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| **The Minutes of the Meeting of the Great Witley and Hillhampton Parish Council** |
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| **Held via Zoom on 8th July 2020 at 7.30pm** |
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| **Present: Chairman**, Cllr F Chapman (FC). |
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| **In Attendance:** Clerk, J Evans, Cllrs C Dermietzel (CD), A Goodman (AG), N Drew (ND), C Jones (CJ), B Dallow (BD), A Symonds (AS),P Trow (PT) and C.Cllr K Pollock (KP) and D.Cllr P Cumming (PC). |

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| **1.** | **Apologies:** Cllr C Shaw (CS), Could not access the meeting and sent apologies via a telephone message received at 8.51pm on 08/07/20. | | | | | |
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| **2.** | **Declarations of Interest:** None. | | | | | |
| **3.** | **To consider any Application for a dispensation:** None. | | | | | |
| **4.** | **Minutes:** Approved and signed for 11/03/20 | | | | | |
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| **5.** | **Progress reports: FC – Chairman:**   1. ***ACTION:*** A letter will be sent to Mr Newings informing him that WCC has given us the go ahead by telephone to cut his hedge back. The Parish Council will invoice Mr Newings on this occasion but in future his hedge will be added to the list of hedges cut by WCC. (Clerk). 2. The streetlights at Turnpike Close have been removed. FC thanked PC for investigating the planning consents with MHDC. FC also highlighted that the trees on the Stourport Road need cutting regularly and will send a letter to Claire Cooper, Project Manager for this development: FC to ***ACTION***. 3. FC reported he had sent a letter to the developers of the 100 House regarding restoring the historically important milestone but had received no reply. He will pursue this. 4. It was highlighted that the playground and tennis court can now be opened. PT said that she is still receiving requests from parishioners for the tennis court to be reopened, as are Mike and Sarah from the Post Office. ***ACTION:*** FC asked PT to email CS regarding this issue in his absence from the meeting. 5. FC has now received a reply from John Campion, PCC. Localised road safety projects are mentioned and FC wonders if he could use his funds to widen the footpath. ***ACTION:*** FC will investigate this and pursue with Mr Campion. 6. The Parish Council have been informed by Dave Jew, Senior Traffic Engineer of Network Control, WCC, that the speed limits in the parish will remain unchanged. 7. We received correspondence from the Margaret Westwood Memorial Trust Charity highlighting how they assist young people. Their link has been added to our websites and local groups including the Scouts, Pre-School and Primary School as well as The Chantry have been sent their information.   **CS - Lengthsman:**   1. Nothing new to report. Chris Bunn continues to do a particularly good job as Lengthsman. FC queried whether the Lengthsman would be able to cut the grass verges, but CJ said that he can strim where safe, but the verges are too dangerous and that is why the Council do it.   **FC – Neighbourhood Plan:**   1. FC said he had received poor indications from the planners that his re-drafts would be accepted. They do not like the wording as it is not ‘planners speak’. They suggested using a professional body to make the wording acceptable to them. This would probably cost around £10,000 but there are grants available to claim back this cost. PT and CD agreed it would make it more credible and waste less time redrafting and were therefore in support of using a professional. AS wanted clarification on what exactly were the problems with our draft, content, or style? FC thinks it is the style and that the wording used is not ‘planner speak’. FC asked the Parish Council to email their thoughts for him to consider. BD recommended Charles Hayman as someone who may be used to do the redraft. | | | | | |
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| **6.** | **CALC:** Nothing to report. | | | | | |
| **7.** | **District and County Councillors’ Reports:**  **Paul Cummings:** PC reiterated that the streetlights at Turnpike Close have been removed and that on this occasion, public pressure won. MHDC has acquired 45 acres of land at Hallow The land at Hallow was on sale for 9 months at £4,500 an acre. The Council, however, were under the impression that it was worth £7,000 per acre and they were buying it extremely cheaply. They were not aware that it had been previously marketed at the £4,500 and failed to sell. As it is no longer to be used for farming, the question is whether they have paid the right price for nature reserve purposes.  They were worried they had overspent on this land as it was designated for agriculture use but when AG looked at the figures and that the total cost was £180,000, he considered the value to be correct.  PC emailed the Parish Council regarding a redundant water supply cover at Abberley Hall School. The cap keeps being moved and there is at least a dangerous 10ft drop below. ***ACTION:*** BD will provide a map reference for PC who will contact Abberley Parish Council. PC questioned whether Earth Heritage own it. The landowner will be responsible for this cap. ***ACTION:*** PC will contact Amanda Smith at MHDC regarding this.  **Ken Pollock:** Summary – Regarding the speeding concerns along the A443, the siding out will be completed this month. ***ACTION:*** FC will make enquiries as to whether siding out works? CJ said that although the A443 Action Group have been working tirelessly to action traffic calming measures successfully over several years, we are still getting complaints that we are not doing enough. If residents want to form their own independent group to work towards calming the traffic through the parish, and indeed all the local parishes who belong to the A443 Action Group, then they should go ahead. As none of these residents attend our meetings or appear to read the Minutes then the Parish Council agreed unanimously that an independent group would be a welcome idea. KP suggested contacting the relevant landowners to see if they would be willing to sell a small portion of land to enable for footway widening. ***ACTION:*** FC will draft a letter outlining that more space is required and to ask if they are willing to sell.  [..\REPORTS\K Pollock 08.07.20 report.docx](../REPORTS/K%20Pollock%2008.07.20%20report.docx) | | | | | |
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| **8.** | **Planning:**  Nothing to report. | | | | | |
| **9.** | **Finance:** All invoice and remittances were circulated and approved before the meeting along with the Bank Reconciliation and Budget Comparison. The Clerk reported that Zurich had made the temporary claim for mower repairs authorised and will plan to settle TAG’s invoice of £1,354.66 (the Parish Council will have to pay a £100 excess). The Clerk also reported that the internal audit had gone well and that it was suggested that all pages of Minutes are signed for security reasons. All regulatory documents were published on the websites. | | | | | |
| **10.** | **Correspondence for Information:** See above point 5.7. | | | | | |
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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:**   1. AG said that The Old Bakery have put up a fence where the gabion has been taken down. The top level of gabion must be removed by order of MHDC. They have consent for 2 levels and then grading. They only wanted to remove a small section, but PC refused this and so the whole top of the gabion is being removed. 2. We were also reminded that their neighbour had taken out trees without permission. PC said they applied for retrospective permission and this was granted and by taking them out they had caused a water overflow problem on the Bromyard Road. They were told to put in an improved drainage system. 3. BD reported that the manhole cover at Rose Cottage is still oozing water. ***ACTION:*** The Clerk will report this as well as the missing gauge on the flood measure post on the link road B4197. | | | | | |
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| **13.** | **Date of next meeting:** It was agreed by a show of hands that the next meeting will be via Zoom at 7.30pm on Wednesday 9th September 2020. | | | | | |
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| The meeting was adjourned for **Public Question Time**, notes of which are appended to these minutes. No members of the public had requested to join the meeting. | | | | | | |
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| The meeting closed at 8.30pm | | | | | | |
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| Signed …………………………………….. Date …………………………………….. | | | | | | |
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|  | | Chairman | | | |

