



**MINUTES of the MEETING OF WHITWICK PARISH COUNCIL
held on THURSDAY 8 DECEMBER 2022 AT 7.00 pm at Park
Hall, Whitwick Park, North Street, Whitwick**

Present: Councillor S Colledge (Chair)

Cllrs A Barker, P Moulton, R Woodward, M Wyatt [From start to Item 3063 only]

In attendance:

Mrs C Tibbles PSLCC, Parish Manager/Responsible Finance Officer

Guest Speaker:

Mr J Atkinson, Chief Executive, Leicestershire & Rutland Association of Local Councils (LRALC) [From start to Item 3062 only]

6 members of the public [not present for Item 3072]

The Chair thanked the public, the police and the guest speaker for coming to the meeting.

3053. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs L Gillard, T Gillard, L Spence, J Straw. Cllr S Gillard was absent.

3054. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATION REQUESTS

Cllr Wyatt declared a non-pecuniary interest in all matters relating to North West Leicestershire District Council as a member of that authority.

Cllr Moulton declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member and a Link Councillor of Whitwick Historical Group, as a member of Whitwick Bowls Club, as a Link Councillor for Thornborough Road Allotment Society, as a Link Councillor for Walkers Flats Allotment Group and a Link Councillor for Meadow Barn View.

Cllr Barker declared a registerable interest as a Director of Holly Hayes Woods, a member of Whitwick Historical Group and a registerable interest as a signatory at Walkers Flats Allotment Group.

Cllr Woodward declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Director of Holly Hayes Woods and as a member of Whitwick Historical Group.

Cllr Colledge declared a non-pecuniary interest in matters connected to Whitwick Historical Group as a member, to Whitwick Royal British Legion as a member, to Whitwick Action Group as a member on matters relating to planning and a pecuniary interest as a member of Woodstock in Whitwick

Committee, and a potential pecuniary interest as an immediate neighbour of the old Hermitage Leisure Centre site.

3055. MINUTES

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2021 and 17 November 2022 be approved as a correct record.

3056. COMMUNITY POLICING

PCSO Carney introduced her colleague who had recently joined the team and reported that the Chief Constable had recently announced that police attend a minimum of one parish council meeting per year due to staff resources. She would endeavour to attend more if possible but did cover several parishes. In an effort to reduce the annual ASB that occurred at Whitwick Park she had discussed this with the new People Zone initiative to see if there could be a Club provided for younger people to build relationships. Members were invited to ask questions on policing and they raised concerns about parking problems at the City of Three Waters that were exacerbated by parents parking while taking children to/from school. Advice was given to report full details to the police and PCSO Carney undertook to visit the locations of the two schools at Parsonwood Hill and see if initiatives like those at New Swannington might work. The police had powers to ask drivers to move their vehicle, or District Council Officers could issue fines. If vehicles were causing an obstruction the police could arrange for vehicles to be towed away.

[Parish Manager's Note: The next Beat Surgery had been detailed in the police newsletter and would be held on Wednesday 14 December at the Community Office between 10 am and 12 noon.]

3057. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

None.

3058. VAS SCHEME – UPDATE

The Parish Manager reported there had been an unavoidable delay in moving the signs to Leicester Road and the batteries had run down so data not collected. Cllr Barker offered his help and gave new advice on battery management, which the Parish Manager would share.

3059. THE FUTURE OF HERMITAGE LEISURE CENTRE

A report was read in the absence of District Cllr T Gillard – The Council had prior notice of planning consent. Electricity and Gas had been disconnected from the building. The council had commissioned an R and D Asbestos survey. The council were in the process of appointing Cawarden as demolition contractor. Once appointed Cawarden would serve the S80 and Dem1 notices which were all about providing safe demolition. Assuming contract award was completed before Christmas then he would expect demolition to start about 4 weeks later (approx. end Jan 23). Cawarden estimated 12 weeks to demolish, recycle and remediate the site. They believed recycling rates would be 85 – 95% of materials. Members would be aware that some of the car park had been blocked off to prevent potential traveller incursions.

3060. THE HERMITAGE PROJECT

No information provided to the Parish Council on this matter.

3061. GUEST SPEAKER: Jake Atkinson STRATEGIC PLANNING

Mr. Atkinson presented his recommendations following the two Strategic Planning workshops that he had facilitated earlier in the year and attended by some members. As the process had not been completed in May, it was important to have a plan, although this would be more general than specific due to the proximity of the next election period and prepare the way for the council next year to consult residents on their ideas and priorities. The report had invited opportunities for councillors to submit suggestions for inclusion in the budget to the Parish Manager. As a relatively new council (created in 2011) he felt it was important to focus on what the council should address. The Local Council Award Scheme would help the council structure what it needed to build upon. **Resolved to adopt a plan based on the following themes and consult the community after the May elections in 2023:**

- 1. Community consultation, engagement and representation;**
- 2. Play and recreation;**
- 3. Community facilities;**
- 4. Organisational management and resources;**
- 5. Biodiversity and village environment.**

It was further resolved to investigate applying for the Local Council Award Scheme; work towards the Pledge on civility and respect; use the outcomes of the consultation to create a prioritised budget for 24-25 and beyond; consider commissioning LRALC to undertake a governance review to provide independent objectives. Initial ideas were suggested to consult the community by doing a leaflet drop, promotion via the Community Voice, face-to-face meetings at community events with the parish council having a stall (e.g. Woodstock in Whitwick).

