



Present: Cllr. Tassell (Chair), Cllr. Eden; Cllr. Eberlin; Cllr. Jukes, Cllr. Birchall, Cllr. F Doyle; 1 Vacancy.

In Attendance:—2 members of the Public.

Minute Reference	
875	<p>Note Apologies:</p> <p>Cllr. J. Ballard, Cllr. Sarah Field, WCC Councillor David Chambers; Cllr. Paul Cumming (MHDC Councillor; Cllr. Pam Cumming (MHDC Councillor)</p> <p>Absent: None</p>
876	<p>Declarations of Interest: Cllr. Birchall declared an Other Disclosable Interest in item 882. Cllr Tassell advised since the publication of the agenda the matter was now in hand and no further discussion was currently required. The item was therefore withdrawn from the Agenda.</p> <p>Cllr. Eberlin disclosed an “Other Disclosable Interest” in 878 as she resides on Suffolk Lane.</p>
	<p>Democratic Period/ Public Time –</p> <p>Abberley Hills Preservation Society – Is interested in item Apostles Meadow (Section 106). AHPS offered their support to the project and also requested the opportunity to present a tree when the time is appropriate.</p> <p>Update covered under item 883.</p>
877	<p>Approval of the Minutes</p> <p>Cllr. Cllr. Eden Proposed and Seconded by Cllr. Birchall that the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Abberley Parish Council on the 20th November 2024 was a true record. All in favour.</p>
878	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeding Issues on Stockton Road and within the Parish are ongoing. The Police reported to the Clerk that Thursday 16th January they would be conducting a enforcement day of spot check with a camera across the Malvern Hills area. They intend to try to achieve this more often. • Lengthsman’s Update – a report of the work undertaken by the Lengthsman during November was circulated prior to the Meeting. Suffolk Lane drainage issues was discussed.
879	<p>PC Molly-Ann Smith, West Mercia Police attending to introduce herself and discuss any issues.</p> <p>Police submitted their apologies. It was hoped they would be able to attend the next PC meeting.</p>
880	<p>County and District Councillor Reports Appendix 1</p> <p>Cllr. Cumming MHDC – Appendix 2</p>



	Cllr. Chambers WCC Report: Report attached as Appendix 1.																																																
881	<p>Finance</p> <p>a) To approve payments from 21st November 2024 to 15th January 2025. Cllr. Tassell proposed and Cllr. Eden seconded that the payments be approved. All in favour.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td colspan="3">Payments list January 15th 2025</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Abberley Village Hall- Nov meeting 24/25/076</td> <td></td> <td>£ 17.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IN2OUT Lengthsman Nov 24</td> <td></td> <td>£ 231.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C Hirst Dec salary</td> <td></td> <td>£ 732.20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HMRC Clerk Tax Dec plus outstanding NIC</td> <td></td> <td>£ 530.24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IN2OUT Lengthsman Dec 24</td> <td></td> <td>£ 218.62</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Farlow Farm Nursery Ltd- planting - Green Spaces from allocated reserve grant</td> <td></td> <td>£ 2,783.88</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C Hirst- clerk expenses to 15th Jan 25</td> <td></td> <td>£ 49.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cooks Garden Centre - Gift/Chairman's Budget</td> <td></td> <td>£ 36.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C Hirst - Jan Salary</td> <td></td> <td>£ 732.20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HMRC Clerk tax and employer NIC</td> <td></td> <td>£ 204.69</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>£ 4,598.44</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">RECEIPTS upto January 15th 2025 not previously reported</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WCC Lengthsman Nov</td> <td></td> <td>£ 231.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>WCC Lengthsman Dec</td> <td></td> <td>£ 218.62</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL RECEIPTS</td> <td></td> <td>£ 449.62</td> </tr> </table> <p>b) To note the Bank Reconciliation on 1st January 2025. Noted.</p> <p>c) To Note the Budget report on 1st January 2025. Noted.</p>	Payments list January 15th 2025			Abberley Village Hall- Nov meeting 24/25/076		£ 17.00	IN2OUT Lengthsman Nov 24		£ 231.00	C Hirst Dec salary		£ 732.20	HMRC Clerk Tax Dec plus outstanding NIC		£ 530.24	IN2OUT Lengthsman Dec 24		£ 218.62	Farlow Farm Nursery Ltd- planting - Green Spaces from allocated reserve grant		£ 2,783.88	C Hirst- clerk expenses to 15th Jan 25		£ 49.50	Cooks Garden Centre - Gift/Chairman's Budget		£ 36.00	C Hirst - Jan Salary		£ 732.20	HMRC Clerk tax and employer NIC		£ 204.69			£ 4,598.44	RECEIPTS upto January 15th 2025 not previously reported			WCC Lengthsman Nov		£ 231.00	WCC Lengthsman Dec		£ 218.62	TOTAL RECEIPTS		£ 449.62
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881	<p>Planning –</p> <p>Notification of Planning Appeal - APP/J1860/W/24/3350677- M/23/01309/OUT- Land At (Os 7566 6597) Worcester Road Great Witley- Outline application for the Construction of up to 90 homes, formation of access from Stourport Road, construction of new internal roads, footpaths and cycle links, sustainable drainage features, areas of open space, landscaping, habitat creation and</p>																																																



