

The Minutes of Abberley Parish Council  
Held At Abberley Village Hall Committee Meeting Room at 7.30pm on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2018

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Present: Cllr R T Nott (Chairman), Cllr C Knight (Vice Chairman), Cllr N Kedwards, Cllr K Andrew, Cllr G Crompton, Cllr A Eden, Cllr J Gibson, Cllr R Goodman, Cllr A Juckes,

In Attendance: County Councillor Dr Ken Pollock, Mrs H Stack, Clerk

Item

027 Apologies District Cllr P Cumming, advised the Council that he was unable to attend this meeting. His apologies were accepted.

- 028 Declarations of Interest
- a. Register of Interests. Councillors are 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.
  - c. To declare any Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.
  - d. Written requests for the council to grant a dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) are to be with the Clerk at least four days prior to a meeting.

Councillors who have declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, or an Other Disclosable Interest which falls within the terms of paragraph 12(4)(b) of the code of conduct, must leave the room for the relevant items. Failure to register or declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest may be a criminal offence.

**No Declarations of Interest were received.**

029 Adjournment / Public Question Time The meeting was adjourned for Public Question Time. Mrs H Stack addressed the meeting asking for an update on what was being done to deter speeding in and around Abberley and specifically close to the area that she and her neighbours resided in.

Brief notes may be appended to the Minutes as an aide memoire in the case of an adjournment for Public Question Time. See Appendix 1 (and item 032.c)

030 Minutes The Minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2018 were **approved**.

- 031 County & District Councillors Report
- a.1 County Councillor Dr Ken Pollock's report is appended to these Minutes (Appendix 2).
  - a.2 SWDP (South Worcestershire Development Plan). Cllr Kate Andrew asked about the County Council's input into the SWDP as it was her impression that it was a District led project. County Councillor Pollock assured her that the County Council were inputting in to the SWDP despite the fact that it does not carry their name.

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County Councillor Pollock observed that money from the finance element of a developer's commitment to a project was being directed toward infrastructure construction. Responding to Councillor Knight's question about the location of sources of infrastructure funding, County Councillor Pollock commented that housing development and infrastructure moved hand in hand.

b. No report had been received from District Councillor Paul Cummings.

032 Progress Reports

a. Neighbourhood Watch. (Cllr Kedwards)

a.1 The West Mercia Rural Police Newsletter has been circulated and posted up onto the website.

a.2 SMART Water. The Clerk was asked to chase this matter up.

b. Neighbourhood Plan. (Cllr Knight)

Hallow Parish Council have offered guidance on the consultancy process having already been through this route themselves. They had been formally thanked for their advices.

The interviews are scheduled for April 2018. A draft application has been made for the grant to fund the Neighbourhood Plan process. Cllr Richard Goodman volunteered to sit on the selection committee with members from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

The business questionnaire is awaiting feedback.

The date of the next meeting is 7.30pm Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2018.

c. Cross-Parish Council Working Group, A443 Issues (Cllr Kedwards)

Cllr Kedwards and Cllr Symmonds (Great Witley and Hillhampton Parish Council) had attended a meeting with representatives from the Safer Road Partnership (SRP), to discuss traffic management / speeding issues.

The SRP outlined their position in that they have only 110 visits a week available across the entire area that they cover (Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, Warwickshire and Worcestershire). The SRP meet quarterly with Highways and West Mercia Police to see how they can improve safety and reduce speeding.

Whilst Clows Top Road is on the Safer Road Partnership's site list, their resources are stretched and priority is given to known accident blackspots that have resulted in one or more fatalities.

Councillors felt that this approach needs to be challenged because of the proximity of the village school to known areas of poor driver behaviour and that prevention should carry a much higher weight in their considerations for resource allocation. Whilst 20 mph limits close to the school were desirable, the problem of denoting the specific area was a challenge faced by many parish councils.

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Councillors also felt that a motor bike presence rather than the difficult to park large white van could be used to more effect in Abberley.

The question of Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) had been visited on a number of occasions and again this remained a question of Cost /Benefit. The high financial outlay for a small parish such as Abberley would need to be met by the residents, however other Parishes and most noticeably the Transport Research Laboratory had sufficient experience and research to stress that VAS units were effective only for a very short number of weeks whereinafter poor driver behaviour came back to the fore.

County Councillor Pollock noted that Great Witley have not found the relatively recent installations of the VAS units to be of help and this was a situation that other Parish councils had also discussed informally with members of Abberley Parish Council.

Councillor Jim Gibson suggested that an approach to community funded Speed Cameras be investigated, especially in relation to traffic travelling through Abberley to reach places such as Pensax.

Councillor Ning Kedwards noted that in the South Worcestershire Development Plan there was no transport budget until after 2030 for engineering works to address issues such as those being experienced on the A443 and in Abberley.

