

**MINUTES of a MEETING of WHITWICK PARISH COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 8 DECEMBER 2011 at the St John the Baptist C of E School, Parsonwood Hill, Whitwick.**

Present: Councillor R Woodward (Chairman) (In the Chair)

Cllrs A Barker, S Colledge, E Easom, D Everitt (arrived 7.03pm), D Howe, N Pearson, L Spence and J Straw

In Attendance: Mr P Ellis, Interim Clerk, Mrs L Ellis, Interim Assistant Clerk

2 members of the public

Apologies: Councillor T Gillard and L Weaver

Declarations of Interest:

Councillors D Everitt and D Howe declared personal and prejudicial interests in Minute No 89 (Planning) as members of NWLDC's Planning Committee

Councillors S Colledge and J Straw declared personal and prejudicial interests in Minute No 89(a) (Planning - Application 11/00934/FUL) as friends of a neighbour

Councillor A Barker declared a personal interest in Minute No 92(b) (Request for Grit Bin) as an employee of St John the Baptist C of E School

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

A member of the public asked what plans the Council had to improve the numbers of people attending parish council meetings. The Clerk reported that the Council's application to the County Council for a licence to erect a notice board on land at City Of Dan was still awaiting a response. In the meantime, dates of future meetings and agenda were displayed on the Council's website. Some members felt that people usually came along when they had a problem so low attendances were not necessarily a bad thing.

### **84. MINUTES**

**Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 October 2011 as previously circulated be approved as a correct record**

### **85. COMMUNITY POLICING**

The Clerk reported that apologies had been submitted by PC Broomfield as this meeting fell on one of his rest days and due to a personal appointment he was

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unable to change his shifts about in order to attend. PCSO Sorrell was currently off active duty due to an injury.

## **86. SPEEDING TRAFFIC – LOUGHBOROUGH ROAD, WHITWICK**

The Clerk reported comments from PC Broomfield that in respect of the Loughborough Road speeding issues, local officers had been in attendance both to monitor and record speeding vehicles and to enforce through ticketing or court summons where appropriate. They had also been in touch with Leicestershire Police HQ to seek some assistance from their Road Policing Unit. They had promised some resources but this was “highly likely” to be in the New Year. He undertook to keep the Council updated.

The Chairman welcomed Barry Preston of Loughborough Road Community Speedwatch who was in attendance at the meeting to present their findings and to invite the Council’s support in requesting the County Council to introduce suitable traffic calming measures.

Mr Preston explained that the Speedwatch had started in 2008 and had resumed in October. It had 12 members who had monitored traffic speeds at peak times on alternate days between 24 October and 3 November. A total of 597 vehicle speeds had been recorded with many exceeding the 30mph speed limit – some by as much as 60+ mph – with some drivers also using mobile phones. He submitted detailed data on the exercise for members’ information. He was concerned that while the information was relayed to County Hall, no response had yet been received from the County Council. It also appeared that the Police had not sent warning letters to offending drivers. Parents of pupils attending Holy Cross School no longer used the Man in Compass car park because of the dangers of crossing this road adding to parking problems elsewhere.

Members congratulated Mr Preston and his Speedwatch colleagues on their success in compiling such telling evidence of a speeding problem at the location. The fact that no serious accidents had yet occurred was no reason not to take action.

Speeding problems were also being experienced elsewhere in the village including Leicester Road and Hall lane.

### **Resolved:**

**(a) That strong representations be made to the County Council to implement suitable traffic calming measures to counter this problem; suggestions to include a speed table or flashing speed warning sign but not speed cushions**

**(b) That the Police be requested to undertake further enforcement at peak times**

**(c) That District Councillors be requested to raise the issue at the local Highways Forum**

## **87. COMMUNITY FOCUS**

The Clerk reported that unfortunately, Tony MacRory-Smith, Principal Community Team Leader, NWLDC was off sick and so this item would have to be deferred until the next meeting.

## **88. COMMUNITY-LED PLANNING**

(a) The Clerk reported that the Council's application to the County Council's Big Society grant fund for £300 in respect of the Rural Community Council's training fees had been successful.

**Resolved: That the report be received**

(b) Members who had attended the Rural Community Council workshop on 22 November gave feedback.

There was a clear distinction between a community plan and a neighbourhood plan, the latter being related to where development should be allowed to take place while the former was a more general one around local amenities. The estimated costs of producing a neighbourhood plan were prohibitive.

There was some disappointment with the content of the sessions which had not given the Council the information it needed to take decisions about how to move forward.

While councillors remained committed to doing some form of community engagement exercise in the longer term, it was pointed out that the outcome of the Stephenson Green planning appeal for building on the green wedge would have a fundamental impact on the future of the parish and it would be difficult to design a relevant questionnaire until the outcome was known.

