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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 10th March 2021** |
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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), 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:** None. |
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| **2.** | **Declarations of Interest:** None. |
| **3.** | **To consider any Application for a dispensation:** None. |
| **4.** | **Minutes:** Approved and signed once face to face meetings can be held again. |
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| **5.** | **District and County Councillors’ Reports:** 1. PC: Nothing to report. Lots of training sessions are being attended. The question of the state of 5 Stourport Road was raised. PC said they have been spoken to and asked to stop collecting rubbish at their property. FC reported that nothing has changed, in fact, the state of the accumulated rubbish has got worse. There are now many vehicles parked at/on the front of the property which are clearly un-road worthy. PC said if they are running a scrap business from the property this will need looking into. FC answered that they are illegally recycling rubbish. PC will investigate this. FC also wondered if the number of houses to be built as enforced by the Government remains the same. PC said the Government is pulling back and working to the old figures until the final number for new builds are released.
2. KP submitted his report which is attached to the end of these Minutes: [..\REPORTS\K Pollock 2.10.03.21 report.docx](../REPORTS/K%20Pollock%202.10.03.21%20report.docx)
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| **6.** | **Progress reports:** 1. **FC:**
* A letter of thanks was sent to Erin Betik and Morgan Tabberer for their volunteering as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme to litter pick at the village hall. Their community spirit was commended and rewarded.
* There has been some support for a suggested new footpath should it become possible in the future. ND pointed out that the landowners, the Quarterman family, have said they were reluctant to have their land used for this purpose and suggested that if any plans were to go ahead, they should be contacted in the first instance. FC agreed with this.
* All attempts to locate the Milestone Plate from The Hundred House have so far been met by a wall of silence. As the Hundred House is a listed building, PC will look at the planning permissions and chase MHDC for an answer. BD remembered the contractor, Mr Kelly, removing it for ‘safe keeping’ while the development was in progress.
* The request for the current agreement with WCC to use the Village Hall car park for school bus and parent parking to be renewed was discussed and agreed. However, it was highlighted that due to the increase in the number of houses in the village and the growing numbers of children attending local schools, this renewal would be granted on the proviso that WCC look at the health and safety aspect of parking at this site. ***ACTION***: The Clerk will email confirming our agreement for the renewal with this proviso. ***ACTION***: FC will write to the school to say that they must regulate how parents and busses park at the Village Hall.
* FC brought up the issue of the debris being left behind by the hedge cutters. He has contacted Hannah Davies at Highways regarding this, as the debris is then washed by the wet weather into the gutters and drains causing blockages. He has not received a response to date. ***ACTION***: The Clerk will chase this matter. AG pointed out that it is difficult to clean up after these machines have cut hedges, some have blowers on them. It depends on the angle of the land. Most cuttings fall at the base of the hedge.

**Clerk:*** AS and CD agreed that they were content with the Clerk’s work and are happy for her to continue in this role.
* It was also noted that an annual pay increase award had been made by CALC on 09.09.20 to £12.34 per hour.
1. CS: nothing much to report, they are following the Government’s roadmap to re-open facilities at the Village Hall and Quartergreen.
2. FC reported that the landowner at Home Farm Lane has made a good job of digging out the ditch. A drain further up from this location which is blocked has been reported to WCC.
3. FC will update via email on the NPWP.
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| 7. | **CALC:** All updates and invitations were circulated before the meeting. |
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| **8.** | **Planning:** An application, not on the Agenda, for Stourport Lodge 21/00169/LB for internal alterations associated with installation of platform lift and adaptation of east extension doors for wheelchair access was discussed and it was supported by all and hoped MHDC would make it a priority, |
| **9.** | **Finance:** All finances were circulated prior to the meeting and approved. |
| **10.** | **Correspondence for Information:** None. |
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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:*** PT reported on the virtual meeting she attended regarding Broadband. An electronic update was received by Stephen Woodhouse. In summary, unfortunately, there was not enough support for this to proceed. PT said we were 65 houses short of the required total to make it viable. £594,000 voucher funding is available but with a 33% short fall of houses in support another £196,000 would have to be found. AirBand have offered to supply a quotation as an alternative.
* FC will complete the South Worcestershire Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Strategy – Parish/Town Council Survey.
* Again, the problem of dog fouling has been highlighted. A concerned parishioner has also emailed reporting how bad the situation has now become on Bowen’s Field. 2 black Labradors have been seen, off lead, and fouling where children play, and other users of the area walk. The owners were seen to be using their mobile phones and unaware of what their dogs were doing. CD said that dog owners should always be aware of what their dogs are doing and where they are. During Lockdown, the guidelines are that dogs should be on a lead in public spaces and areas where there is livestock. There are numerous signs around Bowne Field’s asking people to be responsible for their dogs and pick up and take away their dogs’ waste. After a long discussion it was decided that new notice would be put up and leaflets distributed. The Parish Council will now investigate using CCTV and wardens to monitor the area. Anyone not responsible for their dogs or picking up and taking away their dog’s waste will be reported to MHDC Dog Warden. An on-the-spot fine of £100 can be issued. If the offender wishes to avoid this then it was suggested that they could pay £25 to the Parish Council to help contribute to the cost of providing dog waste bags. If they refuse either of these options, then they must be prepared to be fined up to £1,000 by the MHDC or go to Court. Anyone reporting irresponsible dog owners do not need photographic or video evidence but must be prepared to attend Court. ***ACTION***: PC will investigate with MHDC and the Dog Warden for guidance. ***ACTION***: FC will draft a new notice to replace the existing ones, include a warning that you are being filmed and will be reported for not cleaning up after you dog, and wardens are patrolling the area. CS said it is not just people from our parish who are not cleaning up after their dogs but people from other areas too. AS reported that unfortunately it is not just a problem in Bowen’s Field now but also in the field behind The Hundred House.
* ***ACTION***: The Clerk will speak to Hannah Davies at Highways regarding the missing solar panel on the VAS by The Hundred House. If no one is prepared to take responsibility for its maintenance, then can it be removed as it is not doing the job it was put there to do and is detrimental for the village.
* FC also asked the Clerk if she could bring to Highways attention that the new tarmac at Turnpike Lodge falls short by about 4/5ft. Who should fill in this gap? Highways or the Developers? CS said it is the same at the entrance to the Village Hall car park. ***ACTION***: Clerk will contact Hannah Davies at Highways.
* BD wishes to point out and publicly thank local residents, Roger and Linda Perkins, Mr and Mrs Timmins and Sue Midup Jones who have been spotted cleaning up around the parish. Sue was seen with a wheelbarrow full of black rubbish bags! Some of the litter may be from people passing through the village as MacDonalds and KFC rubbish has been found as well as discarded beer bottles and cans. BD asked that their good citizenship be Minuted. ***ACTION***: Clerk to write a letter of thanks to these parishioners.
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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 12th May 2021 to include the Annual Meeting of the Parish and the Annual Parish Council Meeting. |
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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 were present*. |
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| The meeting closed at 20:51 |
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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  |
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**GREAT WITLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**10.03.21**

