

Vowchurch Group Parish Council

Minutes of Vowchurch Group Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 17 November 2016 at 7.30p.m. at Vowchurch and Turnastone Memorial Hall

Present:

Harry Franklin, Alan Picton, Evan Williams, Keith Hortin, Paul Mason, Simeon Cole, Rob Lloyd, Adam Price, Tim Williams, and Councillor Graham Powell.

1. **Mrs Sylvia Teakle**

The Council discussed the recent death of Mrs Teakle and paid tribute to her many years' service as Parish Clerk. (It was agreed subsequently to mark her death with a donation of £100 to Turnastone Church.)

2. **Apologies:** were received from David Price.

Harry Franklin was in the Chair

3. **Declarations of interest:** there were none.

4. **Minutes** of the September meeting, having been circulated, were taken as read and signed.

5. **Matters arising** – there were none.

6. **Road Works**

It was agreed to compile a new list of issues that need to be dealt with. A copy of the maps would be circulated to all councillors so that they could mark on exactly where they were aware of problems so these could be reported to Balfour Beatty.

7. **Neighbourhood Plan**

Paul Mason reported that the supporting material on the consultation process for the plan had been accepted by HCC. With the agreement of Harry Franklin he had commissioned someone to design and typeset the plan so this could be submitted for the next stage of the process – independent assessment.

8. **Planning matters**

It was agreed to circulate a list of planning applications for Golden Valley South as these appeared until a new parish clerk was in post.

9. **Lengthsman Scheme**

Since Terry Griffiths was present, the Council discussed with him the approach they had agreed in which he alerted councillors to work he was planning to do in their locality. Mr Griffiths reported that his team was now marking areas of road with white arrows to identify where work might be needed. If work was then carried out these would be replaced by green marks.

Mr Griffiths reported that his team had begun their winter maintenance work. There was a discussion of the difficulties created when landowners did not keep the ditches they were responsible for cleared. It was acknowledged that this is a long-standing issue. It was agreed that where possible when any such any problems were identified the Parish Council would contact the landowner in question.

Mr Griffiths said that he would need to know by January 2017 what funding the Parish Council proposed to commit to the lengthsman scheme for the next financial year. The same issue would arise for 2018 when no additional funding would be provided by Herefordshire Council.

10. **Finances**

Mr Mason reported that he had paid several outstanding invoices. It was agreed that new financial procedures should be agreed and put in place once a new parish clerk had been appointed to ensure proper control over spending.

The Council then discussed the precept for 2017/18 and in particular the level of funding that should be provided for the lengthsman scheme given the reduction of funding from Herefordshire Council next year. Graham Powell reported on the limited number of comments he had received about the proposal to increase parish precepts to pay for the lengthsman work. It was agreed that in order to fund the work the options were to -

a) increase the precept by the minimum amount needed to ensure some funding from Herefordshire – that is, to provide £60 a kilometre to attract funding of £30 a kilometre. This would mean increasing the precept by £3210 a year.

b) increase the precept by an amount that would maintain the current level of funding – that is, to increase the precept by a total of £4815 a year.

After discussion the Council agreed to increase the level of the precept by £4815 a year. It was noted that there was already some unallocated funding in the current budget which gave some room for manoeuvre.

11. **Parish Clerk**

Mr Mason reported that an advertisement for the parish clerk position was on the HALC website. He had also inserted adverts in the two local newsletters. It was noted that HALC would be able to provide advice about the appointments process and about the kind of contract to put in place once a new person had been chosen. This would include a process under which the Council monitored the performance of the clerk.

12. **Dark Skies Project**

The Council agreed its support for the proposed local project.

13. **Report by District Councillor**

The Chairman closed the meeting.

Councillor Powell reported on the future of library services, the budget situation including possible reductions in local services, the various road projects in and around Hereford City, possible changes in parking charges in the historic core of the city and proposals for housing refugees and asylum seekers.

The Chairman re-opened the meeting.

11. Other Business including Correspondence

The Council had been approached by BT about a scheme for providing fibre broadband to Michaelchurch School. Mr Powell took the papers and undertook to look into this in the context of the next stage in the general implementation of faster broadband.

Evan Williams reported that there would be training in the use of defibrillators at the Pavilion in Michaelchurch at 7.00 pm the following Monday.

It was agreed that the website should be changed to make it possible to put on the agenda and minutes of meetings. At the same time it was noted that there would be advantage in having a website where the parish clerk could put on new material without having to send this to someone as at present. It was agreed to consider how this could be achieved.

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 19 January 2017 at Newton Church Room.

Chairman Date – 19 January 2017