**Resolved: That consideration of the proposed community plan engagement exercise be deferred pending the outcome of the Stephenson Green planning appeal**

## **89. PLANNING**

### **(a) Applications**

The Clerk reported notification of the following by NWLDC and LCC:

11/00934/FUL – Erection of a part two-storey, part first floor level rear extension (replacing conservatory) – 69 Leicester Road, Whitwick

11/00957/FUL – Demolition of detached garage, erection of an attached garage and single storey extension, alterations to existing kitchen and outbuilding – 164 Church Lane, Whitwick

11/01017/FUL – Erection of a single storey rear extension and front porch – 49 Mossdale, Whitwick

11/VOC0037/LCC - Tom Toon & Daughters Skip Hire - variation of condition 2 and 7 of planning permission 2005/1453/07 to lay concrete to create a storage area for soils and hardcore associated with the business - 40, Brooks Lane, Whitwick

**Resolved: That no objections be made to the above applications**

**(b) Proposed telecommunications installation - grass verge on west side of Market Place (at the junction with Hall Lane), Whitwick**

Consideration was given to a letter from Higham & Co regarding further proposals for a radio base station for Telefonica O2 Ltd (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes).

Members felt that this was little more than a resubmission of the previous application with only cosmetic changes. The Chairman and Vice Chairman had met a representative of the company who had indicated that there were no other suitable locations as the coverage was only for a 50m radius. They had also indicated that the previous application could go to appeal if this one was also refused.

**Resolved: That the Council's previous objections to this proposed development be reiterated**

**(c) Decisions**

The Clerk reported that NWLDC had now taken decisions as follows:

**Approved:**

11/00452/FUL – Erection of a 2 storey front extension with first floor level accommodation within the roof space – 6 City of Three Waters, Whitwick

11/00517/FUL – Erection of first floor front extension and conversion of existing garage to annexed living space with associated work – 12 Howe Road, Whitwick

11/00737/TPO – Crown lifting of horse chestnut trees to clear thatched roof - Old Vicarage Residential Home, 11 Silver Street, Whitwick

11/00859/ - Erection of two storey side extension – 20 Hilary Crescent, Whitwick

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**Refused:**

11/00661/FUL – Change of use to mixed use for residential and cattery together with the erection of a timber single-storey boarding cattery building – 35 Tressall Road, Whitwick

11/00830/FUL – Alterations and extension to dwelling – 240 Church Lane, Whitwick

11/00833/T56 – erection of a 12.5m high slimline telecommunications streetworks column with antenna together with 1 no. equipment cabinet and 1 no. metre pillar (prior notification) – Quiet Storm Communications, Talbot Street, Whitwick

**Resolved: That the report be received**

(Councillors Colledge and Straw had declared personal and prejudicial interests in Application 11/00934/FUL but as this had previously been notified to members and the closing date for objections had now passed, there was no debate on the matter)

(Councillors D Everitt and D Howe left the meeting during consideration of this item having declared personal and prejudicial interests as members of NWLDC's Planning Committee)

**90. THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE – 4 JUNE 2012**

Members were invited to consider whether the Parish Council should support any initiatives in celebration of this event.

One initiative being promoted nationally is to light 2012 beacons across the country on Monday, 4 June 2012 – traditional bonfire beacons and church tower beacons.

**Resolved; That the organisers of the community Party in the Park event be invited to consider scheduling the 2012 event to coincide with the Jubilee celebrations**

**91. LOGO COMPETITION**

The Clerk reported that no entries had been received by the closing date. However, an offer had subsequently been received from local firm Quiet Storm to design a logo at no cost to the Council in return for suitable publicity.

Members reiterated the key themes to be represented – ancient history (Doomsday Witewic, the castle and knights), economic history (quarrying and mining) and the National Forest.

**Resolved: That the offer of Quiet Storm be gratefully accepted and draft designs be considered at a future meeting**

## 92. REQUEST FOR GRIT BIN

(a) The Clerk reported receipt of a request for siting of a grit bin from Mrs S Edgecombe of 24 Elsdon Close, Whitwick. Mrs Edgecombe had been advised of the Council's previous decision not to fund such provision until community priorities had been identified.

(b) St John the Baptist C of E School, Parsonwood Hill had asked if the Parish Council would consider purchasing a grit bin for their use. The bin would be accommodated within the school curtilage so there would be no need for County Highways consent. They would also undertake to fill it with grit themselves so there would be no on-going costs. The bin would enable them to treat paths in and around the school on icy mornings in the interests of pupil and parent safety.

Members felt that the Council should agree to this request, particularly as use of the school for meetings was being provided at no charge. The other school in the parish would also be considered if it made a similar request.

