

WALFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Walford Parish Council



Held on Wednesday 20th November 2024, 7:30pm at Bishopswood Village Hall

Present: Councillors Akers (Chair), Berry, Evans, Warburg, Watson, Simeon Cole, Barnett, Field, Petersen.

In attendance: N Richmond (Clerk), 1 member of the public, PC Simon Hall of West Mercia Police and Parish Lengthsman Terry Griffiths.

1. **Apologies: To accept apologies and note reasons for absence.**
Apologies were received from Cllr's Sandra Cole, Robinson, Llewellyn and Vine whose reasons for absence were accepted.
2. **Declarations: To receive declarations of interest and consider any written applications for dispensations.**
No written requests for dispensation were received. Declarations made were as follows:
Cllr Watson agenda item 8.3 HHMP non-pecuniary as a member of the HHMP working group.
Cllr Simeon Cole reserved the right to change his vote in relation to any planning matters that might come before the Herefordshire Council Planning Committee.
3. **To consider minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 16th October 2024.**
The minutes having been circulated Cllr Akers asked if there were any comments. None being made Cllr Akers proposed that the minutes be signed as a true record of the meeting. This was agreed and Cllr Akers signed the minutes.
4. **Public participation session:**
 - 4.1. **To receive an update from West Mercia Police.**
PC Simon Hall reported that no issues had been reported in Walford in the last 30 days. Cllr Akers said she was aware of the police visiting a house in Walford and taking someone away, and Cllr Watson asked about incidents of domestic violence. PC Hall said that 'No Issues' meant incidents such as burglary, theft, vandalism – domestic violence could not be reported on due to the sensitive nature of personal information. He highlighted car key burglary where two incidents had occurred in Ross targeting high end expensive vehicles, and he advised people not to leave car keys in easily accessible places and if possible to keep them in foil lined containers as it is possible for keys to be 'cloned' without the need to break in to steal them, which the foil prevents. Cllr Watson asked about the numbers of incidents of domestic violence as council was interested only in the prevalence of the issue in Walford in order to determine if council needed to provide specific assistance. PC Hall said that he had not previously been asked for such data but he would see what he could provide the next time he attended parish council. PC Hall mentioned the engagement van visit to Walford Village Hall recently from which he had received comments about speeding through the village. He advised that occasional speed monitoring will be carried out and the results posted via 'neighbourhood matters'. The engagement van will be at Howle Hill by the memorial project on Sunday 1st December from 2pm to 3pm. PC Hall provided leaflets on anti-social behaviour which the clerk will put on the council website.
 - 4.2. **To receive a report from the Localities Steward.**
Weekly reports from the Localities Steward had been circulated. The clerk will enquire as to what work was carried out on the pavement near the Bishopswood War Memorial as the before and after pictures presented showed little difference.
 - 4.3. **Public participation session: three (3) minute limit per person (15 minutes maximum)**
The member of the public present had no comments to make.

The Parish Lengthsman being present Cllr Akers proposed that agenda items 8.3 Howle Hill Memorial Project, 9.2 and 9.3 be taken next which was agreed.

- 8.3. **Howle Hill Memorial Project.**
To consider the completion of the groundworks and receive an update on the planning application to move the war memorial.
Cllr Petersen outlined the work undertaken by parish lengthsman Terry Griffiths and his team to complete work ahead of Remembrance Sunday. There had been issues to overcome in achieving completion including a shortage in donated topsoil requiring an additional 40 tons and underground cables requiring covering with tarmac, and Cllr Petersen commented that it was usual to allow an



additional 10% on the budget for such a project to cover unforeseen circumstances. Cllr Watson commented on the number of people who said that the transformation was amazing. Terry Griffiths advised that any future projects should have a complete spec of required works beforehand. Cllr Barnett said that the project had too many people involved and no-one in overall control all the way through. A vote of thanks was agreed for Cllr Petersen and Terry Griffiths for completing the work on time. Given an overspend of £840 it was decided that the information lecterns would be placed on hold and Cllr Watson agreed to inform the supplier. The clerk reported that he had provided additional information to Herefordshire Council planning but they have responded that the block plan is not sufficiently accurate and side and front elevation plans of the war memorial are required. The clerk said he did not feel he has the skills to develop the required plans. It was suggested that Chris Barron could be approached to help with this. It was agreed that in order to satisfy the terms of the National Lottery grant the lecterns and moving the war memorial had to be completed by the end of May 2025, and that further fundraising would be undertaken by the HHMP Working Group to provide the resources to achieve this.

