

**MINUTES of a MEETING of WHITWICK PARISH COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 24 JANUARY 2013 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, D Howe, N Pearson, L Spence and J Straw

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors E Easom, T Gillard and L Weaver

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

1 member of the public

**Declarations of Interest:**

Councillor D Everitt declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 222 (Planning Matters) as a member of NWLDC's Planning Committee

Councillor D Howe declared non-pecuniary interests in Minute No 222 (Planning Matters) as a member of NWLDC's Planning Committee

Councillor R Woodward declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 222 (Planning Matters) as a district councillor

**219. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

A member of the public asked why there had been such extensive debate at the previous meeting regarding making a grant to a worthwhile cause (NWL Homeless Project) when a larger sum for advertising had been approved without such debate. Members explained that this was the first grant application considered for a project where the benefits were not confined within Whitwick Parish and it had been debated how this fitted in with the Council's community grants policy. The other expenditure did not relate to promotional advertising but a public questionnaire survey aimed at giving local people a say in how they wanted the Parish Council to spend their council tax. The Clerk indicated that amendments to the wording of the community grants policy would be suggested when policies were reviewed at the Annual Meeting to clarify issues raised in the previous debate.

**220. MINUTES**

Arising from the Minutes, the Clerk reported that NWLDC had agreed to undertake street cleansing ahead of future Remembrance Day parades in Whitwick and that an NWLDC officer would be in attendance at the March meeting to discuss cemetery

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liaison and grounds maintenance issues. Members also requested that clarification be sought from the County Council as to whether additional traffic calming measures were still being proposed for Thornborough Road in connection with the proposed shared use cycle facility.

**Resolved: That the minutes of the previous Meeting held on 6 December 2012 as previously circulated be approved as a correct record**

## **221. COMMUNITY POLICING**

The Chairman welcomed PCSO Jim Sorrell to the meeting. He reported that over the previous 30 days there had been 31 crimes in Whitwick – 11 non-recordable (domestic), no house burglaries, 4 burglaries other than dwellings including 2 businesses, 7 assault/harassment and 7 vehicle related including 4 damage to and 2 thefts from. There were no patterns to these crime or any particular hot spots.

Another Fatal4 exercise was being planned for later in the year though the location had not been decided upon.

Members referred to two reports in the *Coalville Times*. The first related to a local man who had been jailed for six months for downloading indecent images of children. Given his previous record, concern was expressed about his monitoring/supervision and who had been aware of his history. PCSO Sorrell explained that Police had no power to control where such offenders lived and he had not been supervised locally. Many people were on the sex offenders register for a wide variety of reasons.

The second report referred to theft of tools from a van which might have had implications relating to part-night street lighting. PCSO Sorrell reiterated previous Police findings that there was no evidence of any correlation between part-night lighting and crime levels.

**Resolved: That PCSO Sorrell be requested to convey the Council's concerns regarding lack of knowledge of the sex offender to his senior officer.**

## **222. PLANNING MATTERS**

### **(a) Applications**

NWLDC had consulted the Parish Council on the following applications:

12/01028/FUL – erection of first floor rear extension - 14 Stainsdale Green, Whitwick

12/01094/FUL – erection of 4 no. two-storey (with habitable accommodation in the roof space) dwellings and associated garaging (revised scheme) - 191 Loughborough Road, Whitwick

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12/00977/FUL – erection of two-storey extension with habitable accommodation in the roofspace, side extension and front porch (revised scheme) – 35 Gracedieu Road, Whitwick

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

13/00034/FUL – Loft conversion including insertion of 3 dormer windows in roofslope – 7 Martin Close, Whitwick

13/00050/FUL – Conversion of garage to habitable room and replacement of garage door with window – 33 Lakeshore Crescent, Whitwick

The Chairman reported that there were local concerns regarding 12/01094/FUL and as a District Councillor he had already arranged for the application to be ‘called in’ for consideration by the Planning Committee if the case officer was likely to recommend approval.

