WALFORD PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the meeting of Walford Parish Council

Held on Wednesday 21st February 2024, 7:30pm
At Bishopswood Village Hall

Present: Councillors Akers (Chair), Evans, Petersen, Berry, Cole Simeon, Warburg, Corbett, Barnett, Terry, Vine, Llewellyn and Watson.

In attendance: N Richmond (Clerk), and 14 members of the public.

1. Apologies: To accept apologies and note reasons for absence.
Apologies were received from Sandra Cole who is unwell.

2. Declarations: To receive declarations of interest and consider any written applications for dispensation.
No written requests for dispensation received. Cllr Watson stated that she was a member of the HHMP Working Group as a resident. Cllr Simeon Cole declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 13 HALC, and also stated that he reserved the right to reverse any vote he made on planning applications should they be considered at Herefordshire Council planning committee.

3. To consider minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 17th January 2024.
The minutes of the meeting of 17th January were agreed by all as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Public participation session:

4.1. To receive an update from West Mercia Police.
No member of the police was present.

4.2. To receive a report from the Ward Councillor.
Cllr Simeon Cole stated that this item should be removed from agendas. He said that he would provide a quarterly written report and would answer questions about it submitted to him. Cllr Watson advised that in her experience of being Ward Councillor she felt it was the role of the Ward Councillor to also provide a verbal update at parish council meetings. Cllr Simeon Cole did not agree and the chairman agreed to take this item off the agendas.

4.3. To receive a report from the Localities Steward.
Reports from the Locality Steward had been circulated. No questions arose.

4.4. Public participation session: three (3) minute limit per person (15 minutes maximum)
Rosemarie Morgan-Watson handed round several copies of her suggested guidelines for the submission of plans by Riversea Holdings outlining any new developments planned for the following season, and the rationale behind them. The clerk will circulate to all councillors and the ideas will be considered by the KBCL Working Group before potentially being recommended to full council. Grahame Morgan-Watson asked Cllr Evans the footpaths officer about his e-mail enquiring if she agreed that it was acceptable to put wood chippings on footpath WA42 to assist with some slippery slopes. Cllr Evans had no objections but thought scalpings might be a better option. Mr Morgan-Watson then commented on the possible 20 properties that could be built on the Leys Hill NDP settlement area noting the large increase in traffic this would generate. He advised Cllr Berry that he had found the parish council minute relating to the council spending on the Kerne Bridge Canoe Launch. Cllr Berry advised that this was used as a yardstick for budgeting purposes. Mr Morgan-Watson then suggested that as there had been no Terms of Reference in existence at the recent meeting of the Kerne Bridge Canoe Launch working group, the meeting was therefore invalid and should not have been held. Cllr Akers advised that the working group, not being a committee of the council but a consultative group, Terms of Reference while helpful are not strictly necessary.

5. Finance:

5.1 To approve the payments on Appendix A.
Cllr Watson was concerned about the payment of the HALC/NALC affiliation and subscription payment, in that HALC had not held an AGM and lacked openness and transparency in its operational structure. Cllr Berry advised that council had already agreed and minuted that it would renew its subscriptions. On that basis Cllr Berry proposed that the payments be agreed en bloc. This was seconded by Cllr Corbett and all voted in favour.

5.2 To ratify the payments on Appendix A.
Cllr Berry then proposed that the two salary payments to be ratified were agreed. Cllr Watson seconded and all voted in favour.

6. Kerne Bridge Canoe Launch: To receive reports and consider any actions:

6.1. KBCL Maintenance Co-ordinator report.

Cllr Petersen reported that Natural England had provided permissions for the tree work to be carried out and extended the permission deadline to 1st March. Cllr Vine noted that National Grid had been using the access across council land to enter Phoenix Meadow to carry out its work in moving the overhead power lines underground but had not sought permission from council. Cllr Akers said that National Grid have statutory powers to enter and Cllr Berry advised that the agreement with Herefordshire Council under which the land was transferred had clauses that required the entrance to be open at all times for which this was no doubt the reason.

6.2. To receive an update on the improvements to access the permissive footpath (from Kerne Bridge to the Canoe Launch) directly from the Inn on the Wye.

