

PILLERTON HERSEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting

7:00 pm, Thursday 25 February 2021 (online)

Present

Cllr. Debbie Newton (DN)
Cllr. William Forsyth (WF) by phone
Cllr. Alec Hitchman (AH)
Cllr. Tim Newcombe, Chair (TN)
Cllr. Richard Scott (RS)

Cllr. Penny-Anne O'Donnell, SDC
Cllr. Isobel Seccombe, WCC

In attendance

Alana Collis, Clerk to the Council (AC)
The meeting commenced at 7:01 pm

Absent

None

Apologies

None

Public

Mr Terry Hitchman

1. Apologies

None

2. Declaration of interests

None

3. Dispensations

None

4. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of the ordinary meeting of the parish council held on 14/01/2021 as an accurate record of the meeting.

5. Public Forum

Mr Terry Hitchman noted a concern about the increase in parish precept. He noted, that coupled with the increase from Stratford District Council it was hard. Cllr. Hitchman noted that he had voted against the increase.

6. Planning Matters

a. Planning decisions

- i. [20/03243/FUL](#) – The Stable House, Warwick Road, Pillerton Hersey, CV35 0QJ
It was noted that permission was granted with conditions (18/01/2021).
- ii. [20/03223/LBC](#) – The Stable House, Warwick Road, Pillerton Hersey, CV35 0QJ
It was noted that permission was granted with conditions (18/01/2021).

Cllr. Hitchman noted that there was a lot of building materials in front of the property. This is partly blocking the footpath any people have to step onto the road to walk around. There is also quite a lot of earth mounded up behind the property, in the garden. Cllr. Newcombe noted that this may be due to earthworks for foundations or landscaping.

7. County, District and Parish Liaison

Stratford District Council

- Cllr O'Donnell noted that SDC had met on 22/02/2021 and had agreed the level of Council tax for 2021/22.
- The council tax has increased and is now £149 for a Band D property (payable to SDC).
- SDC only receive 7.5% of the total council tax bill.
- SDC are exploring working with Warwick District Council by 2024. There have been some concerns raised over this and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have asked to receive regular updates. Cllr. O'Donnell noted that there will be strong public consultation on this.
- One area of concern is that information regarding the collaboration of SDC and WDC has been developed and based on 2011 Census data. For any merger to be robustly considered, the 2021 data should be used.
- The collaborative working with WDC aligns with a directive from Westminster for more streamlined local government.
- From 01/04/2021, SDC residents will have to pay to have their green bins emptied. To date, 22,500 households have signed up for this.
- Land charge searches have increased meaning that the property market is still moving.
- Environmental health activity is increasing. This includes visits to shops and other premises to check Covid-compliance to ensure this are ready for re-opening.
- The SDC Climate change panel will complete a carbon baseline. This will consider the WDC joint working and will use a Local Government Association (LGA) base tool. SCATTER analysis of data will also be used. This is a local authority emissions tool. At a cost of £32,500 this will be done joint with WDC.

Cllr. Newcombe asked for clarification of the LGA tool.

Cllr Hitchman asked to raise a concern regarding the current public consultation on the increase in ward councillors. Would this result in increased costs and how does the timing relate to the proposed merger with WDC.

Cllr Hitchman noted the increase in council tax is expressed as Band D which many people do not relate to. They receive a notice of council tax demand that has a different figure and can get confused.

Cllr. O'Donnell observed that this is the standard used across the UK but noted the confusion that this may cause.

Warwickshire Count Council

- Cllr. Seccombe noted that the WCC budget was set in early February 2021. There are two elements to this for WCC. The Council tax increase is capped at 2%; in 2021/22 it will increase by 1.99%. The adult social care element will increase by 1%. WCC has had to use some reserves over the past year and has also received money from government. Cllr Seccombe noted that there will be people who agree with the decision and others that disagree.
- Over the course of the pandemic, WCC has spent money to purchase 30,000 computers for school children to support home learning.
- The goals have been to exit from the pandemic and recover quickly. Families and education are important. The latter is critically linked to advancement in society.
- There are two priorities: to look after the vulnerable and those that need help. This includes the elderly and those with mental and physical disabilities. Although the costs of care are equally split between the elderly and the disabled of working age, the numbers are split one third to two thirds respectively.
- Childcare is very important, there are fifteen different packages, and they can be expensive.
- Cllr. Seccombe shared that WCC had launched a new adapt and diversify grant for businesses. This received over one million applications in the first 24 hours and had to close early.

