

**MINUTES of a MEETING of WHITWICK PARISH COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 6 DECEMBER 2012 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, D Everitt, T Gillard, D Howe, L Spence, J Straw and L Weaver

An Apology for Absence was received from Councillor N Pearson

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

2 members of the public

**Declarations of Interest:**

Councillor D Everitt declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 200 (Planning Matters) as a member of NWLDC's Planning Committee

Councillor D Howe declared non-pecuniary interests in Minute No 200 (Planning Matters) as a member of NWLDC's Planning Committee, Minute No 205 (Whitwick Bowls Club: Proposed Fundraising Tournament) and Minute No 212 (Application for Grant: NWL Homeless Project)

Councillor R Woodward declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 200 (Planning Matters) as a district councillor

**196. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

There were no items raised by members of the public.

**197. MINUTES**

**Resolved: That the minutes of the previous Meeting held on 18 October 2012 as previously circulated be approved as a correct record**

**198. COMMUNITY POLICING**

No representatives were in attendance.

**199. TRAFFIC MATTERS**

**(a) Loughborough Road, Whitwick**

Consideration was given to a letter from Mr James Worth (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes). The Clerk reported that he had

taken up the issues with Leicestershire County Council and the following response had been received:

*“We appreciate speeds can exceed the posted 30mph speed limit when driving along Loughborough Road , due primarily to the characteristics of this road having properties on one side and a section with no properties. This along with its downhill approach into the village is leading to motorists not always realising what speeds they should be doing.*

*In response to Mr James Worth requests, legally we are not allowed to install repeater 30mph signs or roundels in an area with street lighting. It was noted that ‘slow’ road markings are painted along Loughborough Road, and we will ensure these road markings are maintained on Loughborough Road , especially when close to its side junctions with Parsonwood Hill, Temple Hill and Cademan Street.*

*Looking at solutions officers have identified to reduce speeds on Loughborough Road, we could look at introducing a 'Gateway treatment' similar to others throughout Leicestershire in that it has 'shark teeth' road markings, large signs and 30mph roundels painted on the surface. This type of treatment is effective in reducing high end speeds and used on highways that have significantly issues with speeds entering changed environments such as motorists entering Whitwick in this instance.*

*Officers have a number of requests for traffic calming, that all need to be assessed and prioritised against set criteria and all requests for traffic calming needs to show strong links to the road safety goals adopted Long Term Plans( LTP3).*

*There are a number of roads similar to Loughborough Road throughout Leicestershire that have similar issues with speeds and when we have assessed this request it has a medium priority when compared to all other schemes. However with strong support from the Parish Council, and local residents, officers would look at installing a gateway treatment in the near future on Loughborough Road.”*

**Resolved: That the suggestion of a ‘Gateway treatment’ at this location be fully supported**

### **(b) Walking and Cycling Consultation - Thornborough Road, Coalville**

Consideration was given to notes of the site meeting held on 9 November 2012 (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes).

The Chairman undertook to provide feedback to residents who had raised concerns.

**Resolved: That the report be received and the recommendations contained be adopted**

## **200. PLANNING MATTERS**

### **(a) Applications**

NWLDC had consulted the Parish Council on the following applications:

12/00852/FUL – Demolition of existing buildings and construction of a supermarket (Use Class A) with associated landscaping, car parking and service yard – Whitwick Sports and Social Club, 5 – 7 Market Place, Whitwick

12/00900/TPO – Height reduction of lime tree, felling of ash tree (protected by TPO) – The Chestnuts, Loughborough Road, Whitwick

12/00925/FUL – Erection of single storey conservatory – 6 The Terrace, Dumps Road, Whitwick

12/00930/FUL – Temporary change of use to offices and retail shop in association with Whitwick Community Enterprise – 72 North Street, Whitwick

12/00941/FUL – Erection of 3 No two storey dwellings – land adj. 14 School Lane, Whitwick

**Resolved: That no objections be made to these applications**

### **(b) Decisions**

The following applications had been approved by NWLDC:

12/00738/FUL – Single storey side/rear extension – 73 Thomas Road, Whitwick

12/00815/FUL – First floor rear extension and balcony – 116 Hall Lane, Whitwick

12/00823/FUL – Extend and convert existing garage into habitable accommodation – 34 Templars way, Whitwick

12/00828/TPO – Re-pollarding of 5 horse chestnut trees and 2 sycamore trees protected by TPO – The Old Vicarage Residential Home, 11 Silver Street, Whitwick

**Resolved: That the report be received**

## **201. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Councillor Gillard referred to the fact that the County Council's budget consultation period had now begun and that the authority was well prepared to protect front line services with the County Council element of Council tax due to be frozen again. LCC had been lobbying hard for local government budgets to be protected and the Chancellor had agreed that central grants to councils would be exempted from the savings required elsewhere in the public sector.

