

MINUTES of a MEETING of WHITWICK PARISH COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 27 OCTOBER 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, T Gillard (arrived 7.02pm), D Howe, L Spence, J Straw and L Weaver

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

3 members of the public

Apologies: Councillor N Pearson

Declarations of Interest:

Councillor D Howe declared personal and prejudicial interests in Minute No 71 (Planning) as a member of NWLDC's Planning Committee

Councillor L Spence declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No 71 (Planning - Application 11/00833/T56) as an NWLDC Ward representative

68. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

No members of the public had any questions.

69. MINUTES

Further to Minute No 59(d), Councillor Weaver reported on her attendance at the initial Rural Community Council training session on community-led planning the previous evening. This had been aimed at moving immediately to a public meeting to launch the exercise whereas the Council's aim had been to establish a blueprint for the exercise with a view to assembling a steering group and launching it sometime next year. The same applied to Hugglescote & Donington le Heath Parish Council which was the only other authority attending the training. In the circumstances, the RCC representative had offered to use the training fees already paid to tailor support more suitable to the Council's requirements which would include advice on necessary provision in the 2012/13 budget and how to access practical and financial support.

Resolved:

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

(b) That the suggested alternative approach to RCC support for community planning using the training fees already paid be approved

70. COMMUNITY POLICING

No representative of Leicestershire Constabulary was in attendance and no policing issues were raised.

71. PLANNING

(a) Applications

The Clerk reported notification of the following by NWLDC:

11/00737/TPO – Mr M Booth – Crown lifting of Horse Chestnut trees to clear thatched roof (trees protected by Tree Preservation Order) – Old Vicarage Residential Home , 11 Silver Street, Whitwick

11/00420/FUL – Friends of Holly Hayes Wood – Erection of small compound with storage container and welfare unit – Holly Hayes Wood, Leicester Road, Whitwick

11/00830/FUL – Mr B Howard - Alterations and extensions to dwelling – 240 Church Lane, Whitwick

11/00859/FUL – Mr P Gregory – Erection of 2 storey side extension – 20 Hilary Crescent, Whitwick

The following applications were to be considered by NWLDC's Planning Committee on 1 November. The Parish Council was asked if it wished to appoint a representative to speak for up to 3 minutes on either or both applications:

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

11/00833/T56 – erection of 12.5m high slimline telecommunications streetworks column with antenna together with 1 equipment cabinet and 1 metre pillar (prior notification) – Quiet Storm Communications, Talbot Street, Whitwick

The Council had previously decided not to object to 11/00661/FUL. With regard to 11/00833/T56, members were aware that a technical objection had been lodged by Mr J Sketchley questioning health and safety aspects of the proposal given the proximity of the proposed site to a petrol station and that he would be attending the meeting to speak on the issue. Councillors Gillard and Spence would also be speaking in their roles of County and District Councillor. In the circumstances, it was felt that a parish representative could not add anything extra to what was already going to be said.

Resolved:

- (a) That with regard to application 11/00833/T56, the District Council be advised that in the event of there being legitimate health and safety concerns, these should be paramount in deciding the application**
- (b) That no objections be made to the other applications**

(Councillor Spence left the meeting during debate on application 11/00833/T56)

(b) Decisions

The following applications had now been **approved** by NWLDC:

11/00608/VCI – Mr R Morris – Erection of 3 dwellings approved under planning permission 10/00006/FUL without complying with condition 2 to enable provision of first floor accommodation to plot 5, Parsonwood Paddock, Whitwick

11/00623/FUL – Mr R Mellors – proposed garage conversion, 35 Lakeshore Crescent, Whitwick

11/00642/EXT – Mr Michael Aris – New outline permission to replace 08/0111/OUT to extend time period for demolition of 81/81A North Street, Whitwick and redevelopment of site with erection of 9 new dwellings, parking and turning facilities

11/00664/FUL – Mr J Worth – alterations and extension to dwelling including erection of single storey front extension, 2 dormer windows to rear roof slope and single storey rear extension to garage – 64 Loughborough Road, Whitwick

11/00694/FUL – Mr Gary Bates – Erection of 2 storey side extension – 113 Loughborough Road, Whitwick

