

KIDDERMINSTER FOREIGN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting

held in Trimpley Village Hall on Monday 18th September 2023 at 7.30pm

Present Councillor Mr. C. Holford
Councillor Mr. C. Grainger
District Councillor Paul Harrison
District Councillor John Byng
Mrs E Whitehouse (Clerk)
Councillor Mr. B. Phillips
Councillor Mrs. R. Norton
County Councillor Ian Hardiman
12 members of the public were present.

Welcome to Cllr. R. Norton: The Chair welcomed Cllr. Rebecca Norton who had been recently co-opted to the vacant seat left by Mrs Gammond. He gave a brief resumé of her extensive community experience, and her enthusiasm for the parish and the local area.

Police Report: PCSO Lisa Tranter in attendance, who advised that there had been no calls which the local team had been made aware of during the month. There was a need to advise police of the **three policing priorities** during the month for the parish. During the past three months, the police had done speed surveys in the parish – mainly across through Trimpley village – although she advised that the average speed check had been below 40mph. Admittedly when these checks were done, the visual presence of the police vehicle automatically made motorists reduce their travelling speeds. She left **30mph Wheelie Bin Stickers** for distribution in the parish. They had also done periodic **checks to the car parks by the Reservoir** re former reports of suspicious vehicles and activities in this remote area.

A member of the public asked about the call out (during the month) to intruders playing on the equipment at **Habberley Trail** at 10p.m., to which police had responded. PCSO Tranter said that she had not been made aware of this incident and local police do not become involved in all incidents, and so there had been no report logged on their system. It was reported that the incident involved people drinking, which made the member of the public question the advisability of a alcohol licence being granted to the site. Several police personnel had attended, following reports of a noisy presence on site after it had closed.

Clerk asked about a report that there were **squatters** who had reportedly set up in the Community Housing garages to the rear of Valley Close in Low Habberley. The police had been made aware of this, and had visited the site, but had never found any persons on site. Community Housing had been made aware of the problem, and it was thought that steps may now been taken to ensure the property was properly secured.

Public Open Forum

The Commodore of the Sailing Club at **Trimpley Reservoir** was present at the meeting, and detailed anti-social and threatening behaviour, by some visitors to the Reservoir area. People were parking down the private lane to the Reservoir, and climbing over gates, and generally trespassing. The Commodore feared that there may be a confrontation, as the groups of people, including families with children were abusive when confronted and if there were to be an altercation, the police advised they would attend. People were also swimming, and paddling in the reservoir itself, which obviously had life threatening implications. The police advised that if it were a life threatening situation, then a call to 999 would need to be made. Threats and abuse had become so bad that one lady had refused to work at the Sailing Club any more.

The Commodore would be following up with Severn Trent to see what could be done to stop this behaviour and in the hope that a meeting could be convened to discuss what measures could be taken to stop this happening.

It was reported that the **bridleway at Jacobs Ladder** was impassable by horseriders. The PROW Richard Roberts was present and advised that clearance was in hand. The local farmer would be attending to the overhanging branches within the next couple of weeks, although the width issues may take a little longer. There was also an issue on the bridleway where the ground was falling away, due to bank slippage. This had been reported to the Countryside service many times for attention.

It was generally noted that this year had been particularly bad for season growth, but the parish PROW Warden and the contractor employed to do the clearing were doing their best to get on top of the problem.

Fly tipping in Northwood Lane – to be reported. It was noted that fines in connection with littering and fly tipping had recently been increased.

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1. **Apologies For Absence:** No Apologies – all present.
 2. **Declarations of Interest/Dispensations:** Interests as previously minuted and declared.
 3. **Approval of the Minutes** The minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held Monday 21st August 2023 were approved and signed, with a slight alteration to the draft concerning wording in the public Open Forum.
 4. **County and District Councillors' Reports –**

Report from County Councillor Hardiman:

"Grip Problems I Verge by Property Jacob's Ladder:

The Highways Engineer has explained that the Drainage Maintenance Team have decided to make obsolete the existing Grip to allow water to remain generally on the highway where it can continue down towards the next available Gully. (The lengthsman, who was present, advised in confirmation with the Clerk that there were 6 such grips near to Jacob's Ladder – all not functioning as they had been concreted, and therefore water could not soak away. It was unknown if the grips at one time fed into a ditch, no longer there.)

Habberley Road, Dip in Highway causing Surface Pooling:

I have recently chased this issue with the Highways Engineer for it to be resolved.

