

**MINUTES of the MEETING of WHITWICK PARISH COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 19 MARCH 2020 at 7 pm at Park Hall, Whitwick Park, off North Street, Whitwick.**

Present: Councillor L Collins (Chairman)

Cllrs A Barker, P Moulton, J Straw and R Woodward

In Attendance:

Mrs C Tibbles PSLCC, Parish Manager/Responsible Finance Officer [except items 2712-2713]

2 Members of the public [except items 2712-2713]

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and explained that under the current public health emergency the meeting would be severely curtailed with only key decisions being made, other matters noted or deferred to a future meeting. It was aimed to complete the meeting quickly.

**2153. APOLOGIES**

Cllrs L Gillard, S Gillard, T Gillard, T Oldham, L Spence and M Wyatt. Reasons for apologies were recorded. Members said the council, as an employer, had a duty of care to its staff and endorsed the procedures being followed by the Chairman and the Parish Manager to safely hold this meeting in a correct and responsible manner to respond to the current national emergency.

**2154. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr A Barker declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest as a signatory at Walkers Flats Allotment Group and as a member of Whitwick Historical Group and as a member of Broom Leys PPG.

Cllr J Straw declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest in all planning matters regarding the Green Wedge as a member of Whitwick Action Group and a disclosable non-pecuniary interest as a member of Whitwick Historical Group.

Cllr P Moulton declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest as a Link Councillor and member of Whitwick Historical Group, as a Link Councillor and member of the Royal British Legion and as a member of Whitwick Bowls Club.

Cllr L Collins declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest as a Link Councillor with Whitwick Scout group and as member of Whitwick Historical Group.

**2155. MINUTES**

**With the amendment of item 2119 heading to read 'parish projects' instead of 'policy projects', resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2020 be approved as a correct record.**

### **2156. COMMUNITY POLICING**

Noted without discussion. PSCO Rose had sent her report on 31 recent crimes or suspicious incidents in the parish. The Beat Surgery at the Community Office scheduled for Sunday 10th May 10 am -12 noon may not take place.

### **2157. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

A member of the public said the forms needed by the County Council had been returned and more information was awaited for the role of Voluntary Tree Warden.

### **2158. LEISURE CENTRE PROVISION**

Noted without discussion. The Department of Transport had granted the Stopping Up of Highway in Stephenson Way for the Coalville Leisure Centre. Planning permission had been granted for the building of the new Leisure Centre. Latest information could be found on the NWLDC website: [https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/leisure\\_centres\\_project](https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/leisure_centres_project).

### **2159. PARISH PROJECTS – WORKING PARTY/LINK COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

*Deferred.*

### **2160. GRANT APPLICATION**

**Resolved that a grant of £250 be awarded to Broom Leys Patient Participation Group towards the cost of ECG machine for the surgery to benefit patients by having results immediately with no delay.**

### **2161. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Members noted/**resolved**/*deferred*:

- a) noted the minutes of the PMGP Committee meeting held on 5 March 2020 and the delegated decisions taken.
- b) *deferred consideration of ward walks by members to check parish open spaces;*

### **2162. TREE PLANTING**

Members noted/**resolved**/*deferred*:

- a) noted the confirmation by the County Council that there is likely to be a big drive on tree planting over the next few years, especially around the National Forest;

- b) noted the further discussions taking place on a community planting scheme as suggested by a local resident in conjunction with a local school that would enhance a nearby open space where trees had been felled last year;
- c) noted the new community project agreed with a local organisation whose members wished to obtain and plant free trees on parish land in the autumn;
- d) resolved (with 2 abstentions) to adopt the Tree Charter and/or establishing a Tree Charter Branch for Whitwick, utilising the wording provided below to now be included in the draft Tree Management Strategy (awaiting completion):**

“Whitwick Parish Council was created in 2011 and is currently responsible for 24 areas of open space, mostly populated with mature trees (formerly owned by the local District Council), including Whitwick Park King Georges Field. Our vision is to manage and enhance the trees, woodlands, hedgerows and green spaces on parish owned land within the village of Whitwick in a way that is safe, sustainable, ecologically aware and that provides benefits for the whole community today and into the future. This includes a commitment to responsible management of parish owned trees and is currently undertaking professional advice and surveys to aid our future plans, including planting of new trees in line with professional advice. A Tree Management Strategy has been drafted.

Charter Branch Map and Description

Whitwick Parish Council (newly created in 2011) is currently responsible for 24 areas of open space, mostly populated with mature trees (formerly owned by the local District Council), including Whitwick Park King Georges Field. Our vision is to manage and enhance the trees, woodlands, hedgerows and green spaces on parish owned land within the village of Whitwick in a way that is safe, sustainable, ecologically aware and that provides benefits for the whole community today and into the future. See our website for Parish Map, our Tree Management Strategy and other news of partnership working at [www.whitwickpc.org](http://www.whitwickpc.org) 97 words.

