

**Minutes of the Kempsey PACT meeting held at the Community Centre on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 12.30pm**

**PRESENT:** (21) Ann Smith(Chairman), Cllr David Harrison (MHDC), Cllr Martin Allen (County Council), Cllr Mike Biddle (Parish Council), Cllr Rob Gardener (Parish Council), Cllr Neil Stevens (Parish Council), Rev Kat Mephram (Vicar), Simon Bott (Parish Lengthsman), Cathy Garner (Community Builder), Jan Harrison, Nick Richardson (Platform Housing), Joy Clee (Churchwarden), Kath Padden, Brian Hewlett, Helen Fenton, Bob Bowley, Penny Warren (WI), John Baker, Chris Gillies, Margaret Gillies, Marian Walters.

**1.Welcome and Introductions:** Ann Smith welcomed everyone to the Community Centre and thanked them for attending. Everybody then introduced themselves.

**2.Apologies:** Cllr John Michael (MHDC), Cllr Chris Waller (Chairman Parish Council), Bryony Baynes (Headteacher KPS), Sally Linsey (Cornflower Club), Maxine Hemming, Jackie Smith, Pauline Ransom.,

**3.Minutes:** Copies of the November 2024 meeting minutes had been circulated prior to this meeting and also distributed at the meeting and were approved.

**Matters Arising:** None.

**4.Reports from County, District and Parish Councils:**

**COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Cllr Martin Allen** gave the following report.

**COUNCIL TAX AND FINANCIAL MATTERS.**

The county council are raising the council tax by 4.99%, which is the maximum currently allowed.

While MHDC is expected to set a 0% increase which will save you about £5.00 if you are a Band D property.

Of the 4.99% County Council increase, 2.99% is to provide financial support for the delivery of outcomes in line with the councils Corporate Plan.

2% to be ring-fenced for Adult Social Care service.

WCC have gone to the government to ask for a £33.6m loan, rising to £43M.

Interestingly for every £20M the council borrows, it will need to repay £1.9M. I fear this is unsustainable.

## UNITARY AUTHORITY'S AND COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The county council elections are to go ahead.

We now know that Worcestershire's district and county councils are in the second wave to become a Unitary Authority.

A progress report must be in place by the end of March this year. A full plan is to be in place in November this year.

The Shadow Authority will be formed in 2027, currently both WCC and MHDC will run until April 2028.

## BROOKEND LANE BRIDGE

Following last month's PACT meeting, I contacted WCC to raise the issue about reports of the bridge being struck again following its repair.

I have sent you their reply that they attended and cannot see any strike or damage.

They have refused to a change in the speed limit or extending the limit out.

I have again asked for the Pedestrians in the Road signs to be installed.

Apart from that WCC are not willing to take any action.

I have now got additional Verge Masters installed around the bridge.

## ON DEMAND BUS UPDATE

In November last year I mentioned that following my continued pressing of WCC, that as from 6th of Jan this year, the following locations become live. Taylors Lane The Firs

Ledbury

Malvern Science Park

Barnards Green.

WCC are still looking at the Hospital and Haresfield House, which is the main doctors surgery for Kempsey. But no date has been set as to when these will come live.

It is also hoped that during 2025 part of the Wychavon area will soon be included.

## PAVEMENT CHANGES NEAR THE VILLAGE HALL (Tin Hut)

Sorry about the temp traffic lights on the A38 near the Village Hall (Tin Hut).

I have been pressing for this work to be done for over 18 months. A number of wheelchair users have reported that where the pavement breaks to allow cars to get

into the homes off the A38 the drop from the Kerb is too steep and they have been reluctant to go that way.

Finally, I'm winning and work commenced today.

I had to go and look at the short notice change of work to be done, the tactile plates are still going in for those suffering from sight issues, but we cannot change the kerbs, instead I have agreed for the entrance way road surface to be raised instead. I believe it's going to cost a little more, but it worth it to help those who are disabled.

The work will now continue until Wednesday evening, so i am sorry if you are delayed.

### CHERRY BLOSSOM TREES

One new tree is to be installed by the Community Centre, and I have asked that the two dead trees on the left as you go out of Kempsey towards Worcester are also replaced.

This work should be done this Thursday.

Finally, as the County Council elections are going ahead, there is a possibility that this may be my last meeting. I am pleased that during my time I have brought you both Community Transport and the Worcestershire on Demand Bus Service, I have sorted out hundreds if not thousands of issues for residents, and after a long battle with a pigeon I have got the crossing installed to keep our young children safe.

Can I say a huge thank you to Anne and Marian for all their efforts with PACT, and also a huge thank you all for coming to PACT.

It's been an absolute honour to be your County Councillor, and I hope to see you at the next meeting.

