

MINUTES OF THE
OMBERSLEY AND DOVERDALE PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 15th SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 7.30 P.M.
AT OMBERSLEY MEMORIAL HALL

Present: Cllrs: D Ingram (Chairman), W T Arnold, Mrs H Barningham, M Best, F Cody, Mrs J Goodman, C McKenzie-Rowan, Mrs J Mitchell, P Reynolds, R Reynolds, Mrs B Serrell, C Welch (12)

In Attendance: County Councillor Cllr M H Broomfield and District Councillor Cllr P Tomlinson were also in attendance.

102/15 Apologies for Absence - None.

103/15 Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interest

The following interests were declared:-

Cllr W T Arnold - Member of Ombersley Memorial Hall Management Committee.

Cllr M Best – Member of Sytchampton Village Hall Management Committee.

Cllr F Cody - Member of Sytchampton Village Hall Management Committee.

Cllr D Ingram – Member of Hartlebury Parish Council.

Cllr C Welch – Member of Ombersley Memorial Hall Committee.

The Clerk also took the opportunity to remind Parish Councillors of the need to keep their Register of Interests up to date. He circulated a copy of their own form to each Councillor and asked them to review them. He particularly made reference to include their own private residence (where necessary) in Section 5 of their return. Once reviewed these should be signed and dated. Copies would then be forwarded to Wychavon District Council for public display on their website.

Public Question Time

At the Parish Council's invitation, a local resident, Andrea Crowther attended the meeting to talk about the current state of the Ombersley Play Area.

Whilst efforts were being made to keep the Play Area clean and tidy, the equipment was now becoming dated as was in need of replacement. In addition to being worn, the existing equipment was not deemed to be sufficient to stimulate and engage the young people from the village.

The Parish Council had previously accepted that there may be benefits in upgrading the equipment, although it was mindful that the replacement of the equipment would be expensive and could not be funded solely from Parish Council funds.

The Parish Council was looking to identify sources of external funding to help meet the cost of any works. A number of specific enquiries were currently being made. It would be beneficial to seek quotations but before it did, it would like to establish local views on the type of equipment to be provided.

The Parish Council therefore asked Ms Crowther to seek the views of other parents in the village to establish what their preference would be. Once this had been obtained the Parish Council would seek quotations which could be used in any future funding applications.

104/15 Confirmation of Minutes

Three sets of minutes had been circulated for confirmation. These related to the meeting held on 21st July 2015, the Extra-Ordinary Meeting held on 10th August 2015 and the meeting held on 8th September 2015 to deal with a number of specific planning applications.

It was moved by Cllr Mrs Serrell and seconded by Cllr P Reynolds that the minutes were an accurate record of these meetings. All Councillors agreed and the Chairman signed the minutes.

105/15 Parish Council Membership.

The Clerk reported that following the Extra-Ordinary meeting on 10th August 2015 he had written to Cllr Murphy setting out the Parish Council's concerns. In response to the letter, Cllr Murphy had subsequently notified the Clerk of his decision to resign from the Parish Council. A copy of Cllr Murphy's email, which had been acknowledged by the Clerk, had been circulated to all members of the Parish Council.

As a consequence there was now a vacancy on the Parish Council and the Parish Council was asked how it wished to proceed.

The Parish Council confirmed that it would wish to seek to fill the vacancy as soon as possible. It therefore asked the Clerk to make the necessary arrangements. The first stage would be to advertise the vacancy so that, if desired, 10 electors could request that an election be held. Should no request be forthcoming, the vacancy could be advertised and filled by co-option.

Although the Clerk had already acknowledged Cllr Murphy's resignation, Cllr P Reynolds felt that a further letter should be sent, acknowledging the significant amount of work (pre-dominantly connected with the Website, Newsletter and as the co-ordinator of the Parish Path Wardens) undertaken by Cllr Murphy. All Councillors agreed and the Clerk was asked to send a suitable letter of thanks.