Alternative (if Charter is adopted):

Whitwick Parish Council (newly created in 2011) is currently responsible for 24 areas of open space, mostly populated with mature trees (formerly owned by the local District Council), including Whitwick Park King Georges Field. To support our vision to manage and enhance the trees, woodlands, hedgerows and green spaces on parish owned land within the village of Whitwick we adopted the Tree Charter in 2020 to pledge further benefits for the whole community today and into the future. See our website for Parish Map, our Tree Management Strategy and other news of partnership working at [www.whitwickpc.org](http://www.whitwickpc.org) 96 words

- e) noted the written clarification from the County Council that their ‘Licence to Cultivate’ did not normally cover trees; although the county could look into new tree planting on verges with the help of parishes (funding

and watering) it could also be considered as part of their own county planting program; confirming that trees would become the default property of the county who would then decide maintenance and felling; having to be mindful when planting of choosing the right species, size at maturity, visibility splays, width of verge, consideration of adjacent landowners and maintenance of their property (e.g. hedge cutting) and importantly the checks and restrictions to planting with overhead/underground services (needing searches with around 15 different service providers to locate utility runs (gas, water, electric, telecoms); willingness to investigate further;

- f) *deferred consideration of the above information (see (e) above);*
- g) 2 members declined to consider this item. Noted that following a £5000 budget provision in the next financial year, some members were against spending money on match funding when free trees seemed to be readily available. The Parish Manager said the requested information and assistance from a member had not been forthcoming and without that she could not meet the grant deadline of 31 March 2020. In the absence of suggestions being submitted of possible species and detailed costs for planting trees on verges, initially in Hall Lane/Broom Leys ward and then other wards, she could not progress the matter as previously resolved and therefore advised discussion was not relevant.

### **2163. STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING**

*Deferred – minutes not yet available and it was deemed impractical to try and recruit under current conditions. [NB item (iii) should read 250 hours.]*

### **2164. VE DAY COMMEMORATION – LOCAL EVENTS 8-10 MAY 2020**

Members noted:

- a) the Chairman reported the Whitwick Scout Group community Torch Light Procession in Whitwick on the evening of Friday 8 May had been postponed;
- b) the Picnic in the Park event, in partnership with Woodstock in Whitwick on Sunday 10 May had been postponed;
- c) the Parish Manager had not applied for a grant towards the cost of a marquee due to the events being postponed;

### **2165. BUSINESS CONTINUITY AND PARISH SUPPORT**

The Parish Council already had business continuity protocols with lone-working and/or remote working being viable options for the Community Office. The Proper Officer (Parish Manager) could manage all decisions in accordance with sector specific, local, county and national advice. Additional information had been circulated to share LRALC professional advice for councils. **Resolved that in response to the Covid-19 outbreak in the UK:**

- a) **Council and Committee meetings be postponed indefinitely. The Parish Manager shall have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the council where such decision cannot reasonably be**

deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the council in legislation or in its Standing Orders or Financial Regulations. Any decision made under this delegation must be recorded in writing and must be published in accordance with the relevant regulations. This delegated authority ceases upon the first meeting of the council after the council meeting at which the delegation was put in place. The delegated authority, in the absence of the Parish Manager, to pass to the Administrative Assistant and to any Locum Clerk (if required and if available). The Parish Manager would:

i) take delegated decisions on own initiative on all routine matters, in line with policy of the council and/or past practice and sector advice/knowledge;

ii) in consultation with all members (by parish council email) where there is a consensus within the response time requested, take delegated decisions on new matters to action;

iii) update members periodically (weekly, fortnightly or as possible/necessary) by email on news, incidents, progress, decisions etc.

iv) rewrite Newsletter for Community Voice as the drafted version was no longer appropriate under current circumstances;

b) Park Hall – immediate closure agreed for 4 weeks to 16 April, being reviewed on 2 April to assess if it should be extended further. The Parish Manager would:

i) offer hirers alternative dates when re-opening and retain payments to transfer across;

ii) waive clause 1.5 of the hire regulations and give full cost refund to hirers (regular/casual) if they need/request payment returning;

iii) caretakers to work on other duties, e.g. deep cleaning and (if flexible) offer alternatives like decorating the entrance corridor, office, pavilion or other community work;

c) Community Office – closure agreed (no timescale specified) with:

i) all enquiries being made by phone or email on parish matters (with District and County matters being self-referred if possible);

ii) no personal visits to office;

iii) staff to establish lone working to protect each other and the council;

iv) closure to commence the following morning;

d) Community Support – The Parish Manager would:

