

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 12th January 2021 at 7pm

This meeting was held remotely in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

PRESENT: Cllr Pat Woodfield (Chairman), Cllr Paul Berrisford, Cllr Margaret Briggs, Cllr John Charles-Jones, Cllr John Newsome, Cllr Richard Pannell, Cllr Daniel Raynor, Cllr Colin Starke, Cllr Charles Wardle.

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr Helen Greensmith (GBC, part), Cllr Boyd Elliott (NCC, part), Averil Marczak (Clerk). 2 residents/members of the public observed all or part of the meeting.

4169. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ACCEPTANCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Andrew Gough and Cllr Sophie Hopkin.

4170. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No additional interests declared.

4171. MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

The minutes of the meetings held on 8th December and 5th January were approved.

4172. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman thanked Cllr Charles-Jones and the Clerk for helping to pull together the budget proposal.

4173. DISTRICT REPORT

Cllr Greensmith had circulated a report. Cllr Greensmith agreed to contribute £200 towards the cost of new flood warden jackets. A further business grant might be made available during the latest Covid-19 lockdown, more details were awaited.

4174. 2021/22 BUDGET

The draft budget document had been circulated. The Clerk presented the detail and outlined the assumptions.

It was proposed that the precept should increase by 0.9%. Cllr Raynor questioned whether the precept should be held at the current level; Cllr Charles-Jones explained that the proposed increase would result in an additional 80p per year for a band D household.

It was resolved (proposed Cllr Woodfield, seconded Cllr Charles-Jones) to raise a precept of £74,795.

It was resolved (proposed Cllr Woodfield, seconded Cllr Charles-Jones) to keep all WPC fees at current levels, adjusting the contribution of the Tennis Club pro rata to exclude the time periods when tennis was not permitted under Covid-19 regulations. It was agreed that the Cricket Club should be charged for the pitch cuts only and not for water used during the 2020 season.

It was resolved (proposed Cllr Woodfield, seconded Cllr Charles-Jones) to approve the expenditure budget of £104,423.

It was resolved to continue with the terms of the Farm Business Tenancy on the Sam Middup Field for a further 3 years. Cllr Charles-Jones confirmed that the current tenant was happy to continue without making a deduction for the land fenced off to create the new permissive footpath.

4175. ALLOTMENT RENT

Cllr Berrisford abstained from the discussion and vote. It was resolved (proposed Cllr Woodfield, seconded Cllr Briggs) to keep the allotment charge at £32 for 2022/23.

At 7.45pm, Cllr Charles-Jones left the meeting.

4176. COVID-19 UPDATE

Following the start of a new national lockdown on January 5th, the Village Hall was being used solely by Preschool, who were permitted to operate with their full complement. The Governors' Field was allowed to stay open for exercise taken in accordance with social distancing rules. Cllr Starke reported that recent frosty conditions had made cleaning at the normal time impossible, and volunteers had been asked either to delay cleaning and opening up until any frost had cleared (providing they were able to do so) or to leave the park locked. There was currently no organised use of the Playing Field.

4177. POTHoles

Cllr Elliott joined the meeting at 7.50pm.

Cllr Raynor reported that he had emailed Cllr Elliott with an extensive list of potholes around the village. It was noted that cars had been damaged by potholes, and villagers sometimes planned their route to avoid the most damaged roads. Cllr Raynor also raised concerns regarding the safety of the Lowdham Lane speed limit and the width/poor surface of the pavement.

Cllr Elliott gave a downbeat assessment of the likelihood of getting any resurfacing or quality repairs for the village roads, although Lowdham Lane was scheduled for some work to be carried out in partnership with Severn Trent. He explained that Via were carrying out quick temporary repairs to potholes in order to reduce damage to vehicles and mitigate against the risk of legal action. The possibility of reducing the Lowdham Lane speed limit to 50mph or 40mph was under discussion with Highways as part of consideration of the Timmermans planning application PC1119/GBC2020/1174. Cllr Elliott explained that NCC's workforce had been decimated by Covid-19 and its priority was provision of social care during the pandemic. Notwithstanding his pessimism about securing works for the village, Cllr Elliott agreed to invite a highways officer to a WPC meeting and to raise petitions for the priority works.