Cllr Simeon Cole continues to chase the Herefordshire Council footpaths team for permission to create the opening. Cllr Akers suggested that as this seems to be taking an undue amount of time the clerk would also chase for an answer. Cllr Simeon Cole thought this unnecessary. The clerk said that if Cllr Simeon Cole provided him with the e-mail contact details he will chase them.

6.3. To receive an update on the conversion of the permissive footpath to a Public Right of Way.

Cllr Warburg reported that Herefordshire Council footpaths team are happy for the permissive path to become a PROW, but noted that the path was in part near a slope and it required that foliage be cut back such that walkers were not required to go too close to the slope. They also advised that a public footpath could not extend to cover any steps put in opposite The Inn on The Wye. Cllr Barnett offered to cut back the foliage and Cllr Simeon Cole said he would scrape and level the path to make it safer.

6.4. To approve one of two quotations to carry out tree works (Job 2) at KBCL for public safety.

Cllr Simeon Cole proposed that the lower of the two quotes (from Adrian Hope Tree Services) be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Petersen and all voted in favour.

6.5. To consider the notes of the KBCL Working Group meeting held on 31st January 2024 and actions arising, as follows:

6.5.1. To consider granting consent in principle for a pre-application planning submission by Riverseas Holdings for a structure that is mobile to be retained on site during the operational summer season replacing the existing café van.

Cllr Akers advised that the KBCL Working Group had discussed this matter at length and despite reservations from some residents (and support from others) it was agreed to proceed and allow Riverseas Holdings to develop more detailed plans for submission of a pre-application to Herefordshire Council. Cllr Berry suggested alternative wording and proposed the following: ‘Walford Parish Council resolves to grant consent to Riverseas Holdings Ltd, in accordance with clause 2.3.4 of the Management Agreement to submit a Pre-App planning application for a towable mobile structure to be retained on site during the operational summer season replacing the existing café van’. This was seconded by Cllr Simeon Cole and a vote taken with 10 in favour and 2 abstentions so was **PASSED**.

6.5.2. To investigate relocation of the existing electricity supply boxes to mitigate potential flood risk.

Cllr Akers noted that the electrical supply boxes remained unlocked and in any case should be moved to a safer location. The clerk is to contact National Grid to organise.

6.5.3. To consider the installation of collapsible bollards preventing vehicular access to the launch itself.

It was decided that the clerk, supported by Councillors Llewelyn and Cole would investigate the different types of bollards and report back to the next meeting.

6.5.4. To consider further remedial works to the Railway Buttress following receipt of approvals from Natural England and the Environment Agency.

Cllr Petersen advised that once the railway buttress had been de-robed a survey could be carried out to consider what re-pointing and reconstruction work was required. The clerk has provided Cllr Petersen with four stonemasons details to obtain quotations.

6.6. To consider the adoption of Terms of Reference for the KBCL Working Group.

Cllr Vine questioned who the stakeholders were in the Terms of Reference. Cllr Berry advised that this could be literally anyone. Cllr Vine suggested that within the terms of reference one of the objectives should be stated as ‘to assist Walford Parish Council to manage the site in an environmentally responsible manner’. Cllr Vine proposed that the terms of reference be agreed with this addition. This was seconded by Cllr Evans and all voted in favour.

6.7. To consider obtaining an updated independent Risk Assessment for KBCL.

Cllr Akers advised that in April 2022 council had commissioned an independent risk assessment of the Kerne Bridge site and that this risk assessment should be updated and renewed. Cllr Simeon Cole proposed that the company that carried out the risk assessment, Stellatum Ltd be asked to carry out the update. This was seconded by Cllr Barnett and all voted in favour. Cllr Watson expressed the view that with the removal of some diseased trees at Kerne Bridge consideration should be given to planting more trees.

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

7.1. Community Support Scheme Coordinator

No report had been received. Cllr Barnett will supply estimates for the creation of the path to the Hub which will require agreement from the village hall committee.

7.2. Police Liaison.

Cllr Corbett said there was no update from the police so it appeared there was currently no crime in Ross!

7.3. Howle Hill Memorial Project

7.3.1.To receive an update on the progress of the project.