The problem with large vehicles and smaller vehicles travelling at speed along routes such as the B4202 Abberley/Pensax causing strong vortexes was also discussed, especially in relation to the small pavements and the danger presented to pedestrians.

d. South Worcestershire Rural Communities Programme (Clerk)

The Clerk informed the meeting that the door knock was due to take place during the week beginning March 26<sup>th</sup> 2018, with 16 addresses in the village being selected for contact.

e. Abberley Parish Council Website Management (Clerk)

The Council gave their thanks to the retiring Webmaster, Cllr Godfrey Crompton who'd been responsible for creating and developing the new parish website which was launched in 2017. His extensive time investment had been given voluntarily and the Clerk, who was now responsible for maintain the website, had been handed a carefully constructed site.

033 Highways The Clerk had received no new reports relating to Highways at the time of the meeting. She had not yet received a firm date as to when the various works on Bank Lane were due to commence.

a. Response to Mr J Miles. The Clerk was asked to draft a response to Mr Miles.

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- b. The Clerk was asked to investigate the availability and cost of 30 mph wheelie bin stickers and to report back to a later meeting.
- c. There are 2 x blocked drains on Wynniates Way which may require jetting.

034 Planning and Related Matters

- a. Report from the Planning Sub-Committee. No updates from current planning applications.
  - a.1 Cllr Goodman observed that the development site former owned by Mr Fiello had been sold on. The location and size of the site may present challenges to any developer's site traffic with regards to safety management.
- b. South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) Councillor Briefing. Cllrs Andrew and Knight gave an update on their attendance at the SWDP Councillor Briefing which was held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March.
  - b.1 It was recommended that the Parish Council keep a close watch on developments with the SWDP. Whilst reviews are scheduled every 5 years, it will be important to watch for changes that impact Abberley specifically and more general for items such as village categorisation and development site reviews, which could drive changes that would influence the Neighbourhood Plan. In addition, one of the primary topics at the Briefing were diverse expressions of concern relating to infrastructure and the apparent lack of provisioning, by the prioritising of housing development over a more holistic or integrated approach to infrastructure growth.

035 Finance

- a. Confirmation of payments made. **Noted.**

Mins	Item	Description	Payee	Amount £
21.02.18	026.c.1	Clerk's Salary (Month 11)	Kym Wild	-323.08
21.02.18	026.c.2	Office Allowance (Month 11)	Kym Wild	-16.00
21.02.18	026.c.3	Expenses Claim Black Ink Cartridge for printer	Kym Wild	-22.49

- b. Confirmation of receipts. **Noted.**

Mins	Item	Description	Payor	Amount £
21.03.18	035.b.1	Gross Interest (Funds on Deposit)	HSBC	0.90
21.03.18	035.b.2	Gross Interest (Car Park and Foot Path Funds)	HSBC	1.61

Mins	Item	Description	Payee	Amount £
21.03.18	035.c.1	Clerk's Salary (Month 12)	Kym Wild	-318.28
21.03.18	035.c.2	Office Allowance (Month 12)	Kym Wild	-16.00
21.03.18	035.c.3	PAYE Deduction due to HMRC (on line payment required via Kym Wild)	Kym Wild	-4.80
21.03.18	035.c.4	Expenses Claim (Month 12) 2 x reams of white photocopier/printer paper	Kym Wild	-8.00
21.03.18	035.c.5	Lengthsmans Claim to 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2018	Andy Johnson	-132.00

c. Payments to be made. **Confirmed**

d. Arrangements for financial year end, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.

d.1 Delegated powers for expenditure approval was given to the 2017-18 Budget Sub-committee for the period 22<sup>nd</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2018.

d.2 Internal Audit Arrangements. Mr Kevin Gittins had previously indicated his availability to conduct the internal audit, the re-appointment had been made and the Clerk and Mr Gittins had been in conversation to make preliminary arrangements.

d.3 External Audit Arrangements with PKF Littlejohn LLP  
All Parish Clerks in the Worcestershire area had been contacted by PFK Littlejohn LLP's via WorcCalc, to advise them that PFK Littlejohn's did not possess their contact details and this accounted for the delay in receiving the external audit paper work. The Clerk had responded immediately and Littlejohn's had affirmed that they were now in possession of Abberley Parish Council's official contact details.

036 Register Of Interest and Guidance on Gift to Councillors  
Malvern Hills District Council. Councillor's Register of Interest and Guidance on Gifts to Councillors.  
All councillors confirmed that they had received and read the guidance on gifts to Councillors from MHDC. All Councillors were requested to bring their Register of Interest(s) up to date.

037 Training  
Society of Local Council Clerks Training opportunity (CiICA – Certificate in Local Council Administration).  
The Clerk indicated her interest in reviewing the training option for recently introduced by WorcCalc, for the above certificate. The cost of training sessions would be £20.00 and it was agreed that the Clerk could attend the next available session and would then report back.

