

Whixall Parish Council

Chairman: Ian Mercer

Minutes of the Parish Council's Monthly Meeting held on 12 February 2020 at
Whixall Social Centre starting at 7:30pm

Present:

Councillors: I Mercer (Chair); A Rawlinson; J Spenser; G Turnbull; A Hague; M Howard; D Edgerton;
J Broadhead

County Councillors: P Dee; C Mellings

Clerk: A Roberts

Members of the community: 2

Representatives of other bodies/ organisations: PCSO Hannah Lister (West Mercia Police)
Mike Crawshaw (Shropshire Wildlife Trust)

13/20 Apologies for Absence

R Harris

14/20 West Mercia Police Report

PCSO Lister gave a verbal report to members stating that there had been very little crime in the area since the last meeting. She highlighted the fact that there had been a number of trees down as a result of recent storms, but members of the public had helped with clearance. Cllr Turnbull stated that he had been in discussion about police visit to locations in the parish during March or April. This is to be confirmed.

15/20 Shropshire Wildlife Trust Update

Mike Crawshaw gave an update on the Marches and Mosses BogLIFE Project. He provided a written report (Appendix A).

16/20 Public Participation

Planning application 19/04305/FUL

An email, sent on behalf of a parishioner expressing concerns was read to the meeting along with supplementary information supplied by the parishioner. The parishioner, present, then responded to questions asked by the Council.

(This communication was taken under public participation as parishioners are not permitted to raise objections when the main planning application is considered).

17/20 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded of their obligation to declare any interests/ gifts/ hospitality:
None declared

18/20 Minutes of Previous Meetings

Meeting of Whixall Parish Council held on 8 January 2020:

It was proposed by Cllr Rawlinson that the draft minutes, of the meeting detailed above, were an accurate record. This was seconded by Cllr Spenser and agreed by all present.

19/20 Planning

a. Planning Applications Received

| Reference | Details | Parish Council Response |
|--------------|---|-------------------------|
| 19/04305/FUL | Whixall Marina Alders Lane Re-consultation on amendment. Proposed tourism development, including change of use of land to allow siting of up to 6no. luxury holiday lodges including conversion of existing buildings to holiday accommodation | Object with comments |

Comments for 19/04305/FUL

The Parish Council believes this is over-development of what is currently an open field and that the proposed individual units are too large. In addition, the Parish Council wants assurances regarding the adequacy of drainage and vehicular access and wishes to reiterate the request for assurance that lighting levels will be controlled, with minimum light pollution from the site. A committee decision and site visit are requested.

b. Planning application decisions noted

| Reference | Detail | Decision |
|--------------|--|----------|
| 19/04923/FUL | Erection of a one dwelling, for local needs, with detached double garage Land Opposite Yew Tree Cottage, Abbey Green | Refuse |

20/20 Clerk's Report

a. Correspondence

- The clerk reported that she had received a number of emails containing information to be circulated to members following the meeting:
 - Shropshire Council: Changes to Highways Management
 - SALC: Training Programme
 - Shropshire Council: Update on Place Plans (received from SALC)
- Two requests for funding have been received:
 - Whixall Primary School: Thanking members for inviting the school to take part in the Senior Citizen's Christmas Party and asking for a donation towards the installation of a running track to form part of a fitness trail that would be available to members of the community. The cost of installing the track is in the region of £16,500.
The Clerk advised members that the Council had donated £100 to this project at the start of the current financial year and consequently this request should be considered next financial year.
 - St Mary's CE Church: Requesting a donation towards the upkeep of the Churchyard.
The Clerk advised members that, unfortunately, a specific provision of the Local Government Act (1894) prevents a council from contributing to the affairs of the Church. The only exception to this would be if the Council was a burial authority, in which case the Local Government Act (1972) permits a contribution to the expenses of anyone else providing a cemetery. As Whixall Parish Council is not a burial authority it would not be legal to make a donation to the upkeep of the Churchyard.

The clerk will write to the PCC secretary and explain why the parish council is unable to meet this request.

3. The land registry has written to confirm that the Social Centre address has been removed from the record for the land leased to the bowling club. This had been requested by members.
4. A resident contacted the clerk, via the website, complaining about the road condition between Hollinwood and Tilstock. This correspondence was passed to Cllr Mellings who has contacted the resident and raised the issue with the highways team.
5. Shropshire Council have been asked to provide an update on the potential provision of a traffic mirror at Platt Lane Crossroads.

b. Actions Since the Last Meeting

All actions relate to item 10 on the meeting agenda.

c. Financial Matters

a) To receive monthly bank balance record.

