to thrive and increase in size, we have 175 pupils on roll currently and have seven single year classes. This means we can deliver excellent provision for each year group. We have been an academy for almost three years now. We were thrilled with our recent OFSTED report (Feb 2019), which judged the school as **‘Good’** once again. We continue to work very closely with the other schools in the Rivers CE Multi-Academy Trust.  We were joined by a newly qualified male member of staff this year which has further strengthened our team. My Assistant Head Teachers have brought enthusiasm and skills to the team which have had a positive effect on teaching and learning. We have continued to welcome student teachers to the staff team each year, this is great professional development for our staff who act as mentors and it also ensures we are up to date with new ideas from the initial teacher training courses and the University of Worcester.  The Multi-Academy Trust is building a brand new ‘Free School’ in Worcester to help the city meet the needs of a growing population; it will open this September 2019. Great Witley CE Primary School received CIF Government funding to replace the windows and doors in the hall, staff room and several small storage rooms. We were disappointed to find out that we have not been successful with our bid for funding to refurbish the main school toilets. The school continues to struggle with the Government budget cuts and has had to be very careful to ensure we can set a positive budget. Support from the Parish Council with projects is always very welcome, and we would wish to be considered if there are any future ways we can work together to maximise our effectiveness.  We continue to enjoy the support of volunteers who give up their time to support the school. We have a number of reading volunteers but can always make use of new skills and talents, perhaps outdoor skills with Forest School or as a gardener or odd job helper. Please contact the school office on (01299)896246 if you wish to volunteer in some way to support the school.  The Annual Harvest Tea party and Christmas Sing-a-long afternoons continue to be popular events within the local community. The children enjoy having such a receptive audience, please look out for an invite nearer the time. We try to coincide with the Harvest service at Great Witley Church, so pencil in the Friday prior to the Harvest Service.  Finally, if you have any further questions or queries regarding the school please feel free to contact me via the school office.  Many thanks,  Mrs Karen Banford  Head Teacher | | | | | |
| **10.** | **Neighbourhood Plan Working Party :** **Frank Chapman**  In the earlier part of last year the Working Party did not meet and did no work whilst we awaited the outcome of the Marsten Developments appeal against the refusal by MHDC to grant Planning Permission for the building of 175 house in the centre of the village. Had permission been granted the Neighbourhood plan would have been pointless and all the work would have been wasted.  Later last year and into this the figures in the draft plan for the number of houses recently built has been revised and in the light of the upcoming review of SWDP we added a paragraph of how we hope the settlement boundary might secured or revised only slightly. (I referred to this earlier).  Last Autumn Abberley PC decided to pursue a Neighbourhood Plan and I gave them a copy of our draft in the hope that we might all say the same things about preservation of the countryside and especially Abberley Hill. More recently Martley PC asked if we were prepared to work with them on a joint approach. We agreed but nothing has happened yet.  Very recently I sent a copy of our draft to then nominated officer at MHDC to seek advice as to whether our draft covered everything it should cover and what we need to do next. | | | | | |
|  |  | | |  |  | |