### DISTRICT COUNCIL

#### **Cllr David Harrison gave the following report.**

David said MHDC is likely to be merged with WCC and a decision will be made on 18<sup>th</sup> March. The District Council and Parish Council agree that the significant gap between Worcester and Kempsey should remain. A public enquiry is to be held starting on 4<sup>th</sup> March and will last for three weeks. Cllr Rob Gardener and David will both be speaking at this and in reply to a question, both said it would not be helpful to have members of the public present. Work is on-going at the flood defences to rectify an on-going problem with the screen. Church Street will have piling equipment later this week. Development at Astons Yard is well under way and a planning application has been submitted for the site next door to it. He wants to arrange a meeting with Saxon Meadow residents regarding the orchard. All but one of the plots have been sold but they cannot be built on as it is a community orchard. One person has erected a fence which is not permissible. MHDC is going to write to the owners explaining the situation. They will then have five months to raise any objections. This site is outside the development boundary and within the significant gap. The installation of a Skate Park at the new sports centre has been seriously discussed by MHDC.

## **PARISH COUNCIL**

In the absence of the council's chairman, Chris Waller, Rob Gardener, chair of the Planning Committee, gave the following report.

The allocated housing land at the South Worcestershire Urban Extension is not progressing as fast as expected with the result that much of it cannot yet be included in the 5-year housing land supply assessment. Without being able to show an adequate supply, proposals for other sites not allocated are more likely to be successful. Other than the St Modwen housing development on Taylors Lane, most of the schemes on other plots coming forward are by Housing Associations and many are experiencing problems with their applications. Welbeck Land have outline planning permission for the bulk of the allocated land but as yet no detailed proposal have come forward.

The Examination into the SWDP Review commences on Tuesday 4th March. Kempsey continues to be identified as a Category 1 settlement which indicates that it has a range of facilities and services which could accommodate further development. However, the Review proposals do not allocate any further housing land in the parish beyond the Urban Extension. No new application has yet been submitted following the refusal of planning permission for the scheme to build 140 dwellings at Bannut Hill.

In respect of the SWDP Review proposals, the Parish Council has objected to a new employment site of 2ha. proposed at Open Barn Farm off the A38 north of Kempsey. This is in the longstanding Significant Gap in which new development is severely restricted to prevent the merging of Worcester and Kempsey village. In addition, the Inspectors carrying out the Review have questioned the justification for Significant Gaps being included in the SWDP at all. A petition was circulated recently, regarding the necessity to retain the Significant Gap from which 415 responses were received all stating that Kempsey wishes to remain a village. The Parish Council has been invited to attend the Examination and make representations about both the principle of keeping the gap and our objection to the Open Barn Farm allocation.

At a recent meeting, a target date was set for making the planning application for a new Community and Sports Centre at Pixham Ferry Lane. The agreed date by which the architects are to apply is 7th March. The fee to MHDC for this is estimated to be £6K. Part of the original scheme was the installation by Taylor Wimpey of passing bays along Pixham Ferry Lane. It has been suggested that the works may start shortly, bearing in mind the forthcoming nesting season, although affected hedgerows along the lane have already been removed last year. However, the road may have to be closed, or other traffic arrangements put in place while the work is carried out. This will require Traffic Regulation Orders from the County Council which is likely to delay the start date.

Cllr Neil Stevens added that the gorse was being cut on Kempsey Common and Stonehall Common. A new defibrillator has been put up at the village hall which means there are now at least five in the village. Malvern Heart Start is holding First Aid training from September and there are a few places still available at a session on 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

## **5. Reports from School, Police and Church.**

**School.** Bryony Baynes sent Marian the following report.

The school had an Ofsted inspection just before half term, and although the results of that cannot yet be shared with the public, they are very proud of the staff and pupils for how well they represented the school to the inspectors. The school had a visit from Steel, one of the Gladiators from the television show today which the children were very excited about. The PTFA are continuing their fantastic work in raising money for the school, and are now trying to raise money for a sensory garden to go around the sensory pod. Any help with this would be welcome. Kempsey Café is held in the school hall from 10.00am to 11.15am on the second Friday of each month and continues to provide the older members of our village with the chance to interact with the children. There is always a cup of coffee or tea to accompany a vast array of delicious cakes kindly baked by parents of the particular year group hosting the morning. Any donations of money are passed directly to St Richards hospice. Everyone is welcome and the next one is scheduled for Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March.

**Police.** Marian had sent emails to West Mercia Police but they have all been returned non-deliverable. Nick Richardson said he would let her have a different email address to send notifications to. ***Post meeting update. Marian has received a message from Dee Stanley giving a slightly different email address so hopefully we will have a report for the next meeting. I have since received a report from Dee which I have sent as a separate document along with these minutes.***

**Church. Joy Clee, Churchwarden and Rev Kat Mepham gave the following report.**

Joy said working with Kat had been a great help. The church does so much work that many people would be unaware of. Almost every day there are groups working with young mothers and their toddlers, youth groups etc meeting in the church. There is a morning service on Thursdays followed by a coffee morning and an art group meets every Friday morning during term time. The annual fete is being held on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June with a theme celebrating 80 years of peace.