106/15 Parish Council Governance Matters

At the Extra-Ordinary meeting of the Parish Council on 10th August 2015, Councillors had agreed that, in future, comments on planning applications should be determined by the Parish Council itself rather than via a Planning Committee. In order to put this into practice, a number of actions needed to be undertaken.

- a) Revised Standing Orders – it would be necessary to reflect this change in the Council's Standing Orders. The Clerk would therefore revise the Standing Orders and would circulate a copy to all Councillors. In doing so, the Parish Council confirmed that in order to expediently deal with any comments, routine applications would continue to be circulated to Councillors but dealt with, where possible, via email. When future applications were received, these would be circulated to Councillors for comment. A time limit for responses would be included and if comments weren't received within the prescribed timescale, this would indicate consent to deal with the matter via email and to the comments proposed to be made.

Where it was necessary to draft any comments, Cllr Arnold and any local councillors would be invited assist in the determination of comments for consideration.

Should any Councillor believe that a specific application required discussion by the Parish Council at its next meeting, they would have the right to request this. In such circumstances no comments would be submitted until the Parish Council had taken the opportunity to consider the matter at its next meeting. Where timescales did not allow waiting until the next meeting, an Extra-Ordinary meeting of the Council would be convened solely for the purpose of determining the Parish Council's views.

This proposal was moved by Cllr Mrs Goodman and seconded by Cllr Mrs Serrell and agreed unanimously. The Clerk would include provision for this in the revised draft of the Council's Standing Orders.

- b) Parish Council Meeting Start times – Previously, Planning Committee meetings had been held prior to Parish Council meetings and started at 7.00pm. As any planning applications would now form part of the Parish Council meeting agenda, the Parish Council was invited to consider its start time for future meetings.

The Parish Council wished to avoid meetings becoming protracted and it was suggested that meetings should continue to start at 7.30pm and that every effort should be made to conclude the business by 9.00pm. Where this was not possible, meetings should not extend beyond 9.30pm. If, by 9.30pm, not all business had been dealt with, any outstanding items of business would be held over until the next meeting unless the matter was of such urgency in which case a further, extra-ordinary, meeting would be convened.

This proposal was moved by Cllrs Mrs Goodman and seconded by Cllr Mrs Serrell. All Councillors agreed. The Clerk would reflect this provision in the revised Standing Orders.

- c) Councillor Development Training and Support – As there were a number of new Councillors who had recently been elected or co-opted onto the Council, Councillors had agreed that investigations be undertaken to see what training and support could be put in place to support them in their new role. Any such opportunities would also be of benefit to longer serving Councillors.

District Councillor Tomlinson had raised the issue with Ian Marshall, the Head of Legal Services at Wychavon DC to see what opportunities existed. Whilst Mr Marshall would be happy to provide a generic session on the role and responsibilities, he had indicated that the majority of training in this field was provided by CALC. Current commitments would not allow him to do this before November 2015.

The Parish Council was not currently a member of CALC as it had previously felt that its membership fees were expensive. However it did agree that it may be appropriate to invite a representative to a future meeting so that they could outline their role and responsibilities together with an indication of the benefits of future membership. The Parish council could then determine whether it would wish to re-join.

The Parish Council agreed that the Clerk should contact Ian Marshall to arrange a session for Councillors covering such matters as the role and responsibilities of Parish Councillors, the Member's Code of Code and other related governance matters. Once the Council had heard from Mr Marshall it would be in a better position to highlight any knowledge gaps and it could invite CALC to a future meeting to discuss how they could assist the Council in addressing these gaps, as well as more general support it was able to offer.

107/15 County Councillors Report – Cllr Broomfield reported on key developments at the County Council. He also reminded the Council that he was happy to consider any requests for financial support from his Divisional Fund.

The Parish Council received the County Councillor's Report.

108/15 District Councillor's Report – Much of Cllr Tomlinson's Report involved planning matters which were dealt with under Min No 111/15 (c) below.