**Resolved: That the request be approved and Clerk be authorised to order a grit bin for delivery to the school as soon as possible at a cost of approx £110 plus VAT including delivery.**

(Councillor A Barker had declared a personal interest in this item as an employee of the school)

## 93. NALC POLICY CONSULTATIONS

Consideration was given to responding to the following consultations on proposed regulations:

(a) Neighbourhood Planning

(b) Community Infrastructure Levy

Copies of the NALC policy papers had previously been circulated and are attached to the official copies of the minutes. Copies of the full consultation documents (37 and 35 pages respectively) and response forms had been lodged on the Members' Area of the website.

In view of the complexity of the issues, Councillors Easom and Weaver had volunteered to examine them in detail prior to the meeting. While recognising the importance of the issues raised, both considered it difficult to offer reasoned responses based on the limited information supplied.

**Resolved: That NALC be advised that while the Council would have wished to respond to these consultations, inadequate information has been supplied to make informed comments and we therefore object to such important issues resting on such a flawed consultation process**

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#### **94. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

The following accounts were submitted for payment:

HMRC – Tax and NI - £779.81

P J Ellis - Postages and Stationery - £97.73

Members were advised that a successful application had been made to HMRC for a one year 'NI holiday' from Employers NI contributions as the Parish Council qualified as a new business.

**Resolved: That these payments be approved**

#### **95. RISK ASSESSMENT**

Consideration was given to adopting a Risk Assessment (draft previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes). The Council would be expected to have such a document in place for audit and the draft had been approved by the Council's appointed Internal Auditor.

**Resolved: That the draft Risk Assessment be adopted and reviewed annually.**

#### **96. ASSET REGISTER**

The Clerk submitted a register of the Council's assets (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes). This was another document required for audit purposes.

**Resolved:**

**(a) That the Asset Register be approved**

**(b) That the document be updated regularly as changes occur and reviewed annually**

#### **97. MARKET PLACE PUBLIC CONVENIENCES, WHITWICK**

The Clerk reported receipt of a letter from NWLDC's Director of Services and Deputy Chief Executive asking if the Council wished to consider the transfer of this building "to operate the facilities as public conveniences" at the Parish Council's expense.

Members were reminded that there has been a suggestion that this building could be converted to provide an office for the Parish Council and this idea had been floated at the meeting regarding transfer of property with the Chief Executive on 25 October.

It was recognised that the Council could not afford to purchase these premises and even if they were available for transfer at no cost, further investigations would be required into the feasibility and cost of converting them and any sources of grant aid towards such works.

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**Resolved: That NWLDC be asked formally if they would be prepared to include these premises in the transfer of property agreement to the parish council**

#### **98. TRANSFER OF LAND FROM NWLDC**

Following the meeting with the Chief Executive on 25 October, the Clerk submitted a letter which had been received from NWLDC giving an update of their position

The Chairman and Clerk had subsequently met with senior District Council officials regarding the future of the cemeteries service and in particular how fees were to be charged in the next financial year. Members were reminded that the Council had previously agreed:

*“That the parish do not take on the cemetery at the present time but that the matter be reviewed if and when the remainder of the Coalville special expense area is parished.”*

The intention would be to engage with other urban parishes with a view to forming a joint board so that Whitwick, Hugglescote and Broom Leys cemeteries continued to provide a combined service across the whole Coalville urban area.

**Resolved: That NWLDC be requested to continue the current practice of not charging enhanced fees for burials in Whitwick Cemetery for residents of the Coalville urban area**

#### **99. FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

Members received a Bank Reconciliation as at 3 November which had been verified by the Chairman (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes)

**Resolved: That the report be noted**

#### **100. RECRUITMENT OF PARISH CLERK**

Further consideration was given to the use of paid advertising and the relative costs of different media.

**Resolved: That in addition to the methods approved at the previous meeting, an advertisement be also placed in the Rural Community Council Bulletin at a cost of £15 (or thereabouts).**

#### **101. DRAFT BUDGET 2012/13**

Consideration was given to the report of the Interim Clerk (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes).



Members wished to compare the council tax base for the current and following year so as to calculate a precept which would translate into a council tax charge at a similar level to 2011/2.

It was agreed that a reserve fund needed to be identified with the figure being determined at the next meeting.

**Resolved:**

**(a) That Nicholas Hancox Solicitors be appointed to represent the Council in the transfer of land from NWLDC in accordance with their quote**

**(b) That consideration of the Council's precept be deferred to the next meeting to enable further information to be obtained on a figure which would retain Council Tax bills at their present level**

The meeting closed at 8.29pm with the Chairman extending season's greetings to all

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