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| **The Minutes of the Meeting of the Great Witley and Hillhampton Parish Council**  |
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| **Held at the Great Witley Village Hall on 13th March 2020** |
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| **Present: Chairman**, Cllr F Chapman (FC). |
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| **In Attendance:** Clerk, J Evans, Cllrs C Shaw (CS), C Dermietzel (CD), A Goodman (AG), N Drew (ND), C Jones (CJ) and B Dallow (BD),  |

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| **1.** | **Apologies:** A Symonds (AS), P Trow (PT) and C.Cllr K Pollock (KP) and D.Cllr P Cumming (PC). |
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| **2.** | **Declarations of Interest:** None. |
| **3.** | **To consider any Application for a dispensation:** None. |
| **4.** | **Minutes:** The Minutes were approved and signed. |
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| **5.** | **Progress reports:** 1. AG said it would make a huge difference if Mr Newings hedge was cut. **ACTION:** The Clerk will write to WCC to say they are not happy with their response that they think the hedge is fine. Also, **ACTION:** The Clerk will report the blocked drain at Fountain Court which has collapsed. ND reported that the flood at Hillhampton Road was due to a watermain leak. Regarding the removal of the recycling bins the Clerk has contacted Tim Lewis at MHDC for legal advice on getting them taken away as deadline has passed.
2. Quartergreen: CS reported that the Parish Council provide dog waste bags and bins and that most people comply with the pickup your dog waste policy. However, as there are some people who do not the situation is getting out of hand. On a recent clean up it was found that up to 50/60 people had not picked up after their dog had fouled. **ACTION:** CS said that unfortunately this means that a sign is going to be erected to say that if this continues the area will be closed to dogs. On another issue, CS will send an email asking for volunteers for a working party on Saturday 14th March between 10-12 to strim and tidy up the footpath.
3. We have received an email saying that the Lengthsman is increasing his hourly rate from £12 to £14 per hour. This was discussed. ND queried whether this was a fair increase as it is being forced upon us, but the Parish Council confirmed that our Lengthsman is doing a very good job and his costs are within the Lengthsman’s Scheme which reimburses the Parish Council. **ACTION:** The Clerk will confirm the Parish Council is happy with this increase.
4. FC confirmed that the NPWP would be meeting within a couple of weeks and read out his amendments to the draft plan so far.
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| **6.** | **CALC:** Forthcoming training dates and events were circulated prior to this meeting. |
| **7.** | **District and County Councillors’ Reports:** In the absence of both Councillors their submitted reports were read out and are attached to these Minutes:[..\REPORTS\P Cumming report 200311.docx](../REPORTS/P%20Cumming%20report%20200311.docx)[..\REPORTS\K Pollock 1.11.03.20 report.docx](../REPORTS/K%20Pollock%201.11.03.20%20report.docx)***AG left the meeting at 21:00*** |
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| **8.** | **Planning:** None received. |
| **9.** | **Finance:**1. Paid invoices and remittances were circulated and approved prior to this meeting.
2. Bank reconciliation was circulated and approved prior to this meeting.
3. Budget comparison was circulated and approved prior to this meeting.
4. Clerks appraisal will be discussed at the next meeting.
5. 2019/20 Audit: The new Code of Conduct was discussed and adopted by a unanimous show of hands. The Risk Assessment was discussed and is in the process of being updated. Identified trees which pose a concern are being inspected this month and removed with suitable replacements being organised. **ACTION:** CJ will contact Steve Butler to inspect the trees and remove as necessary. FC appointed BD and CJ to agree on a choice of replacement tree.
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| **10.** | **Correspondence for Information:** * BD said that Mill Orchards may consider adopting solar panels and suggested that the Village Hall could make use of them too as well as the School. Also, any new developments should also use solar panels and that this could be included on the SWDP.
* The Nora Parsons request was discussed and supported.
* Bright Ideas Fund: BD suggested that this may be considered to aid funding a parish pub at The Hundred House if the current development fails to run the required bar as a success. We need to think of someone to run a parish pub and the Clerk suggested Tim Lawson, formerly of The Bridge and Baiting House who is currently temporarily running the Red Lion at Clifton on Teme. FC said if we ran a community pub, we would have to look into whether or not we could sublet. **ACTION:** ND will approach some people, such as Tim, to see if they would be interested should the need arise. They will be directed to speak to FC. On the subject of The Hundred House, FC queried the location of the milestone? He will attend the site and ask.
* Spring Clean: This initiative was discussed, and it was agreed to support. A suitable date was decided on as 28th March 2020 from 10am at the Village Hall.
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| **11.** | **Clerk’s report on Urgent Decisions made under delegation since the last meeting:** None. |
| **12.** | **Councillors’ reports and items for future agenda:*** At a recent Neighbourhood Watch event evening covering the police and rural crime rates a push for residents to use Smart Water was made. If 75% of households take up the use of SW, then a sign would be erected to deter criminals. CJ also suggested households could advertise with a sticker that they use SW. It is important if you use SW you register with them so any goods recovered can be traced back to their owners. It is an effective system. **ACTION:** CJ will present on this issue at the Annual Parish Meeting and publish the benefits of using SW on Nextdoor. **ACTION:** FC will also publish a report on this in the Parish Magazine.
* VE celebrations: CS confirmed that the Village Hall will commemorate this event with an appropriate film.
* A number of break-ins have occurred recently, namely at Owens top yard where cameras are installed.
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| **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 13th May 2020. |
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| The meeting was adjourned for **Public Question Time**, notes of which are appended to these minutes. |
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| The meeting closed at 22:00 |
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| Signed …………………………………….. Date …………………………………….. |
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|  | Chairman |

