

WALFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Walford Parish Council



Held on Wednesday 15th March 2023, 7:30pm
At The Inn on the Wye

Present: Councillors Akers - Chair, Evans, Vine, Petersen, Cole, O'Brien, van Lienden, Francis, Chinn, Cole, Dolman and Curtis.

In attendance: N Richmond (Clerk), Ward Councillor Watson and members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Councillor Whelan - reason for absence was accepted.
2. **Written requests for dispensation and Declarations of interests:**

Declarations of interest were made as follows:
Cllr Cole Agenda items 10 & 10.1 pecuniary
Cllr Francis Agenda items 10 & 10.1 pecuniary
Cllr Drummond Agenda item 17 non-pecuniary.
No requests for dispensation were received.
3. **To consider minutes of the previous meetings held on Wednesday 18th January and Monday 6th February 2023.** The minutes were approved unanimously apart from the following councillors who abstained as they were not present at the meetings – Cllrs van Lienden, Drummond and Francis in respect of the 18th January 2023 meeting, and Cllrs Chinn, Dolman, Drummond and Francis in respect of the 6th February 2023 meeting. The Chairman signed both sets of minutes.
4. **Public participation session:**
 - 4.1 No representative from West Mercia Police was present so there was no update.
 - 4.2 Ward Councillor Watson having submitted her report which had been circulated she advised that in it she had referred to a pavement stone when she should have said kerb stone. She reported on the long outstanding issue of an unsafe retaining wall on footpath WA50. A Balfour Beatty engineer will visit the site and submit a report that Cllr Watson will share with parish council. She suggested that council's resilience plan should include the location of defibrillators in the parish. She reported that the Howle Hill Memorial Project was gaining momentum with local residents who will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the area. She sought council approval for a temporary barrier while work is undertaken on the site which was given. Cllr Drummond raised a question with her over the partial road closure at Kerne Lodge, in that the narrowing of the carriageway made it impossible for large vehicles to pass. It was suggested that the concrete barriers could be moved back by a metre which would ease the situation, and it was agreed as an action that Cllr Watson would take this up and the clerk would also. Cllr van Lienden advised that a large pothole in this section of road was likely to damage vehicles that could not avoid it, so it was also agreed that the clerk would report this.
 - 4.3 Reports from the Locality Steward had been circulated.
 - 4.4 Public participation session: three (3) minute limit per person (15 minutes maximum)
Dave Berry questioned the suggestion that the May meeting might be postponed until June and there was no mention of the Annual Parish Meeting. Cllr Akers advised him this would be discussed at the end of the meeting. Cllr Akers then advised council of a conversation she had had with Brian Charlton concerning the closure of the Phoenix Meadow access via KBCL, in which he said that his car had been struck by a vehicle at the Kerne Bridge junction next to his property, and considered the use of that access for agricultural machinery to be much more dangerous than access through the council's car park, and that we should seek advice from Balfour Beatty and the Police before closing the access through council land.
5. **Finance:**
 - 5.1 **To consider the £ 12,709 fees charged by PKF Littlejohn in relation to the AGAR objections.**

Cllr Chinn outlined council's position in disputing the charges and that a new request for more information as agreed by the finance committee had been sent to PKF Littlejohn. It was agreed unanimously that the outstanding balances of the three invoices would not be paid until more information was provided.
 - 5.2 **To consider and approve the payments on Appendix B.**

The payments except those in respect of the PKF Littlejohn invoices were **APPROVED** en-bloc.
 - 5.3 The council accounts as at 28th February 2023 were **APPROVED**.



WALFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Walford Parish Council

- 5.4 The updated assets register with new total of £38,622.63 was **APPROVED**.
5.5 The appointment of Jayne Dunstan of JD Accounting as internal auditor was **APPROVED**.

6. Personnel.

5.1 To receive an update on the appointment of the WCSS Co-Ordinator.
Cllr O'Brien reported that 9 telephone interviews had been completed and three good applicants identified. She advised that one candidate stood out, 'Rebecca' and proposed that Rebecca be offered the position. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Dolman and a unanimous vote in favour occurred. Cllr O'Brien will contact Rebecca and noted that two of the other applicants had expressed the wish to be involved in the support group which was clearly very positive.