4178. COUNTY REPORT

Cllr Elliott had circulated a brief report.

4179. PLANNING

The Clerk provided an update on 3 applications dealt with under delegated powers.

PC1120/GBC2020/1251TCA to reduce the height of an oak tree at 21 Park Avenue by 25-30%, 2-3 metres - WPC's observations: 2 - 3 metres seemed an underestimate of 25 - 30%. The tree officer should give his view on this fine specimen.

PC1121/GBC2020/1211 for replacement front porch and approach steps and over cladding of existing garage at 25A Main Street – no objection made.

PC1122/GBC2020/1264TCA for various treeworks at 161D Main Street – no objection made.

4180. FLOOD MATTERS

Cllr Briggs reported that the Environment Agency officer assigned to the Woodborough project hoped to have finalised a document by the end of March 2021 which detailed options and costs for a potential scheme. Implementation would depend on the EA accessing available funds and grants. A questionnaire for residents was being worked up. 3 new volunteers had come forward to be flood wardens and they were a most welcome addition to the team. Cllr Briggs planned to update the Emergency Plan.

Cllr Newsome expressed his concern regarding the perilous state of some of the village footpaths due to recent very heavy rain and, in some cases, poor maintenance. Cllr Berrisford advised that responsibility for maintaining the footpaths varied from path to path and would need to be checked with the relevant team at NCC.

4181. VILLAGE HALL

Cllr Wardle presented a range of branded vinyl flooring options, to be considered for use in the entrance and committee room. Members expressed a preference for the wood effect flooring, but it was agreed that a decision needed to be made having viewed the samples in situ at the Village Hall. Cllr Wardle agreed to set up the samples for viewing by councillors and also by members of the VHWP on Saturday 16th January. The Clerk cautioned that an asbestos survey and asbestos removal may be required, although it was likely that this could be included within the £5000 budget agreed.

4182. FINANCE

The Clerk presented the financial statement for January and 18 payments, totalling £6,089.21 net, were approved for payment. Gross payments over £500: £1417.16 A Marczak (to reimburse purchase of new computer), £695.42 LGPS (staff pensions).

4183. CORRESPONDENCE AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

A request had been received from a local food business to use the Village Hall car park to provide a collection point for takeaways for an extra evening in January. It was agreed to make additional dates available during the period of lockdown. Cllr Woodfield had delivered Christmas cards and chocolates to the volunteers on the Governors' Field Covid-19 rota to express the village's gratitude to them; several thank you notes had been received. The following items were noted: RCAN Hall Talk; GBC, various agendas and press releases.

4184. SAM MIDDUP FIELD

A neighbour of the field had sent a photo of standing water in the area of the new footpath. Cllr Raynor thanked the neighbour for forwarding this and reported that this area could be improved by better channelling more water into the ditch. It was noted that recent heavy rainfall had caused many footpaths to be waterlogged. He noted that the new footpath would be permissive, and could be shut in times of poor weather or standing water, to help keep walkers safe and maintain the path surface.

4185. WOODBOROUGH INSTITUTE

Cllr Berrisford reported that the trustees had been successful in securing a number of grants to help pay for the Institute refurbishment, and hoped that further grant money could be secured.

4186. GOVERNORS' FIELD REPAIRS

The beacon and adjacent benches, assets of the WCA, were in need of some refurbishment and repair. Cllr Wardle offered to liaise with the WCA to organise works in the spring. It was agreed that WPC should cover the costs as needed.

Cllr Starke reported that DCM had repaired the safe surface under the roundabout by widening the yellow band. There was no update on the repair to the safe surface under the boat springer. GBC had agreed to repair the potholes that had developed in the path.

4187. VILLAGE BENCHES

Zurich had agreed to pay the cost of a replacement bench (less £250 excess) following the destruction of the Foxwood Lane bench by a vehicle in October. They had appointed a law firm to try to recover WPC's excess and their own costs from the vehicle owner's insurance.

4188. WOODBOROUGH WEB

It was agreed to include: minutes; information regarding Cllr Elliott's highways petitions; details of the BBC initiative to get second hand devices donated to local schools to help home/online learning.

4189. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next PC meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 9th February.

The meeting finished at 9.24pm.