Damaged Bollards by Low Habberley Farm:

*I am pleased that County Highways have now resolved this satisfactorily. (It was confirmed by Councillors and lengthsman present that the two damaged bollards had **not** been replaced)*

Dead Tree, Hoarstone Lane:

I have again chased the issue with the Highways Engineer in the interests of safety.

Hollies lane/A442 Culvert Maintenance:

Whilst I have again asked for the introduction of a maintenance schedule for this culvert, I have yet to receive confirmation of agreement. I shall continue to push for this. (Should have been dealing with this as well as the sump)

Habberley Trail Signs in Verge:

The Highways Department have written to the Habberley Trail owners asking them to remove their illegal signage; if they fail to comply soon, Highways staff will remove them and dispose of them."

District Councillors Report:

The increase in fines for litter and fly-tipping – was noted.

Re Localism – The District Council had now changed policy in respect to Localism arrangements, and would offer grants to Parishes who wished to undertake services locally, including Litter Collection and Bin emptying.

5. **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL:**

a) **New Planning applications:** No New planning applications.

b) **Update on Previous applications –**

23/0200 (Revised Plans) – Residential Development of 120 Dwellings, Access from Habberley Road, Public Open Space and Landscaping, Surface Water Attenuation and Associated Infrastructure – Pending Decision

Cllr. Harrison advised that this was going to Committee at the District Council tomorrow evening, but being noted as being "predetermined" himself, he would be unable to take part.

23/0491 Two storey rear extension to provide extended kitchen; dining and lounge to ground floor and extended bedrooms to first floor and including extension to existing loft accommodation. Alterations to existing interior layout at **Moorfield, Hoarstone Lane Trimpey Bewdley – Permission granted.**

23/0538/SCR Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Opinion at **Trimpey Reservoir, Eymore Green, Trimpey, Bewdley - Pending Decision**

c) **Compliance Issues/Appeals and other planning matters –**

In respect of Enforcement re refusal of 23/0456 above, re retention of Dog Breeding Building Cllr. Byng advised that the applicant still had the right of judicial appeal, against the decision. If the appeal failed, then the building would be required to be returned to agricultural use.

d) **Mary Moors** – Nothing further to report. Horses were still on site.

e) **Habberley Trail update** – See County Councillors report. Request for removal of the signs had been put in writing to the owners.

6. **Casual Vacancies**

Clerk reported that the Parish Council were now free to co-opt to fill the three vacant seats on the Parish Council, no poll having been claimed and notices to this effect had been posted.

Newly appointed Councillor Rebecca Norton had signed Acceptance of Office declaration in the presence of the Clerk and was due to attend training by CALC tomorrow. To date, no applications for the vacancies had been received.

7. **Progress Reports and other Outstanding Items**

Highway Matters

- **Dead Tree – Hoarstone Lane** – still there.
- **Grips near to Jacob's Ladder** – (See C. Cllr's report above)
- **Broken Bollards – Verge, Low Habberley** – Not yet repaired.
- **Drain Cover** – Lightmarsh Lane – was not stolen as suspected, but dislodged.
- **Litter – in Eymore Lane Layby** – although reported by Clerk, it had not been dealt with.

8. **Election of Representatives to Trimpey Village Hall Committee –**

Clerk advised that due to councillor resignations, the Parish Council now only had one representative (Cllr. C. Grainger) on the Village Hall committee. She had checked about this requirement, and had been informed that two councillors from the Parish Council were required on the Committee according to the constitution of the Village Hall. It was decided to defer appointment of a further representative until further councillors had been co-opted to fill the vacant seats on the Parish Council.

9. **Items Placed on Roadside Verge**

Cllr. Hardiman stated that if he could be advised of the locations, then the County Council would investigate. It was decided to try to encourage people to desist from the placement of stones on the verge by an item in the newsletter.

10. **Eymore Green – Broadband Availability –**

It was reported that this was still unavailable for the houses at Eymore Green by the Reservoir. Mr. Chris Jordan had kindly offered to follow this up with Open Reach, and Worcestershire Superfast Broadband following a discussion with the Clerk. It was generally felt that Severn Trent had more than sufficient capacity at the Treatment works to allow this connection to be facilitated. A vote of thanks was given to Mr. Chris Jordan and Mrs. Carole Gammond for their continued work on this, and other local matters.

11. **Parking and Visitors to Reservoir Area (Eymore)** – see discussion in Open Forum at start of the meeting.

It was noted that a Security Guard was only in presence on some evenings, and only through the summer months. It was generally felt that Severn Trent was sadly lacking in management of the site, both in safety standards, and also in addressing litter left on the site.

