



## MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 13 JANUARY 2025 AT 7.00 PM AT KEMPSEY COMMUNITY CENTRE

**PRESENT:** - Cllr Waller (Chairman), Cllr Gardener, Cllr Cooke, Cllr Clamp, Cllr Plummer, Cllr White and Cllr Stevens (arrived 7.22 pm as was called out to attend to the fire alarm at the Youth Centre.)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** - County Cllr Allen, District Cllrs Harrison and Michael, plus 2 members of the public. Sharon Dunn – Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer.

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Biddle (Personal) and Cllr Anstey (Personal) - Accepted
2. **Declarations of Interest**
  - a. Register of Interests: Councillors were reminded of the need to update their register of interests.
  - b. To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature - None
  - c. To declare any Other Disclosable Interests on items on the agenda and their nature - None
3. **To Consider Written Requests from Councillors for the Council to Grant a Dispensation** (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) - written requests to be submitted to the clerk prior to the meeting - None

Action

### PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Notes from Public Question Time are appended to these minutes.

Reports from County Councillor Allen and District Councillors Harrison and Michael were noted.

4. **Minutes:**

Having been previously circulated, the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9.12.2024 were signed as a true and accurate record.

A few grammatical errors were corrected page 3 item 8. Donations/grants ... spent and will contain a clause that *any* Parish Council would not be influenced ... any was substituted with the word *the*

Under Public Question Time - Questions (bottom final page) the words living space were amended to capital letters 'Living Space' and in answer 1. bus top was amended to bus stop.
5. **Correspondence for Information:** - Under General Data Protection Regulations names of Identifiable subject/matter withheld
  - a. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - The English Devolution White Paper. This is the Governments long-term vision for a simpler structure with the intention to formally invite unitary proposals in January 2025 from all councils in two-tier areas.
  - b. Consultation on Draft Policy on Pavement Licensing MHDC - Responses by 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025. To question if Kempsey Parish Council should be listed as a statutory consultee. To query if the Parish Council should be a statutory consultee to this consultation.
  - c. Planning Inspectorate - Decision on the proposed works at Upper Ham Common - application is granted. - This was the expected outcome.
6. **Finance**
  1. Payment of accounts as per schedule were authorised.
  2. Monthly Bank Reconciliation Statement - For Information Only.
  3. Capital Budget - For Information Only
  4. Budget Monitoring Quarter 3 - For Information Only

Clerk

<p>5. Proposal to agree final budget for financial year 2025-2026. This was modified to state Proposal to agree on a final budget for financial year 2025-2026 of £260,419 and then taken to a new vote.  <b>RESOLVED:</b> The final budget for the Financial Year 2025/2026 was agreed at £260,419. (£6500 was added under expenditure to the preliminary budget for the continuation work of the Community Builder for the first quarter of financial year 2026.)</p>	Action
<p>6. Proposal to request a precept from MHDC for the financial year 2025/2026. This proposal was modified to read proposal to request a precept of £169,446 from MHDC and then taken to a new vote. <b>RESOLVED:</b> A precept of £169,446 from MHDC for Financial Year 2025/2026 to be requested.          (Consideration of three options was made available to councillors with the impact of each option against the Band D level of the council tax. The Chairman asked each councillor to state their preferred option. The consensus being option B was the favoured option.)</p>	Clerk
<p>7. Committee Report Updates and Proposals: -</p>	
<p>1. Finance &amp; General Purposes Committee: Cllr Waller          There is £3500 put aside in next financial year's F&amp;GP budget for village celebrations. £750 (deposit £195.00) is being requested to pay for a vintage singer to support an event at the Village Fete on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2025. The original proposal was modified from proposal to support an event at the village fete on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2025 to proposal to support the village fete on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2025 with a vintage singer to the value of £750. This modified proposal was voted on.  <b>RESOLVED:</b> To support the Village Fete on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2025 with a vintage singer to a value of £750.</p> <p>2. Environment: Cllr Plummer          A meeting is being organised to take place in February 2025. Cllr Plummer conducted an audit of the noticeboards confirming all appeared to be in good working order apart from the one located at Green Street which has been temporarily removed pending repair. County Cllr Allen identified two missing white marker caps to the white marker gates at Post Office Lane. Clerk to order replacements.</p> <p>- Working Party: MRWP Update: Cllr Clamp.          No meeting has taken place. Thanks were expressed to Cllr Anstey for relocating the planter from the shop and moving next to the bus shelter located in the middle of the village.          Daffodils have been destroyed by vehicles on verge near the Crown pub, where an awful lot of work has gone into planting. Some signs are to be added and the matter is to be investigated further.          Update on location of cherry tree planting - Request sent to Ringway but no confirmation received to date. To follow up.  <b>ITEM DEFERRED:</b> To change the name of the Main Road Working Party</p>	
<p>3. Community Centres: Cllr Stevens          There is currently no heating in the small meeting room of the Youth Centre. An electrician is calling tomorrow to try to resolve this issue.          Signage to be displayed at Community Centre and Plovers Rise regarding hazards arising from freezing conditions. Cllr Waller has kindly volunteered to install these.          Following rain leaking into the Parish Office, plus various other areas of the exterior of the Community Centre potentially needing attention, it was suggested to ask a building surveyor to identify what work was required and for a management plan to be devised for improvement works/repairs to be carried out.</p>	<p>cw</p> <p>Claire</p>
<p>4. Infrastructure Committee: Cllr Waller          The following matters have been progressed or are under discussion:          - reviews of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and a draft Landscaping Plan both prepared by Blade were completed and sent to the consultants along with a request for a Biodiversity Net Gain Report. In the absence of any response a reminder sent last week resulted in a promise of action of all three reports.</p>	