9.2 Lengthsman Co-ordinator: To receive an update.

Terry Griffiths advised council that he has been approached by Cobrey Farms to carry out drainage work at Cobrey House so if his team are observed there it is not work that Walford Parish Council are paying for. He advised that he requires a works order from council to carry out the uncovering of the area on Bulls Hill where sewage is appearing and for work under the old railway bridge near Walford Church. Terry also advised that he has told Herefordshire Council that he cannot complete the nominated drainage tasks for parish councils by the current deadline of March 2025.

9.3 To receive an update on the sewage discharges on Bulls Hill and Howle Hill.

The Herefordshire Council Environmental Health officer Anna Jordan attended the site with Terry Griffiths and concluded that once Terry has uncovered the area where the sewage appears they will visit the surrounding houses and put different coloured dyes into their waste to determine where the sewage is coming from. Once identified they will work with the property owner to resolve the cause of the sewage leak.

5. Finance:

5.1. To approve the payments on Appendix A.

Cllr Warburg pointed out that the latest accounts had expenditure on HHMP that was not included in the £840 overspend mentioned in the discussion of agenda item 8.3. The clerk advised that the expenditure was a payment to Walford Timber for hurdle fencing which has been cancelled and the funds now returned to the council bank account.

Cllr Berry proposed that all payments other than the HHMP payment to Terry Griffiths be agreed en-bloc. This was seconded by Cllr Warburg and a vote taken with 8 in favour and 1 abstention.

In respect of the HHMP invoice from Terry Griffiths Contracts TGC2970 for £15,282.80 plus VAT Cllr Warburg said that the overspend was a major problem. Cllr Field said that despite the overspend Terry Griffiths had carried out the work and should be paid. Cllr Petersen proposed that the invoice be paid. This was seconded by Cllr Field and a vote taken 8 in favour 1 abstention so was **PASSED**.

5.2. To ratify the payments on Appendix A.

Cllr Berry proposed that the payments made be ratified. This was seconded by Cllr Warburg and all voted in favour.

5.3. To receive the 31st October 2024 accounts and note the council bank balances of £ 27,006.69 (current A/c) and £ 22,256.81 (Instant Access Reserve A/c) as at 31st October 2024.

The accounts were noted. No questions arose.

5.4 To consider a draft budget.

The draft budget having been circulated any comments from councillors should be sent to the clerk for discussion at Finance Committee such that a final version is presented to the December WPC meeting for approval and a decision on the amount of precept to request for the 2025-26 financial year.

5.5 To elect a new chairman of the finance committee and appoint a councillor as a member of the committee to meet the numbers required.

Cllr Berry advised that for health reasons he is stepping down as Chairman of the Finance Committee but will remain a member of the Committee. Cllr Akers advised that Finance Committee would chose a new Chairman but another councillor is required to join the committee. Cllr Field volunteered to join as was unanimously approved.

5.6 To consider the report of Richard Abolins on the PCA Finance software.

Richard Abolins report highlighted several drawbacks with the PCA software and saw no advantages



over the current Solar Accounts software. Cllr Berry asked the clerk if he was happy to continue with Solar Accounts. The clerk said he was happy to do so and although the PCA software produces the AGAR figures in an automatic report the figures are not difficult to calculate. Cllr Berry proposed that council continues with Solar Accounts. This was seconded by Cllr Petersen and all voted in favour.

5.7 To authorise the clerk to raise internal transfers from the Instant Access Account to the Current Account as and when payments are made from reserve balances.

Council having instructed the clerk to move certain balances to the Instant Access reserve account this proposal enables him to raise transfers back as and when required. Cllr Berry proposed the adoption of the measure. This was seconded by Cllr Barnett and all voted in favour.

6. Leys Hill Junction Traffic Calming: To receive an update

Cllr Akers advised that the meeting with Herefordshire Council Traffic Management, Cllr Simeon Cole, Cllr Barry Durkin (Cabinet Member for Highways), herself and the clerk has now been fixed for Tuesday 26th November at Bishopswood Village Hall. The clerk will ask Bill Cansdale to attend.