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| **Notes of Public Question Time**  |
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| 10 Members of the public were in attendance and raised the following concerns during Public Question Time: |
|  |  | 1. | Reverend Ted’s Minister, Christine, spoke as a representative of the Church regarding Christian Aid Week, 10-17 May. She reported that on 10th May there was a ‘Big Brekkie’ event at the Village Hall and an Evensong at Lindridge. She wondered if the Parish Council would work with the Church and other prospective groups to help raise money which would go to Kenya and Christian Aid? The help that was required was from food donations, money donations and envelope collections arranged as well as ‘on the day’ help.FC suggested that individuals may wish to volunteer themselves. However, the Parish Council should not adopt this as with other requests as if we help one organisation, we will have to help all. The Parish Council as a whole agreed with this decision. BD said the plea could be advertised on Nextdoor.FC offered to donate towards the ‘Big Brekkie’ on 10th May and said that Robin may be happy to help too. He also pointed out that other Parish Council’s, as an organisation, may not be happy to help for the same reasons. |
|  |  | 2. | Karen Bennett provided a signed petition regarding the concerns over the continuing speeding traffic through Great Witley.FC said that John Campion of the Police and Crime Commission has launched the Rural Road Safety Strategy as seen by the Parish Council in the West Mercia Newsletters. FC reported that over a number of years the Parish Council has tried different avenues for traffic calming measures but keep hitting “brick walls”. He then read out a letter he had drafted to the current Police and Crime Commissioner, David Jamieson, which again highlights our concerns and the Parish Council approved the letter. **ACTION:** The Clerk will send this letter with a copy of the petition.ND thought FC’s letter was a “first class response” and confirmed that we had worked for years trying to reduce speed limits and queried whether the erection of barriers might be the answer.FC agreed, suggesting a hoop or bar construction from the corner with The Hundred House to the School to keep pedestrians safe.BD pointed out that it is also very narrow opposite the Old Chapel up to Glendower Way. CD confirmed it is too narrow. CJ reported that the verge also needs some attention. FC has observed how fast the traffic travels from The Hundred House to the Post Office where it is very narrow.ND noted that increased car parking for the School meant that cars were parking at the Chapel, on verges and other areas causing problems. As an employee should the School be responsible for where people attending the School park? CD responded that schools in cities do not have car parks.A comment from the public audience said that in Astley they operated a collection tactic to ease traffic parking problems.FC said the school buses also cause congestion problems. The Chantry school bus does not go into the car park but parks on the road. Pre-school and the surgery all use the Village Hall car park for staff as well as visitors. The car park is not adequate for the number of cars needing to use it. If the roads were safer then more people would walk to these destinations rather than getting in the car to not travel far.BD asked whether a staggered collection of school children could be implemented? CD pointed out that they are lucky there is a car park as not all employers provide a car park.CS said the Head of the School had been approached to try phasing drop off and collection times but had not heard if this had been implemented? Parents requiring collecting their children at 3.10pm are parking as early as 2pm which has the knock-on effect that pre-school parents have nowhere to park. Some of the reasons suggested as to why parents park so early is because they cannot subsequently park later and that they use this time to socialise.It was pointed out by a parent that there is a policy that you must watch your young children enter the school. Other methods have been tried but the volume of cars have not made them viable.FC asked whether we should mark out where people are meant to park but the other councillors did not think this would work as the markings would be ignored. FC said that as the Parish Council own the car park, we are within our rights to put a barrier up if people abuse this facility.BD wondered whether the School could allow buses to use the school drive instead of the car park or road adopting a drive on drive off one-way flow approach.Apparently, this has been tried but was dismissed.BD suggested another option is to car share. FC said a cut-through from The Glebe should have been put into place when the housing development was completed.CJ said that the Parish Council have asked for more traffic speed signs from the SRP and County Council, but they have not appeared.Perhaps the speed limit should be reduced to 20mph by the School and Post Office as has been done in Cleobury Mortimer.AG said perhaps the camera could be positioned somewhere else. CJ pointed out that the SRP have a criterion for positioning the cameras so they will not be changed.FC said that the size of the lorries travelling through the village also makes the walk for pedestrians uncomfortable. |
|  |  | 3. | Structons Heath: Despite recent requests, large farm vehicles are still using this lane. ND suggested we write to Chris Evans at Astley Farm requesting his farm vehicles stop at the bridle way. FC will give this some consideration to look at the legal rights of way. ND also suggested that the NFU could be contacted for advice, and BD suggested the Countryside Commission may help. |

