

WEOBLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Weobley Parish Council meeting held on
Tuesday 26th November 2024
at 19.00 at the Village Hall, Weobley, HR4 8SN.

In attendance: Councillors Anderson (Chair), Breen, Saunders, Wilson, Apps, Fitsimmons and Mills. There were two members of public present.

1. To receive apologies for absence.

No Apologies were received.

2. To receive declarations of interest and consider any written requests for dispensation.

No Declarations received.

3. Minutes: - To consider and approve the minutes of the meeting held Tuesday 22nd October 2024.

The minutes had been circulated by E Mail and were available in written form.

Councillors RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record. The Chairman signed the minutes accordingly.

4. Open session.

4.1.1.1 To receive a brief verbal report from West Mercia Police.

A written report had been sent from the police and circulated to Councillors.

These reported details of a Criminal damage, an RTC and a missing person who had been subsequently found.

4.1.1.2. To receive a brief verbal report from Ward Councillor Mason

Councillor Nick Mason was in attendance and reported the following:

Flooding: *With a hint of déjà vu, the dominant issue is the recent floods. Although Weobley village was less badly affected in the November floods than other parts of the ward, it is obviously the case that our drainage system is not working in a way that gives any confidence for a future in which we know things will be getting worse – with these intense downpours - before it gets better. I'm working with council officers to make sure we have a plan and an approach that is more appropriate for the world as it is. That means working on improving pipes and drains, for instance where we find the pipes under bridges simply not fit for purpose, clearing ditches/dredging waterways, working with landowners with flood attenuation ponds and the like, considering our policies around planning and new houses and the necessary infrastructure, and working with farmers on their practices.*

Children's Services: *We have had another visit from Ofsted, looking at our remedial work to address the many failings that have plagued Children's services in recent years. We're expecting to get their report early next month but are cautiously optimistic that our progress will be recognised.*

Bridges: *As hinted at last month, I have had confirmation that **both** the damaged bridges on footpaths (on DW2 and DW20) have been approved for repair/replacement. We don't have a timeline on when that will be done, but this long-awaited work is now confirmed.*

Drain check: *I've organised a survey for Friday, with the locality steward from Balfour Beatty, and the parish chair and clerk, to review the drains, gullies and grips within the parish. In particular we are going to check the status of those near areas where there were floods, and make sure that we know who is responsible for making sure that they run clear.*

Drainage grant: *I had it confirmed earlier today that the drainage grant that the Parish bid for in October has been agreed in full. This will go to support work understanding our drainage system across the parish and to undertake small remedial work.*

Budget simulator: *The Council has published a website tool that allows you to explore how you might allocate resources if you were in charge. It's a useful tool, in showing what services take up most of our council tax, and to investigate what we might or might not be able to do with setting our council tax. You'll find it at <https://consultations.herefordshire.gov.uk/consultations/article/121/budget-2025-26-consultation>*

A Site Meeting in parish with the Chair, Clerk and Locality Steward to would take place on Friday 29th to identify further drainage work. Cllr Mason also noted that flooding incidents could be reported via Floodline 01432 261800 or 999 in emergency life threatening situation. Sewage incidents should be reported to Welsh Water and Agricultural run-off to the Environmental Agency.

4.1.1.2 To receive the views of residents on local matters.

Concerns were raised by a resident over the removal of the Hopelands name from exterior of the village hall. The resident was referred to the Village Hall Committee as the hall is managed independently of the Parish Council. Cllr Mills, who declared an interest as Hall Chairman, referred to his earlier correspondence with the resident and the proposed meeting of the Hall Executive Committee in December.

A number of Weobley Marsh residents attended to express concerns over flooding issues in this location. Councillor Nick Mason agreed to a meeting with residents to assess the problems.

5. Councillor Issues –

For Councillors to raise local issues for further discussion.

5.1. Trelleborg Community Engagement funding – Councillor Anderson to forward Trelleborg contact details to Councillor Breen.

5.2. Issue with identifying road numbers on Herefordshire Council / Locality Steward reports. Councillor Anderson will circulate her list to Councillors.

