

Whixall Parish Council



Chairman: Ian Mercer

Minutes of the Parish Council's Monthly Meeting held on 10 November 2021 at Whixall Social Centre starting at 7:30pm

Present:

Councillors: I Mercer (Chair); J Spenser; B Harris; C Weedall; M Howard; M Evans
E Towers (Shropshire Council); P Broomhall (Shropshire Council)
Cllr Evans joined the meeting following co-option (at item 76/21).

Clerk: A Roberts

Members of the community: 2

Representatives of other bodies/ organisations: 2

71/21 Apologies for Absence
Cllr D Edgerton (holiday)

72/21 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
None declared

73/21 Public Participation

PCSO Hannah Lister attended the meeting and reported that since the last meeting there had been a road traffic collision on Rack Lane, a report of suspicious activity which might relate to poaching, issues with parking at Windmill Gardens and an incident involving a dangerously out of control dog. The Mobile Police Station had visited the parish and will visit again in December. There had been no issues relating to the three main concerns highlighted by the parish (anti-social driving near the school, dog theft and scams).

74/21 North Salop Wheelers

Andy Everett, Chair of NSW attended the meeting and gave an update on the current situation. His update included the following:

Whixall Parish Council was actively involved right at the start of the development of NSW. The organisation was badly affected by Covid-19 and at the AGM earlier this year a new committee was formed. This includes officers and area representatives. It is recognised that the constitution needs to be updated because officers and representatives can only be approved at the AGM. The next AGM is in 2022.

Whixall PC is not represented on the committee, but is recognised as part of the scheme, the aim of which is to enable people in rural areas to get to, for example, markets and events. It overlaps with the community car scheme. A Shropshire Council grant covers the costs for anyone who has a bus pass. Others pay a set fee.

Currently the fleet comprises 5 serviceable vehicles and around 20 other vehicles. The vehicles are old and an external mechanic is being used for their upkeep.

The organisation is aware that it needs to change its focus to meet wider needs.

Cllr Mercer emphasised that the parish council had made donations in the past and NSW would need to formally request a donation before February. He also suggested that information, including requests for drivers, could go in the 2022 parish newsletter.

Cllr Mercer thanked Andy for attending the meeting.

75/21 Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests
None declared.

76/21 To consider the co-option of a parish councillor

With the agreement of Members, the Chairman brought forward this item and members of the public were asked to leave the room. Following an earlier interview for co-option Cllrs Mercer, Harris and Spenser gave feedback to Members.

Proposed Cllr Mercer. Seconded Cllr Spenser. Agreed all.

Resolved: William Dafydd Meredydd Evans (known as Med) to be co-opted onto the Council.

Members of the public returned to the room. Cllr. Evans signed the required paperwork and joined the meeting.

77/21 Minutes of Previous Meeting

It was proposed by Cllr Harris that the draft minutes, of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 13 October 2021, were an accurate record. This was seconded by Cllr Spenser and agreed by all present.

The Chairman signed the minutes.

78/21 Reports

Shropshire Councillors

Cllr Towers and Cllr Broomhall provided a response in advance of the meeting (Appendix A).

Parish Councillors

Cllr Harris attended the recent meeting of the North Shropshire Area Committee of SALC where the ambulance service representative had explained the rationale behind recent station closures and the reasons why ambulance delays were so severe at present.

Clerk

The Clerk provided a verbal report (Appendix B)

79/21 Parish Matters

a) To receive a verbal report on behalf of the Social Centre Boundary Task & Finish Group

Cllr Harris reported that, following a site meeting in September and two rounds of emails, amicable discussions led to an 'in-principal' agreement on the extent of responsibilities regarding the site boundary and issues of maintenance.

The draft agreement was distributed prior to the meeting (Appendix C) and was presented by the T&FG to the Parish Council for acceptance. Once agreed by the PC, appropriate acceptance will be sought from the Social Centre Committee with each providing binding signed declarations of acceptance.