**District Councillor, Paul Cumming’s Report**

**11th March 2020**

MHDC is to commence a consultation on upgrading its local heritage list. This would allow any person or organisation in the District to nominate “heritage assets that are valued as distinctive elements of the local historic environment”. Inclusion would mean that in any decisions on planning applications, the impact of the development on assets included would have to be taken into account.

The Council has agreed to allocate £100,000 towards flood relief, in addition to the money provided by the Government. This will take the form of additional Council and Business rate relief and other measures identified as being useful.

The latest Council Tax bills included tips from MHDC for saving the planet and money. First was the suggestion that residents should “eat more fruit and veg and reduce the amount of meat and dairy in your diet”. Whilst on a global basis there is a point in this , it is surprising in our rural area that the Council should encourage us to eat less of some locally grown products without the warning that some of the fruit and veg in supermarkets is  flown in from all over the world. Last week without any real effort I observed sources from Mexico, South Africa, Guatemala, India , Kenya and Egypt and meat brought from France, Italy and Spain.  A suggestion to eat local food products would have made much more sense.

**GREAT WITLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**11.03.20**

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT**

1. **Flooding**

Over the last three weeks, Tenbury has been at the centre of a lot of national news coverage of the flooding. Tenbury suffered worse flooding than in 2007 and a number of the flood defenders supplied by MHDC after that event proved ineffective. This seems to have been because the rubber or plastic seals have deteriorated over time or that the water overflowed the barriers.

