

BISHOPSTONE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

*Minutes meeting of the Parish Council held on
Thursday 12th March 2020 at 7.30pm at
the New Bridge Community Centre, Bridge Sollars*

Minutes

PRESENT: Councillor John Macklin (Chairman), Cllr Sharon Knights; Cllr Lesley Handscomb; Cllr L Goldwater; Cllr N Newton; Cllr. C Draper; Cllr S Keefe; Cllr R Morgan

PRESENT: Mrs Lesley Hay (Parish Clerk;

The Chairman welcomed those present to the March meeting.

1. Apologies for absence – Ward Cllr D Hitchiner; Cllr. S. Crump; Cllr. S Hubbard.
2. To receive declarations of interest or written requests for dispensations – none recorded.
3. To receive a report from the local Police Officer – no representative present.
4. Ward Councillor David Hitchiner - sent a report to be read out in his absence. This report had been circulated and a copy is attached to the end of these minutes.
5. **Chairman's report:**

I met up with Ward Councillor David Hitchiner on Saturday 27th January to visit the site of the planning application on land adjacent to the Clovers. We met with local residents who voiced their concerns over the size of the proposed house, its position and drainage issues. David agreed he would contact the planning officer to see if he would address these concerns. David emailed back to say there was no movement on the size or position of

the proposed property. However, further consultation had taken place with regard to the drainage and it was suggested that a pump might be needed to pump water to spreaders north and away from adjoining properties.

This is a copy of the response email from the Planning Officer to Ward Cllr Hitchiner.

Good morning Councillor,

In regards to your first point on the drainage field, the outline permission has a condition on it requiring full details of surface and foul water scheme. The current application does not have sufficient details to discharge this according to our drainage consultant and therefore they will need to submit full details in a discharge of condition application. When I discussed this issue with the agent following public comments they said while they can move the drainage field to the rear of the dwelling the topography would lead to the need for a pump which they wanted to avoid – this could still be the best option depending on ground conditions when they come to infiltration testing.

Unfortunately, on your second point my understanding is that they have positioned the dwelling there to ensure they did not remove or damage any of the traditional orchard trees. This was a condition on the outline approval as they are a Priority Habitat. As such moving the dwelling backwards would result in the loss of one traditional orchard tree and would likely cause an objection from Ecology.

On balance considering the above and that the front first floor windows, of the proposed dwelling, are secondary bedrooms and at a right angle to the dwelling at 2 The Clovers I am still minded to recommend approval of the application.

Sand bags stored on Bishon Common were nearly all in use - some having gone to Kenchester - we ordered extra bags which were delivered on the 25th February.

Storm Dennis (14th – 19th February) caused flooding in our parishes - Kenchester, Bishon Common and Byford Common. The Parish Council received three emails from the after effect: -

On the 17th February - the Parish Council received a complaint that the drains were blocked and the traffic was diverted from the A480 on to the lane and the fact people can't reverse.

The blocked drains are in Mansel Lacy parish - they have been reported and are on the Balfour Beatty highway defect list. I will ask the Lengthman to check on his next visit.

The resident from the Whitehouse Byford Common, sent an email to the Parish Council on 24th February complaining about the flooding on the common. In it he states that Herefordshire Council had informed him that the Parish Council owns the Common and are responsible for cleaning out the ditch and there was funding available.

I visited the site the next day with Councillor Sue Hubbard there was water on the Common but it was some distance and lower than the resident's house. The ditch does need cleaning out but whether this is the responsibility of the Parish Council will need to be investigated. The funding mentioned in the email is only payable to house owners who have been flooded.

Personally, I think the flood water came from higher ground. When on site I noticed there were grass cuttings, veg peelings and a large fire on a section of the common.

Another resident from the Common made comment that the notice for the restrictions of common use was worn out and illegible – this sign to be replaced.

