

# Whixall Parish Council



Chairman: Ian Mercer

## Minutes of the Parish Council's Monthly Meeting held on 13 October 2021 at Whixall Social Centre starting at 7:30pm

### **Present:**

**Councillors:** I Mercer (Chair); J Spenser; B Harris; A Rawlinson; D Edgerton; C Weedall; D Edgerton; E Towers (Shropshire Council); P Broomhall (Shropshire Council)  
Cllr Edgerton joined the meeting at item 67/21.

**Clerk:** A Roberts

**Members of the community:** 0

**Representatives of other bodies/ organisations:** 1

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### **63/21 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr C Weedall; Cllr M Howard

### **64/21 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

None declared

### **65/21 Public Participation**

PCSO Hannah Lister attended the meeting and reported that there had only been one reported crime in the Parish during the current month. The police are aware of ongoing scam calls and are encouraging individuals to sign up for email alerts via 'neighbourhood matters'. The mobile police station will be in Whixall on 4 November – further information to be provided.

This was followed by a short discussion around concerns about drug dealing, mainly in the urban area.

Sergeant Tim Lever is the new Safer Neighbourhood Team Sergeant for North Shropshire.

### **66/21 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

It was proposed by Cllr Spenser that the draft minutes, of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 8 September 2021, were an accurate record. This was seconded by Cllr Rawlinson and agreed by all present.

The Chairman signed the minutes.

### **67/21 Reports**

#### Shropshire Councillors

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

Cllr Towers provided a verbal update from the recent Helicopter Liaison Group. He noted that all UK military helicopter pilots are now trained at RAF Shawbury.

#### Parish Councillors

Cllr Mercer and Cllr Harris attended the celebration for 30 years of the Whixall Moss project. Both the English and Welsh sides of the project were in attendance and it was described as very positive.

#### Clerk

The Clerk provided a verbal report (Appendix B)

### **68/21 Parish Matters**

#### **a) Social Centre Boundary Task & Finish Group**

Cllr Harris reported that the Group met at the Social Centre in September. The meeting was very productive and the proposed agreement will be brought to the November meeting

of the Council. He also highlighted the fact that other issues, not relating specifically to the boundary with the Social Centre, had been highlighted. These included the boundary of and with the bowling club site and possible third-party ownership of land adjacent to the social centre/Old Burial Ground.

b) Parish Newsletter

The 4 page version was selected. The Clerk confirmed that the printing costs were within the budget.

c) The Marlot

The Clerk reported that the LNR application has been accepted. The Task & Finish Group will meet shortly to plan the next stage of the process. Proposals will be brought to the November meeting of the Council.

d) Remembrance Sunday

The Clerk confirmed that the service will take place at St Mary's followed by an act of remembrance at the War Memorial.

e) Frequency of Meetings

Cllr Mercer explained that, as the Council had processes in place to enable it to function throughout lockdown, members should consider reducing the number of meetings held each year. The Clerk detailed the meetings which could not be removed from the calendar and explained that legislation had changed and online meetings were no longer an option. Cllr Towers asked the Parish Councillors to consider if reducing meetings would allow them to develop the role of the Council fully.

Proposed Cllr Mercer. Seconded Cllr Rawlinson. Agreed All.

**Resolved: The Parish Council will hold nine meetings each year. Meetings will not be scheduled for June, August or December.**

## 69/21 Planning

a. To Consider Applications

Reference	Detail	Stance
21/04242/FUL	3 Maltkin Lane Erection of extension and improvements to existing detached garage	Support with comment

Comment: It is unclear if this application is for a garage or a domestic dwelling. The Parish Council has concerns about references to bedrooms and a kitchen when these are not shown on the drawings. The application is supported if the following conditions are attached:

1. This is for domestic garage use only
2. Permissive development rights are removed

b. To Receive Planning Application Decisions

Reference	Detail	Decision
21/02737/FUL	Rose Farm, Ossage Lane Change of use of agricultural buildings to commercial and all associated works	Grant permission
21/01091/FUL	Land North of Platt Lane, Hollinwood Formation of new vehicular field access	Grant Permission
21/03419/VAR	Property known as Salisbury House, SY13 2NL Variation of Condition No 3 attached to permission NS/04/00001/FUL dated 22 June 2004 to include the substitution of a bungalow with 2 bedrooms in the loft based on the same foundation as is already constructed. The driveway to plot 1 to be tarmacadam for the first 25m from the main road, continuing in gravel to the frontage of the property and garage.	Grant Permission

21/03811/LBC	Altmans Lift Bridge Replacement of timber counter balance beams on a like for like basis and repairs to cracking on timber support columns using resin filler affecting a Grade II* Listed Building	Grant Permission
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- c) Shropshire Council Consultation on the Reduction in number of planning committees  
Members discussed the issues raised by the consultation. The Parish Council response can be found in Appendix C.