Cllr Harris noted that there was a remaining issue relating to formally agreeing the northern boundary which was identified in a previous planning application, and future works will include the sandstone wall, chain fence and gates.

Following a discussion around the legal standing of the agreement Cllr Spenser proposed acceptance of the proposed agreement. Seconded by Cllr Howard. Agreed by all.

Resolved: Subject to agreement by the Social Centre Committee, the maintenance agreement will be signed by the Parish Council.

b) To receive a verbal report on behalf of the Marlot LNR Task and Finish Group

Cllr Harris reported that the T&FG had now completed all actions that they could perform, the designation paperwork had been produced and the next step is for the Parish Council to complete the formal declaration. Once this is done, the work of the T&FG will be concluded.

The T&FG had recommended that the declaration should be published in two local papers. The Clerk queried this requirement and will confirm the minimum requirement.

Proposed Cllr Mercer. Seconded Cllr Spenser. Agreed by all.

Resolved: The Clerk will complete all necessary actions to declare the Marlot as a Local Nature Reserve.

Cllr Broomhall left the meeting.

Cllr Harris advised that one of the advantages of LNR status is that a wider range of external funding becomes available and in relation to this the PC needs to consider what happens in the future. In particular, is there a way to delegate responsibility within a tight remit whilst allowing the Marlot Conservation Group autonomy.

Proposed Cllr Harris. Seconded Cllr Weedall. Agreed by all.

Resolved: The Clerk will explore options for the relationship between the Marlot Conservation Group and the Parish Council.

Cllr Mercer placed on record the thanks of the Parish Council to the Marlot Conservation Group.

c) To receive an activity report for the Marlot

This was circulated by email prior to the meeting (Appendix C).

d) To approve the grants and donations web site and process

The Clerk explained that the web page was now live and a link had been sent to members. Members had not all been able to view all the information.

Proposed Cllr Harris. Seconded Cllr Howard. Agreed All

Resolved: Approval of the grants and donations web page will be approved by email.

e) To agree attendance at Wem Rural PC Meeting with the Police & Crime Commissioner

The Clerk reminded members that they had been invited to this meeting at Edstaston Village Hall on December 9th. Cllr Mercer raised the question of whether this meeting could go ahead during a pre-election Purdah period, because the PCC is a political appointee.

The clerk will contact Wem Rural PC and let members know if the meeting is going ahead.

80/21 Planning

a. To Consider Applications

Reference	Detail	Stance
21/04610/FUL	Erection of 2no. local need dwellings with detached double garages and parking including provision of vehicular access. Proposed residential development land south of Rack Lane Farm, Rack Lane	Support (no comment).

b. To Receive Planning Application Decisions

Reference	Detail	Decision
21/04340/CPL	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for the siting of a lodge for use as ancillary accommodation. Ladywell Farm, SY13 2RR	Certificate – Lawful
21/03360/FUL	Conversion of a former shippon to self-contained ancillary residential accommodation. The Fields Farm, Maltkiln Lane.	Grant Permission

21/03634/FUL	Change of use of agricultural land to residential curtilage and erection of two storey extension following demolition of existing agricultural building, with internal and external alterations. 3 Abbeygreen, SY13 2PT.	Grant Permission
16/02574/FUL	Erection of a local need dwelling. The Cottage, Alders Lane.	Refused

81/21 **Financial Matters**

a) To receive monthly bank balance record.

The Clerk advised the council of the council's bank balances.

DATE	ACCOUNT NAME	AMOUNT
31 Oct.	Current Account (Working Budget)	3,755.38
2021	Savings Account (Reserves)	10,551.25
TOTAL		14,306.63

b) To resolve to approve outstanding accounts

Orders for the payment of outstanding invoices and all payments approved remotely (under "Power to Spend" LGA1972 s.112(2) and 124(1)). As per the financial report of the Responsible Financial Officer/Clerk proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Spenser and agreed by all.