Rev Kat thanked the community for extending such a warm welcome to her and her family and she was thanked for the support she was already giving to so many people and organisations in the village.

**6. Kempsey CIC. (Simon).**

Simon said that thanks to Libbirty and Ellis, the carols due to take place on the green near The Lawns, were held in church due to atrocious weather. It was a very successful event. A supper was held in church in January, to thank the volunteers who help at the various events held throughout the year and a good time was had by all. A free Bike Marking session is being held in church on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March. The village fete on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June, will be opened by Cllr Martin Allen. It will start at 3.00pm and go on until 7.00pm. Ruby Rouge, a professional 1940's singer, will be performing and thanks to a Parish Council grant of £200, street entertainment has been booked. Any donations of good raffle prizes would be appreciated.

**7. Update on Community Builder activities by Cathy.**

**The Significant Gap:** A heartfelt thank you to all members of the community, the Parish Council, and Martin Allen for their support, as we work together to maintain and celebrate the unique, rural and historic character of our parish. We've gathered more than 400 signatures on our petition to maintain the "Significant Gap" between Kempsey and Worcester and may need to be ready to campaign further on this issue, pending the result of a recent review on development in the area.

**Food Bank:** Another big thank you to everyone who made it possible for us to support families in crisis, throughout the festive season. We were able to provide 13 families with proper Christmas and New Year meals, as well as hampers, donated by Waitrose and the Round Table, to make the festivities enjoyable. Efforts continue, with donations welcome.

**Young People:** On the funding front, we've secured £3,000 in Youth Funding to begin to create the Youth Lounge at Plovers Rise. This will be spent on equipping and furnishing the small meeting room at the Youth Centre to welcome young people – a co-designed space where they can meet regularly. We are working with YMCA and have secured further promised funding of over £6,000 from MHDC, pending our Lottery Award application for £20,000 to support the youth hub with professional youth workers, and with Platform Housing, to help us decorate and support exciting activities and initiatives for young people. Slightly older young people 18-24 year olds - have access to something called BYOB – be your own boss – who are running training programmes for young people.

**Digital Inclusion:** On the digital front, our Digital Inclusion Project is thriving, with sessions continuing to run every Monday from 10:30 to 12 at the Firs - providing vital support and skills, to ensure no one is left behind in our increasingly connected world. Huge thanks go to Suzy, Jimmy, Libby and all the team at Come on In. Mike Hoskins has donated a pile of computers to the school from BIFFA to support young people who don't have access to tech. This helps to plug the digital poverty divide. We've had two training sessions offered by Age UK on using the OnDemand Bus and have been continuing to promote the service, which is a hugely valuable asset, lowering our carbon emissions and (many people don't know) offering free access to venues such as Croome Court and other county attractions, making it easier for everyone to enjoy what our region has to offer.

**Community Celebration:** Friday, 6th June we have been invited to take part in a community celebration in Malvern (further details to follow) and to showcase our stories through creative exhibits, for example, a craft project, a nature collage, a photo montage, or any medium that reflects our community / local initiatives. We are able to access a £200 grant for each approved creative project to help cover materials and space hire, so we can share our unique story. **All ideas welcome for what you feel Kempsey might like to offer?**

**Community Café:** As we move forward with the café project, we need enthusiastic volunteers to design, create and run the café. We have developed a detailed café proposal, with costings over the coming three years, beginning with a very basic pop-up service, and expanding, pending grant funding and café income, to transform Plovers Rise Pavilion into Kempsey's first thriving, community-led café. We are exploring a community membership scheme where individuals might contribute £5 per month, in return for free cake and cuppa each month, as well as discounts on all visits to the café. This is a unique opportunity to become a founding member of this community hub and we are eager to receive feedback on the idea. **A quick show of hands amongst PACT participants suggested 2/3 would be willing to support the café, through a small monthly contribution, ensuring its sustainability and success.**

Thank you again for your continued engagement and support as we build a brighter future for Kempsey Parish!

If anyone wishes to speak to Cathy, her contact details are as follows

[communitybuilderkempsey@gmail.com](mailto:communitybuilderkempsey@gmail.com) 07876 680600

**8. Litter Pick – 10<sup>th</sup> Great British Spring Clean 21<sup>st</sup> March – 6<sup>th</sup> April.**

The Parish Council had contacted Simon Bott regarding this initiative. Discussion took place regarding whether or not we should take part in this. It would not be easy to arrange this on a weekday as so many people are at work so a Sunday would be preferable. David said MHDC still litter pick on weekdays but not on a Sunday. A specific date and time needed to be decided upon, so that as many people as possible would get to know about it. **The date is Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> March starting from the Village Hall at 2.00pm and will be advertised on social media.** Litter Pick banners and posters will be put up in the village beforehand. Maxine Hemming will be advised of this.

**11.Any Other Business.** None.

Jan was thanked for providing tea and coffee.

**12.Date of next meeting.** Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at **7.30pm.**

The meeting closed at 2.10pm.