In addition he reported that Wychavon would be considering Worcestershire's approach to Immigration. It would also be considering the South Worcestershire Development Plan on 30th September 2015.

Finally the Terms of Reference had been developed for an Overview and Scrutiny investigation into Enforcement at Wychavon. As part of the original fact finding he had received details of both Cotswold DCs and Stratford DCs approach to enforcement which had highlighted some pertinent points.

The Parish Council received the District Councillor's Report.

109/15 Police Report – A copy of the latest Police Report had been circulated to Councillors. There were still a number of instances of tool thefts from outbuildings and this remained of concern to the Parish Council.

In order that it could provide some re-assurance to residents the Clerk was asked to formally write to Superintendent Kevin Purcell to ascertain:-

- His thoughts on the true extent of criminal activity locally and the potential changing nature of crime in the Parish;
- The initiatives were being put in place locally to try and reduce the levels of crime (together with an indication of any success to date);
- Areas where local residents and the Parish Council could support local officers in preventing and solving instances of criminal activity.

The Parish Council agreed that in order to keep local residents informed, details of the Monthly Police Report should be widely circulated, including publication on the Parish Council website.

110/15 Clerk's Report and Progress Report.

- a) Wychavon Youth Bus – Engagement with Initiatives – The Clerk had circulated the latest details of visits by the Wychavon Youth Bus. Currently the bus no longer visited Ombersley. Following the demise of the local Youth Club, this may be an area where Councillors may wish to give some attention.
- b) Rural Communities Programme – Reconsideration of Involvement – The Clerk had again been approached by David Manning, Programme Officer at Wychavon District Council who was seeking to involve the Parish Council in this initiative. The Clerk undertook to circulate details to Parish Councillors so that they could determine whether they wished to support the initiative.

111/15 Planning Matters

a) Comments on Planning Applications

- (i) W/15/02271/PP: Daneswood Farm, Boreley Lane, Ombersley, WR9 0HU
Alterations and extension of the existing dwelling, new swimming pool enclosure, new garage and alterations to driveway. (Resubmission of planning application W/15/01135/PP).

The Parish Council agreed that it had no objection to the application.

- (ii) W/15/00766/OU: Land off Main Road, Ombersley
Amended layout to include reduction in number of units proposed to 30 and amended affordable housing tenure mix

The Parish Council agreed that it had no objection to the application.

- (iii) W/15/02220/PP: The Cottage, Sytchampton Lane, Sytchampton, Ombersley, Stourport on Severn, DY13 9TA
Single and two storey rear extension and porch to principal elevation.

As the plans and supporting documents were not yet available, the Parish Council agreed to deal with this application by email.

- (iv) GPDE/15/02316/GPDE Hawford Grange Barn, Chatley Lane, Ombersley, Worcester, WR3 7SG
Proposed replacement rear extension

The Parish Council agreed that it had no comment to make on the application.

- b) Details of decision Notices received from Wychavon District Council

Details of the planning decisions taken by Wychavon District Council had been circulated to Councillors and publicised via the Parish Council's Noticeboard and website.

- c) Consideration of any other 'planning' matters received by the Council prior to the commencement of the meeting.

(i) Reconsideration of representations: The Parsonage

District Councillor Tomlinson updated the Parish Council on developments regarding this site. In particular, the District Council's Heritage Officer was now investigating the internal changes that had been made to the property. In view of the ongoing developments, the Parish Council also took the opportunity to review their comments to be submitted in respect of Application No W/15/02032/AC as follows:-

"The Parish Council understands that the application cannot be considered as an access to the residential property as it is outside the curtilage of the property. Although it still has not received confirmation of this, it has considered the application as an application for an agricultural access only.

The Parish Council understands that an agricultural access already exists so does not see the need to create a second (larger) one. However it sees no planning reason to object to an application to create (a second) access strictly for agricultural purposes only.

However, if the application is intended to create any form of access for residential or any other non-agricultural purposes, the Parish Council would be particularly concerned about the highway implications associated with such activity and would wish to register its objection to an application of that nature.