-modifications to the draft Design and Access Statement prepared by Calfordseaden (CS) were completed and sent to the architects. The changes involved accuracy, presentation and typographical errors. The modified D&AS is in docx file format converted from the original pdf file and hopefully will reduce the time input needed from CS for the completion of the final document. An estimated 25 hours of work went into this exercise alone plus contributions from others, especially Cllr Gardener.

- clarification from CS is being sought on the number of EV charging stations that will be required to be provided in the car park for Phase 1 of the project as the ongoing Planning Committee review of the Streetscape requirements suggests that the one charging station currently planned may not be sufficient to gain LPA approval.

Cllr Waller confirmed the Parish Council is almost in a position to make the planning application and an Infrastructure Committee meeting will be arranged soon.

Cllr Waller displayed two samples of the Rockpanel cladding that is being considered for the main building in the project.

#### 5. Commons and Recreation: Cllr Cooke

A meeting is in the process of being organised and consideration will be given to the new gate required at Kempsey Common, bramble/hedge cutting on Stonehall Common, work on the Kempsey Common (back common)/drainage ditch works required (identified by District Cllr Harrison).

#### 6. Planning Committee: Cllr Gardener

A Planning Committee meeting took place on Monday 6 January where various applications were considered for comment, along with: -

- Worcestershire County Council's Streetscape Design Guide (SDG)
- Further discussion on new Street Naming and Numbering request for housing developments on land at Bath Road Broomhall
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- South Worcester Development Plan Review (SWDPr)

Items 6.1 and 6.2 were discussed in reverse order.

1. **ITEM WITHDRAWN:** Proposal to engage a specialist to represent the Parish Council at the SWDPr hearing.

An alternate way forward, suggested by District Cllr Harrison, was to write to Ian McLeod, expressing concerns over the Inspectors' questions concerning the justification for Significant Gaps to find out what MHDC are proposing and what is going to happen to Kempsey and all bordering villages. Cllr Gardener to progress.

RG

RG

2. **RESOLVED:** To grant delegated powers to the Clerk, the Chairman and the Planning Committee Chairman to agree a final submission to the Streetscape - consultation by the deadline of 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

County Cllr Allen and District Cllr Harrison requested sight of the Parish Council response to this consultation prior to its submission. Cllr Gardener confirmed this would be made available to them prior to submission.

Clerk

#### 8. Chairman's Report: Cllr Waller

- Community Builder Update

A Guiding Panel meeting is being arranged.

The draft vision report has been received and is to be reviewed.

Work in progress on the Youth Hub funding application to the National Lottery Awards for All England.

Cathy Garner has submitted a separate article to the Kempsey Times concerning the proposed new community café.

Contributions to place in Kempsey Times - To request councillors to write a contribution for the Kempsey Times on specific topics.

- Emergency Plan Update  
Cllr Gardener and Cllr Stevens had attended a recent meeting with the Emergency Planning Officer and a member representing the Environment Agency. All the amendments have been captured in the plan and are under review.
- Councillor Recruitment - More community engagement is required. Ideas include having a stand at the Village Fete to promote the achievements of the Parish Council and identify what is involved being a councillor. Another idea was to focus on a particular element/topic to try to capture people's attention.
- Police cycle sponsorship - Cllr White to progress with a police meeting

9. Police: The following three policing priorities for the upcoming quarter were agreed: -
- Dangerous and illegal parking at the shop during opening hours and anti-social behaviour including shoplifting
  - Anti-social behaviour at the Rocky
  - Illegal parking on pavements and road junctions throughout the village, especially by the doctor's surgery

**RESOLVED:** Under The Public Bodies (Admission to Meeting(s)) Act 1960 to exclude the public and press from discussions only in respect of agenda item 10. inclusive as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

10. Staffing Matters - **RESOLVED:** To agree contractual changes relating to the Administrative Assistant role.

- **RESOLVED:** To offer an increase to the hourly rate for the private work only conducted by the Lengthsman from 1.4.2025.

Meeting Closed at 10.24 PM

Signed ..... Chairman..... Date

***Standing Orders were adjourned.***

## **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Mr Geens referenced agenda item 9. Police Priorities, requesting if problems associated with parking on pavements and road junctions throughout the village, especially by the doctor's surgery, could be added to this request.

He also questioned if a member of the council would be available to attend the Platform Housing Neighbourhood Walkabout on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 - 10am, Anglia Crescent/ Mercia Way with PC Dee Stanley from the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Cllr Harrison also reported eight incidents of theft from the shop

## **County Councillor Martin Allen**

Good evening and Happy New Year.