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

7.1 KBCL Maintenance Co-ordinator report.

Cllr Petersen reported on the positive recent meeting of the KBCL Working Group. The most urgent work on site is the renovation of the steps down to the river but Cllr Petersen said this would probably have to wait until winter river levels had receded. He will put a proposal together and Cllr Berry will put together a new National Lottery Grant application pointing out that it can only be submitted after the existing HHMP grant has ended. Additional benches are required and the clerk is to obtain quotations.

7.2 To consider the actions arising from the KBCL Working Group meeting on 17th October 2024, in particular:

7.2.1 Proposed updated wording to existing Signage.

Cllr Akers has circulated a proposed wording which she will ask Charlie Baker to confirm. Cllr Warburg felt that the wording should include reference to Bishopswood Village Hall but a majority thought that there was sufficient other signage for the hall. Cllr Akers proposed that the wording be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Evans and a vote taken with 6 in favour 2 against so was **PASSED**.

7.3 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 reported that he has a meeting next Tuesday to progress the matter so this will be put on the next agenda.

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

Cllr Warburg advised that there was nothing to report.

7.5 To consider an instruction to Stellatum Ltd to update the councils KBCL risk assessment and combine this with a review and update to Riversea Holdings risk assessment in order that the two risk assessments are in line.

Cllr Berry questioned whether this could be carried out by someone on the council however nobody had offered to do this and Cllr Akers said that the councils risk assessment would require updating anyway. Cllr Watson proposed that the proposal be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Field and all voted in favour.

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

8.1 Community Support Scheme Coordinator

No report had been submitted and Cllr Barnett said there was nothing new to report.

8.2 Police Liaison.

Cllr Robinson had been delayed and could not attend the meeting.

8.3 Howle Hill Memorial Project.

See above.

8.5 To receive an update on the installation of a defibrillator on Bulls Hill.

In order to allow the installation as soon as possible it was agreed to issue a works order to the parish lengthsmen Terry Griffiths to cement in a pole at the agreed location.

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

9.1 PROW officer – to receive a verbal report.

Cllr Evans had nothing to report she said that the paths and stiles on the footpaths she had walked were all ok.

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9.2. Lengthsman Co-ordinator: To receive an update.

See above.

9.3. To receive an update on the sewage discharges on Bulls Hill and Howle Hill.

See above.

9.4. To receive an update on the repairs to the Coughton bus shelter.

It was agreed to take this off future agendas as a need for further repairs could not be seen.

10. Planning:

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

No new planning applications had been received.

11. Flooding

11.1 To receive an update.

The clerk suggested that a meeting of the Safety and Environmental Working Group be arranged with flooding as one of the items on the agenda. Cllr Warburg requested that the agenda also includes an item on a Bio-Diversity Policy.

12. The Dam: To receive an update.

A revised valuation having been finally received it was agreed that the clerk will contact The Pearsons and suggest that as the sole party expressing an interest in purchasing the plot they make council an offer to buy it.

13. To consider correspondence received.

The correspondence was considered. The clerk advised that he has removed the inaccurate section on the Bishopswood Stores from the council website. The broken step to the Bishopswood War Memorial was fixed ahead of Remembrance Sunday and the clerk spent some time clearing a section of the pavement.

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

14.1. Leys Hill Junction

14.2. The Dam

14.3. Flooding

14.4. Defibrillator installation Bulls Hill

14.5. Improvements to the permissive path from KBCL to Kerne Bridge and conversion to a PROW.

14.6 The condition of Kerne Bridge.

14.7 Sewage issues at Bulls Hill and Howle Hill Cross.

15. Next WPC meeting: Wednesday 18th December 2024 7.30pm at Bishopswood Village Hall

16. Confidential Item.

To consider an increase to WCSS Co-ordinator and Clerk salaries following the NALC salaries agreement for 2024-25.

Cllr Akers proposed that the 2024-25 NALC salaries agreement be implemented in full. A vote was taken and all voted in favour.

The meeting finished at 21.31 pm.

Signed by the Chairman.

Joanne Akers

DATE

18/12/2024