A resident from Bishon Common emailed on 26th February asking for help from the Parish Council in regard to drainage to encourage a better flow of water and complaining that

ditches and pipes are blocked on the Common. Yazor Brook has trees blocking it and growing in it. Also, there is a large pile of debris outside a resident's house (grass cuttings etc). There is a large pothole in lane which a taxi got stuck in. Credenhill flood defence grill blocked with debris no one had cleared.

I did reply by email to say I would bring it up at the next Parish Council meeting and that we are waiting for Balfour Beatty's Locality Steward to inspect the potholes and that the Parish Council had already made two requests for a visit.

The Clerk to liaise with Helen Beale – Herefordshire Council Estates Management Officer - with regard to establishing ownership of the two commons and who has commoners' rights.

Cllr L Goldwater reported that as part of the Yazor Brook project they are running some training in MoRPh surveys. More information can be found at <https://modularriversurvey.org/>.

Andrew Nixon, Conservation Senior Manager,
Herefordshire Wildlife Trust.: telephone 01432 356872 / 07468790307

6. The Chairman opened the Open Session –

(6.1) The Chairman welcomed Sir Harry Cotterell to the meeting and invited him to give a short presentation with regard to possible future plans involving the development of Old Grain Store on Byford Common which is on what is described as a 'brown field site.

Sir Harry explained that nothing, as yet, had been decided with regard to this project – other than he had had a conversation with one of the Planning Officers by telephone.

What had been established, however, was that the site was not really suitable for affordable housing. The most suitable build would be for 3 – 5 houses offering 3 – 4 bed accommodation.

Access to and from the site would be via a 50 – 60 metre drive along an existing minor road with safe access onto the A438.

Sir Harry explained that, should he go ahead, he would be applying for Outline Planning permission and then would sell to a developer. He could not, of course, guarantee that the developer would not then apply for a different lay out of the plans – but in all instances, the Parish Council would be part of the negotiation process.

In general, the Parish Council were in agreement with this proposal as it sits within the settlement boundary and in line with the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Chairman explained that the Parish Council were aware that there had been no development within the parishes for some considerable time – and, as the Neighbourhood Development plan was soon to be revisited for an update – it was hoped that some development would start to take place as outlined in the original plan.

The Chairman thanked Sir Harry for coming to the meeting and Sir Harry promised to keep the Parish Council up to date with future developments.

(6.2) Recent flooding issues; Bishon Common – covered under the Chairman's Report

(6.3) Update on Speeding on the A438

Speeding issues on A438 – Clerk confirmed that she had forwarded Cllr Knights letter and copies of other emails to Ray Wallace, Senior Engineer Balfour Beatty and had received a comprehensive reply which had been circulated. Clerk confirmed she had also copied into these emails Ian Connolly – Safer Road Team who has also sent in a reply which had been circulated and Ward Councillor David Hitchiner.

(6.4) Talk Community Hub Update

- The hub has been open 5 times. People who attend the coffee morning have made enquiries on several topics. No new visitors to the coffee morning.
- Council have supported the hub whilst I have been in hospital
- Still waiting to link with the newly appointed social prescribers based at the doctors
- Seed Funding Grant of £2500 now available. To be used by March 2021
- What can the seed funding be used for?

IT equipment

Development of permanent public information access point

Equipment and resources to develop new activities and events

Advertising and promotion

Initial or pilot activities to extend the support offered by the hub

- Council Power Point training session available

Future Action

- Make application to Herefordshire Council for Seed Funding.
- Agree a designated Account to which Grant can be paid – New Bridge Community Centre Account?
- Agree who will manage and monitor the grant and how it is spent – NBCC & treasurer
- Agree maintenance & storage of equipment procedure
- Insurance policies?

· Items to be purchased:

Contract for 2-year internet connection. Fastershire?

Tablet

Printer inks

Laptop with Microsoft office?

