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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 onThursday 17th November 2022** |
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| **Present: Vice Chairman**, Cllr C Dermietzel (CD). |
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| **In Attendance:** Clerk, J Evans, Cllrs F Chapman (FC), N Drew (ND), C Jones (CJ), B Dallow (BD), D Trow (DT), C Hamer (CM) and C.Cllr D Chambers (DC) and D.Cllr P Cumming (PC). |

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| **1.** | **Apologies:** P Trow (PT), A Symonds (AS). | | | | | |
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| **2.** | **Declarations of Interest:** CM declared an interest in the planning application M/22/01282/HP, 8 Stourport Road. | | | | | |
| **3.** | **To consider any Application for a dispensation:** None. | | | | | |
| **4.** | **Minutes:** Approved and signed. | | | | | |
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| **5.** | **District and County Councillors’ Reports:**  PC reported that MHDC needs to save £2 million in their financial plan, and this will be done gradually. They are proposing to spend £100k on changing their lorries to biofuel. PC thinks this is an unnecessary expenditure. Following COVID, MHDC are still not working to the standard pre-pandemic. FC asked for an update on The 100 House. PC stated that they are building fewer houses than they applied for. Over half of the dwellings are now on the rating list but as not all occupied. One more needs to be occupied before the pub should be fitted out. FC also asked for an update on 5 Stourport Road. Unfortunately, PC had no update as no-one at MHDC will take responsibility. FC asked who we should write to on this matter and PC recommended the new Head of Planning, Anne Brereton.  DC read out his report which is attached to the end of these Minutes. | | | | | |
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| **6.** | **Progress reports:**   1. The clerk was advised to try Adrian Hope, Ledbury, for a tree risk survey assessment ***ACTION*** 2. The Quartergreen reported that as successful as the bonfire was this year, it will be the last one they organise. They are now victims to its success as over 4,000 people attended which makes the event far too big for the village. Complaints regarding the excessive and sometimes thoughtless parking were noted and as they plan no more firework displays it is hoped that remedies the matter. The Village Hall received £11,000 which was raised by the bonfire display. Therefore, funds towards the refurbishment of the Quartergreen facilities will have to be raised elsewhere. As energy bills are vastly increasing, some hire charges may have to be raised, perhaps on a pro-rata basis. FC said that perhaps help subsidising the hire charges for community hires only could be considered. Careful consideration will be made. As next year promises another royal celebration, the Coronation of The King, it is hoped that the parish council and village hall can work together again as they did on the Jubilee Celebrations. 3. FC asked when the hedgerow on the Stourport Road side of Bowens Field will be replanted and CJ confirmed the Lengthsman will do this now the correct season is here. FC asked for a sum to be agreed on for him to purchase the new saplings. There was a unanimous vote in favour of £200 being given to FC to purchases trees from either Frank P Matthews or Farlow Nurseries. 4. NPWP – FC, DT and CH have looked at the draft grant application. Before we can submit the application, we have to appoint a specialist consultant. We have received a quotation from David Nicholson, and it was unanimously voted to appoint Mr Nicholson. 5. CD confirmed that she had discussed the clerk’s work with AS and they are happy with her work and confirmed the backdated pay increase as reported by NALC. | | | | | |
| **7.** | **CALC:** All updates and training events were circulated prior to the meeting. | | | | | |
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| **8.** | **Planning:** M/22/01282/HP, 8 Stourport Road – CH left the room which the rest of the parish council discussed and agreed that there were no planning areas for objection but ask that the Planning Department take into account any responses received from the neighbours. CH returned to the meeting.  ND aired his complaint relating to previous planning applications made by the Pains and another made by the Birkmyre’s of Sturctons Heath, where it was deemed by other members of the parish council that ND had another disclosable interest in both applications and should declare the interest and leave the room for the discussions. ND maintains that he does not have any interests to declare and should be allowed to stay in the room and take part in the discussions. The parish council were acting upon the advice from CALC and a representative from CALC attended a meeting via the format Zoom and agreed ND had an interest and should leave the room. Following a discussion, it was agreed that in future it is up to the individual councillor to declare any interests, pecuniary or other and it is not the decision of the rest of the parish council. The councillor does this in the knowledge that failing to make a disclosure of interest is a criminal offence. A statement was received from the absent chairman on this and was read out: “I have taken advise re disclosure of interests .From now on if a Parish Councillor does not acknowledge that they have an interest and I believe they do ,I will report it immediately to the monitoring officer .As this is a criminal offence they may decide to take it further .” | | | | | |
| **9.** | **Finance:** All finance was circulated and agreed prior to the meeting. A vote was taken on the sum set for the next financial year’s Precept and it was unanimously agreed, by a show of hands, that the sum required would remain the same at £10,000. | | | | | |
| **10.** | **Correspondence for Information:**   * WCC are happy with the sites suggested for 2 new benches to be provided in The Glebe. These will be secured in concrete plinths. * Following our notice in the parish magazine, an email from a resident was received suggesting that the 2nd defibrillator might be houses at the petrol station/Spa shop. It was agreed this was a good suggestion and Tina Hole, Abberley would be contacted in connection with it, to ask for permission. ***ACTION***. | | | | | |
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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:**   * CJ said the trees on the Martley Road by Witley Manor, the property of Mr Evans, need to be cut back ***ACTION*** Clerk will report to WCC. * BD regarding 5 Stourport Road – DC will look into the complaints regarding this property. * BD question as to whether the 100 house pub could become an asset of community importance as he is worried it will be removed and they will try to sell on as a private residence. If it belonged to a chain of pubs it would be very hard to change it use. | | | | | |
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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 Thursday 12th January 2023. | | | | | |
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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 9.30pm | | | | | | |
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| Signed …………………………………….. Date …………………………………….. | | | | | | |
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|  | | Chairman | | | |