- A new fund is being developed. This will be the Warwickshire Recovery Investment Fund and it will cover three sectors. Local government can borrow money at a good rate. So far WCC has not done this but it will use this capacity to provide a five-year recovery fund. These will be business loans and repayment will be required. They are to help business growth and secure new and existing jobs. The WRIF was presented to MPs earlier in the day (25/02/2021).
- Cllr. Seccombe also noted that despite the difficult times, the number of patents submitted in the last 12 months has increased significantly.
- Homebuilding strategy is to provide low energy cost housing (affordable to live in). This initiative will be in partnership with Homes England.

Cllr. Hitchman asked whether WCC would be grateful for more funds and whether they could issue savings bonds. There is an interest in value savings.

Cllr. Seccombe noted that she was not sure whether WCC could do this but offered to find out. Central government can (e.g. after WWII) and it can be for good. Cllr Seccombe noted that nationally, WCC was in the lower third of counties in terms of raising council tax. An increase of 2-3% was usual. Part of the increase is to also ensure that the council is secure for five years. This will enable the council to be ok and have enough money to do things and manage demand over time.

Cllr Forsyth commented that he was encouraged and acknowledged the careful budget and five-year budget.

Cllr. Scott asked whether planning departments consider infrastructure. Forward planning is needed to ensure villages have electricity network (power lines) to support large scale adoption of electric vehicles.

Cllr. Seccombe noted that there is not enough capacity at the moment to support this, but National Grid have a strategy to address this.

8. Finance

a. Financial report

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the finance report and accounts payable.

b. To receive bank reconciliation report

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the bank report as an accurate reflection of the parish councils financial position including income and costs.

c. To discuss update to bank signatories.

There have been some issues with the Clerk being able to get payments authorised. This seems to be with authorisation links. The Clerk will continue to seek to resolve this with the bank and will require signatures from the Chair and former Clerk, Dick Leaper. For the future it is recommended that all councillors are registered as signatories to authorise payments.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would arrange paperwork for all Councillors to be added to the bank authorisation.

9. Council documents

To comply with the Transparency code, the council is required to have statutory documents and policies in place and published on the website. Councillors had received these in advance and there was discussion to clarify key points.

a. Standing Orders

b. Financial Regulations (NALC Model 2019)

Cllr Hitchman noted the section about assets register. This was discussed at a meeting in August 2020 but was not finalised. Similarly, the risks need to be identified.

The village green (includes small strips of land, verges and the main green) is an asset but needs to be registered. The trough needs to be recorded on a risk register. Ideally the parish council should get a grant to make a feature of it and make it safe.

ACTION: All Councillors to think about assets and items for a risk register and share with the Clerk.

ACTION: The Clerk will use feedback to compile a risk register and asset register.

c. Code of Conduct (SDC Model 2018)

d. Remote Meeting Protocol

e. Document Retention and Destruction Policy

Cllr Hitchman asked a question about the security of documents. Is the cloud more secure than on a personal computer and would WCC help provide storage and emails?

The Clerk noted that some documents are kept in the cloud but the Clerk is required to keep hard copies of some documents. This includes signed copies of minutes. Every so often these are transferred to the County Records Office.

Cllr. Scott noted that businesses widely use the cloud for storage.

f. Complaints Policy

g. Publication Scheme (Required under FOI)

h. Privacy Policy and Statement

There was discussion regarding the documents. Cllr Scott had identified some typographical errors to correct.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt all the of the documents presented to the Council.

The Clerk will remove any highlights, address typographical errors and then upload to the website.

10. Website

a. To resolve issues related to hosting and domain situation.

Cllr Scott updated councillors about the current website. It is not compliant with cookies and content (policies). This was raised with the hosting company Easyspace and a five-year subscription to a website building tool has been provided to the council free of charge.

