

Minutes of Whitbourne Annual Parish Council Meeting

held on 8th May 2024

Attendance:

Present: R. James (RJ) (Chairman); S. Knowles (SK); T Hunt (TH); P. Davis (PD); P Wood (PDW); N Shaw (NS)

In Attendance: Ward Councillor P Stoddart (PS); K Phillips (Clerk and Proper Officer). L Kershaw (LK) and M. Clark (MC) attended via Zoom and did not vote. No members of the public.

1. Election of Chairman to the Council 2024/25

It was proposed (PDW) and seconded (SK) that RJ be elected as Chairman. All in favour. RJ was duly elected as Chairman.

2. Chairman Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The Chairman signed the declaration of acceptance and thereupon witnessed by the Proper Officer.

3. Election of Vice-Chairman to the Council 2023/24

It was proposed (RJ) and seconded (PDW) that NS be elected as Vice Chairman to the Council. All in favour. NS was duly elected.

4. Apologies for absence

J. Bromley (JB) was unable to attend.

5. To receive declarations of interest

There were none.

6. To appoint representatives on outside bodies

6.a. Village Hall - LK

6.b. Playing Fields - TH (with JB)

6.c. Manorial Court - SK

6.d. Community First - LK

7. To appoint Parish officers

7.a. Tree Warden - RJ would ask John Walker if he would continue as tree warden.

7.b. Footpaths - RJ would ask Neil Grant if he would continue as footpaths officer.

7.c. Pollution - PD

7.d. Transport - MC

7.e. Flag Officer - TH

7.f. Defibrillator - SK

8. To approve the minutes of the Meeting held on 10th April 2024

It was proposed (PDW) and seconded (SK) that the minutes be approved. All in favour. Approved.

9. Matters arising from Minutes

There were no matters arising.

10. To approve Clerk consultation decisions

10.a. Signing and returning PCC grant acceptance forms. It was proposed (NS) and seconded (PDW) that the Clerk decision be approved. All in favour. Approved.

11. To receive report from Ward Councillor

PS reported that a new road strategy for the Hereford bypass has been agreed. It was expected that work would begin in 2026 and be complete by 2031/2. The award of a new waste contract would ensure that this service would come in on budget. Herefordshire Council have decided to terminate the current

Minutes of Whitbourne Annual Parish Council Meeting

held on 8th May 2024

contract with Balfour Beatty Living places. This will end in May 2026. £38.38M has been set aside for fixing potholes. The 420 bus service bid documentation has been sent to several bus companies. The service will be subsidised for three years and then move onto a commercial basis. PS also reported that there was a new Head of Children's Services.

12. To receive the Clerk's report

The Clerk report covered the following points:

- 12.a. Financial consolidation had been the main task over the previous period. This included getting the internal audit undertaken on the accounts. It was noted that the internal auditor (Lynn Butler) had audited the accounts for free. There was a heartfelt thanks from the Parish Council for this generosity.
- 12.b. A new financial year had been started on the HMRC database.
- 12.c. The Lengthsman contract received from Herefordshire Council had been signed and returned.
- 12.d. Applied for (and now received) the official portrait of King Charles III
- 12.e. The defibrillator had been taken out of the cabinet in an emergency. This was subsequently checked over by a local CFR representative. Concern was raised by SK that it had effectively been out of action (according to the Circuit database) for a while although when checked it was found to be operational and not used. This raised the question of ownership and responsibility. PDW agreed to draft a note to the West Midlands ambulance and CFR services to restate that the Parish Council nor the Village Hall Committee were responsible for the defibrillator although it had paid for consumables in the past.