7. Kerne Bridge Canoe Launch: To receive written reports and consider actions.

7.1. KBCL Maintenance Co-ordinator.

7.1.1. To consider the riverbank erosion quotations.

Cllr Petersen reported that he has been working hard to achieve the Environment Agency licence which will hopefully be confirmed very soon, and has put JPR Environmental on notice to commence work, and that they have pencilled in a start immediately after Easter. Council thanked Cllr Petersen for the great efforts he has made to reach this point.

7.1.2. KBCL Performance Management Checklist – update.

Cllr's Petersen and Cole have carried out a visual inspection of the site and not noted any issues. In conjunction with Cllr Whelan they will 'rationalise' the checklist to remove any duplication and ensure reasonable timings of checks.

7.1.3. To approve the insurance provider of Riversea Holdings.

The clerk has chased Charlie Baker for Riversea Holding's insurance certificates. Cllr Akers advised that she was in contact with Charlie to arrange a meeting of the KBCL working group before the end of March at which she would also request that Charlie provides insurance certificates that were due for renewal in February. Cllr Chinn advised that the RPI figure on which the management fees are calculated would be published next week.

7.2. CCTV update.

Cllr Whelan being absent this was held over for discussion at the KBCL working group meeting.

8. Projects: To receive written reports from the following projects and working groups and consider action:

8.1. Community Support Scheme Coordinator.

Cllr O'Brien reported that a coffee morning had been held in February. It is hoped that the new support group co-ordinator will re-invigorate activities at The Hub.

8.2 Police Liaison.

Cllr Whelan's report had been circulated no questions arose.

8.3 Safety & Environmental Working Group.

Cllr Akers advised that a meeting of the working group was overdue and would set one up.

9. Highways and public rights of way: To receive written reports and consider actions

9.1. PROW officer.

Cllr Evans reported that in conjunction with the 'Walkers are Welcome' group replacing stiles with gates Herefordshire Council are sending someone to pinpoint stiles to decide if they are in the right place. A circular walk around Bulls Hill mostly on Cllr Cole's land would benefit from the replacement of stiles with gates to make walking easier.

9.2. Lengthsman Co-ordinator.

Cllr Cole reported that the lengthsman having carried out ditch clearing at Deep Dean he would now jet the pipes as the final part of the work.

9.3. Drainage Grant (£4,339) – to receive an update and consider any actions.

The clerk reported that the £2,000 of the grant spent at Deep Dean had been received in the council bank account. Balfour Beatty have confirmed that the balance of the grant may be held over indefinitely to carry out work at Daycroft Lane. Following a meeting with a contractor at Daycroft Lane it was decided that the best course of action was to have a professional survey of the entire drain system to determine exactly where the pipes are and where they are blocked. The clerk has now contacted three different surveyors who have found the extent of the survey required beyond their capability but it was agreed he would continue searching for a qualified surveyor.

Cllrs Cole and Francis left the meeting.



WALFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Walford Parish Council

10. NDP: To provide an update and consider any actions.

10.1. To consider the report of the NDP steering group.

The report had been circulated. Cllr Dolman advised that the referendum date of 4th May would be put on the Herefordshire Council website very soon. She felt that council should not advertise the date in case it was perceived as attempting to influence the vote. She highlighted a report from Cllr Liz Harvey in the Herefordshire Council Leader's March Newsletter, about a development at Broad Oak covered by the Garway NDP which was refused at county level, then allowed at appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, and then defended by Herefordshire Council using the policy position set out in the NDP to the High Court. The High Court quashed the earlier appeal decision, and on reconsideration, the Inspectorate upheld the Herefordshire Council's decision to refuse the development on the grounds that it conflicted with the Garway NDP, which demonstrated the power of the NDP.

Cllrs Cole and Francis rejoined the meeting.

11. Planning:

6.1. To comment on applications for determination by Herefordshire Council:

P230450 Woodlands Coughton.

Cllr Drummond advised that as a lawful development council did not need to comment so it was agreed just to note the matter.

P230325 Windrush Howle Hill – two storey extension.