There are three separate fees for the website: domain (due for renewal in August 2021), hosting (currently in a five-year subscription until 2023) and building tool. The latter was provided by another party who has since ceased trading.

The existing website is old and therefore importing and exporting content is not simple and would incur a cost.

To manage costs but update the website to be compliant Cllr Scott suggested that it would be appropriate to stay with the current provider and use the tools to create a new website.

It was **RESOLVED** to remain with Easyspace and use the build tools to create a new website.

ACTION: Cllr. Scott will start building new website.

b. To discuss content on website

A new website also provides the opportunity to add new content and imagery including the logo (which a suitable resolution is needed).

Councillors were all positive about the update and new logo. It was seen as a good opportunity to engage the community, particularly children.

ACTION: All councillors should send ideas for content and local images to Cllr Scott and the Clerk to support the new website design and build

ACTION: The Clerk will develop appropriate criteria for a logo competition (with input from Cllr Scott).

11. Roads, Transport and Flooding

a. To discuss ice conditions on Oxhill Bridle Road

It was noted that some residents have raised concerns about water and ice on the Oxhill Bridle Road. There had been a suggestion of locating a grit bin near the stile. The parish council noted that they hope to work with WCC Highways to resolve the issue of water on the road. This would remove the issue of ice.

Cllr Newcombe noted that there is already a large bucket of grit (recently refilled).

Cllr Newton has already emailed Michael Rogers at WCC Highways regarding various highways issues including the water. The potholes in the village have also been logged on FixMyStreet.

b. To discuss need for a grit bin located near Watery Lane and village green.

Cllr Newton has spoken to Michael Rogers, WCC Highways regarding ice on the corner by the culvert.

Cllr Seccombe will also raise with WCC Highways if support is needed.

It was noted that there is no budget provision for this and things should be monitored. The issue tends to be the filling of the bucket.

12. Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish meeting will be held online. Councillors were asked for their suggestions for content and engagement at the meeting.

There has not been a newsletter for the parish in recent months and it was suggested to do one just for Pillerton Hersey that would include an invitation to the meeting to residents and ask them to share their concerns (e.g. flooding, signs, speeding etc)

The logo and competition will be mentioned.

There was a suggestion of a guest speaker on a topic of interest such as climate change and how to improve homes and vehicles. This should be specifically relevant to residents in the village which has a lot of old (less energy efficient) homes.

It was asked about whether the presentation may be recorded. There would need to be consent from attendees. It could be recorded at source but not released until attendees have consented.

Cllr Seccombe noted that there is the Climate Change fund for Communities. This may provide support for local projects.

Cllr Newcombe suggested one option would be to approach Bob Sherman from Low Carbon Warwickshire. Cllr Hitchman is also aware of John Stott, also of Low Carbon Warwickshire.

ACTION: All Councillors are asked to share ideas for the annual parish meeting, including speakers, with the Clerk who will collate ideas and draft a newsletter.

13. Parish environment

There have been more recent incidences on dog waste not being cleaned up. Cllr. Newton has stuck up some additional dog waste signs. There had been mention of a bin, but the problem is that one bin is not enough because there are lots of walks around the area. There is a cost associated with these and it is not provisioned for in the budget.

Cllr Scott suggested that small holders filled with bags may help. It was noted that this also leads to the problem of full bags of waste being deposited (including hung from branches) rather than people taking the waste home.

ACTION: A reminder to clean up dog mess will be added to the newsletter.

14. Reports and questions

The Clerk noted that the Annual Parish Council meeting has already been scheduled for 18 May. However, following the Government update, WALC has shared recommendation that these meetings are held online before 7 May (when the current legislation expires). This would require a resolution from the Council (at an additional, extraordinary meeting) to change the date. The Council is also asked to consider whether they wish to submit a response to the ward boundary consultation.

Cllr Seccombe shared the observation that many think the government will extend the online meeting legislation for another twelve months.

ACTION: The Clerk will circulate the WALC guidance and ward boundary consultation to all councillors.

15. Date of next meeting

7:00 pm, Thursday 25 March – Annual Parish meeting

7:00 pm, Tuesday 18 May – Annual Parish Council Meeting

The meeting closed at 9:22 pm.