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| **Notes of Public Question Time** | | | | | | |
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| Approximately 35 members of the public were in attendance and raised the following concerns during Public Question Time: | | | | | | |
|  | |  | | 1. | A flyer had been received by residents reporting that the application for 44 houses which has been refused and appealed appears on the SWDP Review. This caused a lot of concern as the majority of the village is against the development. FC spoke to the room to explain the background to the SWDPR and our responses and new draft response to be adopted by the parish council. PC updated the present situation and that we are at greater risk of further development. MHDC has been ‘dragging its feet’ for the last 12 months. COVID caused obvious delays of 2 years, so we are now going into a 2.5 year delay. Members of the public have until 13.12.22 to put their responses in before the end of the consultation period. Objections to further developments in villages are made as they have their quota of new dwellings, and the current infrastructure cannot cope. PC is pushing for improvements in infrastructure before further applications for developments are passed. The room asked if the school and surgery were at capacity, and this was confirmed. FC asked if the absence of a plan would be worse, and PC said it would. Without a plan we are open to more speculative sites being offered. The room asked if the 800 houses being allocated to the surrounding villages couldn’t be absorbed in the big allocation of the larger towns and district? It was asked who owned the land which had been put forward for development and the answer was the Pains. It was also pointed out that the 100 House cannot sell their dwellings and that some have been rented. The pub is still not fitted out, so why do we need for houses? Local applications for 1 house on a resident’s land is refused by MHDC yet they consider larger unwanted developments. FC read out his draft response to the SWDPR and this was unanimously approved by the parish council and adopted.  [..\REPORTS\SWDPR November 2022 response.docx](../REPORTS/SWDPR%20November%202022%20response.docx)  South Worcestershire Development Plan preferred Options  Response from the Great Witley and Hillhampton Parish Council  Strategic issues  Despite what follows later we believe that the strategic decisions outlined in the review are correct and sensible in that most future development will take place near to employment and good transport links. We are grateful that some of the concerns we expressed in our “ issues and Options “ reply have been taken on board.  The preferred option still proposes to build more houses west of the River Severn without any proposal to increase employment in the area nor to improve transport links. Any new building will therefore inevitably increase the amount of traffic moving eastwards in the morning and westwards at night on roads which County Highways surveys show are already at capacity towards bridges which cannot cope. (e.g.Ombersley –Holt over Holt Bridge ).This brings unnecessary pollution, wasted time in journeys and an increase in carbon footprint to these areas. You may partly solve one problem by creating several others. It is unlikely that funds will be found for any improvements on these roads as most available funds will have to applied in building a new infrastructure for the major developments at Parkway. Rushwick and Throckmorton.  The review assumes that the only developments will be on the newly designated sites or those carried forward from the last review. This ignores windfall development within existing settlement plans. If appropriate allowance is made for this, the need for rural development would be small.  The methodology of inviting landowners to offer their land for development may also be flawed in that it identifies sites which landowners want to develop rather than identifying sites where people want to live. The present focus on climate change and carbon footprint is much in play here.  There is no current need for organic development in Great Witley generated by local people wanting to find a home. Nearly all of the residents who have arrived in the last 10 years have moved here from other districts There is very little employment available in or near Great Witley so new residents , including any coming to the proposed site will have to travel to work in Worcester or beyond. There are no bus services which can meet the needs of employees and even those which do exist are under threat. This means that workers have to travel by car which adds a considerable financial burden to their finances.( with cars achieving 30mpg and petrol at £2.25 a litre viz £9.00 a gallon plus, insurance, road tax depreciation and maintenance an allowance of at least 50p per mile is needed plus the cost of parking.) This makes a daily journey to Worcester, Kidderminster or Droitwich £12.00 per day, £60.00 per week or about £3.000 per annum and many will have more expense with onward travel.  Added to that is the cost to the community of increased road maintenance, traffic jams and pollution.  Even if some development may be needed in the villages over the next 20 years we think that the plan to focus all of that development mainly on category1 villages is flawed. Category 1 villages already have many amenities and do not need extra development to create or protect those amenities. More development in those villages is more likely to put those amenities under stress and lower the quality of delivery.  In our view it would be better to enable or encourage development in places which need more residents to create the amenities which they lack at the moment. Consequently we think it would be better to widen the availability of sites to include some in small communities. There ought to be a way for settlements without a settlement boundary to have some expansion. The division between settlement boundaries and open countryside is too stark. Developments of say 5/10 houses ought to be acceptable in villages without a settlement boundary provided they meet other planning criteria. This would achieve flexibility and provide homes where they are actually needed.  Whilst we understand that in time there may be a need for development in the villages we think it is important that transport improvements are undertaken before more development begins. Any other policy will lead to gridlock on the bridges over the River Severn and negate all the benefits of living west of the river.  We also think that the issue of rural exception sites needs to be refined. The question of whether there is a local need ought to be determined by transparant , reliable evidence and not by relying on unchecked secret lists. If there is real evidence of need the number of houses to meet that need should be determined and only that number built. Furthermore if such a need is established more consideration should be given to where that need is best met rather than merely adopting the application site.  Local Issues  So far as the review concerns Great Witley 2 questions arise :-   1. Is it appropriate at this stage to build more houses in the village? We do not think it is .The last review called for 27 new homes. Since then 39 have been built and are occupied and another 31are under construction viz a total of 70.That allocation was said to be for the period up to 2031and we are still in 2019. Not surprisingly most residents think we have already made our contribution for the foreseeable future. 