A report had been circulated. It was reported that the grant application had not been successful as it was not considered to benefit a large enough section of the population. Other grant applications will be submitted. Cllr Barnett felt that there should be greater clarity of the work and costings and the plans may need rethinking as Walford Parish Council are responsible. Cllr Simeon Cole commented that three quotations should be obtained for the work. Cllr Watson advised that Freemans were contributing much of the work at minimal cost.

7.3.2. To consider Peter Dewhurst becoming the contact for the planning application to move the memorial cross.

Cllr Berry proposed that Peter Dewhurst be the main contact with Herefordshire Council regarding the planning application to move the memorial cross. This was seconded by Cllr Petersen and a vote taken 7 in favour 4 against and 1 abstention so was **PASSED.**

7.3.3. To agree that Walford Parish Council supports the concept of the D-Day80 event.

Cllr Watson advised that parish council was not being asked to contribute in any way just to register its support. Cllr Berry proposed that parish council support the D-Day event. This was seconded by Cllr Corbett and all voted in favour.

7.3.4. To consider cleaning the brass plaque on the cross.

Cllr Vine proposed, and it was agreed, that the plaque would not be cleaned at the moment until after the memorial had been moved and that the appropriate war memorial authority should be contacted prior to any work being carried out.

7.4. To receive an update on the Parish newsletter.

Cllr Akers apologised for not having completed the newsletter. Cllr Watson offered to help with its production.

7.5. To receive an update on the installation of defibrillators on Howle Hill and Bulls Hill.
Cllr Akers advised that the Howle Hill defibrillator had been installed and was working. It had been removed without permission by a resident who believed there was an issue with temperature control but this was not the case. Cllr Watson has obtained the defibrillator and will place it back inside the cabinet. A suitable location for the Bulls Hill defibrillator has been found on a metal pole. The clerk will order a further solar panel and Cllr Akers will contact the Balfour Beatty Locality Steward regarding the pole.

7.6. To note the proposal from Bill Bloxsome to submit an application to the 'Excellence in Plan Making Award' run by the Royal Town Planning Institute in relation to the Walford NDP Working Group.

This was noted as recognition for the excellent work carried out by the NDP Working Group.

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

8.1. PROW officer

Cllr Evans reported that Herefordshire Council are coming to look at WA66 and WA39 to make recommendations.

8.2. Lengthsman Co-ordinator, to include consideration of recommendations for Parish Lengthsman ditch clearing works and receive an update on the expenditure of £4,046 available under the current 2023/24 Lengthsman Scheme.

The clerk reported that with the current two invoices submitted by Terry Griffiths once those were re-invoiced to Herefordshire Council £3,800 of the £4,046 will be reclaimed.

8.3. To approve an instruction to the lengthsman to clear any obstructions in the drainage system at The Dam.

Cllr Simeon Cole proposed that the lengthsman be instructed to carry out the work. This was seconded by Cllr Akers and a vote taken with 10 in favour 1 against. Cllr Warburg asked that outstanding work on Bulls Hill should also be considered.

8.4. To consider a Lengthsman Parish Plan for 2024/25.

8.5. To consider amendments to the Lengthsman contract.
In respect of items 8.2, 8.4 and 8.5 Cllr Simeon Cole stated that he had a list of things that were wrong in the contract between WPC and Terry Griffiths and had asked for an extraordinary meeting to discuss them but had been denied (Clerk note: the minutes from the meeting dated 17th January, approved at item 3 above, show that while Councillor Cole had proposed a meeting to discuss the Lengthsman Contract, this had received no seconder). Cllr Berry advised that the contract had been presented to council in October 2023 and all had voted in favour of sending it to Terry Griffiths for his signature. It was decided that Cllr Warburg would work with Cllr Simeon Cole to address these matters. The clerk advised that he had spoken to Terry Griffiths about the contract and had drawn up the amendments to clarify certain things which he believed would enable Terry to sign it. Cllr Berry suggested that the contract be dated 1st April 2024 to enable the start date to fall in line with the new financial year.

Commented [JA1]: Nick - are you able to include this given Simeon's spurious and very vocal allegation against me?

Commented [NR2R1]: Yes of course !!!

8.6. To receive an update on the application for the Lengthsman scheme for 2024/25.
The clerk reported that he had sent an expression of interest for the scheme including matched funding and was awaiting receipt of the HC management plan form to complete and return.