| **11.** | **West Mercia Police Community Support Officer :** **Vannessa Snape (not present but report handed in)**  Well I have looked at the calls made to Police for Great Witley which total  **Residential**  Attempt land rover theft  Cannabis found in jar on road  Van broken into items stolen  Residential break in items stolen  Car at Witley Court – windows smashed, mac book phone stolen  **Business**  Witley Court – asb  Tea Room broken into  Farm – diesel theft  Farm items stolen – Quad x 2  100 House development – 3 break ins items stolen, and bob cat digger  Burnt out car in field behind 100 House  Hare corsing  **What SNT – (Safer Neighbourhood Team) have done**  Carried out a number of covert operations in the ‘wee’ hours, in an attempt to disrupt/stop Rural Crime-Ongoing  Carried out a number of Property Marking Events – residential, business, farming community  Utlised NHW  Speed Enforcement  **What can be done**  Overtly mark equipment in sheds, \*padlock with an audible padlock alarm, and have sensors inside the sheds; which alert the owner to **any** unwanted presence-internet  Mark items of value in homes with Smart Water – available online direct sale OR by the Smart Water initiative. \*\*(65% of the Parish take up Smart water and receive a bulk discount purchase price).  List belongings on Immobolise.com  Use/set up Whats APP groups – group chats are instant, (add SNT)  Call 101 to report incidents  Call or text Safer Neighbourhood team on mobiles (if we are not on duty, please listen to the message)  **Safer Neighbourhood team offer:**  Basic Security advice, homes, sheds, cars  Property marking events – on offer throughout the Teme Valley  Stop that Thief – Security advice from an accredited professional technician endorsed by the NFU  If anyone wishes to use this service please call one of the team.  **To reach the team:**  Call landline to leave message for the team 01905 725780  Email: [mt.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk](mailto:mt.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk)  Mobiles: Ness Snape 07814 040307  Teresa Howells-Brown 07814 041496  PC Chris Lea 07773 050598  Call 101 to report incidents  \* Cre Mark available from Cre Products online  \*\*Smart Water Initiative – a presentation is available from Mike Simpson (West Mercia Police) in more detail  If you would like more information – contact Ness | | | | | |
| **12.** | It was agreed that FC, CS, AG and BD would be the new signatories for the joint account cheque book and AG and BD would sign and present the new Mandate to HSBC Worcester at their earliest convenience. | | | | | |
|  |  | | |  |  | |
|  |  | | |  |  | |
| **13.** | **Date of next meeting:** It was agreed by a show of hands that the next meeting will be at Great Witley Village Hall at 7.30pm on Wednesday 10th July 2019. | | | | | |
|  |  | | |  |  | |
|  |  | | |  |  | |
| The meeting was adjourned for **Public Question Time**, notes of which are appended to these minutes. | | | | | | |
|  |  | | |  |  | |
|  | ***Art in Nature – A Presentation by Christ Davies, Artist*** | | | | | |
|  |  | | |  |  | |
|  | ***We were treated to an inspirational presentation from Worcestershire born artist, Chris Davies, who's talk entitled 'Art in Nature' made us all think about how we view our surroundings in more detail and we came away with a fantastic original ink completed on the night of Witley Court, which we will frame and hang in the small meeting room of the Village Hall.  After a short slide show which Chris narrated, he took a Q&A session from the audience.  Clearly, by the many questions asked, Chris had awakened the creative juices in all of us!  He then took to the easel and demonstrated some of his architectural art, explaining his materials and how he creates perspective as he went along.  This ink drawing will now take pride of place in the room where the Parish Council meet.***  ***As Geoff Goodman was retiring from the Parish Council after 36 years, the current councillors had a collection and commissioned Chris to paint a snowy landscape of Goodman's Farm which Chris proudly presented to Geoff once Frank Chapman, Chairman, had made his speech thanking both Geoff and Judy for all that they have done for the Parish over the many years.*** | | | | | |
| The meeting closed at 10.30pm | | | | | | |
|  |  | | |  |  | |
|  |  | | |  |  | |
|  |  | | |  |  | |
|  |  | | |  |  | |
|  |  | | |  |  | |
| Signed …………………………………….. Date …………………………………….. | | | | | | |
|  |  | | |  |  | |
|  | | Chairman | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Notes of Public Question Time** | | | |
|  |  |  |  |
| Several Members of the public were in attendance and raised the following concerns during Public Question Time: | | | |
|  |  | 1. | It was noted that those present were very happy with the clear presentation of the reports. |
|  |  | 2. | FC reported that there had been some concerns about the procedure with no votes being necessary for this District elections this May. He wrote to the voting officer outlining the issues and problems which had been highlighted and their response that in future any no vote would be better published. |