· Publicity – how to get new people to attend? Advertised parish website, Hereford Times & Credenhill News

· New volunteers

(6.5) Greening the Five Parishes

The Greater Collaboration – Cllr S Keefe reported that following her recent attendance at a meeting organised by Herefordshire Green Network whose vision is a resilient low carbon future for Herefordshire. Cllr S Keefe explained that she and three other Councillors have recently had a meeting and she read out the minutes from the meeting.

The Parish Council gave their unanimous support to this initiative and Cllr Keefe to report back to the next meeting.

Please see a copy of these minutes attached to the end of these minutes.

7. MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on the 9th January 2020 were agreed to be a true record and it was unanimously voted that they be adopted and signed by the Chairman

8. Highways report and Environmental Matters:

It was unanimously agreed to continue the D C Gardening contract for 2020-21 and the Clerk confirmed she had submitted the official documentation with Balfour Beatty.

(8.1) Update on Sand bags - The Clerk confirmed that additional the sand bags had been delivered.

(8.2) Lengthsman and P3 work sheet for March/April.

Clerk to liaise with regard to clearing the ditch/grid at the Shetton turn and to supply and erect two dog fouling signs on Byford Common. The Clerk also to liaise with regard to replacing the Common Rights sign on Byford Common.

(8.3) Footpaths update – all very wet

(8.4) Kissing Gates – there are still two in store. Cllr Goldwater explained that Herefordshire Council were encouraging councils to replace stepover stiles with kissing gates. It was agreed to defer the item until Cllr S Crump was in attendance as these gates may be positioned on her land.

(8.5) Locality Steward – the Clerk was asked to contact the Locality Steward with a view to arranging a meeting with the Chairman to discuss some outstanding issues – these still include:

(i) Kenchester Rectory site and the top end of Bishopstone village has blocked pipes between the grids - pressure wash out the pipes.

(ii) Large pot hole - A438 – opposite turn to Byford Common.

(iii) A438 junction with U90013 Ferry Turn – several pot holes

(iv) B4230 – Mansell Gamage Village - pot holes and receding verges

(v) U90012 – Byford – pot holes

(vi) Further to email from resident – Bishon Lane pot holes

(vii) C1098 – query the installation of road markers – two cars have recently gone off the road into the ditch.

(viii) White lining – as mentioned above.

In the meantime, description and position of all pot holes have been reported on line as is now the recommended procedure.

9. **Finance:** Up-to-date accounts sheet/schedule of payments sheet had, unfortunately, not been circulated but these were read out by the Clerk.

(9.1) It was unanimously agreed to pay all outstanding invoices and cheques were raised and signed.

(9.2) It was unanimously agreed to continue the SLCC membership and contribute towards the annual subscription

(9.3) End of year accounts. Internal and External audit. The Clerk confirmed that there had been no correspondence as yet from the external auditor – but once this is received and completed, the accounts would go to the internal auditor.

(9.4) To agree Clerk's annual increment. After discussion, it was agreed to increase the Clerk's salary point from Grade 25 to Grade 26 as from the 1st April 2020. It was acknowledged that as yet a revised salary scale for 2020-2021 had not yet been received. The Clerk also explained that there had been no indication, as yet, of any 'cost of living' increase for 2020 -21 - any information with regard to this usually comes via SLCC.

After discussion, it was unanimously agreed between the Clerk and Councillors that her hours would remain at 5 hours per week – but that any increase would be discussed at the budget/precept setting meeting in November.

10. **Planning matters:** no recent applications received.

Planning matters: Land adj. to The Clovers - Bishopstone - this was covered within the Chairman's report.

11. CORRESPONDENCE:

Web site suitability after Sept. Due to new legal requirement with regard to website accessibility – the Bishopstone website will need to be upgraded from September to meet these requirements. Mark Milmore has been contacted with regard to this issue – and he will be corresponding with Parish Councils in April/May, He has indicated that there will be an additional charge of £50 for this upgrade.

Programme of Commemorative Events

Email on Flooding issues; Parish Summit Day; County Plan; VE and VJ Day commemoration and Coronavirus – public information.