	associated works and infrastructure (with means of access to be considered at this stage and all other matters reserved)- The Hearing will take place on 11 March 2025 at 10am.
882	To discuss Long Meadow Planning Enforcement Complaint. Not discussed at the meeting as it had been followed up by Cllr. Tassell prior to the meeting, the matter was currently in hand between the relevant parties and required no further discussion at this meeting.
883	<p>Apostles Meadow (Section 106) Update report: Cllr. Eberlin</p> <p>The good news is that the 30 orchard trees are ready to lift at the end of January.</p> <p>On Saturday 1st February Abberley residents will be encouraged to .. “Bring a spade and probably your wellies as the field is very muddy. Something to drink- maybe a hot flask? We will provide some cake.</p> <p>The holes will be marked and prepared for us so not too much hard work! We do hope you will come and join in. The primary school are also invited to a separate day during school hours to plant trees and join in with the locating of bird/bat boxes.</p> <p>You will see the hedgerow is nearly complete and will be woodchipped to keep the grasses down- although we may need some help looking after this. Thanks to planting team!</p> <p>The three arched shrubby zones next to the houses on the west side are designed to provide shelter and some privacy both ways - the path that walkers are using will be left in place with plenty of space to cut the meadow as required.</p> <p>You will notice some felling work in the last week of January on the trees deemed unsafe next to the path and also with advanced ash dieback. This will leave a space for new planting- so don't panic when you see this hole appear. Logs will be left in tidy piles to provide a habitat and then rot down to replenish the woodland's nutrients and the brash will be chipped so we can use this on the hedgerows or paths.</p> <p>We will need help with ragwort/thistle pulling in the spring and maybe attending to overgrown sections affecting the hedge, so please come and support the development of the meadow. Over time it should become a lovely space. We are grateful to the King's Coronation Fund for the trees and the bird boxes are provided by the Natural Network Fund with a contribution from the parish council.</p> <p>See you on the Saturday 1st February in the field, accessed by a track from Clows Top Road"</p>
884	<p>The ongoing concerns about excessive light spillage on the village square causing problems for wildlife and neighbouring houses etc infringing the Dark Skies Policy of the Parish Council Report by Cllr. Eberlin dated 14th Jan 25. was discussed and a further update provided.</p> <p>Jane, Manager from the Manor Arms PH had now made contact to say that they had spoken to electricians to get plans in place to resolve the matter. Cllr Eberlin to liaise further</p>



	Email from Great Witley PC regarding light spillage from Abberley Hall School. Cllr. Tassell to investigate with Cllr. Field to forward the contacts of the new site owners as displayed on their banners adjacent to the site to Great Witley PC.
885	Councillors reports and items for future agendas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDP to look at putting together a Working Group to take this forward. • Flooding on Suffolk Lane • Carbon Footprint within Abberley Parish. • Dangerous Dogs Suffolk Lane
886	Date of Next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council will be on 19th March 2025 at 7.30pm at Abberley Village Hall.