No councillors chose to comment. Cllr Akers proposed that council supported the application. This was seconded by Cllr Drummond and a unanimous vote to support took place.

12. Community Resilience Plan: To appoint a deputy resilience officer.

Cllr Petersen proposed that Cllr Cole be appointed as deputy resilience officer. This was seconded by Cllr Akers and a unanimous vote in favour took place.

13. Howle Hill Memorial Project: To receive an update and consider any actions.

A report had been circulated. No actions were required.

14. Councillor .gov.uk Email Addresses: To receive an update and consider any actions.

Several councillors still reported issues accessing their gov.uk e-mails. Cllr Akers suggested that it was best now to wait until after the election to resolve this as the councillors may change. The clerk is to contact Mark Millmore to ensure a new e-mail address is obtained for the new community support co-ordinator.

15. Leys Hill Junction. To receive an update.

Bill Cansdale advised that following the revised plan received from Balfour Beatty he had noted several inconsistencies between the proposal and what currently existed at the junction. He has queried these with Balfour Beatty and it is hoped that a response from them will be received and considered by the SEWG from which a proposal can be made to full council.

16. The Dam: To receive an update.

The clerk reported that a Herefordshire Council enforcement officer had visited the site and spoke to the owner of Atlas House, who advised him that the earth that had been moved partly onto council land was there only temporarily until landscaping took place. The officer did not feel that his intervention was warranted. The clerk has one quotation of £600 for registering the land in the name of the council. It was decided that he would obtain a second quotation and proceed with the less expensive of the two.

Cllr Drummond left the meeting.

17. Phoenix Meadow: To consider physical closure of the access from KBCL.

Following the decision of council to not allow agricultural machinery to use council land to access Phoenix Meadow, an e-mail had been received from Luke Freeman suggesting that council reconsider its decision. Cllr Petersen spoke to highlight the safety risks involved in using other access points, and proposed that council's decision be suspended until these safety risks had been investigated. He also advised that he had spoken to Charlie Baker of Riversea Holdings who told him he felt that council's decision would create more issues for the canoe launch than allowing the access using the council car park. Cllr Evans stated that Mr Freeman had never actually asked council to use the car park access, and that some of the statements made in his e-mail were inaccurate and misleading. Several councillors spoke including Cllr van Lienden who said that a risk would always exist and the access

WALFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Walford Parish Council



should be physically closed. Cllr Akers spoke in support of the position of Cllr Petersen. Cllr Cole proposed that the access point be physically closed. This was seconded by Cllr Vine and proceeded to a vote. The vote was five in favour of the proposal and six against so the proposal failed.

The time being 9.30 Cllr Akers proposed that the meeting be extended by 15 minutes in order to complete the agenda which was unanimously agreed.

18. Parish Council Elections – May 2023: To receive nomination forms.

The clerk advised that he had with him 13 sets of nomination forms one for each councillor to be handed out at the end of the meeting, and that he had a copy of the 1st March 2023 electoral roll so would be able to advise councillors of the details required for their proposer and seconder, who can be other councillors provided they are on the electoral roll.

19. Correspondence received.

The correspondence from Mrs Helen Warburg regarding the ditches on Bulls Hill was noted. Cllr Cole advised that these ditches would be the next in line for clearing by the parish lengthsman, and it was agreed that the lengthsman and Cllr Cole would liaise with Mrs Warburg to identify any particular ditches requiring action.

20. Items for next meeting agenda: (No discussion)

- 20.1. NDP
- 20.2. Leys Hill Junction
- 20.3. The Dam
- 20.4. KBCL & KBCL insurance
- 20.5. Use of Community Assets
- 20.6. Gov.uk e-mail addresses

21. Next WPC meeting: Wednesday 17th May 2023 Walford Village Hall.

The clerk's holiday in May was noted. Given the requirement to hold a meeting soon after the election it was decided to keep to the original meeting date and that the clerk would seek a stand in clerk for the meeting. It was also agreed that a separate Annual Parish Meeting would be arranged in early May.

The meeting finished at 21.42 pm.

Signed by the Chairman.

DATE Joanne Akers 17/5/2023