11/00710/FUL – Mr and Mrs Sawyer – Single storey rear extension – 61 Cademan Street, Whitwick

11/00726/VCU – Mr S Wilcox – new outline permission to replace 08/01710/OUT in order to extend time period for implementation for erection of 2 No two storey three bedroomed properties – 16 School Lane, Whitwick

11/00774/TPO – crown lifting and thinning of 6 lime trees protected by tree preservation order – Whitwick Day Nursery, Market Place, Whitwick

The following application had been unanimously **refused**:

10/01208/OUTM – William Davis Ltd and Jelson Ltd - Proposed residential development, village centre and other uses – Land north of Stephenson Way (A511), Coalville

Resolved: That the report be received

(Councillor Howe left the meeting during consideration of the whole of this item)

72. REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES

The Clerk reported that the Boundary Commission had published initial proposals which would see the existing North West Leicestershire Parliamentary Constituency divided between two new constituencies – Bosworth and Coalville & Keyworth. This Parish would fall within Coalville & Keyworth.

Maps illustrating the two proposed constituencies together with an extract from the Boundary Commission website detailing the review had previously been circulated and are attached to the official copy of the minutes.

Any views on the proposals could be sent to the Boundary Commission not later than 5 December.

Members expressed concern that the proposed Coalville and Keyworth Constituency would be an artificial area with no historic or current community links. There were not even any public transport links between the two towns and the long-established Coalville urban area would be split down the middle. The whole concept was illogical. While recognising the requirement to reduce the number of MPs, the existing North West Leicestershire constituency was only 722 electors short of the required minimum of 72,000 and, given the numbers of new houses envisaged in the District Council's emerging Core Strategy, new house building should soon see this figure more than exceeded. A constituency coterminous with the District Council boundary had distinct advantages and the proposal would make the MPs job a much more onerous one by straddling not only District but also County boundaries.

Resolved: That an objection be lodged with the Boundary Commission on these grounds.

73. PARISH NOTICE BOARD

Consideration was given to a report by the Interim Clerk (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes). He had been advised that the County Council licence fee was £100.

Resolved:

- (a) That an application be made to the County Council for a licence to site a notice board on highway land at City of Dan between the junctions with Hall Lane and Silver Street**
- (b) That payment of the licence fee of £100 be approved**
- (c) That subject to a licence being granted, a model PDN man-made timber 2 Bay Notice Board be purchased from Greenbarnes Ltd**
- (d) That quotes be sought from local builders for erecting the notice board on site**

74. REQUEST FOR PROVISION OF GRIT BIN

Consideration was given to a request from a resident that a grit bin be provided on Pares Close, Whitwick.

Under current arrangements, the County Council would need to approve the site, the Parish Council would be expected to pay for the bin and the County Council would then keep it topped up with grit. The cost was approximately £300 per bin.

While recognising that this small cul-de-sac was on a slope, members expressed concern that this might set a precedent for similar requests. Before incurring any expenditure, it was agreed that villagers should be consulted to determine the demand for new bins and to enable locations to be prioritised. It was also possible that in future, the County Council might introduce charges for topping up.

Resolved:

- (a) That demand for and public priority sites for new grit bins be addressed through the parish planning process**
- (b) That provision be made in estimates to enable the Council to take a phased approach to purchase of new grit bins**
- (c) That provision of grit bins be requested to be included in any future Section 106 agreements for housing developments on sloping sites**

75. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The following accounts were submitted:

NWLDC – Printing - £12.26

Royal British Legion – Poppy wreath - £17 (Section 137 expenditure)

Resolved: That these payments be approved

76. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Clerk submitted a Balance Sheet and Bank Reconciliation Statement to 10 October 2011 (copies previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes).

Resolved:

- (a) That the report be received**
- (b) That the Chairman of the Council be nominated to check and verify these figures as part of the Council's financial control arrangements**

77. STAFFING POLICIES

The Clerk suggested that the Council should adopt Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures (drafts previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes).

Because a parish council with just a clerk did not have the usual line management arrangements of a larger organisation and having regard to the need to incorporate an appeals procedure, these policies would require the appointment of:

- (a) A Staffing Committee with delegated powers to institute disciplinary procedures and hear grievances in accordance with the policies and
- (b) An Appeal Committee made up of members not on the Staffing Committee with delegated powers to hear and decide on appeals lodged in accordance with the policies.