## 70/21 **Financial Matters**

- a) To receive monthly bank balance record.

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

DATE	ACCOUNT NAME	AMOUNT
30 Sept.	Current Account (Working Budget)	5,144.91
2021	Savings Account (Reserves)	10,551.25
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>15,696.16</b>

- 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 (RFO)/ Clerk proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Spenser and agreed by all present.

**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
C Jones	Grass Cutting Contract	£1,015.00	OSA 1906 s9 & 10
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1389.53</b>	

- c) To review bank authorisations/signatories

Proposed Cllr Harris. Seconded Cllr Spenser. Agreed All.

**Resolved: Cllr Rawlinson will be added as a third signatory on the bank accounts.**

Scheduled date of next meeting: **10 November 2021**

The meeting closed at 10.00pm

## Report 2 to Whixall Parish Council by Shropshire Councillors Peter Broomhall and Edward Towers October 2021

*Dear All* – Please find below our second written report (for September) as your County Councillors.

In a recent weekly Covid update from Shropshire Council that gives the overview for Shropshire, Rachel Robinson, Shropshire Council's director of public health, said:-

*We continue to see widespread community transmission right across Shropshire, which has led to a significant increase in COVID-19 cases. The majority of outbreaks are currently focused in places like schools where there are large groups of unvaccinated young people together, after previously low infection rates. Since the third Lockdown eased, the number of people in hospital with COVID-19 has remained high and I am sad to report a further seven deaths. The testing rate in Shropshire is higher than the national average, which means we are successfully finding the infections. This is key to stopping the spread. If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, no matter how mild, it's important to get a PCR test".*

Our 'Induction' training has moved on to 'Development' training and we have to fit this in with the Shropshire Council Committee's we have been allocated to as well as all the local 'case work'....so our diaries are becoming 'key' as we juggle with all our requests/commitments each week. Please bear with us if there is a delay in getting back to you, should you contact us.

**North Salop Wheelers (NSW).** The delayed 2021 AGM for North Salop Wheelers took place on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and a new committee comprising of 4 Officers and 4 Area Representatives was unanimously appointed to serve until the next AGM on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022. The new Chairman is Andrew Everett - ([andyeverett63@gmail.com](mailto:andyeverett63@gmail.com)). This in turn has unlocked immediate funding from Shropshire Council-amongst other sources, and means that other key decisions ranging from staffing to fleet renewal can now be considered to further stimulate the groups future. Behind them they also have the successful Shropshire Community Transport Consortium (CTC) who will offer them a range of practical support measures, as needed. Whilst there is a lot of work to be done, the future of NSW now looks to be very different, one aspect of which could be trialling a linear 'destination-focussed' mode of operation using parish council support as well as individual pick-ups through 'ring and ride'.

**Bus Back Better On-Line Survey.** We sent you an email on 28<sup>th</sup> August to give some details related to this. Shropshire Council conducted this on-line survey and extended the closing date until 17<sup>th</sup> September as they had such a huge response. They were expecting around 200 replies and it had already reached 2200 when I spoke to an Officer on the 9<sup>th</sup> September. It is part of the National Bus Strategy which is perhaps the greatest change to these services since 'deregulation' was introduced in the Transport Act of 1985 (ie transfer of operation of bus services from public bodies to private companies). As such it is very important that the public engaged with this to give their opinions as this may well help to improve the sparse situation we currently have locally. It may well also help volunteer transport groups such as NSW Wheelers going forward. We now await the results of the analysis of this survey.