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| **Notes of Public Question Time** | | | |
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| 0 Members of the public were in attendance and raised the following concerns during Public Question Time: | | | |
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**GREAT WITLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**08.07.20**

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT**

1. **County Matters**

We must hope that the impact of the coronavirus outbreak is diminishing and that we may soon be able to resume what me might refer to as normal life. The County has suffered just over 500 deaths from Covid 19, with around 57% of them in hospitals. The most recent figures I have to hand show there are 15 confirmed cases in our acute hospitals and just one in intensive care. There had been no deaths in hospitals in the previous 3 days.

We have stood down our reserve provision, to make it unnecessary for patients discharged from hospital to go to a care home, with the risk of infecting other relatively weak residents. This arrangement might have been usefully duplicated around the country, with a little more understanding from hospitals and county councils, and a stronger resistance from care homes to acting against their better judgement. Two thirds of the county’s care homes have had no cases of Covid-19 among their staff and residents.

Meanwhile, we are trying to revive the local economy with help from a number of government schemes to get money in grants or loans to local businesses. Details can be found on the Worcestershire Business Central website. The County’s GDP has fallen by 20.4% and 75,700 workers are currently on furlough. Meanwhile, traffic has risen to about 77% of normal pre-Covid levels.

At this time, it is unfortunate that for many people the solution to reduced use of public transport in London has meant strong pressure to assist cycling and walking in Worcestershire. So far, we have not seen the sort of temporary measures suggested as worthy of implementation. Our established policies, set out in LTP4, give us plenty of schemes to follow, where the funds allow.

I am sure Great Witley residents will appreciate the problem of adding cycle lanes to the A443 and A451, to make cycling in the village safer. The same problem applies on many of our county’s roads.