Resolved:

- (a) That the draft Disciplinary and Grievance procedures be adopted**
- (b) That a Staffing Committee comprising Councillor Woodward (Chairman) and Councillors Colledge and Weaver be appointed with delegated powers to institute disciplinary procedures and hear grievances in accordance with the policies**
- (c) That an Appeal Committee comprising Councillor Howe (Chairman) and Councillors Barker and Easom be appointed with delegated powers to hear and decide on appeals lodged in accordance with the policies**

78. TRANSFER OF LAND

The Clerk gave a verbal update on the meeting with the District Council's Chief Executive which had been held on 25 October. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman had been in attendance together with representatives of Hugglescote and Donington le Heath Parish Council.

It was now clear that the transfer of land from the District to the Parish would not take place in time for the next financial year. The current arrangements of maintenance costs being charged by NWLDC as a Special Expense on the Parish would therefore continue for 2012/13. The provisions in the Parish Council Creation Order for the Parish to give the District notice to terminate the current maintenance arrangements did not apply until after transfer took place meaning that no change could be made before 1 April 2014 at the very earliest. The District Council had agreed to supply a timeline for addressing "complex legal issues" involved in the transfer.

Given the District Council's commitment to a zero council tax increase in a time of inflation, this would put additional pressure on special expense budgets and the Parish had been requested to assume responsibility for community grants from 1 April next.

Resolved:

- (a) That the report be received and that future progress be kept under close review**
- (b) That provision for community grants be included in the 2012/13 estimates**

79. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Resolved: That a revised schedule of meetings be approved as follows:

8 December, 19 January, 8 March, 29 March (interviews), 19 April, 17 May (Annual Parish/Parish Council)

80. NWLDC SPENDING PLANS 2012/3 TO 2014/5

Members considered responding to NWLDC's budget consultation (copies previously circulated by e-mail and attached to the official copy of the minutes).

While recognising the need for fiscal responsibility, some members felt that the cuts were weighted too heavily in Year 1 and that some should be deferred to Year 2 to give the local economy more chance to recover. Other members felt that the District Council's finances were too complex for the Parish to make constructive comments. It was also recognised that the overall budget strategy was being controlled by central government.

Resolved: That no comments be made

81. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved: That having regard to the confidential nature of the following business and the need to receive advice, publicity in respect of which would be prejudicial to the public interest, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting in accordance with the provisions of Section 1 of Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as amended).

82. RECRUITMENT OF CLERK

Consideration was given to the report of the Recruitment Working Party (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the Minutes)

Resolved:

- (a) That the report of the Recruitment Working Party be received**
- (b) That the post be advertised at 18.5 hours per week on Scale LC2 points 30 to 34**
- (c) That the draft job advertisement be approved**
- (d) That the draft Information for Applicants be approved**
- (e) That the draft person specification be approved**
- (f) That the draft job description be approved**
- (g) That an application form be not used and that applicants be invited to apply in their own style to include details of education, employment and two referees**
- (h) That an equal opportunities questionnaire be not used**
- (i) That a medical questionnaire only be required from the successful applicant**
- (j) That the current employment of the Interim Clerk and Interim Assistant Clerk be extended to 31 March 2012**
- (k) That from 1 January, the hours be 18.5 per week divided on a 10:8.5 basis**

- (l) That the two year contract be advertised in February with interviews to be held in March**
- (m) That the post be advertised at no cost via the Council's website and notice board; the Leics Association of Local Council's mailing list and Jobcentre Plus**
- (n) That further consideration be given to paid advertising at the next meeting**
- (o) That in the event of the Interim Clerk and/or Interim Assistant Clerk intending to apply, applications be sent direct to the Chairman**
- (p) That shortlisting be undertaken by the Recruitment Working Party**
- (q) That the interview process be undertaken by members of the recruitment Working Party with other members present as observers**
- (r) That the interviews comprise a 10 minute presentation by candidates, a question and answer session based on the presentation and structured further questions**
- (s) That the decision to appoint be taken by all councillors present and voting**

The meeting terminated at 8.21pm