### Full Shropshire Council Meeting....at Theatre Severn on 23<sup>rd</sup> September

It began with a very lively debate under 'Public Questions' as a result of over 1000 signatures (2100!) being received under the Council's Petition Scheme. The petition was to: ***'hold a full member debate on the rationale and impact of Kier and Shropshire Council's proposal to centralise the highways service by closing the two depots serving the east of the county. Members were asked to consider whether closing and selling off depots in Bridgnorth & Hodnet is in the interests of local residents and quality of service....and a vote taken on whether the proposed closures should go ahead or not'.***

Strongly held views with various pieces of evidence were expressed by many agreeing with this proposal, but the Administration (Steve Charmley-Portfolio Holder) countered these by saying the closure was only temporary (2 years) and being taken on the grounds of safety – as has been reported in the Press. **The vote was 24 in favour and 38 against.** It now remains to be seen as to how this will affect highway services and whether the closure is indeed temporary.

Then followed:

1. **Annual Treasury Report for 2020/21** (Gwilliam Butler-Portfolio Holder) that reported a £3.12m underspend, that will be needed to help plug the looming deficit gap that appears to be on the horizon!  
**Report of the Audit Committee to Council 2020/21.** Here a point was raised about the internal control of contracts such as Kier's when it was suggested that the ability for Shropshire Council to manage contracts seems to be poor. The request was made for the Audit Committee (Cllr Brian Williams-Chairman) to look into this. He said "a new sense of trust is developing with Kier" and the Committee will judge again in 6 months time; at the next Audit Committee meeting.
2. **Changes to the Appointment of the External Auditor – decided to accept whoever the Government Appointee is** for us, as has been our practice for the last 157 Years.
3. **Adoption of the Local Government Association's new Model Code of Conduct** that comes into practice from 1/12/2021 – **agreed unanimously.** As a result a request was made that we all show care in

regard to our dealing with social media, it can cause innocent reputations much harm in the public sector.

4. **Appointment of Monitoring Officer.** Due to the retirement of Claire Porter, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Tim Collard) is appointed to replace her on a temporary basis until the post is filled permanently following a selection process. [Agreed unanimously.](#)
5. **Allocation of Committee Seats and Appointments.** Due to one member leaving the Conservative benches over a point of principle after the August Council and then joining the Independent Group, a Committee seat has been taken from the Liberal Democrats and given to the Independent Group on a 'Housing Committee' to ensure political balance is maintained. [Agreed unanimously.](#)
6. **Various Motions were then debated:**
  - a) [Resolution agreed unanimously that Shropshire Council will seek to become an accredited White Ribbon Authority by March 2022.](#) Is about taking a stand against domestic abuse in line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, so protecting all in the home, particularly women and children.
  - b) **Active Travel that sought to promote this (Walking and Cycling provision) within Shropshire** by allocating a steadily increasing proportion of the Highways Budget (up to 10%) until 2025 to ensure adequate measures are put in place conforming to LTN 1/20. This is as a result of the Government announcing the establishment of Active Travel England as part of Gear Change. This body will be an inspectorate, funding body and statutory consultee within the planning system to press for adequate walking and cycle provision in all developments over a certain threshold. Lezley Picton (Leader of SC) said although the leadership supported 'Active Travel' as a laudable aim for us all, Shropshire Council couldn't at this stage commit to specific measures, with a looming budget deficit to fill. A lively debate ensued concluding with a vote of [23 for this motion, 27 against with 4 abstentions....and so it was lost.](#)
  - c) **The 'Shrewsbury Horseshoe' bus route.** This new route that goes around the town southern perimeter linking up the many bus services that come out of/go to the centre of town like joining the spokes on a wheel, has been discussed at Shrewsbury Town Council on 13<sup>th</sup> September and has many supporters – including Shrewsbury Town FC, the Bus Users Shropshire Group and the Zero Carbon Shropshire Group. It fits in with Government Active Travel policies and Bus Back Better Campaigns. [This was unanimously accepted.](#)
  - d) **Closure of Community Ambulance Stations.** The West Mids Ambulance Service is proposing to close stations across Shropshire because of costs and operational efficiency. They haven't consulted or advise Town Councils about this proposal. It was proposed that the Leaders (Lezley Picton) and Chief Executive (Andy Wigley) write to WMAS to express strong opposition to these proposed closures, as well as local MP's to make the Secretary of State aware of them. [This was agreed by all Councillors with 1 Abstention.](#) The Press has since confirmed that despite this the closures at Oswestry, Market Drayton, Craven Arms and Bridgnorth during the first week of October!
  - e) Motion of **support for Blue-badge friendly pedestrianisation.** Trials for this had been a success, 80% Businesses have requested this and there is support from Town Centre residents for Low Traffic Zones in Shrewsbury Town Centre. [This motion was passed.](#) The trial will recommence on 25<sup>th</sup> October, whilst reserving the right to change it/cease it.
  - f) **Motion calling for support for a Carbon Tax** to be applied to imports as well as domestic production and introduced UK wide by 2022. [This was defeated.](#)
  - g) **Motion regarding the 2021 Code Red for Humanity** that asks all directorates to address the Climate Emergency by a whole series of specified measures that combats the Climate Emergency with a 'revolutionary' approach. [This was agreed unanimously.](#)
7. Finally the meeting addressed the matters of **i) purchasing some affordable homes in the county, ii) 8. considering actions in the vicinity of Shrewsbury Pitch and Putt and iii) Shropshire Council's Civic Accommodation with regard to the Pride Hill and Riverside areas.** [These were all passed.](#)