County Plan 2020-2024

West Mercia PCC Road Safety Strategy

Letter on behalf of the Accessibility Working Group

It was acknowledged that all the above correspondence had been circulated and after discussion, there was no further comment.

Parish Summit Day - 2nd April at the Shire Hall – Councillors were asked to book their place direct if they wished to attend.

13. Date of next meeting – Thursday 14th May 2020 - 7.30p.m. start.

Chairman closed the meeting at 9.15p.m.

Signed:

Date:

Leader's newsletter as of 1st March 2020

Flooding

Please remind your Parish Councils that compensation is available for householders whose property has been flooded.

Coronavirus

The three key messages Karen Wright would like us to take away, and communicate to Parish Councils:

- All necessary actions are being taken to support the national effort
- As leaders we need to provide reassurance and reinforce and basic hand washing and 'catch it, bin it kill it' messages that are the most effective approach in preventing the spread of any infections.
- Refer members of the public to the national websites or through the council website for the latest guidance.

So far as schools are concerned, Herefordshire Council have received a small number of enquiries from schools and colleges in Herefordshire, regarding their staff/pupils returning from Northern Italy.

Other roles

The Herefordshire Cultural Partnership is looking for a new Chair. The role of the HCP is to:

- Champion Herefordshire's cultural strategy and cultural ambition.

- Identify and support initiatives, which attract funding and investment for creative and cultural activity.
- Oversee the development and delivery of the Cultural Strategy 2019-29, producing an annual action plan with specific objectives and targets.
- Support strategic programmes and identify key initiatives to deliver the Cultural Strategy action plan.
- Take collective responsibility for ensuring that cultural funding is allocated properly and against agreed priorities.
- Monitor activity against the Cultural Strategy's Strategic Objectives and Key Actions and publish an annual review.
- Examine and respond to local, regional, national and international environments and policies to ensure that the Cultural Strategy's vision and objectives remain valid.

Do you know anybody who might fit this role?

Staunton Primary School

Staunton-on-Wye Endowed Primary School received a letter earlier this month from Nick Gibbs MP, Minister of State for School Standards, congratulating them on their progress levels. Staunton's results in reading, writing and mathematics from Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2 place them in the top 3% of schools in the country.

Congratulations to all the staff and pupils on their hard work and achievement.

Education achievement

Strong performance in Primary education; top quartile performance in majority of measures for all pupils from early years to KS2.

Station Approach Student Accommodation

Working with Hereford College of Arts and a range of private sector partners and investors, the Council has enabled the development of a

£19 million 178 bedroom student accommodation development in Hereford. The construction reaches a significant stage in February as modular units, that have been constructed offsite over the winter months, are delivered to site and craned into place.

The development will quickly take shape over the next six weeks, and is due to open in September for the new academic year.

Q3 Outturn

The quarter 3 outturn report was presented to cabinet last week at its meeting in Ewyas Harold. Currently the council is forecasting an overspend of £51k on a total budget of £386m which equates to +0.01%. A very good position to be in at this point in the year. Congratulations to everyone involved in delivering so closely to the overall budget.

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50076452/Quarter%203%20201920%20corporate%20budget%20and%20performance%20report.pdf>

Council Tax Setting

The Council Tax for Herefordshire Council was set at a marathon full council meeting held on 14 February. The council resolved to apply a 3.9% increase to the council tax, which equates to an increase of £4.92 per month for a band D property. This rise comprises 2% dedicated to supporting the increasing cost of adult social care and 1.9% to cover cost increases in all other areas of the council's operation.

Finance

Adults and Communities continue to maintain their strong financial position, reporting an underspend of just under £2m as at December 2019. This is both supporting the overall council financial position during 2019/20 and also enabling the Adults to bring forward savings initiatives and investment programmes to support their own financial position in 2020/21.