The County Council had introduced the 'Lend a Hand' scheme in association with Lloyds TSB to help first time buyers onto the property ladder. The authority was also working with Districts, Parishes and Housing Associations to identify sites suitable for affordable housing.

He was continuing to lobby for the proposed pedestrian crossing in Market Place and this had moved up the list of LCC priorities.

LCC was ready for winter with a full stock of 16,000 tonnes of grit/salt to treat roads with 6 new gritters.

LCC had been rated Best Performing Council in this year's National Highways Survey.

The EU had finally given the go-ahead for LCC to work with its partners to allow state funding for broadband infrastructure.

£2.4 million was also being invested in the Coalville area's sustainable travel network with more cycle and bus lanes and encouragement to use public transport, all aimed at cutting congestion.

**Resolved: That the report be received**

## **202. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

Councillor Spence reported on a number of issues, some in the Thringstone Ward but which would impact on that end of Whitwick Parish.

Now that bat problems had been resolved, work had started on the redevelopment of the Rose and Crown into a Co-op store and the Queens Head was being actively marketed as convenience store / restaurant.

Thringstone Community Centre – which also served Whitwick - had purchased a stock of new chairs.

November had brought heavy rains, although flooding was not the problem that it had been in the summer.

Complaints from council house tenants were on the increase regarding minor work not being done and potential callout charges for such work.

Over recent weeks a number of head teachers had mentioned the growing problem of students arriving at school 'buzzing' as a result of drinking energy drinks. The drinks in question, whilst legal, contained excessive amounts of sugar, caffeine and other stimulants and were marked as not being suitable for children. Unfortunately such drinks were popular with children and were being sold by convenience stores as children pass by on their way to school. The District Council was investigating the possibility of either licensing conditions or a voluntary code demanding shopkeepers refrain from selling these products to children.

**Resolved: That the report be received**

## **203. PROPOSED PARISH NOTICE BOARD – SITING**

The Clerk reported that the Midlands Co-operative Society had agreed to include the siting of a parish notice board on the frontage of their proposed food store in Market

Place. This would be subject to planning permission being granted for the development.

Members agreed that this was the ideal site for the notice board and, subject to the development proceeding, should be given preference over previous suggestions.

**Resolved: That Midlands Co-op be thanked for their offer and that this be gratefully accepted.**

#### **204. STREET CLEANLINESS – REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE**

Councillor Colledge referred to problems with dog fouling, vomit and broken glass which she had witnessed on the footways along the route of the Remembrance Day parade.

**Resolved: That NWLDC be requested to ensure that the parade route is cleaned in future years on the morning of the event**

#### **205. WHITWICK BOWLS CLUB – PROPOSED FUNDRAISING TOURNAMENT**

Members were advised that Whitwick Bowls Club wanted to raise funds to refurbish the bowling green in Whitwick Park and would like to hold a tournament in June 2013. To do this, they would have to close the public lane for one day and would also wish to sell alcohol.

As it was not yet clear whether the land would have been transferred from NWLDC by that date, members were invited to indicate if they would support this event in principle before a formal application was made to the District Council for the necessary licences.

**Resolved: That this Council raise no objection to the closure of the public lane and application for a drinks licence for one day only to allow this event to be held**

#### **206. STREET LIGHTING**

The Clerk reported that County Council had responded to the Parish Council's Freedom of Information request by stating that *"The total cost of the street lighting replacement program in Whitwick is £105,077.87"*.

**Resolved: That the report be received**

#### **207. SUGGESTED DISTRICT/PARISH JOINT BURIAL BOARD**

The Clerk reported that discussions had been held with District Council officers concerning this suggestion which came out of the re-visioning exercise.

They did not see any practical advantages in following this course for a number of reasons:

- the current service was running efficiently and is well regarded;
- there were joint arrangements with Charnwood BC already in place and these might be extended further;
- a joint district/parish board would need to be established by Statutory Instrument
- This could involve significant and potentially expensive changes to current management and accounting practices and software at a time of increasing financial stringency

In the circumstances, it was felt that the current District Council service should continue unless and until the remainder of the Coalville urban area was parished.

While the Parish Council had already decided not to include the cemetery in the transfer of land from NWLDC, it was felt that it would be mutually beneficial if some form of liaison could be introduced

**Resolved: That NWLDC be requested to consider introducing liaison procedures with regard to the cemetery.**

## **208. PROTOCOL FOR CONDUCT OF CHAIRMAN**

Consideration was given to a draft protocol (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes). Members agreed that this was comprehensive and covered all the potential issues.

