

## WEOBLEY PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 19.00 at Hopelands Village Hall, Weobley, HR4 8SN

#### Present

Councillors: Lorraine Anderson (in the Chair), John Simons, Chris Breen, Frank Fitzsimmons, Stephen Coleman, Ian Wilkinson, Helen Saunders, Colin Mills

#### In attendance

Clerk Helen Tinson – on behalf of HALC (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils); Ward Councillor Nick Mason; 4 members of the public.

#### 1. Election of Chairman for 2024/25:

Cllr Lorraine Anderson was proposed and seconded to the office of Chairman for 2024/25.

**It was RESOLVED:** to elect Cllr Anderson to the office of Chairman. Cllr Anderson signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

#### 2. Election of Vice Chair for 2024/25:

Cllr John Simons and seconded to the office of Vice Chair for 2024/25.

**It was RESOLVED:** by unanimous vote to elect Cllr Simons to the office of Vice Chair.

#### 3. Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Andrew Apps. It was noted that the Clerk, Andrew London, was on annual leave.

#### 4. Declarations of interest & written dispensation requests:

Cllr Chris Breen declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 7.2.4 (Reimbursement of Expenses); Cllr Lorraine Anderson declared a pecuniary interest in agenda items 7.2.5 and 7.2.6 (Reimbursement of Expenses).

#### 5. Minutes:

##### 5.1. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 23rd April 2024:

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes as a true and proper record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chair.

#### 6. Public Participation Open Session:

**6.1. West Mercia Police:** There were no police representatives present but an emailed report had been submitted:

**6.1.1.** No crimes reported in the village.

**6.1.2.** An Exclusion Order has been served on a local family due to antisocial behaviour and criminal damage. A situation concerning a breach of court order is ongoing; West Mercia Police are in constant contact with Stonewater Housing Association.

**6.1.3.** The Clerk is in communication with West Mercia Police concerning CCTV cameras to help with antisocial behaviour.

## **6.2. Ward Councillors Report:** The Ward Councillor reported:

- 6.2.1. A summary of achievements by the new administration following a full year in term, including:
  - 6.2.1.1. The budget deficit has been reduced significantly and a balance budget is expected this year.
  - 6.2.1.2. Funding to parishes has increased with a further £250,000 for the Lengthsman Scheme, £250,000 for PROW and £455,000 for Local Drainage Schemes.
- 6.2.2. The contract with Balfour Beatty will cease in May 2026. Herefordshire Council are working through a new tender and operating model, with a focus on achieving better value for money. HC will be looking to bring Locality Stewards back in house and are keen to maintain their link between the parish and Herefordshire Council. A constructive relationship is anticipated for the next two years.
- 6.2.3. A question was raised concerning the Planning Department. It was acknowledged that this is an area that is under resourced and is on the list of areas that needs attention.

## **6.3. Representations from Members of the Public:**

- 6.3.1. A member of the public raised a planning matter (232393) and reported an ongoing neighbourly dispute. A number of concerns had been raised concerning the planning application. It was noted that the Historic Building Officer had not supported the application but that it had been passed by the Planning Officer nevertheless. Ward Cllr Mason agreed to take the parishioners' concerns forward with the Planning Team.

Three members of the public left the meeting (7.28pm)

## **7. Finance:**

### **7.1. Bank Balances:**

It was reported that the balance of the Current Account as of 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024 is £74,664.86. It was not possible to check outstanding cheques as the old cheque books are with the Internal Auditor. It was reported that the balance of the Reserve Account is £6474.70.

### **7.2. Payments:**

Members considered outstanding invoices for payment.

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve the following invoices for payment:

- 7.2.1. Clerk Pay, April/May, in accordance with contract
- 7.2.2. HMRC, in respect of Clerk's pay (as above)
- 7.2.3. Welsh Water, water rate for toilets, £374.79
- 7.2.4. Chris Breen, reimbursement lawnmower fuel, £27.22
- 7.2.5. Lorraine Anderson, reimbursement toilet products, £9.18
- 7.2.6. Lorraine Anderson, Chairs Expenses, reimbursement flowers Romilly Giddens and Helen Quinlan and stationery, £39.75
- 7.2.7. Three Counties Toilet Hire, 25.3.24-22.4.24, £111.00
- 7.2.8. Zurich Insurance, Annual Insurance 2024-25, £1715.33

Cllrs Anderson and Breen refrained from voting on 7.2.4, 7.2.5, 7.2.6 in accordance with their declaration of interest.

## **8. Parish Maintenance:**

Members wished to minute their thanks to Cllr Ian Wilkinson for his work on the new noticeboard.

### **8.1. Works to be undertaken by the Lengthsman:**

Members considered work for the Lengthsman. It was reported that the Chairman and Clerk had met with the Lengthsman, DC Gardening Services on 12<sup>th</sup> May to consider the schedule of work for the current year. It was reported that the second Lengthsman, Glen White, has been carrying out mowing and weeding (hand weeding and spraying) to attend to the backlog of maintenance (weeding) around the village. Members considered how to monitor the level of work with the budget. It was noted that the Clerk would prepare a budget monitoring report on a quarterly basis which would inform expenditure against budget and forecast a year end position. Members considered works to submit for the Local Drainage Scheme and considered exploratory work on the culvert by the library. It was agreed to put a list together for consideration. Members expressed their condolences to Dave Campbell of DC Gardening Services following the loss of his son in a road traffic accident. Flowers have been sent.