One example of the county’s aspirations in active travel is under consultation just now. We are asking for views on a new pedestrian and cycling bridge at Kepax, mirroring the Diglis bridge that has proved so popular. It would run from the Kepax site on the west bank to Gheluvelt Park in the east, and provide a useful connection for recreation and commerce for all who wish to walk or cycle across the Severn, without needing to go into town to the Sabrina bridge.

1. **Local Matters**

The county has been keen to follow the government’s guidance on returning pupils to schools. Until recently this has been confined to vulnerable children and those of key workers. We are grateful for all the efforts by teachers attending schools and those who have contributed to providing education for children at home.

At present there are many schools who would not be able to accept all pupils back to school in September, as is planned, unless there is a relaxing of the social distancing rules. Reducing the normal separation to 1 metre as from last Saturday is a help, and one must hope that in two months’ time, even that can be eliminated.

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I am very conscious of the impact on businesses of all types, and of family incomes, of the need for one or other of the parents to be away from work, looking after their children. Nothing could be more important, but the economy will be greatly boosted when all that want to work are back doing their normal jobs.

Touring Tenbury last Friday, it was encouraging to see so many businesses open again, and I hope all residents will seek to follow the idea of “shop locally”, to help these relatively small enterprises. That said, it was encouraging also to see the Tesco’s car park nearly full, indicating that many shoppers are staying within Tenbury, rather than needing to go to neighbouring towns for their regular shopping.

In the meantime, it is worth observing that our highways personnel have been able to take advantage of the much lower number of vehicles on the road to complete a lot of routine maintenance, pothole filling and surface dressing, so that our roads are in a better condition facing the summer.

You will be aware of the overnight work, patching and surface dressing on the A443 between Great Witley and Eardiston. The road closures were obviously inconvenient for a while, but the end result is clearly beneficial.

Similarly, we are spending £8 million on repairing and restoring footways, the footpaths that run alongside the carriageway. At present there are 7 crews working on this, but the number will increase to 10 this month. Note, this does not excuse the trip hazard in Powick, highlighted in the Worcester News last week, but it does indicate that the County Council is not oblivious to this problem, which we hope will be dealt with quickly.

I would be naïve to think that all such problems are behind us, and I would be grateful if you could let me know of any such matters that need our attention.

1. **Speeding in Great Witley**

The question of speeding in the village has occupied a lot of time for councillors and residents recently. It would be fair to say there have been no startling new ideas on how to deal with the problem and there is some disagreement as to the extent of the problem itself.

There are two players with the powers to act in this matter, the police and the County Council. The police have been sensitive to the needs of the village, deploying camera vans and motorcycles on A451 and the A443 at various times. These catch some motorists and act as a deterrence to others.

The County Council can measure speeds with rubber strips on the road and the most recent results seem to indicate the problem is more apparent than real. More such measurements in slightly different places will be carried out in the near future.

Deployment of fixed cameras taking photographs as evidence for prosecution needs a certain level of accidents, speeding and the like to trigger action. So far, Great Witley falls below that threshold.

There remains the question of widening the pavements, or footways, as they are termed to distinguish them from carriageways (for vehicles) or footpaths (across open countryside). The county highways personnel will carry out this “siding out” on the 20th an 21st of this month. It is to be hoped that in many places this will result in a sufficiently wide strip of tarmac to avoid the sort of accident that befell a local resident walking between Fountain Court and Glendower Way recently.

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Regrettably, it may be that there is insufficient room in places for this operation to give a sufficiently wide footway. That would mean the paths remain dangerous for pedestrians being passed by the sort of HGVs frequently found on the road.

If this proves true, the next step would be to seek to purchase some land from the residents on those stretches of road, so that the path could be widened, and the hedges moved back away from the road. This would be expensive and maybe unpopular with some, or all, of those residents. It may be that the Parish Council would like to sound out those residents to gauge reaction to such a scheme.

There is a further possibility that could also be deployed on the A443 for motorists approaching from Holt. We are familiar with the yellow lines across the carriageway on the A449, when approaching the Claines roundabout from J6 of the M5. These stand proud of the tarmac and are painted at shortening intervals. They thus provide an audible and visual warning to slow down.

It may be that such a scheme could be deployed to the east, as a further warning to motorists to slow down before entering the village.

I hope this rehearsal of the options concerned with speeding will help understanding, and I will be keen to hear of any reaction to these comments.

**Cllr Ken Pollock**

**Cheltenham,**

**Gloucestershire,**

**GL50 2BZ**

**08.07.20**