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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 11th November 2020 held via Zoom** |
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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), 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:** Received during the meeting by N Drew (ND). Cllr A Goodman was absent with no apologies received. | | | | | |
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| **2.** | **Declarations of Interest:** None. | | | | | |
| **3.** | **To consider any Application for a dispensation:** None. | | | | | |
| **4.** | **Minutes:** Approved and will be signed in due course when COVID guidelines allow. | | | | | |
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| **5.** | **Progress reports:**   1. **HSBC:** Despite several lengthy attempts to contact the bank for their requested Review, changing mandate forms and asking for confirmation that the account can now be operated fully, we are still being ignored. The time has now come to contact HSBC Press Office to highlight the catalogue of errors on the Bank’s behalf. BD has approached Stourport’s TSB branch who are happy to open a new account for us but HSBC will not release our funds as they still contest our signatories despite the new forms being completed and sent in over 3 weeks ago. We are in a ‘Catch 22’ situation. The Clerks suggested FC and our ex-chairman, Geoff Goodman who is still a signatory according to the Bank, attend the Worcester branch of HSBC to try and sort this issue but FC advised the Clerk that Worcester HSBC no longer has either a branch manager or Business Account Advisor there. ***ACTION:*** FC will contact HSBC’s Press Office.   **HMRC VAT claim query:** FC has completed another live claim query form following up from our unanswered query in 2018. However, it still seems clear revisiting correspondence from when the VAT Claim was made that no charges can be made for use of the outdoor leisure facilities, only voluntary donations the value of which are at the behest of the user. ***ACTION:*** FC will produce a notice to this effect for the Post Office, Parish Magazine and Nextdoor platform. It will also be published on the website. CS wanted to make it clear that the Quartergreen were not looking to charge for use of the facilities but encouraged to donate. There is no intention to charge. FC confirmed that a donation would be acceptable. CS said that Mike at the Post Office is suggesting people donate £4 for 90 minutes use and for larger groups, like football groups, a donation of £15 be made. AS’s experience is that when you go to book Mike asks for a £4 donation which is, therefore, a de-facto charge. PT has spoken with Mike and Sarah who said they have received no complaints. However, FC and AS have received several complaints. PC found advice online during this discussion which confirmed the facilities cannot be charged for. FC will provide a written notice outlining the voluntary donations. PT said that a written notice will not be necessary as Mike can verbally explain the situation as can his staff. FC said when sub staff take over holiday leave, they will not have the local knowledge and therefore a written notice will help explain how bookings work. CD stressed that as the Parish Council claimed back the VAT, we must do the correct thing by not suggesting a monetary donation charge. FC reiterated that it cannot be run as a business. AS again suggested that the Parish Council could give the Quartergreen £1,000 for maintenance of the facilities if they need funds. This offer was supported by CD. CS said the Quartergreen do have sufficient funds to cover maintenance cost at present and did not want to impose on the Parish Council at this time. BD said the offer should remain for future needs if another pandemic hits when fund raising might not be as easy.  **100 House:** Correspondence received from Daniel Griffiths suggested that the project had passed the halfway point. There are 17 dwellings but only 2 have been sold. 4 have been reserved which leaves 11 still available. PC advised that the project had not yet reached the trigger point where the bar needs to be kitted out. A further 9 dwellings need to be occupied first. The bar is scheduled to open next year under normal opening hours. The licence will be up for sale and the function room will be available for hire. Connells have also confirmed it will be a Freehouse. BD is concerned that although they have potential tenants for the bar, the rent rates will make if unviable, and they might apply for Change of Use after 12/18 months. FC said he believed they must ‘make a go’ of the bar first, before a Change of Use application could be made. PC confirmed that in order to make this application they would have to try and sell the bar otherwise Change of Use would not be granted. BD asked if there was access to their proposed plan for the new tenant/landlord? FC reported that Connells advised that the developer already has several pubs and hotels around the country. We must be patient as they will make their decision when they are able to.  **Recycling Bins:** FC has spoken with local resident Simon Dix, who made complaints about the lack of facilities. He clarified the situation and as a result Mr Dix now has a larger recycling bin. FC hopes this has rectified the situation.  **Precept for 2021:** It was decided that as we have a healthy bank account and in these times of the Coronavirus Pandemic, the Precept for 2021 will remain the same as this financial year, £10,000.   1. **Village Hall and Quartergreen:** CS confirmed that due to the current second lockdown the village hall has closed. Pre-school and toddler groups continue to operate within the current Government Guidelines. No dog waste wardens have been appointed yet, but they will be in the future. At present the autumnal leaf fall is making inspection of the ground difficult. 