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT**

1. **National lockdown**

Worcestershire has recently experienced a high incidence of coronavirus outbreaks with levels above the average for England, but lower than for the West Midlands. The trend is in the right direction and we have to hope it will continue, no matter what new variants might appear from around the world.

Cadmore Lodge is still on standby to take those who may have been in hospital, but are not definitively clear of the disease, and hence able to go to care homes.

Our schools opened again on Monday, March 8th and we hope that then education will rapidly return to something approaching normality. By the same token, we must hope that our library can resume normal service and not only rely on the digital provision that has kept it effectively operating during the lockdown. The current arrangements will continue until the 12th April

1. **Council Tax**

On Thursday 18th February, the full Council approved the draft budget. This includes provision for an 1.5% increase in the basic council tax rate and a 1% increase in that money designated for Adult Social Care, making a total of 2.5%.

You will recall that any increase above 2% in the basic rate requires a referendum for approval. We have kept the tax increase low but still aim to balance our budget.

The government has made 3% available for ASC over the next two years, and we have decided to take 1% of that for the coming financial year. Others, like Herefordshire and Staffordshire, have allocated all 3% for the coming year, making an increase in county council tax of 4.99%.

There was not much opposition to our move for a 2.5% increase. The Liberal Democrats wanted a small increase and the Labour group thought that all the increase should have been paid by central government. In the end, the budget was approved without too much difficulty.

1. **Highways report**

At the same meeting, my colleague, Alan Amos, the cabinet member responsible for highways, presented his report on the state of our carriageways and footways. It is worth noting that it is an aim of the council to be in the top 25% of all county authorities for the condition of our roads and we are succeeding in that endeavour.

This comes at a cost, and in a normal year, we spend some £12 million on carriageway repairs. In the current year, another £6 million will be spent and next year a similar sum of £6 million will be spent on resurfacing and repairs.

Footways are treated separately and this year an extra £4 million is being spent with 12 gangs at work on this. Next year a similar extra sum of £4 million will be spent on footways.

Full details on this and all other matters concerning highways can be read on the website, and anyone can listen to a recording of the live webcast of the whole council meeting.

1. **Local matters**

On Friday the 26th February, the Environment Agency hosted a meeting on Tenbury flooding. The progress on ground investigations was reported, along with preliminary design for a comprehensive flood defence scheme.

There was also discussion on the recent flooding that resulted in Market Street being closed for just a short while. The reasons for this are being investigated by the EA, Severn Trent Water and the County Council.

It is worth noting that many other locations around the county fared worse, in terms of disruption, although property damage was limited.

I am aware of the continued concern about speeding in the village, but we are waiting for the results of the speed measurements that were recently made by the county council.

Whatever the results, it is clear that there is still widespread concern, but it is not easy to see what further measures can be taken to reduce vehicle speeds. I note that the most westerly VAS machine still lacks PV cells to power the measurement.

While I am hopeful that some widening of the footway alongside the field in the village, I am aware that this will not allow the separation from traffic that some residents would prefer. Such measures would be costly and difficult to implement.

That said, further siding out of the footways on the A443 towards Hillhampton, and possibly on the A451 are scheduled and I trust these will be helpful.

If you have any further local concerns about highway matters, please let Hannah Davies know in the first instance, but let me know if the response seems inadequate.

I have recently made a number of applications for assistance under my Divisional Fund, and I have to inform you that that source of financial support is now exhausted.

1. **Frank Chapman**

I am aware that your parish council chairman, Frank Chapman, is standing down this spring. From my observations Frank has made a major contribution to the smooth running of the village community and I wish him well in his voluntary retirement. Likewise, I hope his successor will be able to fulfil the functions of chairman as successfully.

**Cllr Ken Pollock**

**Cheltenham,**

**Gloucestershire,**

**GL50 2BZ**

**10.03.21**