Resolved: The outstanding accounts should be paid and the payment transactions authorised by two authorised councillors.

Recipient	Reason for Payment	Amount	Power of Expenditure
Employee	Salary	£203.79	LGA 1972 s112
HMRC	PAYE	£135.60	LGA 1972 s112
NEST	Pension Contributions	£35.14	LGA 1972 s112
SJF Design/Print	Newsletter Printing	£124.00	LGA 1972 s112
Total		£498.53	

82/21 **To receive verbal report on predicted spending and review budget proposals for 2022/23**

A summary of predicted spend and proposed budgets (Appendix D) was distributed prior to the meeting. The clerk gave a verbal breakdown of the reasons for predicted outturn for each budget area.

For the 2022/23 budget, inflation has been set at 5% and the clerk went through the budget proposals. One area which will need some more work is future funding for the Marlot. The Clerk suggested that these discussions will need to tie in with any decisions about how the Marlot will be managed in the future.

Following a short discussion, the clerk agreed to review the figures for the January meeting to ensure that the precept can be set at a reasonable level. The revised figures will also take into account any predicted surplus from the current year.

Scheduled date of next meeting: **12 January 2022**

The meeting closed at 9.33pm

Report 3 to Whixall Parish Council by Shropshire Councillors Peter Broomhall and Edward Towers – November 2021

Dear All – Please find below our third written report (for October) as your Shropshire Councillors.

Rachel Robinson, Shropshire Council's director of public health in giving the latest weekly Covid update from Shropshire Council last Friday reports:-

"Although the figures for 22-28 October show another decrease in positive cases, we are already starting to see numbers increase again, and the number of people who are falling seriously ill and are needing hospital treatment is worrying. More recent data shows a huge increase in people at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals with COVID-19. The ongoing effects of the pandemic are being felt in our local hospitals and we must do everything we can to alleviate some of that pressure.

"If you threw away your face coverings back in July when the third Lockdown was lifted, now is the time to consider wearing one again in busy places. The little things we can all do to prevent the spread of the virus, like hands-face-space-fresh air, will make a real difference.

"Staying up to date with vaccines will also give you the best protection against COVID-19 and the flu. If you are eligible, please don't delay."

Regarding Whixall Parish, there is less to report with just monitoring planning applications coming forward and either being accepted or refused. There have been no road closures so far as we are aware.

We have not had another full Shropshire Council meeting since the 23rd September 2021 so nothing to report this month. The next one is in the diary for 16th December.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations – June 2022 – Some of you may know that we have been involved in the Wem Community Committee doing the outline planning for this very special weekend (unique!) next year. The minutes of the latest meeting are now in circulation. If you haven't seen them and would like a copy then let us know and we'll send you a copy. However, we need to stress that as yet there is no money in the budget for this programme of events, so it will need to be raised through public donations, grants and sponsorships as has happened previously at the 'successful Queen's Diamond, Golden and Silver Jubilees. **If you would like to donate, or sponsor to help finance the event, please contact Peter on 07885837606.**

The next committee meeting is on Tuesday 23 November 2021 at 7..15pm at the Wem Conservative Club, Noble Street, Wem. Everyone will be welcome. Please come along and give your views and any help with arrangements.

This appears to have been a much quieter month in Whixall Parish but we can assure you there continues to be matters 'bubbling away' that have kept us busy around the Division. We hope this brings you up to date with the key issues that have surfaced here. However, if there are other matters not covered, or you would like to raise then let us know.

Kindest regards,

Peter Broomhall and Edward Towers

Shropshire County Councillors for the Wem, Wem Rural & Whixall Division

Date: 9th November 2021

Clerk's Report: November 20211. Correspondence

A general complaint about mud on the road from farmers' vehicles. This was reported to Shropshire Highways and the complainant was informed that Shropshire Council is the Highway Authority. A highway technician made contact with the Clerk but no further details could be provided.