The Chairman, on behalf of members, thanked Mr. Atkinson for the excellent sessions that he had organised.

3062. BUDGET PLANNING 2023/24

Following a reminder to members that their suggestions were to be invited on the '0' lines in the budget, this would supplement the preparations on contractual commitments and anticipated charges that had already been made by the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) to produce the next version of the draft budget. **Resolved that the figures proposed should be incorporated into the next draft budget for the January council meeting. Further resolved that in addition to the usual transfers to reserves, any unspent balance at 31 March 2023 from the current year budget allocations should also be transferred to Earmarked Reserves for: 4542/300 Community Christmas Lighting; 4620/460 Park Entrance improvements; 4640/460 Fencing.**

The Parish Manager was asked to contact the website provided to explore new email provision for all councillors as the current system was not acceptable.

3063. COMMUNITY MATTERS

Members noted/**resolved** that:

- a) **Changes to bus routes in Whitwick** – endeavours were continuing to get Arriva to reinstate the previous route for the 16/29/29A bus services;
- b) **Future changes to Arriva bus routes in Whitwick from 03/01/23** – members noted the Traffic Commissioner had been sent information on minor changes to departure times for services and minor timetable changes;
- c) **Flooding from Grace Dieu Brook –the Chair announced that on Thursday 26 January 2023 at 7pm at Park Hall the joint agency public meeting would take place.** Representatives would attend from Severn Trent and the Environment Agency and the meeting chaired by Cllr Colledge, supported by Cllr Woodward as the Parish Flood Champion and County Cllr T Gillard. The Parish Manager explained that due to room capacity, priority would be given to seating and tables not available for all parish councillors.

[Cllr Wyatt left the meeting at 8.57 pm]

3064. FINANCIAL MATTERS

Members noted/**resolved**:

- a) **Appointment of External Auditor for 5 year term from 2022-23 until 2026-27** - noted that Moore's had been appointed by the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments (SAAA) and should any councillors or close relations be employed by this company this must be advised to SAAA immediately as a potential conflict of interest;
- b) **to continue the payroll services contract by DM Payroll Services at an annual cost £180 (noting the conditions, registration with ICO, ethical guidelines of AAT, privacy policy and retention policy, and to confirm the contract conditions for a further period.**

3065. PARISH NEWSLETTER

Members discussed the future content and agreed the value of communicating in this way every month with residents. The Parish Manager outlined her list of topics to be covered and this was supplemented with suggestions from members for publicising events that were scheduled, advertise activities of our community groups and the work of the Parish Warden. The next draft would be prepared the following day due to the submission deadline. After the election, members would like to repeat the 'Introduce your Councillor' feature that had run successfully over 11 editions 4 years ago.

3066. COMPLAINT PROCESS

Following consideration by members, it was **resolved that the PMGP Committee should hold a special meeting to hear the formal complaint that had been investigated by the Parish Manager. This was scheduled for Thursday 22 December 2022 at 4.30 pm and would be heard under confidential terms. The outcome of the meeting would be reported to council and be on public record.**

3067. EVENTS 2022

Members noted/**resolved**:

- a) **Christmas Tree Lights** – completed by staff and switched on at the City of Dan on Monday 28 November;
- b) **Christmas Event - Sunday 4 December at the Black Horse Pub** – the Chair reported that in partnership with Woodstock in Whitwick this had been well attended, with 90 children being able to visit Santa’s Grotto and have a gift with no charge or entrance fees. The Chair thanked Cllr and Mrs. Barker for donating mince pies, to Cllr Moulton for helping with lighting. Cllr Moulton thanked Woodstock in Whitwick for running the event;
- c) **Easter Event – Sunday 2 April**;
- d) **Coronation Event** – the Chair was still exploring the possibility of doing a joint event but dates were still awaited;
- e) **Remembrance Parade Sunday 13 November 2022** – noted the feedback was nearly completed but not yet circulated and the Chair thanked the Parish Manager for the work undertaken;

Standing Order 5.20 set the deadline for meetings to end at 9.30 pm and it was agreed by resolution to extend the meeting to enable business to be concluded.

