

COMBROKE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 18 March 2019 at 7.30pm at the Village Hall, Combroke

Present

Tim Goodhead (TG)

Cllr Chris Mills (CM)

Jo Price (JP)

Brenda Rayson (BR), Chairman

Georgina Lowe (Clk), Clerk

Members of the Public 0

1. Apologies

Cllr Stephanie Connah (SC); CCllr Chris Williams (CW)

2. Acceptance of Apologies from Parish Councillors

Cllr Stephanie Connah; it was proposed TG, seconded JP and

RESOLVED: That the apology be accepted

3. Declaration of Interests

JP – Agenda Item 9.2; BR – Agenda Item 9.3

4. Public Representation

None

5. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 22 January 2019 had been circulated. Proposed JP, seconded TG and

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting be confirmed and signed by the Chairman

6. Chairman's Report and Other Reports for Information Only

a. Chairman:

- i. Reported a meeting on 1 March at the request of Cllr Mills to review previous enforcements and planning matters.
- ii. Brought attention to the election on 2nd May, for both Parish and District Councillors. Election packs have been received and the notices for the election will be published on 19 March.

b. Clerk:

Provided an overview of the arrangements for nomination of candidates for election, to be completed by 3rd April. The Returning Officer has asked Clerks to assist with the process by offering to receive and check nominations comply with requirements.

7. District Councillors Report

- i. Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Budget Consultation Results – SDC recently undertook a budget consultation exercise to help inform the District Council's budget for the next financial year. Highlights include:
 - 90% of respondents thought the District Council offered Value for Money
 - 63% of respondents agree that *'it is important for the District Council to maintain current levels of service, even if it means increasing council tax by more than £5 a year'*
 - Support for the homelessness prevention tools (69%) was first choice for residents out of the new budget proposals, followed by UBUS (67%) and Wellesbourne Airfield (61%)

- Around two-thirds of respondents felt the quality of Council services was good overall

506 questionnaires were returned from a mailing to 1,063 residents on the District Council's Citizens' Panel

- ii. Extra Funding Secured to Help Rough Sleepers – Stratford-on-Avon District Council has secured up to £24,000 in funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to support initiatives designed to help rough sleeping in the district.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council already operates the Stratford Link Project providing:

- Housing advice / homelessness
- Benefits and budget service
- Debt assistance
- Drug and alcohol advice
- Employment, education and volunteering advice
- Health advice
- Recreation activities

Stratford Link Project open Monday to Friday 10am to 1pm, 14 Waterside, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6BA

- iii. Residents Warned of Council Tax Scams – Stratford-on-Avon District Council has issued a fraud warning after receiving reports from residents getting cold calls or texts about a Council Tax rebate from individuals who appear to work for the District Council.

The text often contains phishing links, which direct the recipient to a website where they will be asked to provide personal data including bank details.

The District Council will never telephone, email or message to ask for a payment to release a Council Tax overpayment.

If you do receive an unsolicited call from someone claiming to be from the District Council, do not divulge bank or credit card details – first obtain the caller's name, then ring the District Council back on its main switchboard number and ask to be put through to the caller to confirm it is a genuine request.

- iv. Peony Pavilion gift for Stratford-upon-Avon – In September 2018 the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Fuzhou Culture and Tourism Investment Company Ltd. signed an exclusive co-operation agreement to re-create Shakespeare's Birthplace and Shakespeare's New Place in the People's Republic of China. The Peony Pavilion, a gift from the Fuzhou Municipality symbolises the international friendship between the two authorities; the Pavilion will be located in the Firs Garden and is expected to be completed by the end of March.

8. County Councillors Report

CCllr Williams report is attached to these minutes

9. Planning Updates

9.1 No Objection: Touchdown, Spring Lane 19/00161/TREE

T1 - leylandii - Crown reduction from 4.7M tall X 3.6M spread to 3.5M tall X 2.7M spread. T2

- leylandii - Crown reduction from 5.6M tall X 5.0M spread to 3.6M tall X 3.3M spread

T3 - leylandii - Fell. T4 - leylandii - Fell

9.2 Refused: The Tree Place, Church Hill 18/03788/FUL

Change of use of part of land from agricultural to domestic curtilage, demolition of existing barn / dwelling and construction of replacement dwelling.