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

| DATE | ACCOUNT NAME | AMOUNT |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| 29 January 2020 | Community Account | £5,303.27 |
| | Business Saver Account | £927.78 |
| TOTAL | | £6,231.05 |

b) To resolve to approve outstanding accounts.

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

Resolved: The outstanding accounts should be paid and the cheques signed by two authorised councillors

c) To review financial regulations

The clerk went through the proposed changes to the standard Financial Regulations template. Following discussion, it was agreed that the minimum spend level for the clerk should be increased from £50 to £100. It was also acknowledged that, in future, the bank reconciliation will be signed off by a councillor who is not a cheque signatory. Proposed Cllr Hague. Seconded Cllr Mercer.

Resolved: The revised financial regulations should be approved.

d) To resolve budget setting for 2020/21 financial year

The clerk presented the proposed budget, which exceeds the precept by £240 with the difference to be found from underspend in the current financial year or from the general reserve.

Proposed Cllr Hague. Seconded Cllr Turnbull.

Resolved: The proposed 2020/21 budget, as shown below, should be approved.

| Budget Item | Budget Value |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Staff costs | £4,600.00 |
| Administration | £897.00 |
| Office Costs | £52.00 |
| Social Centre Hire | £309.00 |
| Communications | £88.00 |
| Audit | £120.00 |
| Insurance | £256.00 |
| Banking Costs | £72.00 |
| Subscriptions | £350.00 |
| Grounds Maintenance | £1,650.00 |
| Grass Cutting Contract | £1,500.00 |
| Marlot | £150 |
| Training | £200.00 |
| Events | £350.00 |
| Chairman's Fund | £300.00 |
| Reserves | £793.00 |
| Earmarked | £ 793.00 |
| Total Budget | £9,140 |
| | |
| Precept | £8,900 |

d. Parish Matters

a. The Marlot – Asset Management Update

The grazing period has now ended. The wet weather may prevent an additional grazing period in the Spring. Recent work has focused on the back meadow which is now more open. The arisings have been burnt and saplings will be chipped in dry weather.

Natural England (NE) spent a day with volunteers excavating two ponds following a newt check carried out by Nicky Hunter. The ponds are now very deep. One pond has been left so as not to disrupt the ecology. Cllr Turnbull reported that a vast amount of debris had been removed from the ponds, including plastics, glass bottles, scrap metal items and broken glass which was in bags. NE volunteers are going to spend some time picking up the shards of glass.

Request for Additional Funding

Safety signs are now needed because the ponds are now open and deep. Cllr Turnbull will source these signs. He also reported that the Marlot Conservation Group would like some additional funding for wildflower seed. The funding will be discussed at the next meeting.

Local Nature Reserve Status

Cllr Turnbull suggested that the Council should set up a local nature reserve sub-committee comprising one representative from each of the following:

- Parish Council
- Marlot Conservation Group
- Natural England

The proposal to pursue LNR status and the proposal to set up a sub-committee will both be formally discussed at the next meeting of the Council.

The clerk was asked to write to Natural England to thank them for their ongoing involvement in work at the Marlot.

b. Annual Parish Meeting

It was agreed that the Marlot would be the topic for the meeting. Details will be agreed at the next meeting of the Council.

e. Councillor Reports

a. Parish Councillors

Cllr Turnbull declared a non-pecuniary interest and gave a report on behalf of the Social Centre Committee:

- There will be a bingo evening on 9 April
- The dog show on 14 June will feature an international judge (Frank Kane)
- The Chair of the Social Centre Committee has expressed concern that the clerk was given all the boundary information held by the Social Centre Committee over six months ago and no progress has been reported back to the committee. Boundary work is now required, including tree works and at this stage it is unclear who has responsibility for these matters.

b. Shropshire Councillors

Cllr Dee reported that she had taken a letter from Shropshire Fire Service to the Fire Service in Australia congratulating them on the level of work done recently with the very basic equipment used by volunteers.

Cllr Mellings circulated his report by email prior to the meeting.

Scheduled date of next meeting: **11 March 2020 at 7.30 pm**

The meeting closed at 9.17pm