5.3. Councillor Apps reported that the vacancy on Weobley Parish Council would be advertised on the Parish Website.

6. Finance -

6.1. To note the current bank account balances.

The Clerk reported the balances on the current and reserve account.

6.2 To consider the following invoices for payment.

Council Resolved to make the below payments:

6.2.1. Clerks Pay – November 24 - £475.88p.

6.2.2. HMRC – Clerks PAYE – November 2024 - £119.00p.

6.2.3. Weobley Village Hall – Room Hire (Oct) - £17.00p.

6.2.4. Reimbursement to Cllr Wilkinson for Village Christmas Tree - £160.00p.

6.3. To note the below direct debits and prior payments.

Council noted the list of direct debits and payments as circulated and presented.

6.4. To Discuss and approve Budget for 2025-2026.

Council was in possession of the draft budget prepared by the Clerk. Discussed followed with Council RESOLVING to set a budget of £41,090p. It was agreed to carry the balance of the Play Area budget forward to the next financial year.

6.5. To set Precept for 2025-2026.

Council RESOLVED to set the precept at £41,090.00p

6.6. To discuss the need for Microshade support.

The Clerk reported that he was in possession of an invoice for Microshade in respect of Applications and file saving. The Clerk reported that this was not required and that he had all relevant applications and file saving technology. Council RESOLVED to cancel subscription to Microshade. The Clerk reported that there would be a partial payment to be made.

6.7. To discuss and approve Clerks pay award.

The Clerk reported that there had been a nationally agreed pay award that would increase his current payrate. Council RESOLVED to implement this award.

7. Parish Maintenance -

7.1. To consider works to be undertaken by the lengthsman.

7.1.1. Council discussed the need for works and considered jetting small gullies by Library and public toilets and grill gully by Bell Brook (Bell Square). Councillor Anderson will contact Mayglothing' and also request attention to gulleys by the Library / museum.

7.1.3. Council identified ditching work required in Kington Road (by Rose Cottage / Newnet Lane)

7.1.4. Council raised issue regarding the overgrown verge on footpath from VH to Council Play Area field gate which required trimming back.

Councillor Anderson will instruct / get quote from Glen White the Lengthsman.

7.2 To consider works to report to Herefordshire Council.

Blocked gullies were reported in Broad Street and Kington Road

Responsibility for the maintenance of the Newbridge Brook at the Marsh was raised and would be considered at the site meeting to take place on 30th November.

7.3 To receive an update on Sec 106 monies.

7.3.1. Highways allocation: The proposed Traffic calming design had been completed and submitted to the Parish Council for comment (this had been circulated to councillors).

Further questions to be raised by the Chair with Mr. Greg Speller at Herefordshire Council with a likelihood of full installation of road marking regarding road conditions.

7.3.2. Open Spaces funding update: Council are awaiting news from solicitors re progress on legal side of drainage easement. Funds have been transferred regarding the 'undertaking' fee. A site visit with approved Contractors is pending prior to start of work in the spring.

Concerns were expressed by Marsh residents to the effect of the additional field drainage into former bridle path that travels west to Marsh. This would be discussed at site meeting on 30th November.

7.4 To Consider works to footpaths and Public Rights of Way (PROW) (P3).

Gates had recently been received by Parish Footpath Officers but there were some questions as to the sizes provided by HC.

Councillor Nick Mason had reported on the status of the Weobley/Dilwyn footbridge repair in his earlier report.

7.5 To consider maintenance of the public toilets and library.

Council was given an update following a meeting at the library where Councillors Anderson, Simons, Fitzsimmons together with Maggie Waldman, John Shutler and Sue Hubbard on 12th November. This meeting followed two recent floods at the premises. Concerns were raised regarding ownership of the building and the viability of the building. There was a subsequent meeting with Nick Mason just prior to the meeting on 26th November. Several options were considered resulting in Nick Mason to confirm ownership of the building before any decisions were taken regarding repairs or sale / transfer. It was reported that Whittle warehouses had given permission to enter the 'exercise yard' to the rear and check drainage

7.6. To receive an update from the Parish Tree Warden and note tree preservation order for 100 Bearcroft.

Council noted the recent tree preservation order from Herefordshire Council. The tree warden suggested an alternative variety of Prunus (available via Blue Diamond) for planting of three trees opposite the surgeries and one in Bell

Square. The Locality steward will purchase. This was agreed by Council. Councillor Anderson will liaise with tree warden and locality steward.