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

#### **(b) Decisions**

The following applications had been approved by NWLDC:

12/00794/FUL – demolition of existing dwelling and erection of three detached dwellings, detached car port and formation of a vehicular access - 131 Talbot Street, Thringstone

12/00862/EXT – extension of time limit to implement planning permission 08/01426/FUL for the construction of nine dwellings and garages - land opposite 236 – 262 Hermitage Road

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 Enterprises – 72 North Street, Whitwick

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

**Resolved: That the report be received**

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

In the absence of Councillor Gillard, the Clerk reported a response from County Hall to the Council’s request for additional village nameplates around the borders of the Parish.

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Village name plates were typically positioned on main routes into a village rather than minor routes as these tended to be used by drivers already familiar to the area.

With this in mind the County Council would supply and install village name plate signs at Thornborough Road in the verge near KFC, Hermitage Road at the junction with the A511 and a smaller sign on Spring Lane due to the limited space available in the verges. The existing sign on Leicester Road would also be replaced but not re-sited. However the County Council would not consider installing village name plate signs, at the following locations for the reasons stated: Warren Hills Road, as village name plate already exists on entry to the village on Leicester Road; Hall Lane, as this route was unlikely to be used by people unfamiliar to the area; Church Lane, as this route was unlikely to be used by people unfamiliar to the area and on Oaks Road as a sign positioned in this location would be inappropriate and could lead to confusion.

It was also noted that the next Community Forum would be discussing the issue of pavement parking which might have implications for Whitwick.

**Resolved:**

**That the County Council be requested to reconsider:**

- (a) including the words ‘Parish of’ on the new signs before the name ‘Whitwick’**
- (b) relocating the existing sign on Leicester Road to opposite the Forest Rock pub rather than replacing at its existing location.**
- (c) introducing a new sign on Hall Lane.**

**224. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS’ REPORTS**

The Chairman reported on the on-going discussions regarding introducing lighting to the driveway and car park area at Whitwick Park.

NWLDC’s officers had now obtained a quote for a potential lighting scheme. 5 solar power bollards – 4 on the drive and 1 on the edge of the car park – and an external light with PIR and timer for installation by the door to the Youth Club building would cost approx £2000. The external light would be on a timer so it didn’t come on between certain times. The bollards would come on as dusk settled and run for at least 4 1/2hrs, which in winter would last to 9pm. In addition to the £2,000 equipment and installation costs, planning permission would need to be sought for the scheme and the associated costs of this covered. Whilst the land was currently the responsibility of NWLDC, it would be handed over to the Parish Council in due course and the support of the Parish Council was being sought before proceeding. There were more than adequate funds within NWLDC’s asset protection budget to cover the works.

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Concern was also expressed regarding the adverse impact on many local people of NWLDC's changes to council tax and housing benefit which would come into effect from 1 April and the potential detrimental effect on local job creation opportunities in the wider district if the route of the proposed high speed rail link prejudiced development of the planned rail distribution depot at Lockington.

**Resolved: That NWLDC be advised that this Council supports the proposed lighting scheme for Whitwick Park**

## **225. ELECTORAL REVIEW: NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England was currently consulting on "How many councillors for North West Leicestershire?" During this phase of the review, they were asking local people and organisations how many councillors they believed should serve North West Leicestershire District Council in the future. The consultation would take place until 18 February 2012.

NWLDC currently had 38 councillors. The Commission was asking local people whether they agreed that the council should continue to be represented by 38 councillors. Anyone who did not agree with retaining the present number was invited to submit alternative proposals. Once the Commission had taken a view on the number of councillors to represent North West Leicestershire, they would redraw ward boundaries across the district and ask for views during that process.

Members considered that the impact of cuts in public services combined with proposals for additional housing in the District was likely to lead to an increase in casework for councillors.

**Resolved: That the Commission be advised that this Council considers NWLDC should comprise at least 38 councillors.**

## **226. COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE WORKSHOP**

Councillors Barker, Colledge, Howe, Straw, Weaver and Woodward together with the Clerk and Assistant Clerk had attended a workshop session with Jo Ling of the Rural Community Council held on 10 January 2013.

The workshop followed up the discussions at the previous session to agree and finalise format and content for the community questionnaire survey to be included as the centrespread in the Spring edition of Close-knit community magazine.