Rural Access Grant

We will shortly be launching the Rural Access Grant which is seeking to target funding for schemes which will improve access for rural residents and in particular limited access to private transport. The fund total £275K and will be available for projects and initiatives which can start providing better access during 2020/21. We have listened to our community transport partners and have sought to ensure that they can bid for funding for a broad range of activities noting that we are keen to support great local solutions and respond to the needs of specific communities. This means that the fund can support new vehicles, activities which will encourage more volunteers – particularly drivers, and innovative approaches which might improve access and reduce carbon emissions. We are really keen to see what works well so that we can share best practice between communities and inform how we might target resources in future.

Trading Standards

The trading standards team has just successfully prosecuted a nationally renowned rogue trader from Glasgow, an engineer who was exploiting the elderly in the pricing of TV aerial installations. This rogue company, Aerial Express, is the largest aerial firm in the UK and having been featured on Esther Rantzen's Channel 5 rogue trader programme, Herefordshire Council are the first local authority to take court action relating to the company. This was so serious that it has been passed from the Magistrates to the Crown Court for sentencing. Trading standards have also successfully prosecuted a company from Bournemouth who exploited an 89-year-old retiree from Bartestree for unnecessary building repairs.

Working Group: Greening the Five Parishes

Meeting held 11th February 2020

Present: Cllr Sue Hubbard (Vice-chair), Cllr Lewis Goldwater, Cllr Rosemary Morgan, Cllr Sarah Keefe

Apologies: Cllr Muriel Holmes, Cllr Serena Crump

Name for Working Group

We decided that associating this initiative with “Green” would send a positive message to our approach to Climate Change and to include all parishes, we decided on “Greening the Five Parishes. The initial focus will be on wildlife and improving biodiversity, with the hope of attracting as many people in the parishes as we can to get involved. We will expand to cover reducing our carbon footprint later in the year.

Places for Wildlife

We identified areas where biodiversity is already present with a view to showcasing the rich habitats in our parishes. These were:

- Kentchester Kettle Ponds – haven for water birds and project by Herefordshire Wildlife Trust with partners to conserve this habitat. They are rare Ice Age remnants, also called Ice Ponds.
- Bishon Meadow, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – down Bishon Lane
- Stonehouse Meadow – traditional hay meadow rich in wild flowers (ridge and furrow field). Behind The Stonehouse, Bishopstone
- Maggie’s Meadow, Byford

Action: Look at having an Open Day to view these with owners’ permission, possibly June/July, while at the same time adding:

- Garden in Mansell Gamage owned by Lewis Goldwater
- Garden in Bishopstone owned by Rosemary Morgan

The idea is to show how anyone’s garden can be a wildlife haven with planting bee friendly plants and leaving areas for nature to take its course.

Potential Wildlife Sites

Looking at public spaces that could support a more diverse range of plants, we identified:

- Triangle of land in Kentchester by the Chapel
- Wide verge at Bridge Sollars junction on A438 (orchid identified in previous years)
- Verges along C roads managed by land owners

Bearing in mind, not affecting visibility at junctions and along roads, we discussed working with Paul Norris at Balfour to agree area at Bridge Sollars junction which wouldn't be cut.

Where verges are already species rich, see if a different management programme might help some wild flowers to thrive. We looked at growing wild flower plugs of a range of species that can thrive in tall grass (Lewis can get seed from HWT). Plant these when big enough to cope with grass competition.

Other topics

Home insulation – this is one of the most cost-effective way of cutting heating bills and conserving energy. Sarah to look at what grants are available and put info in Community Hub.

Sharing of produce – suggested anyone who has excess could bring to Wednesday Coffee Morning. May need to find another location as well to make it easier for those unable to attend.

Lobbying Herefordshire County Council and local MP – Park & Ride for Hereford?

Bus service to Hereford – only Bishopstone is served by a bus. If there was parking in Credenhill, people could take advantage of the hourly service to Hereford from there. Is that something people would like to do?

10 Ways to be Eco Friendly – Sarah to create a list of what we can do, that's easy and doesn't involve changing way of life a great deal. Look at what how we communicate to the whole parish.

Sarah Keefe