Hopefully this brings you up to date with the key issues that may affect us here in Wem Rural Parish. If there are other matters not covered, or you would like to raise then let us know.

*Peter Broomhall and Edward Towers*

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

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021

**Clerk's Report: October 2021****1. Wem Rural PC Invitation**

Wem Rural Parish Council has for some time had concerns with rural policing. Although individual police officers are committed to their work, it is the strategic policy that the Council considers should be reviewed.

The Council has invited John Campion to a meeting to discuss his plans for the future and he has accepted. The Council would like to invite 2 Whixall Parish Council members to attend as WPC may well share the same concerns as WRPC.

The meeting is planned for Thursday 9 December at 6.30pm at Edstaston Village Hall.

**2. Community News**

Last edition will be December 2021. Essentially due to lack of resources (money and time). Email has been circulated for information.

**3. Election Costs**

Shropshire Council Elections Team are still working on the accounting following the May 2021 elections, they aim to send notification of the town/parish recharges during November 2021; invoices will be generated during April/May 2022

**4. Bowling Club Lease – Outstanding Payment**

The representative of the Bowling Club has not had a response from Hatchers to his request for a breakdown of the costs. Because this work was instructed by the Parish Council, the Clerk will contact Hatchers to give permission for the two parties to discuss the costs over the phone.

**5. Shropshire Council Tree Scheme**

SC has written to all town and parish councils offering them the opportunity to acquire native trees. Information has been passed to Martin Spenser to obtain his view on acquiring trees/hedging for the Marlot.

**6. Clerk's Employment Status**

In line with her contract, the Clerk gave an update of her current employment status along with details of a new part time post that she has been offered.



## Shropshire Council Consultation on Reducing the Number of Planning Committees

What do you think has been the impact of reducing the number of committees from three to two?

- Does this result in less informed decision making?
- Does this result in less representative decision making?
- Does this result in less emotive decision making?

**The three initial questions asked following the reduction of committees from three to two are secondary to questioning how these committees undertake their roles and conduct business. Reducing the number of committees has/will unavoidably lead to more delegation to Officers, with the resultant decision making, unavoidably, being less informed. We are concerned that Members (and by association, the parish council and residents) are being taken out of the decision-making process.**

**The role of Planning Officers appears to function without clarity and accountability and, if more planning decisions are devolved to Officers, without Member input, confidence in the planning system will be eroded. Once devolved there does not appear to be a right of appeal – by anyone, even if there has been statutory non-compliance – once an Officer has published their outcome(s). There is a requirement for an additional (fail-safe) consultation step prior to an Officer publicising their findings following a delegated action.**

How should elected members determine planning applications with strategic implications across Shropshire, but significant local impact, such as the North West Relief Road? Should this be by a local committee or by a strategic committee covering the local authority area?

**A strategic committee should cover the local authority area**

Do you think – or do think committee members – are more inclined to go with officer recommendations when they have less knowledge or connection to an area?

**Yes**

Do members feel that they are listened to by planning officers when they request applications go to committee?

**n/a**

What would help local members to be more involved in the decision about whether an application goes to committee?

- Would a pre-meeting with the committee chair and planning officer help? **Yes**
- Would direct links to planning applications streamline the process of reviewing applications? **Yes**

Parish and town councils: Do you think you are provided with sufficient planning training to put relevant planning reasons for refusal forward?

**No**

Should elected members be required to visit the site of a planning application before they make a decision about it?

**Definitely**

Are there any other comments or observations that you'd like to make?

**Although not directly linked to the question of planning committees, we would like to see planning enforcement more transparent. Once issues are passed to enforcement the PC does not know what, if anything, is happening.**