2. **Lengthsman and Footpaths:** CJ reported that there are no problems here. CS referred to the circulated report by CCllr K Pollock in which it says that the Government are encouraging people to walk again and use footpaths. However, these footpaths are in a shocking state. Maintenance is required especially during the summer months. PT said that the pavement at Hillhampton towards Great Witley is extremely dangerous to use and is the only way to walk to the Post Office. At points pedestrians and those with prams must step into the extremely fast oncoming traffic on the A443. FC highlighted that the pavement here is too narrow. It needs constant cutting back. CD said that the problem is that the soil is encroaching on the pavement. CJ said it is a major job to chop back and is too dangerous for the Lengthsman. PT said that if the Government is encouraging this then these footpaths and pavements need to be made safe. This pavement was last sided out several years ago. CS pointed out that in areas of the Worcestershire Way nettles are waist high. ***ACTION:*** FC will write a letter regarding the state of the footpaths to the council. BD reported that footpath signs and stiles have been neglected for years. That is no invitation to walk. ***ACTION:*** BD will quote for galvanised stiles to improve access for all. 3. **Neighbourhood Plan Working Party:** FC has nothing to report here. Due to the pandemic all dates have been pushed back by 6-8 months. MHDC and WCC have contested the Governments proposals to change the way in which housing need is to be calculated. PC is opposed to these plans because of how it affects our area. The figures for housing needs vary making them very contradictory. They are not considering local needs. 4. **Staffing Committee:** ***ACTION:*** AS and CD will discuss the Clerk’s appraisal and report back. | | | | | |
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| **6.** | **CALC:** All dates and updates have been circulated prior to this meeting. | | | | | |
| **7.** | **District and County Councillors’ Reports:**   1. **PC:** During this second lockdown the tips are staying open. Regarding 5 Stourport Road, he understands that the environmental services department are now involved but the problem has still not been resolved. PC is still pushing for a solution. PC’s report is attached to these Minutes. [..\REPORTS\District Councillor November 2020.pdf](../REPORTS/District%20Councillor%20November%202020.pdf) 2. **KP:**  Unfortunately, due to the length of the meeting, KP could no longer attend and left but his report is attached to these Minutes. [..\REPORTS\K Pollock 6.11.11.20 report.docx](../REPORTS/K%20Pollock%206.11.11.20%20report.docx) | | | | | |
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| **8.** | **Planning:** Nothing to consider. | | | | | |
| **9.** | **Finance:** All finance matters were circulated prior to the meeting. The Clerk had received the latest Bank Statement and informed the Parish Council that the current balance is £23,197.01. | | | | | |
| **10.** | **Correspondence for Information:**   * **Broadband Fund Enquiry –** CS said we should show our interest as 200+ names are required. * **Emergency Measures –** BD thinks we should adopt a plan to cover emergencies such as fire, flood, RTA, chemical spillages, power cuts and snowfall. ***ACTION:*** BD will investigate this and provide suitable measures. He wondered if a list of people at risk, in The Glebe for instance, could be made. Perhaps 4x4 owners or famers might volunteer to help when snow cuts off access. PT said you must be careful here, as if there is an accident insurance does not cover this type of voluntary help. | | | | | |
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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:** BD had a meeting with Hannah Davies of Highways with Alan Pain attending. BD wishes to extend his thanks for Mr Pain giving his time to highlight to Mrs Davies that an agricultural vehicle needs to extend at least 10 feet out of the junction from A451 Stourport Road in Redmarley before they have safe visibility. Mrs Davies appreciated the dangers here and there is hope that WCC will rethink the speed limit here. | | | | | |
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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 January 2021. | | | | | |
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| The meeting was adjourned for **Public Question Time**, notes of which are appended to these minutes. **THERE WERE NO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE.** | | | | | | |
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| The meeting closed at 21.08. | | | | | | |
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| District Councillor’s Report November 2020  The area consisting of the Wards of Woodbury, Baldwin, Hallow and Martley is currently one of the worst in Malvern Hills for COVID infections with a figure of 192.8 per 100,000 for the week to 4th November (16 cases) as against 118 for the whole District.  I have enquired if any figures are available on a ward by ward basis so that we can be aware of more specific areas , but have been told that this is only provided if there is a specific outbreak rather than general community transmission. It therefore seems that we can only stress the need to follow the general guidelines.  So far as the current lockdown is concerned the refuse amenity sites are remaining open which should remove some of the problems experienced in April and beyond.    Although we have one planning department it is noticeable that Malvern Hills has a far greater percentage of planning enforcement cases where it is not considered expedient to take any action as compared to Wychavon. The argument is that each case is considered on its merits, but I remain unconvinced by this.  