**i) establish if a Whitwick/local support group was set up (e.g. in partnership with Woodstock in Whitwick) then registration would be made with national website - Local Covid-19 Mutual Aid groups;**

- 1. The Chairman volunteered to liaise with the group as Link Councillor;**
- 2. Offer use of council resources to any recognised support group – co-ordinated by the Parish Manager (e.g. use of Park Hall, printing, stationery, hi-vis, support and/or information) to be available at no charge;**
- 3. Utilise the agreed unspent balance of the Community Grant budget (£370) to help resource essential items/support;**

**ii) if no group was set up, the parish council, through the Parish Manager’s delegated authority, would support or resource items for the community as appropriate;**

**iii) signpost enquiries to NWLDC Community Focus team who were putting information on a dedicated webpage;**

**iv) send relevant information to NWLDC Community Focus team to help them find ways to support the vulnerable, elderly and isolated in our communities, given the Government’s advice around social distancing;**

**v) prepare a public statement by the Chairman for the website and newsletter;**

**vi) no other matters not covered above.**

## **2166. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS’ REPORTS**

No reports submitted.

## **2167. COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT**

No report submitted.

## **2168. PLANNING MATTERS**

### **a) Applications**

**The Council had been consulted by NWLDC on the following applications and it was resolved that the following recommendations be submitted:**

REF 20/00216/FUL - 367 Hall Lane - Erection of a two-storey rear extension with dormer windows and a hip to gable roof extension (deadline 10 March – extension granted to 20 March) – **no objection**

REF 20/00317/FUL - 9 City Of Three Waters - Conversion of carport into living accommodation and erection of a single storey rear extension (deadline 17 March - extension requested) – **no objection**

REF 20/00339/FUL – 43 Hogarth Road - Erection of single-storey rear extensions (deadline 10 March – extension requested) – **no objection**

REF 20/00458/FUL – 102 Leicester Road - Erection of side and rear extensions (deadline 24 March) – **no objection**

## **b) Decisions**

**NWLDC have now approved** the following applications:

REF 19/01343/FULM - Land Adjacent To A511 Stephenson Way Coalville - Erection of a detached building for use as a leisure centre (Use Class D2) together with external landscaping, pedestrian accesses and parkland (including external trim trails and activity stations) associated parking and servicing areas alongside provision of a new vehicular and pedestrian site ingress/egress from A511 (Stephenson Way).

REF 19/02392/OUT - Land Rear Of 21 To 63 Church Lane - Erection of three dwellings (outline- access only)

REF 20/00062/FUL - Whitwick Day Nursery Market Place - Alterations to external doors and alterations to hard surfaces

REF 20/00063/LBC - Whitwick Day Nursery Market Place - Alterations to external doors and alterations to hard surfaces

REF 20/00116/TPO - Land Adjoining 25 Dumps Road - Works to 1 no. sycamore and 1 no. ash (Protected by Tree Preservation Order T83)

## **2169. REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES/EVENTS ATTENDED**

No reports given.

## **2170. PARISH MANAGER'S REPORT AND MATTERS PENDING**

Members noted the report.

## **2171. FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

### **Resolved that:**

- a) the income of £879.51 received since the last meeting be noted;
- b) the latest payment list and retrospective salary payments of £41,364.59 be approved; to process additional payments received by 31 March due to year end deadlines and submit for retrospective approval at the next meeting;**
- c) the latest income and expenditure report for 2019/20 be noted;
- d) the bank balances at last month end were noted as Unity current a/c £177,878.80; Unity Deposit a/c £12,190.61 and CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund £145,000.
- e) To delegate authority to the Responsible Finance Officer to vire funds within budget headings (this is not expenditure and not changing reserves) to facilitate financial management, with reports to be submitted to council when undertaken;**

- f) **To approve allocation of unspent but committed/usual balances to earmarked reserves (information to be adjusted at 31 March) and submitted to council for retrospective approval;**
- g) following action by the office, to note that Unity Trust Bank had now reactivated 3 of the existing signatories (Cllrs Spence, Straw and Woodward) who should login at the earliest opportunity;

**2172. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Resolved:** 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.**

**2173. STAFF APPRAISALS AND INCREMENTAL REVIEWS**

**Resolved that:**

- a) **the verbal report from the Staffing Committee on the recent completion of the Parish Manager’s annual appraisal be noted;**
- b) **that the contractual incremental salary point be awarded to the Parish Manager, as previously costed, with effect from 1 April 2020.**

Full signature of Chairman: ..... Date: .....

The meeting terminated at 7.41 pm

*Date of next council meeting: **meetings suspended until further notice***