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Minutes of the meeting of Church Aston Parish Council held on-line via Zoom professional at 7.30 pm on Monday 4th January 2021.

Present: Councillors: S Stacey (Chairman), P Evans (Vice Chairman), B Richards, F McKeown, P Sansom, B. Knight and J Pay

In attendance: Borough Cllr Andrew Eade, M. Atherton (Clerk) and Dr Malcolm Bennett

(04/01/21)

Item 1 - Apologies: received from Cllr A Stokes (ill-health)

The Clerk provided Members with a brief update following a telephone conversation with Cllr Stokes earlier in the day. Members conveyed their continuing best wishes for his speedy recovery.

Item 2 – Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

Item 3 – Public Session:

Dr Malcolm Bennett (Chairman of the Village Hall Committee and prospective Parish Councillor) attended the meeting.

Item 4 – Minutes of the Meeting held on 7th December 2020

Minutes of the meeting held on 7th December were proposed as a true and accurate record of proceedings by Cllr McKeown and seconded by Cllr Evans with all members present voting in favour.

Resolved: minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2020 to be signed by the Chairman of the meeting as a true record as soon as possible on cessation of government restrictions relating to the Coronavirus (COVID 19).

Item 5 – Matters Arising:

(a) Wellington Road – Encroachment: Cllr Eade updated colleagues on progress following action taken in default by T&WC contractors in December 2020.

In summary, neither of the two offending frontagers had taken the required action, and so idverdi Ltd (on behalf of T&WC) had cut back a section of hedging adjacent to The Last Thatched Cottage. Cllr Eade confirmed agreement with Adrian Corney for this work to be included in a T&WC routine schedule so that the issues should not arise again.

Both Cllr Eade and Cllr Richards confirmed that the works had significantly improved the situation for pedestrians walking along this section of footway but that the footway remained narrow. To improve the situation further more substantial works would be required to cut back the encroaching embankment but this could not be achieved without first removing the substantial hedging that is rooted in the embankment.

Action: It was agreed to maintain a watching brief on this issue, to impress upon T&WC a need for regular hedge cutting, and to pursue a longer-term solution.

(b) St. Andrew’s Church Community Orchard: the Clerk and borough Cllr Eade confirmed that five apple trees had now been planted in St. Andrew’s churchyard with all going to plan. Arrangements for media / PR are to be made at an appropriate time in light of current restrictions.

(c) Signage in the Children’s Play Area: the Clerk updated Members following recent discussions with Adrian Corney (T&WC) about signage at the play area.

Action: Clerk to ask Adrian to seek prices for making and erecting 4 number signs (two at each entrance). Subject to reasonable costings the Clerk is authorised to proceed with this mini-project.

(d) Lighting of the Church Hall Car Park: the Clerk confirmed that contact had been made with Bill Titley of the Church Hall Committee to discuss the issue and options. Bill agreed to discuss this issue at the next Church Hall Committee meeting.

Cllr Knight confirmed that lighting on St. Andrew’s Church damaged by the lightning strike back in August 2020 had now been repaired which had significantly improved lighting of the Church Hall car park.

Action: it was agreed to review this matter over the coming weeks to assess whether any action is required in view of repairs to the Church lighting.

(e) Cllr Vacancies

The Chairman informed colleagues that an application for a vacant Parish Councillor position would be considered at the end of the meeting – see later notes / minutes.

PARISH PROJECTS & COMMUNITY MATTERS

Item 6 – Representative Reports

All relevant information circulated by email during the Coronavirus restrictions.

Cllr Knight informed colleagues that use of the Village Hall is severely restricted by news that T&WC has moved into tier 3 and a widely anticipated third national lockdown. Nevertheless, the VH committee are looking to provide additional lighting to enable theatrical performance. In addition two events have been booked in anticipation of returning to normality. These events are on 22/05/21 (??) and 13/11/21 (Barn Dance).

It was also reported that there are ongoing discussions with Shropshire Health about the suitability, or otherwise, of the VH as a potential vaccination centre.

It was noted that the VH AGM is scheduled to take place in March, whilst this is unlikely to happen in the current situation actions are in place to ensure that the year-end accounts are completed and other charitable trust obligations are met.

Item 7 – Communications:

(a) Community Leaders Meetings: Cllr Stacey indicated that he would be seeking clarification on arrangements for sharing information and future preparation of newsletters at the Community Leaders meeting on 21/01/20.

(b)(i) Correspondence: the Clerk notified Members of 7 pieces of recent communications that had not been circulated and actions proposed in respect of each.

(b)(ii) Face-book: Cllr Evans updated colleagues on Facebook postings including the PC's post relating to a proposed boundary review and also details of the Local Plan review 'Issues & Options' paper;

(b)(iii) Web-site: the web-site is currently up-to-date and will be further updated following this meeting.