### **UNITARY AUTHORITY'S**

We now know that the government are instructing Worcestershire's district and county councils to become a Unitary Authority.

Currently, there are 57 County Councillors, their number would be increased to about 100 to 120 assuming that Worcestershire becomes its own Unitary Authority. This could well be the case; because the size of a Unitary Authority is 500K residents or more, and this fits in with the numbers for Worcestershire which are about 600K residents.

I understand that by April 2027 at the very latest all new unitary authorities are to be delivered.

The Conservative leader and the CEO have submitted a letter to the government requesting that Worcestershire is included in the first round. If this request is accepted, the May 2025 WCC elections would be cancelled, and Unitary Authority elections would take place in May 2026. We will know by the end of Jan 2025 if we are to be in the first wave. If so, a plan must be in place by the end of March this year. If we are not accepted into the first wave, a plan must be in place before the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2025, otherwise the government will impose a decision upon us.

Maybe this is the time to seek what assesses your council would like to either obtain or rent on a 99-year lease with a peppercorn rent.

### **COUNTY COUNCIL COULD GO BUST**

It has been announced in the Council's Cabinet papers that Worcestershire County Council are facing a funding gap of £33.6 million for the next financial year, rising to £43.6 million the year after. The leader of the WCC has had to go cap in hand to the government asking for a bailout. Are vanity projects one of the main causes of the black hole?

The council may have to issue a section 114 notice, which is how an authority effectively declares itself bankrupt. Councils can't actually go bankrupt, but a section 114 notice, issued by its Finance Officer, means it cannot commit to new spending and makes service cuts more likely.

#### **DRAINAGE WORK**

Between 28<sup>th</sup> of April and the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May part of Old Road South will be closed for drainage work. This is from the junction of Pixham Ferry Lane going northwards to Meadow Close.

#### **BESTMANS LANE GULLY BLOCKED AND MUD ON THE ROAD #6117**

This is still expected to go ahead between 20/01/25 and 24/01/25.

#### **ON DEMAND BUS**

This is now free for Veterans from 0930 each day.

#### **PEDESTRIAN SIGNS REQUIRED BROOKEND LANE #8536**

Traffic Management have ordered pedestrian warning signs for either side of this bridge. They should be installed in approx. 2-3 months' time.

Warmest regards

Martin Allen.

#### ***Questions/Comments***

Q1. When did Hereford become unitary?

A1. A parishioner kindly provided some background information on how this evolved.

There is an opportunity to ask about how a unitary authority would impact us. To be taken up with Worcestershire CALC.

Mr Geens questioned how a unitary authority from a planning perspective might work.

Cllr Plummer referred to the water markers located at the ford indicating the depth of the water and asked how to obtain improved signage should the water depth exceed 6 feet deep. The Clerk was advised to contact WCC Highway to request improved marker signage.

## **District Councillor John Michael**

Food Waste Collections - Seeking to implement commercial food waste collections this year followed by private households next year. This is a costly exercise.

## **District Councillor David Harrison**

Cllr Harrison reported a vandalised fence to WCC Highways bordering The Limes and the County Council land behind the Southbound A38 bus stop just south of the new pedestrian crossing. He has since confirmed this is not the responsibility of WCC Highways and it has now been referred to MHDC.

Cllr Harrison advised on the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review - Examination Arrangements

You have a right to be heard and you wish to exercise that right, you should contact the PO by 5:00pm on Friday 31 January 2025 indicating which session(s) in the published hearing programme you wish to participate in. You must do this regardless of what you may have indicated in your original representation(s). Please note that if you do not contact the PO by that date, it will be assumed that you do not wish to appear and be heard, and you will not be listed as a participant.

The examination hearing, which forms part of the examination of the Plan, will commence at 9:30am on Tuesday 4 March 2025. The hearings will be held in the Worcester Guildhall, High St, Worcester, WR1 2EY (weeks 1 to 3) and the Wychavon District Council Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore 1S20(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 3 WR10 1PT (week 4). The draft programme for the hearing [EXAM 34] is being at the same time as the guidance note.

11 February 2025 - Deadline for submission of hearing statements.

Can I get involved in the examination?

You have a legal right to appear before and be heard by the inspector at the hearing if:

- you made a comment (a 'representation'), on the final draft of the plan (the 'Regulation 19' plan) that the LPA submitted for examination, and
- your comment asked for a change to be made to the plan – that is, it was an objection to the submitted plan

### ***Questions/Comments***

In relation to the hearing, Cllr Gardener questioned the validity of significant gaps.

Cllr Harrison advised an assessment has been carried out in one of the examination documents that he may find useful.

Cllr Waller asked both County and District Councillors their intentions to participate in the hearing. Both Cllr Allen and Cllr Michael confirmed they could not commit to 4 weeks and would leave representation to officers and legal representatives. Cllr Harrison confirmed it was his intention to attend most of the sessions at the hearing.

***Standing Orders were reimposed.***