Finally, and for clarity, should it not be possible to restrict the purposes for which the access could be used, the Parish Council's objection, principally on highway grounds, would apply".

- (ii) Update regarding Ox Orchard – The Clerk reported that this application had been withdrawn and re-submission was currently awaited.
- (iii) Land off, Mount Pleasant Lane, Crossway Green (Pask Farm) – District Councillor Tomlinson reported the latest position regarding this retrospective application (W/15/01779/CU).
- (iv) Revised Policy regarding Gypsies and Travellers - District Councillor Tomlinson reported on the latest Government Guidance regarding the provision of sites for Gypsies and Travellers.
- (v) Knottsfield Nurseries – District Councillor Tomlinson reported that investigation into Enforcement action continued at this site. He would seek an update from Wychavon's Enforcement Team.

112/15 Highways Matters

- a) Maintenance of Bus Shelters – The Clerk reported that the maintenance and cleaning of bus shelters was a Parish Council responsibility. He would discuss the issues raised by Cllr Mrs Mitchell with the Lengthsman.

b) Reports on Highway Matters

The following issues were raised:-

- (i) Damage to a stile in Haye Lane following hedge cutting
- (ii) Overgrown hedgerow – A4103 near junction of Parsonage Lane
- (iii) Pothole on A4103 outside Spa Stores
- (iv) Holt Fleet Bank – Sunken drain covers
- (v) Overgrown Hedgerow between the Bakery and Old Post Office on Main Road.
- (vi) Moss and Algae on the pavement near the Doctor's Surgery.
- (vii) Water running on the footpath alongside the A449 (Southbound) at Hawford.

Cllr P Reynolds would deal with the damaged stile. The Clerk would report the other matters.

113/15 Envirecover Update

Revised Terms of Reference had been circulated together with the minutes of the last meeting.

The next meeting was scheduled for 21st September 2015 and councillors were invited to forward any issues to be raised to the Chairman or Clerk.

114/15 Finance and Authorisation of Accounts

a) Recommendations from Finance Committee – The Parish Council considered the report of the Finance Committee as follows:-

- (i) Audit and Review of Financial Year to date. – The External Audit on the Council's accounts for 2014/15 had now been concluded and notice of the completion of the audit process had been posted on the Noticeboard and website. The Finance Committee had also taken the opportunity to review the accounts for the 2015/16 financial year to date and had confirmed that everything was in order.
- (ii) Expenditure requests – The Committee had considered a request that some of the existing signage in the Millennium Orchard be replaced. The Committee had recommended that a sum of £100 be set aside for this and the replacement of a dead plum tree. The Clerk had approached John Silvester (Tree Warden) who had suggested it may be appropriate to take the opportunity to look at a wider enhancement scheme. This could be incorporated in the list of issues for discussion with the Ombersley Conservation Trust.
Enhancement work was being undertaken around the telephone kiosk and noticeboard. This would involve the reconnection of the telephone line (for emergency calls only) and an electricity supply to illuminate the Noticeboard area. Cllr Best would continue to pursue this and would report back to the Parish Council.
- (iii) Review of Lengthsman Contract – The Clerk had circulated proposed arrangements for reviewing the Lengthsman Contract. The arrangements were agreed, although there were some further financial matters to be resolved. The Parish Council agreed that the Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Finance Committee together with the Clerk be authorised to resolve any outstanding matters prior to seeking tenders for the revised contract.
- (iv) Re-furbishment of the Ombersley Play Area. – This matter had been dealt with as part of the Public Participation session earlier in the meeting.
- (v) Village Enhancement Schemes for discussion with the Ombersley Conservation Trust – Following a discussion between the Clerk and Trust, the Parish Council had been asked to bring forward suggestions for enhancing the village which could be considered jointly between the Parish Council and Trust. Following further discussion, the following issues were identified:-

- Enhancement of the roundabout (including feasibility study to determine the scope for and improvements);

- Planters and welcome signs (incorporating Sandys Coat of Arms) at Village entrances (particularly A449 towards The Crown and Sandys)
- Enhancement and interpretation signs in the Millennium Orchard.