7.7. To discuss concerns regarding listed building at 1 High Street, Weobley.
There have been several E Mails regarding this subject. Council had previously expressed their concerns to the Planning Enforcement Officer. He stated in 2021, *Unfortunately, the decaying state of the Grade II listed building is not a planning breach, it is a criminal offence to carry out unauthorised work but not to leave the building in a state of disrepair.*

Council also wrote to owner Richard Gregg in March 2023 to express their concerns and the potential risks to the public from issues with the structure of the property, also asking if he might be able remedy the problems and offering to meet with him to discuss these if it would be of help. No reply had been received to date.

7.8. To discuss recent E Mail from Eardisland PC regarding the decline of the River Arrow.

Tree Warden Amanda Apps has offered to represent the Parish Council regarding this group. It was noted that Mr. Mike Williams and members of the Wildlife Trust are carrying out water testing on the Newbridge Brook.

8. Planning –

8.1. To discuss and comment on planning applications for decision by Herefordshire Council.

8.1.1. Planning application no. **242716** – Tree Works at 67 Burton Wood, Weobley. Council RESOLVED to support the application.

8.1.2. Planning application No. **241540** – Demolition and rebuild of workshop at ‘Ladymede’, Weobley. Council RESOLVED to support the application.

8.1.3. Planning application nos. 242770 and 242771- Demolition of conservatory and build extension at ‘St Columbas cottage’ High Street, Weobley. Council RESOLVED to support the application.

8.1.4. The Parish Council were requested by resident to enquire of Herefordshire Council regarding the need for Planning regarding the construction of an agricultural barn in field to north of Church Road. (Possibility that this is permitted development).

8.2. To note decisions made by Herefordshire Council.

8.2.1. Planning application number **242290** – Highbury, Weobley – Proposed tree works – **Approved.**

8.2.2. Planning application number **242228** 19 Bearcroft, Weobley -Tree Works – **Approved.**

8.2.3. Planning Application number **242170** – Stonehouse, the Marsh, Weobley – Proposed extension – **Approved with Conditions.**

8.3. To note planning applications awaiting decision by Herefordshire Council.

8.3.1. Planning application **241286** – **3 Portland Street, Weobley** – Proposed erection of fence – **Pending.**

8.3.2. Planning application **241287** – **3 Portland Street, Weobley** – Proposed erection of fence – **Pending.**

8.3.3. Planning application number **242115** 4 Mill bank cottages, Weobley – Proposed insulation works – **Pending.**

9. Footpaths / Highways –

9.1. P3 Grant allocation – an update. Already dealt with.

10. Play Area –

To receive an update and consider action as required.
A report had been circulated from Councillor Breen including budgetary requirements. This had been discussed earlier and approved.

11. Library and Museum –

To receive an update and consider action as required. See 7.5

12. Magpie Magazine – A request for assistance. To Discuss and Resolve.

There had been a representation from Gill Atkinson and Simon Wiles Requesting support of £1500 in respect of costs for ‘the Magpie’ magazine. The Council discussed the application but requested more information to support the request, e.g. financial position, printing quotes.

13. To Note resignation of Councillor Coleman –

Council noted the resignation. The Clerk will inform the Elections dept at Herefordshire Council. Councillor Anderson will send a letter of thanks.

14. To consider items for the next agenda.

Magpie – A return of item 12.

Drainage – To discuss the current situation.

15. Date of next meeting – 7.00pm Tuesday 28th January 2025, Weobley Village Hall.

16. Diary of Meetings.

Tuesday 25th February 2025.

Tuesday 25th March 2025.

Tuesday 22nd April 2025.