**Resolved: That the Protocol for the Conduct of the Chairman be adopted**

## **209. BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND – CONSULTATION ON REVISED PROPOSALS**

The Boundary Commission for England, the independent public body that reviews all Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England, was currently conducting the 2013 Review and had now published revised proposals.

With regards to this area, the initial proposal to scrap the existing North West Leicestershire Constituency and include Whitwick in a new Coalville and Keyworth Constituency appeared to be unchanged.

While the Council had lodged an objection to this at the outset, members reluctantly conceded that the Boundary Commission seemed determined to press ahead with it.

**Resolved: That the report be received**

## **210. PROPOSED QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY**

Consideration was given to notes of a workshop held on 29 November and the recommendations coming out of it (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes).

**Resolved:**

- (a) That the Council confirm its wish to proceed with the survey**
- (b) That the Spring edition of Closeknit be used for either the centrespread or delivery of a separate questionnaire**
- (c) That the services of the RCC be engaged to run the survey, enabling use of their survey software, on-line questionnaire option and Freepost address.**
- (d) That a prize of £50 for a responder to be drawn at random be offered to encourage a statistically valid response rate**
- (e) That an application for a Big Society grant be made towards the costs**
- (f) That a further workshop session be held on 10 January**
- (g) That delegated powers be granted to the Chairman and Vice Chairman to agree any final details**

**211. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

Members were requested to authorise the following payments:

- NWLDC – Printing - £67.30
- Shaw & Son – Corporate seal press - £123.78
- Shaw & Son – legal seals – £11.04
- Whitwick Community Coffee Shop – Closeknit pages - £180
- Royal British Legion – Poppy wreath - £17.50 (Section 137 expenditure)
- HMRC – Tax and NI - £223.60
- AuthSMTP – email account – annual renewal - £30

**Resolved: That these payments be approved**

**212. APPLICATION FOR GRANT: NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE HOMELESS PROJECT**

Consideration was given to an application for financial assistance from the North West Leicestershire Homeless Project (copy letter previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes).

There was debate over whether a grant could be restricted to benefit parishioners only. Some members were aware of practical examples where local residents had benefited from advice given by the Project and felt that its continued existence was beneficial to the parish. The hope was expressed that other parishes would also contribute.

**Resolved: That a grant of £250 be made under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972**

### **213. CONSULTATION: IMPROVING LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY**

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

The Clerk pointed out that when the land transfer had been completed and maintenance costs added to the parish precept, it would be approaching the £200,000 threshold referred to in the consultation but would probably not exceed this amount in the life of the current council.

**Resolved: That the report be received**

### **214. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND PRECEPT SETTING**

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

Members expressed their concern over the prevailing uncertainty regarding this issue which would probably only be clarified by case law.

**Resolved: That the Clerk be requested to circulate a template letter to all councillors who live in the parish to enable them to apply for a dispensation should they so wish.**

### **215. FINANCIAL STATEMENT TO 26 NOVEMBER 2012**

The Clerk submitted a summary of receipts and payments (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes).

**Resolved: That the report be received**

### **216. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Resolved: That having regard to the confidential nature of the following business and the need to take account of legal advice, publicity in respect of which would be prejudicial to the public interest, the press and public be excluded from the meeting in pursuance of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended**

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

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

**Resolved;**

**(a) That the report be received**

**(b) That the fenced area of the Parsonwood Hill Recreation Ground which provides access to the sewage pumping station be excluded from the transfer**

and NWLDC be requested to reach agreement with STWA as to its future ownership

**(c) That the car parking area at Cademan Woods be excluded from the transfer**

**(d) That the Council welcomes the withdrawal of the clawback requirement but expresses disappointment at the continuing intention to include a restrictive covenant.**

**(e) That the District Council again be urged to sell the Dumps Road site but that if it is transferred, no restrictive covenant be included regarding that site to enable the parish council to seek to dispose of it.**

**(f) That subject to agreement on the above issues, the transfer proceed once registration of the adverse possession sites has been completed**

#### **218. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was reported that the next scheduled meeting of the Council, due to be held on 17 January 2013, may need to be rescheduled due to the current uncertainty regarding the localisation of council tax issues and its impact on parish council finances

**Resolved: That the report be noted and the Clerk make arrangements for the precept-making meeting as appropriate.**

The Chairman closed the meeting by extending season's greetings to all

The Meeting terminated at 8.22 pm