3068. PLANNING AND LICENSING MATTERS

a) Applications - The Council has been consulted by NWLDC on the following applications:

REF 22/01721/FUL – 296 Hall Lane – Erection of single storey side/rear extension/porch – **resolved that no objections be made;**

REF 22/01791/FUL – Dogtastic Daycare, Broom Leys Farm, 59 Broom Leys Road – Erection of dog care building – **resolved that no objections be made;**

REF: 22/01824/CLP – 17 Torrington Avenue – Certificate of lawful proposed development – **resolved that no objections be made;**

REF: 22/01721/FUL – 17 Torrington Avenue – Certificate of lawful proposed development for erection of single storey rear extension – **resolved that no objections be made;**

REF: 22/01721/FUL – 296 Hall Lane – Erection of single storey side/rear extension – **resolved that no objections be made;**

b) Decisions by **NWLDC who had now approved** the following applications:

REF: 22/01521/TPO – To provide a 2 metre clearance of trees within Area G1 from Hall Lane Methodist Church building

REF: 22/01495/FUL – 2 Torrington Avenue – Erection of a two-storey side extension

REF: 22/01514/FUL – 28 Carterdale - Erection of single storey front and rear extension

REF 21/02371/REM – Land Rear Of 21 To 63 Church Lane - Erection of 3 dwellings

3069. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Members noted the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 3 November 2022 be received.

3070. STAFFING COMMITTEE

Members noted the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 10 November 2022 be received.

3071. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved for Item 3072: That having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and the need to consider advice, publicity in respect of which would be prejudicial to the public interest, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting in pursuance of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended.

Item 3072 was deferred to the end of the meeting to enable public to observe the remaining business.

3073. WORKING PARTY/LINK COUNCILLOR REPORTS – PARISH PROJECTS

Cllr Moulton reported the Bowls Presentation Evening had been held and was a well attended event.

3074. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

No other matters – Hermitage Leisure Centre update given earlier in the meeting.

3075. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

No further information since the report at the last meeting. County Cllr T Gillard had attended Whitwick Quarry for a meeting on Thursday 17th November. However, the meeting was cancelled due to lack of attendance but he had passed on their newsletter to the Parish Manager, which included up-dates.

3076. PARISH MANAGER'S REPORT AND MATTERS PENDING

Members noted the report.

3077. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT AND FINANCE

Members noted/**resolved** that:

a) the income received for the last period was recorded as £0.00 although notification had since been received of £458 bank interest on the investment account;

b) approved the payments made for the month of November, including salaries, of £21,819.54;

- c) noted the latest income and expenditure account for 2022/23;
- d) noted the latest bank balances at the last month end as Unity current a/c £119,371.52, Unity Deposit a/c £12,251.37 and CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund £225,000 (latest deposit confirmed);

[Members of the public left the meeting at this point]

3078. STAFFING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Members resolved to accept the recommendations of the Committee which were planned to address the critical situation with the office workload and be a solution to the crisis. Agreed to purchase an audio recording device for use at all Council and Committee meetings to make minute taking less onerous - the Deputy Parish Manager to prepare draft minutes from the tape and Parish Manager to check them through (NB The Parish Manager had already budgeted to purchase a recorder and Cllr Moulton had details of suggested equipment.); for the time being suspend use of the projector and have paper copies provided for members and public at meetings (NB this has already been implemented by the Parish Manager); whenever possible, aim to have only one officer at each meeting (suggested Parish Manager at Council and Deputy Parish Manager at Property Management and General Purposes Committee meeting) to leave other staff member those hours (estimated 3 hours) to work on outstanding legally required work; for any future recruitment, training costs should be agreed with full council involvement due to the financial implications; contracts should not be agreed by members of Staffing Committee only and in future cost of training should come before the full council; induction of 2 staff had not been completed (delayed due to the illness of the Parish Manager in Spring 2022) and this should be suspended until the council was compliant (NB Full knowledge of Open Spaces is not yet complete.); empower other team members to assist with the day-to-day activities to allow the Parish Manager and Deputy time to focus on outstanding legally required work; priority for the office to be open when it should be open and no-one should take TOIL if the office could not be opened (NB this is normally the way that taking TOIL is planned); consider in future timetabling working weeks to include Officer hours for Council Meetings to reduce TOIL hours; the Saturday Office opening proposal can be a future aspiration once the council is compliant; given the current situation, work should be in the office so that it is clear that people are in there; revert back to most hours being worked in the office rather than homeworking making staff more accessible by phone and making councillors confident that when they signpost parishioners to the office that there will be someone available via phone; when asked what councillors could do to support the work of the Parish Manager, she asked that when a workable email system was in place logging on to their email account twice a week (or more) to read their emails and to reply when asked for guidance or opinions.

Two additional suggestions raised at the last council meeting had already been actioned.

Full signature of Chair: Date:

The meeting closed at 10.14 pm.

The guest speaker left the meeting at 8.50 pm]
[Cllr Wyatt left the meeting at 8.57 pm]

<i>Date of Special Council Meeting:</i>	<i>Thursday 12 January 2023</i>
<i>Date of next council meeting:</i>	<i>Thursday 19 January 2023</i>
<i>Date of PUBLIC Flood Meeting:</i>	<i>Thursday 26 January 2023</i>