13. Financial Matters

- 13.a. To receive the internal auditors report. No issues raised.
- 13.b. To approve and sign the Certificate of Exemption. Proposed (NS) and seconded (SK). All in favour. Approved.
- 13.c. To complete and sign the annual governance statement (2022/2023). Proposed (PDW) and seconded (PD). All in favour. Approved.
- 13.d. To approve the end of year accounting statements (2022/2023). Proposed (NS) and seconded (PDW). All in favour. Approved.
- 13.e. To approve bank reconciliation to 31st March 2023. Proposed (PDW) and seconded (SK). All in favour. Approved.
- 13.f. To approve accounts for payment
 - 13.f.1. Clerk salary and HMRC (Apr/May 2024)
 - 13.f.2. Clerk expenses Mar/Apr 2024 (£40.00)
 - 13.f.3. Information Commissioner's Office (£40.00) and Lengthsman (£108.00)Items under 13.f. were taken together. Proposed (TH) and seconded (PD). All in favour. Approved.
- 13.g. To review budget versus spend (2023/2024).
No issues were raised.

14. To re-adopt the following policies

- 14.a. Standing Orders
- 14.b. Financial Regulations
- 14.c. Risk Management
- 14.d. Complaints procedure

Minutes of Whitbourne Annual Parish Council Meeting

held on 8th May 2024

14.e. Clerk Scheme of Delegation

14.f. Councillors' Code of Conduct

These were taken together. It was proposed (PD) and seconded (SK) to re-adopt the above policies. All in favour. Decided.

15. To receive reports:

Village Hall. LK provided a summary of activity for the village hall. The two activities that had received funding were Tai Chi and British Sign Language (BSL). The third unfunded (and popular) activity was clay art and will form a workshop style event. Bookings and repeat bookings have increased. LK particularly mentioned the Lengthsman whom had investigated and advised LK about a leak in the village hall and had recommended a solution.

Playing Fields. The insurance will be renewed soon (but see agenda item 16). A big-breakfast event has been scheduled for the 18th May. Maintenance had been good so far. There is a committee meeting on the 10th May.

Manorial Court. Although SK was absent from the meeting the issue of a commons grazing licence was raised. Grazing was now beginning to take place in one of the remoter sections of the common. An abandoned vehicle had been reported and recovered the following day. The next meeting is due shortly.

Lengthsman. PDW reported that the effects of the Lengthsman services were visible to parishioners and were receiving positive comment. Some projects were left over from last year and would be looked at for appropriateness for this year.

Community First. LK reported that the lead person on this initiative was moving on.

16. To determine insurance cover for war memorial and bus shelter.

It was agreed to increase insurance cover for street furniture (bus shelter) by the initial purchase price (£12,024 inc VAT). The war memorial would remain uninsured. It was also suggested that enquiries be made for the combination of the Parish Council and Playing Fields insurances. It was hoped that economies of scale could be achieved. This was to be reviewed at the next meeting.

17. To decide approach for further distribution of Smart Water kits.

The Clerk had spoken with the We Don't Buy Crime (WDBC) unit. The distribution of a further 120 kits would then qualify for the blue signs to be installed around the parish. The officers concerned would also help to distribute the kits within the parish and involve the local Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT). The Clerk would consolidate the electoral roll to exclude those that had already received their kits and group the remaining addresses into suitable areas for distribution.

18. To decide approach for the use of the King Charles III official portrait.

LK would ask the village hall committee if the portrait could be hung in the village hall and if so, where.

19. To decide Police Community Charter priority areas of concern.

MC suggested the following areas of current concern. 1) night time poaching, 2) roadside vendor cash boxes being stolen and 3) tools, quad bikes, tack and small machinery. The Clerk would inform the local SNT team of the current concerns.

20. To report village issues regarding road maintenance etc.

It was agreed that the Lengthsman had dealt with many of the problems. The Clerk gave an update on some of the footpath outcomes and will seek further progress reports. Potholes were noted down by the lodge near the Sapey bridge.

21. Public Participation.

No members of the public were present.

22. Items for future consideration

22.a. Insurance

The meeting closed at 21:22

Minutes of Whitbourne Annual Parish Council Meeting
held on 8th May 2024

Cheque No	Expenditure	Payment
300588	Clerk Salary Apr/May 24	£582.24
300589	Clerk HMRC Apr/May 24	£388.00
300590	Clerk Expenses Mar/Apr 24	£40.00
300591	Information Commissioner's Office	£40.00
300592	Lengthsman	£108.00
Total		£1158.24

.....
Chairman – 8th May 2024