**It was RESOLVED:** to ask Glen White to clean the road signs and paint inside the bus shelter.

### **8.2. Works to report to Herefordshire Council:**

Members considered work to report to Herefordshire Council.

It was reported that the crossing points at Gadbridge Road had been raised at the Annual Parish Meeting and should be more visible. The possibility of reducing or turning off streetlighting was also raised.

**It was RESOLVED:** that the Chairman would raise both matters with the Locality Steward.

A number of paving slabs at Rose Garden were reported as loose.

**It was RESOLVED:** that the Chairman would contact the contractor.

The condition of the gravel at Bell Square Car Park was considered and agreed needed attention.

**It was RESOLVED:** that the Chairman would contact the contractor for a quote.

### **8.3. Update on Section 106 Monies:**

S106 Open Spaces and Sports: It was reported that a site meeting with Herefordshire Council and potential tenderers had been anticipated but had not yet taken place.

S106 Highways: There was nothing further to report following a detailed report of proposals at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Ward Cllr Mason left the meeting (7.53pm)

### **8.4. Works to Footpaths and Public Rights of Way (PROW):**

It was reported that the kissing gate by the Scout Hut is due to be replaced during the coming week. It was reported that two dead Cherry Trees at Burton Gardens could be replaced and that the hedge that runs alongside the footpath needs to be cut back.

**It was RESOLVED:** to contact Stonewater Housing Association and request that the hedge is cut back and the trees are removed and replanted.

### **8.5. Maintenance of the Public Toilets:**

It was reported that the Chairman had had further discussions with a parishioner considering taking on the role of maintaining the public toilets. She is considering what she can offer for the annual budget

of £1000 and will submit a proposal in due course. It was noted that reliance on volunteers to unlock and lock the toilets would most likely need to continue.

#### **8.6. Parish Tree Warden:**

Members received an update from the Parish Tree Warden:

**8.6.1.** Alternative tree suggestions are anticipated for Bell Square as the trees previously suggested would be too tall.

**8.6.2.** A new planning application for Works to Trees in a Conservation Area had been received after the publication of the meeting agenda and will be considered at the next meeting.

### **9. Planning:**

#### **9.1. To consider responding to Planning Applications for determination by Herefordshire Council:**

**9.1.1. 240929 – The Ley, Weobley, HR4 8QR:** Proposal for 8kW of solar panels, ground mounted. 20 panels in total, two rows of 10.

Members considered the proposals and raised no objections.

**It was RESOLVED:** to 'MAKE A GENERAL COMMENT' noting no objections.

#### **9.2. To note Planning Decisions made by Herefordshire Council:**

The following decisions were noted:

**9.2.1. 240984: 1 Portland Close, Weobley, HR4 8SQ.** 5 Conifer trees have outgrown their position - fell to ground level. Approved.

**9.2.2. 240867: The Old Forge, Mill Bank, Weobley, HR4 8SG.** Proposed works to fell Palm due to proximity to building and inappropriate position. Palm approx. 5m tall, 1.5m away from single storey annex. Approved.

#### **9.3. To note Planning Applications awaiting decision by Herefordshire Council:**

None at this time.

### **10. Footpaths:**

Members received an update in connection with a request for a repair to PROW WX20.

Correspondence received from a parishioner reported a fall due to the muddy condition of WX20.

The correspondence has been passed to the Parish Footpaths Officers who will assess the footpath and refer to Herefordshire Council if felt appropriate.

### **11. Play Area:**

Members noted receipt of the minutes of the last Play Area Team meeting; the minutes were taken as read. It was reported that a concern about the basket swing was identified from the parish social media.

The Play Area Team have since assessed the swing and actioned repairs. It was reported that three popular items are currently out of use, but repairs are in hand and being actioned as quickly as possible.

### **12. Library and Museum:**

There was nothing further to add to the report that had been submitted to the Annual Parish Meeting.

Concerns were raised about water ingress through the back of the library and members considered whether the owner of the yard behind the library could be asked to address the condition of the yard to prevent further ingress. Members considered drainage matters and noted discussions with Garnstone Farms and the Wye Usk Foundation. It was noted that whilst seeking a solution to the problem had been supported, no further communication has been received.

**13. Website:**

There was no report, though it was understood that the person interested in fulfilling the role of Village Website Manager was still interested and that Cllr Apps was happy to continue in the interim.

**14. Information Sheet:**

Members noted correspondence including:

- 14.1. May Newsletter from the Leader of Herefordshire Council
- 14.2. Weekly reports from the Locality Steward
- 14.3. West Mercia Police Neighbourhood Matters
- 14.4. HALC Training Schedule
- 14.5. Invitation to the River Arrow Talk on 30th May
- 14.6. A request to support a Lithium Battery Campaign
- 14.7. Possible interest in the current vacancy for a Parish Councillor

**15. Items for the next Agenda:** Members raised the following items for the next agenda:

- 15.1. To consider and approve the Annual Governance Accounting Return (AGAR) 2023-24
- 15.2. To consider reviewing current policies
- 15.3. To ratify payments made between meetings
- 15.4. To consider planning applications
- 15.5. To receive an update and consider the Park View Sign
- 15.6. To consider Play Area expenditure
- 15.7. To co-opt a new Parish Councillor

**16. Date of the Next Meeting:** Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024, 7pm, Hopelands Village Hall, Weobley, HR4 8SN

The meeting closed at 8.42pm.

SIGNED ..... DATE .....