2. Bowling Club Lease

The Clerk has contacted Hatchers to give permission for them to discuss the details of the final invoice with the bowling club.

3. Retention Policy

In line with the retention policy finance information preceding 2015/16 will be destroyed. There will be a cost of approximately £20 for shredding.

Minutes have to be kept in perpetuity and the clerk will establish if they have to be in paper format.

Employers Liability Insurance Certificates are to be kept for 40 years. There appear to be a number missing but the risk is currently considered to be low.

4. Newsletters

These are now out with members for delivery.

5. SLCC Clerk's Manual

The latest version was produced in 2019 but the Council's copy dates from 2014. A new one is required and will cost around £50 (discounted because the Clerk is a member of SLCC).

6. New Code of Conduct

Shropshire Council has now signed up to the Code. Once an editable copy has been supplied the Code will be brought to the Parish Council for adoption.

Old Burial Ground / Social Centre Maintenance Boundary Task & Finish Group

Draft Declaration:

“on the boundary between the Old Burial Ground (OBG) and Social Centre (SC) specifically for the purposes of identifying precise responsibilities for grounds and property maintenance between the Social Centre Committee and the Parish Council”.

These notes to be interpreted with reference to the attached map: Declared boundaries.

Exclusions: all care, maintenance and up-keep of the Social centre building, in any form or material, and all of its utility services, specifically its septic and waste water requirements; the (current) two wooden sheds, and contents, in the NW corner of the grassed area; and the heating oil storage tank, its contents, and all fixtures and fittings. These remain the sole responsibility of the Social Centre and its Committee.

The Parish Council will: seven points

1. assume all responsibility for the complete area of grass, namely the old burial ground site; that area within the blue dashed boundary line
2. will be responsible for the boundary of stone and linked-chain fence, plus gates and any grass verges, marked by the purple dashed line on the southern boundary
3. should any other article, living or dead, be incorporated into this (purple dashed line) part of the boundary it too will become the responsibility of the Parish Council
4. will be responsible for the yew tree marked at point B
5. will be responsible for the large evergreen tree at point D
6. will be responsible for the northern site boundary – anything living or dead – shown by the dotted purple line (accepting there is a section of overlap between the yellow and purple dotted lines. The PC will be responsible for the absolute line of boundary and anything growing within this area of overlap)
7. be ultimately responsible for the eastern boundary, gold dotted line, although currently this is a devolved responsibility to the Bowling Club

The Social Centre and its committee will: seven points

1. assume full responsibility for the boundary marked by the dashed yellow line, namely the black rail fence and all gates and any grass verges, from the NW corner of the site to the yew tree at marked point B. (Should the yew tree be lost as a marker it will be assumed to be at a point intersecting with the boundary in line with the back wall of the Social Centre)
2. should any other article, living or dead, be incorporated into this part of the boundary (yellow dashed line) it too will become the responsibility of the Social Centre and its committee
3. assume full responsibility with respect to the oak tree marked A
4. be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the parking surface
5. be responsible for the controlled entry posts (two within the grass, and any further terminal attachments) and interlinking chains, set into the grass around point C.
6. be responsible for the northern boundary metal fence and gates, yellow dotted line, including the pathway/slabs that constitute the bowler's pathway i.e. that pathway permitting access for bowling club members. Regarding overlap between yellow and purple dotted boundary lines see #6 under Parish Council responsibilities.
7. The Social Centre and its committee will also be responsible for the required access to the septic tank facility should this be required, either directly or by others

Signed:dated.....on behalf of Whixall Parish Council

Signed:dated.....on behalf of Whixall Social Centre and its Committee

Marlot Conservation Group (MCG)

Work report to Whixall Parish Council for its meeting on 10 November 2021

There has been a phenomenal, burgeoning growth of vegetation, brought on by this year's weather conditions. The pond area became heavily overgrown and the MCG has spent many hours cutting it back. In anticipation of there being a vast quantity of vegetation to clear away, the team set to work building compost clamps to contain the waste. With posts donated by Natural England, two rings were formed into a rustic feature, with the intention of interweaving coppiced willow around the posts. The willow is being cut from trees on site, as part of the overall management strategy of The Marlot. The compost clamps are already quite full, ahead of the willow coppicing work.