The Delegated Report refused the application for reasons of excessive scale and bulk in relation to the dwelling it seeks to replace, which would be harmful to the character and appearance of the countryside and landscape quality. Similarly, the proposed garden extension encroaches on open countryside causing harm through over domestication.

It was noted that these reasons concur with the Parish Council's views. The Delegated Report however made no comment on the Parish Council's concerns about the visibility splay at the lane, referring solely to the Highway Authority's response which seemed to have relied upon the incorrect drawings of the splay submitted by the applicant. The matter has been raised with the Case Officer and will need to be reviewed if future applications come forward.

9.3. Withdrawn: Croft Cottage 18/03377/FUL & 18/03378/LBC

Demolish the existing lean-to extension that provides a kitchen, bathroom and utility room. Replace with a single storey green oak extension with a corrugated metal roof that extends an additional 3m to provide a kitchen, bathroom, utility and study. Extend the existing chimney stack to comply with current building regulation regarding log-burning stoves in a thatched property.

10. Lanes and Drainage

10.1 County Highways Repair and Improvement

The road closure in early February and work on the new gully on the hill adjacent No 40 took place as anticipated. TG reported that Patch Byrne at County Highways was chasing the contractors to complete the final tarmac around the new gully and remove the traffic cones. A broken drain cover adjacent No 25 has been replaced. Patch has also inspected the road surface adjacent Chestnut House / No 27 but as yet it is deemed not to warrant repair. An overturned kerbstone and pothole in the area of Chestnut House have been marked up by Highways as requiring repair but have not yet been attended to.

10.2 Gritting of Additional Lanes at Cost

It was agreed the costs for this County offer would be prohibitive in the context of the budget and nighttime navigation for the gritter vehicle on the narrow no-through lanes would be another problem. It was felt the Parish Council should continue to encourage residents to use the available grit bins.

10.3 Proposed Gateway at West Entrance to the Village

TG and BR met on site with the engineer from WCC at the end of January. It is suggested to create a gateway feature encompassing speed signs just beyond Compton Fields and using the existing village name plate. Proposed designs will be shared with the Parish Council for comment in due course.

11. Financial Administration

11.1 To consider payments to be made

Current Account: £1,997.10 Deposit Account: £5,170.23

Unpresented cheques:

Coventry Diocesan B of E Village Hall Rental £350 + £385; Clerk's December/January Salary £206.97; CPRE £36.00

Invoices were presented, approved and cheques signed for:

Clerk's February/March Salary £216.97 (includes £10.00 Vodafone Top-up Voucher); HMRC £15.60

11.2 To consider grant payments to the Village Hall Committee

During the process of the Parish Council taking on the direct payment of both Village Hall insurance and the rental payments to the Diocesan Board in 2016 and 2017, there were two quarters of rent (i.e. £225) in 2017-18 paid by the Village Hall Committee (VHC) and not claimed from the Parish Council in the following year; also the business rates (£153) were not claimed for that year. There is therefore a back payment of £378 due to the VHC.

It was noted there will be a further claim due in 2019-20, for the 2018-19 business rates (£158). There followed a discussion that the Parish Council could take over the direct payment of the business rate in line with the other fixed costs where upon it was

Clk

RESOLVED to make the back payment (£378.28) to the VHC and investigate paying the business rates for the Village Hall directly.

11.3 Review of Budget Projections for 2019-20

Given the expenditure identified in 11.2 a revised Budget Projection was presented, reinstating the expected £1500 expenditure against the Village Hall in 2018/19 and revising the projected VH expenditure for 2019/20 from £1200 to £1500.

Clk

12. The Leys Update

The edges of the Leys have been cut back over the winter. This was as a result of a fundraising by Hazel Blenkinsop at the Christmas Fair to pay the contractor due to cut the hedging in the lane adjacent the Hampton Farm fields. This has saved a significant manual /working party task.

13. Defibrillator Proposal

Following the offer of a loan defibrillator from Ettington CFR Team, it has been suggested to split the cost (expected £600) for the installation of the cabinet between the VHC and the Parish Council. The Diocesan Board have indicated they would prefer the box to be fitted to the north side elevation of the Village Hall Porch.

14. Nuisance Barking & Dog Notice

Following the review of the notice at the last meeting, it was suggested to BR by a resident concerned about it, that it would be better to leave the circulation of the notice to the Spring. It is proposed to undertake a circulation in April.