During a number of visits to Tenbury, I have been impressed by the fortitude and resilience shown by residents and retailers alike. There has been an admirable community spirit among the townspeople, despite high financial losses and huge inconvenience.

Tenbury Town Council itself has experienced flooding of the Pump Rooms, and needed to meet in the High School on Monday. The High School should be praised for running an evacuation centre at the height of the flooding, with generous support from Tesco’s and the Coop that I know of. That is not, I am sure, an exhaustive list.

You may be aware that the A451 was closed for a time at the Dick Brook. The blockage there only lasted a short time, although one lane was closed for longer, partly due to flood debris and perhaps also due to an abandoned car.

WCC set up a flooding hub in Tenbury library for residents and businesses to register, in order to receive money from central government, the District Council and the County Council. At County, we have allocated £250,000 for flood alleviation, to be directed at those who have suffered loss.

You may recall that the Environment Agency plan to protect Tenbury town would then have cost about £5 million and was judged not to be cost effective. It may be that new calculations in the light of the recent events will see that decision revised.

Your local MP, Harriett Baldwin, has been very vocal on the matter. Since 2007, around six different schemes for flood protection have been implemented with her active support. Only Severn Stoke and Tenbury remain untouched. In the former case there are local problems, but for Tenbury, the difficulty is devising an effective scheme at a sensible cost.

I would be pleased to hear of any local experiences that may help us avoid further problems in the future.

2. **County Matters**

You will all have heard that the new Worcestershire Parkway station was opened on Sunday, the 23rd of February. This is the first such station to open in the county for 100 years, and has been generally welcomed. There are 500 car parking spaces, and there already seemed to be about 250 cars there when I visited just after it opened.

It is disappointing to read the article in last Thursday’s Worcester News detailing problems experienced by a gentleman with limited vision. The designers took advice from pupils at the local blind school as to how to cater for those with poor eyesight. I hope any deficiencies can be overcome.

Note there are also secure cycle racks, spaces for EVs to charge and plenty of disabled spaces. The infrequent X50 bus service calls at the station, and we are negotiating for more bus services as well.

Note you can now catch trains running between Nottingham and Cardiff, as well as the London services. We are working hard to improve the speed and frequency of the London service, which will require further dualling of the line, in particular between Pershore and Evesham.

You may expect that there will be continued congestion along the Southern Link Road, leading to Carrington Bridge. In case you have heard to the contrary, the work on dualling that section between the Ketch and Powick roundabouts has not exacerbated the flooding that always occurs in that area where the Teme meets the Severn.

Just over two weeks ago, we welcomed Matt Warman, MP, Minister of State in DCMS, to Worcester for him to confirm the allocation of £3.3 million to Worcestershire to run a two year experiment with Shropshire on the efficacy of 5G to improve connectivity in rural areas. This will be based in Tenbury, given its rural nature and the topographical features in the area.

The intention is to see how much mobile coverage can be improved and also remote monitoring of those in need of care from social services. The idea of assistive technology is that the social workers can monitor activity remotely, without the use of cameras, to check that those in need of assistance are behaving normally. This may mean that routine visits can be scheduled more efficiently, prioritising those most obviously in need of help, rather than completing a round of visits where many may prove unnecessary.

1. **Local matters**

You may be aware that early next month there will be extensive work on the A443 between Great Witley and Newnham Bridge. A diversion will be signposted, taking vehicles into Stourport and thence to the A456 to reach Newnham Bridge.

Please be aware that all such diversions have to cater for the largest HGVs and it may be that local traffic will be able to use more minor roads to reach the desired destinations. I have not been able as yet to establish how much of the road will be closed at any one time, so please allow a little extra time to find your way to and from Tenbury during this period.

**Cllr Ken Pollock**

**Cheltenham,**

**Gloucestershire,**

**GL50 2BZ**

**11.03.20**