12. **Lengthsman and Footpath Clearance Matters**

a) **Lengthsman** – Lengthsman worksheet / invoice for August had been circulated and was approved.

b) Rights of Way Contract - Clerk had shared information contained in emails between the ROW Warden and the Countryside Service, and also with the Lengthsman

The Chairman stated that he felt the parish had benefitted from an extremely good team with Richard Roberts in his Voluntary Role as PROW, and Chris Bunn as local contractor.

Both submitted regular detailed reports which were superb, and their work was commended.

Both Richard and Chris stated in respect of the RsOW in the parish and the exceptionally mild year, a “once-a-year” cut had not been sufficient to bring these into an acceptable condition. If such mild weather continued, then it would also be unlikely to be sufficient in subsequent years.

To fund extra work which would be required on the RsOW, the Clerk advised that the County Council had agreed that funding for the Lengthsman’s work could be used on the footpaths. Councillors decided that this was not a good idea, since all the lengthsman’s budget would be needed to keep the roads in good condition. However, they also wanted to see the footpaths/bridleways brought up to an acceptable clearance, and the P3 Grant of £450 for the year would not cover this. It was therefore RESOLVED for Mr. Bunn to continue with the necessary clearance, and that this would be funded by the Parish.

A low hanging branch in Hoarstone Lane was reported as requiring removal.

13. **Items for October Newsletter** - several items were discussed for the Clerk to use as copy.

14. **Financial Reports –**

a) **Ratification of payments to be made – a) Payments:** Lengthsman Invoice 5 (August) - £204.75; Cllr. Chris Holford – Chairman’s Allowance - £100. Councillor Holford had agreed to accept the allowance, after previously declining to take this, in order to have funds to purchase spring flowering bulbs to plant around the parish. Councillor Chris Grainger agreed to authorise.

b) **Bank Mandate and Correspondence** - Clerk confirmed that the Mandate Changes were now complete, removing 4 Parish Councillors, and adding Cllr. Norton. Signature details would be finalised by Friday, and after that date, Cllr. Norton would be able to apply for a PINSent machine, ID Card and PIN to access on-line banking. Clerk confirmed the phone number she would have to call.

Barclays had also sent documentation to complete to update details of the account, which required signing by the Chair. Clerk tabled this for signature.

c) **Bank Balances and accounts –** Clerk gave each councillor a copy of the accounts to date, reconciled to the Bank Balances as at 15th September.

15. **Worcestershire CALC Reports & County and District & other Correspondence –**

Report from CALC Meeting – Joint District/Parish Forum – 11th September (by Zoom) – was given by Cllr Holford. It was reported (by the Police Superintendent present) that Road Safety was an issue (with particular reference to speeding traffic) in every parish. Some funding could possibly be obtained for VA Signs. A discussion then ensued about turning round the VA Sign in Low Habberley. It was thought the Councillors would have to contact former Councillor C Jordan who it was thought had the keys to do this.

Mr. Ian Miller of Wyre Forest gave information about CCTV in respect of fly tipping, and prosecutions.

Helen Hawkes of Wyre Forest – advised she would be arranging Planning Training for Parish Councils.

It was again confirmed that Parish Councils could not legally donate money to the Church, (as detailed in the Moneys to the Church.

County and District Council, and Other Correspondence

Clerk advised that she had received email complaints from a resident in Low Habberley about the parking in Low Habberley, and how the bollards erected had compounded the problem. The same resident complained that the Clerk/Council were not contactable via a mobile phone number. Both these matters were discussed.

16. **Road Accident Record -** None to record.

17. **Other Matters** **Next meeting:** confirmed as **Monday 16th October 2023.**

Clerk agreed to inform the council of any **NALC Pay increase** nationally agreed by the union, when she was notified of this. She advised that a parishioner had complained about the fact that the Council did not have a mobile phone number for people to contact the Clerk. The Clerk advised Councillors that she would shortly be reviewing the monthly contract she paid for internet and **phone** and at that time, it may be advisable for the Council to invest in a mobile/phone number, rather than using the Clerk’s landline, as it was understood that analogue landlines were being phased out nationally in a few years’ time. Clerk to make investigations into this.

Clerk alerted Councillors to the possibility of some environmental grant monies but with match funding. It was felt that some of the pools on the Common needed some maintenance, but the landowner had not been happy with previous work done on the Common by the Parish Council, and as such, this may not be a possibility. Councillor Phillips would make contact.

It was noted that a “friends” group could be arranged to plant up an area with wild flowers. This was to be discussed at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Chairman :