The Meeting closed at 20:26pm

Appendix 1 Cllr. David Chambers WCC Report.

I hope everyone had a very enjoyable Christmas and wish you all a very happy New Year.

1. I will continue to urge the construction of a replacement wall/permanent defence wall in Market Street, Tenbury, following the collapse of the original wall last year. WCC are obliged to liaise with the EA regarding its replacement.

I am concerned that the EA has not been entirely honest with us regarding progress of the Tenbury Flood Defence Scheme. I am working closely with the Cabinet Member for the Environment at WCC, who I hope will be able to give me a more detailed assessment of the actual situation, following a meeting due to take place this month. I will update you in next month's report, of any information I receive.

There appears to be a number of anomalies in terms of what we have been led to believe is the current situation and quite frankly, enough is enough. It is time we had the facts, good or bad.

2. Prior to Christmas the government announced major changes to how local government will operate in the years to come, following the publication of its White Paper. Nothing has been decided but the government's intent seems to be clear, and I would suggest these changes will happen.

I will try to outline the proposed changes and how these changes are likely to affect Worcestershire.

- a. The government wants to abolish District Councils and County Councils and replace them with one Unitary Council. This would mean that the six District Councils and the County Council in Worcestershire would all disappear to be replaced with one Unitary Council. Town Councils and Parish Councils will not be affected.
- b. The timeline for this is very short. The government want "letters of interest" by interested parties by 10th January 2025. It is my understanding that the government will make its decision early in March as to which counties will proceed in "the first tranche". If Worcestershire was in "the first tranche", it is likely that elections in May 2025 to the County Council will be cancelled and elections to the new Unitary Council may be held in May 2026.
- c. The above is further complicated because this is the first phase of the government's proposed changes. Once the counties have become Unitary Councils, the government then wishes to create Strategic Authorities. It is proposed that each Unitary Council will represent approximately 500,000 people; Worcestershire has 600,000. Strategic Authorities will be made up of a number of Unitary Councils (2 or 3), headed by an elected Mayor.

It is clear that there will be mixed views as to whether this is a positive change or a negative change. The government are not seeking any consultation period, at this stage, they are simply asking for



“letters of interest” by 10th January. I cannot tell you what the views of the six District Council are or those of other Parties, but I am happy to share with you, the view of the Conservative Members of the County Council.

- a. The Cabinet met to discuss the government’s proposals and we decided it was clear that these were not really proposals, they were changes which the government intends to implement. With the “majority” which the government has, then of course, any legislation would pass through Parliament with ease.
- b. We decided that if Worcestershire was to have any say in shaping its future, it is imperative that Worcestershire is in “the first tranche”.
- c. The Conservatives then held a Group meeting immediately prior to the Christmas break where the Group agreed with the views of the Cabinet.
- d. As a consequence, (I am writing this on 6th January), “a letter of interest” will be submitted to the government by the Conservative Group on or before 10th January.
- e. I am not aware if any other Groups within the County Council will do the same.

I hope you find the above helpful because I am conscious that any changes will affect us all.

The information above is impartial and as I understand the facts to be. My own personal view however, regarding Unitary Councils is a positive one. I have advocated for a number of years that Worcestershire would be better served by its excellent Town and Parish Councils at a local level, and by one Unitary Council (rather than 7 councils), at a more strategic level.

Appendix 2 Cllrs. Paul and Pam Cumming MHDC Report

WCC have applied to Cancel the County elections this year and form a Unitary Authority for Worcestershire. Parish and Town Councils will remain as is. Elections to take place in 2026 if this is agreed. Whilst the County Council is favouring one Unitary Authority for Worcestershire some DC’s would like to see two Unitary Councils, a North Worcestershire and a South Worcestershire.

All further requested papers have been submitted to the SWDP inspectors for the final examination.

The leader fo MHDC has resigned. The New leader is an Independent Cllr. The Council is currently run by a coalition made up from 7 Independent Cllrs. And 7 Conservative Cllrs.

Still issues on planning enforcement with MHDC. Especially the Hundred House at Great Witley. Any planning enforcement issues should be reported to Cllr. Paul Cumming who will pursue.