

The Minutes of Abberley Parish Council

Held at Abberley Village Hall Committee Meeting Room at 7.30pm on Wednesday 21 November 2018

Present: Cllr C Knight (Chairman) Cllr R Goodman, Cllr G Crompton, Cllr T Eden, Cllr J Gibson, Cllr K Andrew, Cllr A Jukes, Cllr T Nott.

In Attendance: County Cllr Dr K Pollock, District Cllr P Cumming, Temporary Clerk (Janet Gittins) and newly appointed Clerk (Carole Hirst).
13 Parishioners.

- | Item | | |
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| 094 | Apologies | Apologies were received from Cllr N Kedwards. |
| 095 | Declarations of Interest | Cllr T Nott declared an interest in Agenda Item 7. His house overlooks one of the sites earmarked for possible development in the SWDP. |
| 096 | Minutes | Proposed Cllr T Nott, seconded Cllr R Goodman and all agreed to adopt the minutes of meeting held on 19 September 2018. The Chairman signed them as a true record. |
| 097 | Democratic Period/ Public Time | <p>The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited questions from the parishioners.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about areas offered for inclusion as possible development sites as a result of the SWDP Review and the fact they were not contacted about these inclusions. It was pointed out if more parishioners had been notified, more would have attended the meeting.</p> |
| 098 | Reports (District and Council Councillors) | <p>District Cllr P Cumming explained the public consultation exercise relating to the SWDP plan which started on 5 November 2018 and finishes on 17 December 2018. The Malvern Hills District Council will consider comments and issues and options will be assessed to help to inform the next stage of the Plan, which will include site specific development proposals, which will be the subject of another round of public consultation, likely to be in November 2019. A final report will be published for consultation and submitted to the Government's Planning Inspectorate for public examination in 2020. It is hoped a revised SWDP will be approved and published in 2021. Village boundaries and village categories are being discussed and members of the public are invited to identify and put forward suitable sites for development. These sites will be made public shortly. Officers will look at each site to ascertain whether it is practical to build on. If the sites pass the first stage it will then go forward to the next stage i.e. the Policy Review. Some members of the public may support building more houses on the outside boundary of towns, rather than in villages. He pointed out that houses should only be built if local residents require them. This is where the Neighbourhood Plan comes into effect. He considered there was nothing to be concerned about at the present time. One of the problems with housing in villages is the lack of bridges across the River Severn and at the moment four Parish Councils suggest that the roads and other infrastructure must be in place before the new houses are built. The closing date for consultation is 5.00 p.m. on Monday 17 December. The consultation policies can be found on the website under the SWDP details and policies and he urged parishioners to look at this site. He pointed out that it is important the deadlines are met.</p> |

Concerns were raised by Parishioners that no information has been forthcoming. Cllr Cumming reported that information can be obtained by attending Malvern Hills

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District road shows, the Parish News and the Malvern Hills District Council website.
www.swdevelopmentplan.org

Consultation on the Draft Plan will commence next year and members of the public and the Parish Council can make their views known.

It was proposed by Cllr T Nott and seconded by Cllr T Eden, and all agreed, that we join forces with the Little Witley Parish Council and three other local Parish Councils in responding to the call for sites for the SWDP to consider the road infrastructures before any developments are chosen. Parishioners were encouraged to write to the District Council now with their views by using the following website:
www.swdevelopmentplan.org

County Cllr Dr K Pollock suggested that his report should be placed on the Parish Council website. He stated that the economic development in the County is going well and more jobs are becoming available. However, wages are lower than in other parts of the Country. There are a large number of developments starting in Worcestershire as a whole, not least the new railway station at Parkway, which should be completed in June next year.

A plan is in place to build a new bridge over the River Severn and a causeway between the Ketch and Powick roundabouts, with a substantial contribution via S106 from the 2½ thousand houses that have been approved by Worcester City Council and Malvern Hills District Council. He stressed that housing development must be considered alongside road development. He recognised that concerns have been raised about the capacity of the bridge at Holt Heath, but there was no likelihood of a new one being built between Holt and the City in the next 15 years. The recent restoration work on the bridge has resulted in it being strong enough to take any level of traffic that might arise.

- 099 Planning No plans have been submitted for consideration.
It was noted that outline planning permission has been granted for The Walshes Farm, but that there are several matters which need addressing before full permission is granted; one of these is that consideration should be given to the power lines and sewerage plant in relation to the proposed positioning of houses. The current design offered does not fulfil the requirements made by the SWDP.
- 100 Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Cllr K Andrew stated that this group has not met since September, however a meeting is due to be held on 28 November, when a Consultant, David Nicholson, will be looking at housing needs assessments together with housing design elements in the parish, which is included in the SWDP Policy Review. It was agreed that the Parish Council's response to the SWDP should be handled by the Neighbourhood Plan Committee and the response submitted by 17 December 2018.
- 101 SWDP The Chairman noted that there were real concerns relating to the SWDP. She urged Parishioners to look at the Parish Council website, notice boards and also to discuss this with their local Councillor. The Chairman and Cllr K Andrew agreed to produce posters for the website and noticeboards. She urged Parishioners to write to the District Council expressing their concerns.

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102 Finance

Finance (Mr Kevin Gittins, Internal Auditor)

(a) Report on Internal Audit (Responsible Financial Officer changeover).