Additionally, Cllr Best was discussing with the owners of Northwood House the prospect of obtaining a paid electricity supply from them to allow the erection etc. of a Christmas tree on the Weighbridge Gardens.

(vi) New Homes Bonus – There was currently an outstanding New Homes Bonus allocation to be drawn down. The Finance Committee had agreed that arrangements should be made to do this. To meet the District Council's criteria, the Clerk would need to compile a list of recent expenditure at the two halls together with an indication of future proposals. He would prepare a schedule for submission.

(vii) Ceramic Poppies – Cllr Best would compile a list of donations received to date for circulation to the Parish Council.

b) Payment requests received in advance of the meeting – No further requests had been received.

c) Income received , cheques paid and payments to be made – a copy of the financial transactions and updated bank balances had been circulated to Councillors.

Income totalling £2,300.00 had been received
Cheques totalling £2,983.26 had been paid since the last meeting
No further payments were required to be paid.

All transactions included in (c) together with proposals contained in (a) and (b) above were moved by Cllr Best and seconded by Cllr Arnold. All Councillors agreed.

d) Other Financial Matters requiring consideration – There were no other financial matters requiring consideration.

115/15 Councillors' Reports

The following matters were raised by Parish Councillors:-

- Cllr Goodman updated the Parish Council following her concerns about the 303 Bus Service. There had apparently been issues concerning the operation of this route. These were currently being addressed by Diamond Buses.
- Cllr P Reynolds reported that a list of Footpath work which required attention was currently being developed. To promote this he would be preparing a short article for the Church magazine. The Clerk would also promote this via the Noticeboard and website.
Additionally he reminded Councillors that the launch of the Ombersley Village Walk was taking place on 26th September 2015. Posters displaying the event were circulated.
- Cllr Welch reported that Ombersley Memorial Hall had obtained National Lottery funding to run free computer courses at the Hall. A fund raising Barn Dance would also be held on 4th October 2015
- In response to a query from Cllr Best the Clerk would obtain details of the Wi-Fi code for the Hall and circulate this to Councillors.

116/15 Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Tuesday 20th October 2015 at Sytchampton Village Hall (7.30pm)

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.30pm.

..... CHAIRMAN.

Appendix

FINANCE and AUTHORISATION OF ACCOUNTS

a. Income Received:

Louise Robinson	£1,500.00	Ombersley Handbells restoration
Richardson Brothers Charity Foundation	£50.00	Donation- Lady Sandys Funeral Flowers
Worcestershire County Council	£750.00	Lengthsman – April – June 2015
	£2,300.00	

b. Cheques paid since the last meeting

Roy Murphy	Re-imbusement PC web hosting	£82.79	01846
David Miles	Maintenance – Ombersley Roundabout	£100.00	01847
LGM Ltd	Supply and Fitting of Curtains – OMH	£425.26	01848
Community First	3 year Membership	£135.00	01849
NALC	Annual Membership Fee	£17.00	01850
J Jordan	Clerk's Salary – July 2015	£366.66	SO
David Miles	Lengthsman and Gardening Services – July 2015	£582.75	01851
Old School House Garage	Church Mower Account – July 15	£27.99	01852
J Jordan	Clerk's Salary – August 2015	£366.66	SO
*Old School House Garage	Church Mower Account – August 15	£38.90	01853
*Grant Thornton	Parish Council Audit	£240.00	01854
*David Miles	Lengthsman and Gardening Services	£582.75	01855
*Richardson Brothers Charity Foundation	Business Leader's Lunch – 18 th September 2015	£17.50	01856
* Payments approved by Finance Committee – 8 th September 2015			
Total Expenditure		£2,983.26	

c. Invoices Received for Payment (to date)

Total Invoices Payable		£0.00

Bank balances as at 15th September 2015

Current Account - £31,508.47

Reserve Account – 3,108.83