The pond area has now been opened up sufficiently for task groups to gain access to commence clearing vegetation from the ponds themselves. The job will involve hand tools and waders and it is hoped that Natural England volunteers will be available to assist with this. In addition, if machinery, manpower and ecological advice can be made available, there will be some re-profiling of some of the ponds, as was done two years ago.

The grazier has informed us that his cattle are to be TB tested on 4th/5th November. Subject to that, electric fencing will be installed on site and a small number of docile animals will be brought in to browse the meadow areas. The main meadow has become heavily overgrown with re-generated willow, which will require intensive clearance work, once the cattle have done their job.

An application has been submitted to Shropshire Council for some saplings to be provided under its Free Trees scheme. Applications are being dealt with on a first-come, first-served basis and if successful, the trees will be planted as a hedgerow.

Whilst all this work is being done for the benefit of visitors, it is disappointing to note continued abuse of the site with dog-fouling and interference. Pond profile barriers have been deliberately dislodged, signage discarded and on 2nd November, there was evidence of an attempted camp-fire. As a result, the team will endeavour to patrol the site over the coming fireworks weekend.

This report has been compiled on behalf of the active team members of the Marlot Conservation Group, namely Tim Lamb, Graham Turnbull, Martin Spenser and John Piper. We strive to maintain at least a weekly visit, usually on a Tuesday, but the works programme sometimes gets disrupted by adverse weather conditions or other commitments. We remain hopeful that our membership may be swelled a little, once the site gains official recognition as a Local Nature Reserve.

Martin Spenser
November 2021

Summary of predicted current year spend and proposed 2022/21 budgets

Budget	21/22 Budget Value	Predicted Outturn	22/23 projected budget	Notes (inflation added @ 5%)
Staff costs	£4,870.00	£4,870.00	£5,056.00	May change - pay award for 21/22 is still pending
Administration	£911.00	£707.23	£2,165.50	
Election Costs	£0.00	£0.00	£1,000.00	Estimate Shropshire Council to advise value To be taken from earmarked reserves
Office admin cost	£55.00	£55.00	£75.00	Includes shredding costs
Travel costs	£0.00	£0.00	£67.50	Not previously claimed
social centre hire	£318.00	£112.00	£334.00	
communications	£90.00	£124.00	£135.00	
audit	£120.00	£0.00	£120.00	
insurance	£256.00	£344.23	£362.00	fixed fee with inflation added
Banking Costs	£72.00	£72.00	£72.00	
Subscriptions	£382.00	£417.00	£438.00	ICO fee included.
Grounds Maintenance	£1,858.00	£1,733.00	£2,376.00	
Grass Cutting Contract	£1,500.00	£1,375.00	£1,500.00	contract value
Marlot (equipment repairs)	£200.00	£200.00	£210.00	
Marlot (routine/equipment)	£158.00	£158.00	£166.00	Budget agreed in 2019
Marlot LNR Declaration	£0.00	£0.00	£500.00	N.Fund or General Reserves?
Training	£200.00	£90.00	£200.00	
Events	£350.00	£0.00	£370.00	
Chairman's Fund	£309.00	£300.13	£350.00	
Earmarked Reserves	£818.00	£818.00	£1,117.90	includes new Hollinwood Green Bench
Neighbourhood Fund	£110.89	£0.00	£1,937.14	Not new funding: Income (£1826.25) plus 21/22 budget to be slipped
TOTAL	£9,808.89	£8,685.36	£14,010.54	Includes election costs and Neighbourhood funding
Estimated Precept Requirement	£9,498.00		£11,073.40	to be updated once all budget values are identified