Kevin Gittins confirmed he had completed an audit and full reconciliation as at the end of August 2018 following the changeover of the temporary Clerk and everything was in order. He reported that the temporary Clerk had distributed a copy of the Receipts and Payment Financial statement for the five-month period to 31 August 2018.

(b) Receipts and Payments Report for the 7-month period ended 31 October 2018.

Kevin Gittins reported the Clerk had distributed a copy of the Receipts and Payment Financial statement for the seven-month period to 31 October 2018. Appendix 1 contained a summary of the receipts and payments for the seven month period. Total receipts amounted to £16,279.69, which included the second instalment of the Precept amounting to £4,600.00. The total payments for the seven-month period amounted to £6,915.04. Appendix 1 showed the latest bank balances which had been fully reconciled to the accounting records. Appendix 2 contained a detailed breakdown of the individual receipts and payments which support Appendix 1.

He then referred to Appendix 3, which contained a forecast of the financial position as at 31 March 2019. The estimated total receipts amounted to £17,461.09 and the total payments amounted to £10,669.04. When the forecast payments are compared with the budget for the financial year of £18,486.00 there is balance of £7,816.96 remaining to be spend, which includes £5,169.25 that relates to Neighbourhood Planning. He reported Appendix 3 would be a useful document in planning ahead in preparation for the 2019/20 Precept, which the new Clerk confirmed need to be approved by the Council at the January 2019 meeting and submitted to the Malvern Hills District Council in February 2019. The new Clerk recommended the Finance Committee need to meet as soon as possible to prepare a budget for 2019/20 and to review the Financial Reporting structure. (A meeting has been arranged for Friday 7 December 2018).

(c) Payments to be authorised which are outside the approved Budget.

Kevin Gittins reported there were no payments made which were outside the approved budget, since the last meeting of the Council.

(d) Annual Governance Report and Accounts.

Kevin Gittins reported PKF Littlejohn LLP, the External Auditor, had written to the temporary Clerk on 30 September 2018 confirming the results of the audit of the 2017/18 Annual Governance Report and Accounts, which will need to be discussed in more detail, together with a review of Governance arrangements at the next Finance Committee. Regrettably, two errors had been found, namely:

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1. £73 relating to a Rural Grant had been included in the Precept amount, which should have been treated as Other Receipts.
2. £649 being the cost of a new laptop and printer for the Clerk had been included in Staff Costs, which should have been treated as Other Payments.

The new Clerk agreed to upload the following documents onto the Parish Council website, in order to comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234):

1. Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2017/18
2. Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2017/18
3. Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2017/18

The letter from PKF Littlejohn LLP, the External Auditor, also included a timetable for the 2018/19 Annual Governance Report and Accounts. However, he advised the Parish Council approving a Certificate of Exemption, which would remove the need to have an External Auditor and save the Council £200 per year. Kevin Gittins reported he had discussed this matter with the new Clerk who had already successfully completed this task for several of the Parish Councils she is responsible for in 2017/18. It was agreed this matter would be discussed at the next Finance Committee.

(e) **Internet Banking Update (Cllr Tony Eden).**

Cllr T Eden stated that now the new Clerk had been appointed this matter would be discussed at the next Finance Committee.

- 103 Correspondence
- (a) Ongoing pollution incident in Abberley Village -Suffolk Lane
The Environment Agency reported they had written to all the residents in the area asking them to check their drainage and septic tanks. Cllr K Andrew suggested the Environment Agency be contacted suggesting a revised letter should be written before it is placed in the Parish Magazine. All agreed. One of the Parishioners stated that they lived in this area but had not received a letter from the Environment Agency. The temporary Clerk agreed to follow this up.
 - (b) Grit Bins – Newsletter from Worcestershire County Council
Parish Councillors are asked to email the new Clerk with any proposed sites for new grit bits. A new grit bin with an initial fill will cost £227. Delivery of salt is £140 per 1 tonne bag.
- 104 Councillors Reports and Items for Future Agenda
- (a) Cllr T Nott reported that a hedge was overhanging and required cutting in Suffolk Lane. He agreed to give the new Clerk the exact location.
 - (b) Agenda item for the next meeting:
 - (i) To reconsider the number of Parish Council meetings held per year.
 - (ii) Cllr R Goodman reported that the Booking Clerk for Abberley Village Hall was

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retiring and a replacement is now required. All agreed to discuss this at the next meeting.

- 105 Clerk's Report The temporary Clerk introduced the new permanent Clerk, Carole Hirst. Carole's start date is 21 November 2018.
- 106 Vote of thanks Votes of thanks for Cllr T Nott (Ex-Chairman) and Kym Wild (Ex-Clerk)
- (a) Cllr T Nott gave a vote of thanks to Kym Wild for her excellent work as Parish Clerk and for her invaluable support to Janet Gittins (temporary Clerk). He thanked Janet Gittins for standing in until a new Clerk was appointed and gave a very warm welcome to Carole Hirst, the new Clerk, and wished her well in her new role. He also thanked the new Chairman, Cllr C Knight, all the best in her new role.
- (b) The Chairman gave a vote of thanks to the outgoing Chairman, Cllr T Nott, for his outstanding work throughout the last seven years. She pointed out his vast experience will not be lost as he is continuing as a Parish Councillor.
- 107 Date of next meeting The next meeting of the Parish Council was confirmed as Wednesday 16 January 2019 at 7.30pm in the Committee Meeting Room of Abberley Village Hall.
- The meeting closed at 9.22 p.m.

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