BR

15. Councillors' Reports and Items for Future Agendas:

BR reported, as a nearby resident, that it is now five months since SDC Enforcement were asked to investigate significant land and engineering works at the Little House. Meanwhile work has continued on the site and still no planning application has been submitted.

16. Date of Next Parish Council Meeting:

Monday 13 May 2019 to convene at the conclusion of the Annual Parish Meeting, which will start at 7.30pm in Village Hall

The meeting closed at 9.47pm

**Combroke Parish Council 18th March 2019
County Councillor's Report**

Administration – After the excitement of the Budget debate it has been quiet at the County Council. Five senior Officers are retiring from the County Council before the end of April and with Brexit uncertainties and the political purdah as a result of the forthcoming the District Council elections in four of the five County's District Councils in May is making major decision making difficult at the present time.

Budget - The Budget was set by the full council for the next financial year on 7th February 2019. The overall riding strategy has been two-fold: to grow the economy and look after the most vulnerable in our community. The economy in Warwickshire is strong and is now recognised to be the fastest growing region in the country. At 30% growth since 2009, this is double the rate in England and 10% higher than the midland region. The unemployment figure is at a record low of 1.8% and our employment rate is also at a record high of 80.7% which is 5% higher than the national figure. The task facing the local authority is to create an environment that is pro-business and an attractive place to live and work. By working with our partners and the districts and boroughs as well as maintaining excellent relationships as a non-constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority we have been very successful in attracting businesses and people to Warwickshire.

One example of this wider influence is the £80 million investment in the UK Battery Industrialisation Centre located on the Coventry/Warwickshire border which translates into jobs and rateable value for Warwickshire. In the autumn statement announced by the government Warwickshire will receive a one-off Social Care grant of £6 million plus £1.2 million for vulnerable pupils. With the principle of protecting the most vulnerable in our communities and the

investment that requires we shall increase the Council Tax by 3% with an additional Social Care precept of 2%. There have been no controversial reductions in the budget spending for next year. We are about to start the third year of a three-year plan which was originally set in 2017 where we mapped out how WCC was going to deliver services to the high standards our residents are used to and at the same time making savings of £67 million. To date we have achieved this target. Be assured that Warwickshire County Council has a sound financial basis and problems that have affected authorities such as Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire will not occur in Warwickshire.

The Fire Service – The County Council is the Fire Authority for Warwickshire and the recent inspection report is being assessed and an Action Plan will go to Cabinet. Most of the areas of concern relate to administrative and HR areas. The fire prevention and operations are rated Good. A new Chief Fire Officer is joining in April. Over the past years there have been initiatives to link up our Fire Service provision with adjacent authorities. Any merger is complex and this one has proved difficult. We are presently looking at a form of collaboration with West Midlands Fire Service. At present there is a national debate regarding a combined Blue Light service.

Public Health and Adult Care – The County Council held a Public Interest Debate recently on the subject of combined working between Health and Adult Services. This topic has been on the national agenda since Public Health was transferred back to local government nearly 10 years ago. It was clear that one of the major problems is communicating between authorities and the conflict between sharing information and breaching personal privacy (Human Rights). There are moves towards integrated working which will need support and legislation from the government. The Director of Public Health retires next month and an interim appointment has been made until a permanent position has been filled.

Finances - The County's revenue finances are in a healthy state with sufficient contingency reserves to cover any foreseen events. Future income streams are unknown as the movement away from Government Grants towards Business Rates as a source of funding is continuing with pilot schemes in some authorities. Council Tax continues to be capped although ring-fenced increases are allowed to meet specific budgets. There is an interim Director in post until a permanent replacement has been appointed. The capital budget is mainly allocated to Schools and Highway projects to meet the population increase.

Schools - The County Council's responsibility with respect to education, has been diluted since the introduction of Academies and Free Schools. It is the County's responsibility to ensure there are sufficient school places to meet the needs, that pupils can access their local school and that there is sufficient provision of "Good" education for those with Special Education Needs. There are only two Secondary Schools in the County that are not Academies.

Highways - It is noticeable that a number of road closures and traffic disruptions are currently taking place. There are a large number of housing developments, all requiring additional utility services and road improvements, which are adding to the congestion.

I will keep the Parish Council informed if there are any decisions that will have an affect on the Parish Council.

Cllr Chris Williams
Member for Kineton and Red Horse Division
17.03.2019