It is noticeable that cases suddenly disappear from the outstanding list, without any response and it is quite a challenge to get timely information.  The Council is shortly due to present the final recommendation to the boundary commission of how many District Councillors are needed. Once this point gas been decided by the Commission work will commence on establishing new ward boundaries and we will all have a part to play in this.  **GREAT WITLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  **11.11.20**  **COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT**   1. **Corona Virus effects**   Your meeting comes a few days after the start of the latest national lockdown. You could spend the whole evening discussing whether this is wise and justified, but it would essentially be ineffective.  We have to do as instructed, and trust that this is brought about by the highest motives of wishing our society to be free of this scourge as quickly and painlessly as possible.  The county was in reasonable shape before the national lockdown, with recently the worst infection rates being in Bromsgrove where so many residents work in Birmingham. I am also told that many visitors to the hospitality outlets seemed to have Black Country accents. Today’s news seems to indicate the situation in Worcester city is even worse.  The County Council is doing its best to provide help and grants to deserving cases, through the Here2Help website. *Please visit there for more information on what is available.*  We are keen to encourage people to stay local and shop local. It is easy to resort to buying everything online and that might be convenient but also helps big multi-national organisations. We also need to support local shops that might otherwise go out of business permanently.  Hence, we are making moves to assist setting up local click and collect services for those businesses, so we can continue to patronise our small local shops, rather than the big multinationals. The government has suggested it should be possible to find a way for pubs to serve visitors as if they have an off-licence, even if it means ordering in advance and turning up with your own containers for beer and wine.  It is not for me to tell people how to behave but I hope we all appreciate the significance of this next lockdown and trust that it is short lived and successful, so we have a chance of enjoying Christmas in a more or less normal fashion.   1. **County matters**   There is a full council meeting tomorrow, which will be held on zoom, but also live webcast as normal. I will be presenting a report that will seek to commission a report on whether we can start a “Wheels to Work” scheme encouraging people to hire bikes and e-bikes from the county to get to work, where bus services are inadequate. The latter certainly applies to the Great Witley district. If the report is positive, we may be able to create such a service, to help those without access to a car to get to and from work more easily.  At the scrutiny meeting of the environment and economy panel earlier this week, a number of members of the public were concerned about our plans for promoting active travel, i.e. walking and cycling. While the discussion was not detailed, it is worth looking at the agenda of the meeting on the WCC website to see the extent of the efforts we are making to encourage walking and cycling across the county.  While there may be limitations of funding, the intention is to assist those who choose to walk and cycle wherever possible.   1. **Local Matters**   In recent days your highways liaison officer, Hannah Davies, has toured the local parishes with the relevant clerks, to highlight various matters that need attention. I hope the time spent with Jo was helpful. This is an excellent effort from Hannah, who is seeking to meet all the clerks and hear what problems arise around the division.  Should there be any outstanding issues, I hope you will use the online reporting system, then let Hannah know if the response is inadequate, and as a last resort, let me know. I will do my best to resolve the issues.  Your neighbours in Abberley have written to the council complaining about speeding on the B4202 within the village. You will recognise that this is a common complaint, and I am still waiting to see the results of the speed measurement on the A443 in the village. What can be done to make everyone safer is another matter.  I have received a number of emails from people concerned about the content of the recent draft white paper on planning. This has been criticised from a variety of different quarters. Despite it emanating from a Conservative administration, I had no hesitation in signing a long and detailed letter to the minister, Robert Jenrick, in my official capacity, detailing a number of criticisms of the paper. Given the widespread opposition to the basic principle in the paper that devalues local involvement I am confident that the final paper will be substantially different.   1. **Remembrance Day**   It was a privilege to lay a wreath on behalf of the County Council during the attenuated service held outside St Mary’s church on Sunday morning. While this was a lesser event than normal, it was certainly worthwhile, remembering all those from Tenbury and the surrounding district who fell in the many wars over the last century. I am very grateful to the British Legion and all the church elders for enabling this simple ceremony to take place.  Today, of course, is Remembrance Day itself, and I am sure we will all have been keen to observe the 2 minute silence at 11.00.  **We will remember them!**  **Cllr Ken Pollock**  **Cheltenham,**  **Gloucestershire,**  **GL50 2BZ**  **11.11.20** | | | |
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