2. If this proposal is adopted it is likely to promote an immediate application to build all 44 in one go. ( a developer told a public meeting held on November 21st that he was ready to put in the application ). A new application on this site would have a much greater chance of success than any of the previous rejected proposals and if granted would lead to another 44 houses being built even before the expiry of the 2031 plans with another review available in 2026. It would follow that in stead of accepting the allocation of 27 in 2016 a total of 114 would have been built. No wonder these allocations are not trusted. 3. If some development is necessary we would like to see it staggered so that some –say half occurs beyond 2026 and the balance after 2031.This would meet the current allocation in a more acceptable way. 4. The Review states that there needs to be land available for 390 new homes in the villages in Malvern Hills District Council and 900 over the 3 joint councils. We do not think it is fair that our small village should be required to accept 12% of the Malvern Hills allocation nor 5% of the whole allocation. 5. The area of land re-designated is allocated 44 new homes. This works out at 18 dwellings per hectare whereas the SWDP assumes a density of 30/Hec. If a developer applied that to this site we could be facing an application for about 70 new homes. Can we be given any guarantees that the site will be limited to 44 houses so that screening, and footpaths can be incorporated. 6. Is this the best site to use? There is a division of opinion about this. Some think it is the next logical field to build on and would provide a pedestrian link between the Glebe., Bowen’s Field, the school, the Village hall , the Post Office and the surgery. Others point out that it would urbanise the village and suggest that if development is necessary it should be ribbon development along the main roads. 7. If none of these submissions are accepted we ask that a strip of land 10metres wide is removed from the designated area on the west and north sides leaving an open area which could be planted with trees as a screen and provide footpaths.   [..\REPORTS\SWDPR November 2022 response Issues and Options.docx](../REPORTS/SWDPR%20November%202022%20response%20Issues%20and%20Options.docx)  From Great Witley and Hillhampton Parish Council  Issues and Options for SWDP  1.We would like to see the District Councils make bold decisive decisions about the next stage of development so that sufficient land and sites are selected to meet projected need, so that other land and sites can be regarded as safe from development for the forseeable future. This would remove most of the lottery of applications and appeals with landowners seeking windfalls.  2.Sites should be selected so that they add least to journey times, traffic bottle necks and our carbon footprint. It follow that new houses should be built as close as possible to employment opportunities . The days when families needed to live away from smoking chimneys and pollution have passed, so time saved in travelling to and from work will benefit the employed in the saving of time and expense; their families; their employers and other commuters.  3. In so far as it may be necessary to build new houses away from immediate employment areas e.g. for those who travel as part of their employment; the sites chosen should have the benefit of good access to rail and motorway connections. This would enable such people to go about their business without adding to the traffic on the county roads.  4. All other new sites chosen should have the benefit of good public transport facilities so that people living in them do not have to drive to work thereby adding to the traffic congestion, wasting their time and adding expense.  5. Some villages have increased in size rapidly since SWDP was approved whilst others have not. Those villages which want and need development should be given priority for expansion.  6. Land already allocated for building in the present plan but not yet developed should be used before new land and sites are included.  7. If it is necessary to allocate sites in villages where there is no spare land within the present settlement boundary, then sensible targets should be set and the settlement boundary should be enlarged only sufficiently to meet that allotted target. If the settlement boundary is enlarged more than is necessary to meet the allotted target some villages will end up carrying far more new building than is fair.  8. Decisions should not in future be based on whether a village is or was a Category 1 or Category 2 etc. according to whether it had a secondary school, primary school, surgery, bank or ATM etc.  This is because many villages now have to share facilities and residents in village A will have to go to village B for some facilities whereas residents of Village B will undertake the opposite journey for other facilities. Some of those facilities are included on the list for grading purposes whilst others are not.  Use of such criteria also corrupts the results when compared to the reality on the ground. One village might have sustainable facilities only because it receives significant support from other villages which may be larger and more suitable for development.  Such criteria also produce incongruous results. e.g. A village with good facilities might have parts of its settlement boundary further away from the facilities than other settlements outside that village. The present system would mean that the sites within the settlement boundary would be more likely to be developed than other sites outside the boundary but in fact nearer to the facilities.  9. The new plan is looking very far into the future and trying to anticipate needs for the next 20 years. We think that there ought to be some mechanism for staggering the eligibility of these sites because if all become available in 2021 we are likely to find applications for nearly all of them in the first year. There is a real risk that the 20 year target for the District will be consumed very quickly or that some villages are overwhelmed with applications to use up their 20 year allocation in the first few years. 5 year plans would be sensible so that all would know whether a particular site would be eligible in 5, 10 or 15 years time or not at all. This would be useful in planning for infrastructure, schools, roads etc. It would also enable planners to have some flexibility if future needs rose or fell.  Frank Chapman  Chairman | |
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|  | 2. | | It was asked if there could be a book swap site in the centre of the village. | | | |
|  | 3. | | The Quarterman’s asked why the fence had not been fixed and replaced between them and Bowen’s Field. ND said he had been waiting to speak to them but had been very busy over the summer. | | | |
|  | 4. | | It was reported that a concrete spillage was causing a danger on the junction with the A443 and link road. ***ACTION*** the clerk will made a report to Highways. | | | |
|  | 5. | | The footpath along from The Lodge is too narrow for a wheelchair. DC said this is logged to be done. | | | |
|  | 6. | | It was asked why the proposals for calming traffic speeds through the village have not been carried out? CJ asked if we could invite the Police to our next meeting to discuss more signage and reducing the speed limit to 20mph. DC suggested we might consider signing up to the new 20 Splendid Scheme. New 30mph roundels have been painted but also property owners need to keep their hedges as they are obscuring visibility. We cannot saturate the signage; we have mobile cameras so perhaps a community scheme of a group of 6 villagers using a speed gun may calm traffic. DC will help fund a replacement VAS for the broken one which Bloor Homes are failing to maintain. It should be noted however, that 20mph is advisable only and cannot be enforced. | | | |