There had been subsequent email exchanges regarding the final wording of the questionnaire and alternative designs.

The Clerk reported two requests for grit bins at Ashford Road and Weavers Close. Concern was expressed that a number of existing grit bins at steep locations had

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been empty for a number of days at a time when roads had become impassable in freezing and snowy conditions.

**Resolved:**

**(a) That option 2 (green) of the questionnaire be approved for publication in Close-knit**

**(b) That the County Council be requested to ensure grit bins are regularly refilled in times of wintry weather**

**227. APPLICATION FOR GRANT: PRIDE**

Consideration was given to an application for financial assistance from the PRIDE (copy letter previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes).

**Resolved: That a grant of £250 be approved under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 to benefit Whitwick Parish residents.**

**228. STAFFING MATTERS**

**(a) Expenses for Clerks Who Work From Home**

Consideration was given to a report on recent advice from NALC and SLCC (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes).

The Clerk pointed out that the latest interpretation by HMRC was a significant change from the normal practice of many parish councils over a large number of years but nonetheless needed to be complied with.

Members agreed that it was now appropriate to obtain a mobile phone for council business. This could also be left with the Chairman when the Clerk was away.

**Resolved: That from 1 January 2013:**

- **the Clerk be paid £18 monthly to reimburse the cost of working from home**
- **it be noted that the Council currently provides a laptop for business use but no other equipment is provided at this point in time**
- **with regard to printing while the current Clerk is in post, printing of the agenda and minutes continue to be undertaken by NWLDC, and for low volume printing (eg, letters etc) the Council provide stationery and consumables to enable the Clerk to use his personal/domestic printer. The Council will consider obtaining its own printer in the next financial year or on the appointment of the next Clerk**
- **the Council provide a basic pay-as-you-go mobile phone for business use as soon as is reasonably practicable. In the meantime, the Clerk will**

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**itemise the cost of calls made on his personal telephone to be reimbursed by the Council**

- **the Clerk be reimbursed actual business mileage at 45p per mile, thereby incurring no tax liability for either party**
- **the cost of stationery and consumables be reimbursed to the Clerk. (The cost of postage already being reimbursed.)**
- **the Council be responsible for the payment of any non-domestic broadband costs**
- **the Council be responsible for any other costs the Clerk incurs on its behalf**
- **the Clerk will supply all necessary receipts for accounting and audit purposes**

**(b) Change To The Tax And NI Operation - Real Time Information**

Consideration was given to a report on changes being implemented by HMRC (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes). It was anticipated that the requirement for all payments to be made by cheques signed by a minimum of two councillors was about to be amended to enable electronic payments.

**Resolved: That subject to the two signatories on cheques requirement being lifted:**

**(a) from 1 April 2013, the Clerk and Assistant Clerk's salary be paid by bank transfer on the last working day of the month**

**(b) that quarterly tax and NI payments to HMRC be made by bank transfer**

**(c) that the council submit its RTI data through HMRC's Basic Tools unless contrary advice is received.**

**229. FINANCIAL STATEMENT TO 31 DECEMBER 2012**

The Clerk submitted a Bank Reconciliation Statement for the third quarter to 31 December 2012 (copy previously circulated and attached to the official copy of the minutes).

The Receipts and Payments Summary had been scrutinised and approved by the Chairman in accordance with the Council's internal financial control procedures.

**Resolved: That the report be received**

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**230. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2013/14**

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

The Clerk advised members that the provisional council tax base and council tax support grant figures mentioned in the report had now been confirmed by NWLDC. The position on insurance for grounds maintenance depended on when the transfer took place. NWLDC's insurance policy ran from 1 April and any rebate to them would go back into the Special Expense account. Looking ahead, it was not known whether the council tax support grant would be made available in future years or if capping would be brought in for parish councils.

Members thanked the Clerk and Assistant Clerk for all their work on the budget and for producing a comprehensive and clear report.

**Resolved:**

**(a) That the draft budget be approved**

**(b) That the precept for 2013/14 be set at £28,080 which, taking account of council tax support grant, represents a freeze in the budget requirement**

The Meeting terminated at 8.18pm

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