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- 038 Councillors, Clerk's Reports and items for future agenda
- a. Reports from Councillors on items not covered elsewhere
    - a.1. Councillor Godfrey Crompton raised concerns regarding the new wheelie bins which had been issued to deal with the new fortnightly collection pattern.
    - a.2. Councillor Alan Jukes asked if any update on the Bank Lane project could be obtained.
  - b. Reports from the Clerk on items not covered elsewhere.
    - b.1 Village Hall Committee. On the day of the meeting an approach had been made by the Village Hall Committee with regards to the future management of the Village Hall Committee in relation to their challenges with succession planning. This item will be scheduled for the upcoming April meeting to give it a proper discussion slot.
    - b.2 Nora Parsons Day Centre. The AGM for the Day Centre is scheduled to be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May at 7pm. Councillor Richard Goodman may be able to attend to represent the Parish Council.
- 039 Date of next meeting
- Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2018<sup>st</sup> 7.30pm Committee Room, Abberley Village Hall.  
Chairman Trevor Nott, Councillor Godfrey Compton and Councillor Kate Andrew gave their apologies for being unable to attend the next meeting.

The Chairman closed the meeting.

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**Appendix 1 – Item 029** - The meeting was suspended for public question time.

As the matter brought to the meeting is linked to item 32.c, please read the notes recorded in the main minutes under that item.

## **Appendix 2 – Item 031 a. - COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

### **1. County Council affairs**

March the 1<sup>st</sup> brought the dreadful and totally unexpected news of the death of our interim chief executive, Steve Stewart. He was only 64 and had made a huge contribution since starting last May, when our previous CE, Clare Marchant had left to run UCAS.

Steve was just coming to the end of his service with us, before our new permanent Chief Executive, Paul Robinson started work this week on the 19<sup>th</sup> March. He has been the Chief Executive of Derby City Council, where he has run a unitary authority with a large budget and staff, comparable to this county.

As I reported last month, we have recently recruited other senior members of the management team. They are the Chief Finance Officer is Michael Hudson, from Wiltshire, the Chief Commissioning Officer is Andrew Spice from Sussex, and the Interim Director of Adult Social Care Services is Avril Wilson from West Sussex.

While there was never planned to be a handover period with both men in place, Steve's death casts a bit of a shadow over Paul's new job in Worcestershire. We wish the whole team well in getting started in post, and providing the vision and leadership needed for the large County council staff, and all those in the County that rely on the council for services and encouragement.

Some people have questioned why so many senior staff have left at this time. In each case they have gone on to bigger and better jobs, indicating we had chosen high flying people originally, and that their careers had been advanced by their service in the County Council.

## **2. Tenbury Public Realm**

The bad weather has delayed the completion of the Public Realm work in Tenbury. The latest news is that the red tarmac which was supposed to be starting tonight, Monday the 19<sup>th</sup>, will now not be scheduled until next week, the 26<sup>th</sup> – assuming our weather returns to normal. The road will be closed from 19.00 and will open again at 06.00. This operation should only take 3 nights, and the 20 mph roundels will be painted on the road surface at the same time.

There are still one or two items of street furniture outstanding as Tesco has not yet fulfilled all its obligations under the S278 agreement it signed. As a result, the County is having to apply for release of some of Tesco's bond, to cover the outstanding work, and it does mean that the raised table outside Tesco's will not be replaced next week.

## **3. Speeding**

I note that a resident compares Abberley unfavourably to Great Witley with regard to speeding through the village. You need to be reassured that your neighbouring councillors are equally concerned about speeding and claim that the VAS and occasional (not "most weeks") presence of SRP camera vans have little effect.

Nevertheless, while the Safer Roads Partnership lists a large number of sites where it deploys its equipment, the B4202 through Abberley is not mentioned on its website. While I know their resources are greatly stretched, it might be worth approaching them about stationing one of their vans or motorcycles along the road at some times. Deterrence can be effective, whatever Great Witley thinks.

You may know of a small consortium of parishes on the A443 that are currently arranging a meeting with a senior County officer to discuss a novel approach to reducing speeding in villages. You may wish to join that group and I can put you in touch with them if you wish.

## **4. Infrastructure and Housing**

I note that my colleague Cllr Paul Cumming is concerned that the SWDP does not address the question of appropriate infrastructure developments needed when extra houses are planned across the SWDP area. Please be reassured that the County is well aware of the needs brought about by such developments. By the same token, the SWDP is a District Council document and infrastructure is a County Council responsibility.

Appropriate measures come in a number of forms. To take two extreme examples, the latest development of houses in Great Witley was contingent on the builders supplying the three VAS units now deployed. Also, the dualling of the Carrington Bridge and causeway to Powick is dependent not only on £54.5 million from the Department for Transport, but also in the region of £7 million from the developers of the South Worcester site, where MHDC have just approved the building of 2,400 houses.

At County we are acutely aware of the infrastructure needs of the whole area when developments take place. Major schemes are planned in certain circumstances. Minor adjustments are needed elsewhere. County highways are statutory consultees in all such developments, and their judgments can halt some planned changes.

Last Wednesday, I addressed a CALC meeting for Bromsgrove parish councils on the problems of infrastructure in the face of extra housing developments, particularly considering Birmingham overspill and the concern for the green belt. There are no easy answers, but we are keen to find the best solution in each case.

**Cllr Ken Pollock, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire 21.03.18**