**Worcestershire County Council Report**

**Meeting of Great Witley Parish Council 17 th November 2022**

1. Concerns remain regarding the long delays that ambulances continue to wait outside

the Worcester Royal Hospital. The poor flow of patients from ambulance to the

Emergency Department, to Wards and then to discharge, also remains a major

concern. On the 1 st December, the next meeting of the Health Overview &amp; Scrutiny

Committee (of which I am a member), will be held at the Worcester Royal Hospital.

Following the meeting we will be given a tour of the new Emergency Department,

which is due to open shortly and where we will be able to question and assess any

likely potential improvement to the services mentioned above.

2. On Sunday 6 th November, as a Member of the Fire Authority, I attended an

emergency services exercise at Worcester Cathedral. Hereford &amp; Worcestershire Fire

and Rescue Service, the Ambulance Service and the Police all took part. Some 100

officers from the various services were in attendance, some active on the exercise

and others as observers. The exercise lasted almost three hours based on a fire in

the lower ground floor of the cathedral, the evacuation of the injured, the removal

precious of archives based in the roof section of the cathedral and so on.

Specialist appliances were mobilised including an appliance with a 30 metre

extending ladder with platform, which could reach the roof area of the cathedral.

There was also an appliance which was deployed at the river, enabling water to be

pumped out of the river up to where the fire engines were located; this one

appliance was able to supply five fire engines with a constant supply of water.

This type of exercise takes place serval times each year at different locations.

Mindful of the Manchester Arena disaster, which is very much in the news at

present, this can give reassurance that our own emergency services are planning for

potential serious eventualities.

David Chambers

County Councillor, Tenbury Division.