8.7. To receive an update on the repairs to the Coughton bus shelter.
The clerk is chasing additional quotes for the work.

9. Planning:

9.1. To comment on applications for determination by Herefordshire Council - see Appendix B.

240309 Land north of Leys Hill - 2 dwellings including access and drainage.
Cllr Watson expressed a concern that the 8 windows involved would produce considerable light pollution that could have a negative impact on Lesser Horseshoe bats nesting in the area, and that there appeared to be no transport survey. She proposed that the application be approved with the addition of comments reflecting these concerns. Cllr Akers suggested that she provide a suitable wording and on this basis all agreed to support the application.

240366 The Queach, Leys Hill - Aluminium & Glass Greenhouse
Cllr Watson advised that there was no indication in the application of what the base for the greenhouse was to be made of, and that a concrete base would not be the most environmentally sensitive choice. All agreed to support the application with a comment concerning the base.

10. Leys Hill junction: To provide an update.
It was agreed to hold this over to the next meeting and take it as item 5 on the agenda.

11. Daycroft Lane: To receive an update.
It was agreed to hold this over to the next meeting.

12. The Dam

To consider lease or sale and expressions of interest.
It was proposed by Cllr Berry that council considers leasing or selling The Dam. This was seconded by Cllr Petersen and all voted in favour.

Cllr Simeon Cole left the meeting.

13. HALC: To consider:

13.1. The attendance of the HALC VC at the November meeting

13.2. The intervention of the HALC VC in item 8.4 (HHMP)

13.3. The process for appointment to the HALC Executive Committee (South Herefordshire)

Cllr Akers having received no answer from Lynda Wilcox the clerk offered to follow this matter up.

Cllr Simeon Cole rejoined the meeting.

14. To consider correspondence received.
The clerk will report the broken fence opposite the Inn on the Wye which resulted from the car accident there, where he attended and removed the debris. The photograph relating to the planning application was not supplied by any councillor and he will request the HC remove any comments ascribing the photograph to a submission of WPC. The clerk will obtain and copy the conveyance document from councils to provide to the person who requested it under a FOI request.

The time having reached 9.30 Cllr Akers proposed that the meeting be extended by 10 minutes – all were in favour.

15. WPC policy review update.

Cllr Terry expressed his continued concerns over the lack of respect shown by councillors to each other and how this is perceived by members of the public. He suggested that the council consider including setting out the values of the council in relation to its Code of Conduct.

15.1 To approve the following updated policies:

15.2 GDPR Policy.

Cllr Vine advised that the GDPR policy was almost impossible to understand and questioned whether a clearer policy existed. It was agreed therefore not to adopt the revised policy but seek a better version from NALC.

15.3 Reserves Policy.

Cllr Berry proposed that the revised policy be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr Petersen and all voted in favour.

15.4 Risk register

Cllr Akers advised that the risk register should include reference to the two other plots of land owned by parish council, The Dam and The Village Pound. Cllr Vine stated that the AONB should now be recorded as The Wye Valley National Landscape. With these two amendments Cllr Berry proposed that the revised risk register be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr Terry and all voted in favour.

16. Use of gov.uk e-mail addresses.

The clerk had received advice from HALC that it was good practice to use BCC in all council e-mail correspondence. Councillors unanimously did not agree on the basis that a proper audit trail would not be possible.

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

- **17.1. Leys Hill Junction**
- **17.2. The Dam**
- **17.3. Daycroft Lane drainage.**
- **17.4 WPC policy review.**
- **17.5 Conversion of the footpath from the Inn on the Wye to the canoe launch into a PROW.**
- **17.6 Defibrillators**
- **17.7 Coughton Bus Shelter**
- **17.8 HALC**
- **17.9 Lengthsman issues:**
  - **A) Parish Plan**
  - **B) Lengthsman Contract**
  - **C) Lengthsman scheme 2024-25**
- **17.10 Bollards for Kerne Bridge**
- **17.11 Removal of Cockshot Quarry from the assets register.**

18. Next WPC meeting: Wednesday 20th March 2024 7.30pm Bishopswood Village Hall .

The meeting finished at 21.40 pm.

Signed by the Chairman.

DATE ____