POLICY & PLANNING MATTERS

Item 8 – NTC Request for a Boundary Review

Cllr Evans provided a brief overview of conversations with an NTC Cllr and Facebook posts. Those conversations included an assurance that NTC were not planning to encroach Church Aston Parish. However, presentation of plans used to identify the target areas suggest otherwise, and also an applicant for a boundary change may initiate a process but it is recognised that they do not control the outcome of that process.

Cllr Evans also informed colleagues that, in a personal capacity, he had sent a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to NTC seeking clarification on a number of related matters – a response is scheduled for not later than 22 January 2021.

Cllr Eade referred to an email that he had received from T&WC indicating that they are aware of discussions at NTC but that they had not received a request for a boundary review. It was also noted that if a request is made before July 2021 T&WC are not obliged to consider it because the required timeframe since conclusion of the last review will not have elapsed.

Cllr Richards raised a number of concerns about quotes attributed in local media to NTC Cllrs which were clearly inaccurate and had the potential to misinform the public.

Members agreed to maintain a focus on this matter for the foreseeable future.

Item 9 – Planning Matters

(a) The **Planning Schedule** for January 2021 was noted;

(b) **PE/2020/0543** the Clerk is still awaiting contact from Bloor Homes;

(c) **Local Plan Review:** the Chairman thanked Cllr Pay and the Clerk for compiling a draft response to the T&WC Local Plan 2040 Review 'Issues & Option' paper. Action: the Clerk to enter the CAPC responses into the T&WC consultation portal prior to the deadline date of 8th January.

FINANCE & GOVERNANCE

Item 10(a) – Accounts & Payments

(i) Cllr Evans proposed, and Cllr Richards seconded, with all Members present at the meeting in favour of approving the following payment made since the last meeting on 7th December:

Payment	Cheque No.	Statute	Amount
Needes Landscaping (fruit trees)	On-line transfer	LGA 1972 s135	£145.00

Resolved: that the above payment made between the meeting held on 7th December 2020 and this meeting on 4th January 2021 be approved

(ii) Cllr Stacey proposed en-bloc, and Cllr Richards seconded, with all Members present at the meeting in favour of approving the following payments:

Payment	Cheque No.	Statute	Amount
HMRC (PAYE) – Nov 2020	On-line transfer	LGA 1972 s112	£84.40
West Mercia Energy	On-line transfer	LGA 1972 sch 14	£156.95

Resolved: that the above accounts be authorised for payment at this meeting held on 4th January 2021.

Item 10(b) 3rd Quarter Bank Reconciliation:

Following scrutiny of the 3rd quarter bank reconciliation Members approved the statement. This was proposed by Cllr Sansom, seconded by Cllr Pay and unanimously agreed by all Members present.

Resolved: the 3rd Quarter Bank Reconciliation 2020/21 be approved and signed by two authorised signatories as soon as government restrictions on movement and meetings allow.

Members noted the statement of account of £18,045.75 as at close of business on 31st December 2020.

Item 11 – Setting a Budget & Precept 2021/22

Members referred to a number of finance and budget related papers considered at their meetings in November and December 2020. These papers provided information required to consider all relevant aspects needed to set a precept and a budget for 2021/22.

Following a thorough review of all relevant matters and available options Members agreed that there should be no rise in the Parish element of the Council Tax for 2021/22.

A motion to this effect was proposed by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Richards and unanimously approved by all Members present at the meeting.

Resolved: that Church Aston PC sets a Council Tax precept for 2021/22 at the same level as that charged in 2020/21.

Action: the Clerk and Chairman to complete all necessary paperwork to notify T&WC as collection authority by their deadline of 1st February 2021.

Whilst the framework for a budget for 2021/22 has been agreed Cllr Richards asked, and colleagues agreed, that a number of detailed variations should now be brought forward prior to finalising this part of the budgetary process.

Action: the Clerk to bring forward detailed budget options at the February 2021 meeting.

Item 12 – Future Meeting Dates

The following future meeting dates were noted: 1st February, 1st March 2021 and (Tuesday) 6th April.

Item 5(e) – Cllr Vacancies

A statement supporting an application for a vacant Parish Councillor position had been received by the Clerk and circulated to all Members. The statement provided information about knowledge, skills and experience of the applicant. After careful consideration Members agreed that the applicant would provide a very good addition to the Parish Council.

The Clerk confirmed that the applicant had been approached in order to confirm eligibility to stand as a Parish Councillor. The applicant had completed a declaration confirming their eligibility.

In light of the above information Cllr Stacey proposed, Cllr Evans seconded and all members present voted unanimously in favour of co-opting Dr Malcolm Bennett onto the Parish Council

Resolved: That Dr Malcolm Bennett be co-opted onto Church Aston Parish Council.
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Action: the Clerk was asked to notify Dr Bennett of the Parish Council's decision and also to ensure (i) a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and (ii) a Register of Pecuniary Interest form are completed.

Roads, Hedges & Ditches

- (a) Cllr Evans referred to a bus shelter along The Dale which had been damaged by a vehicle and reported to T&WC some 8 weeks ago. He had been made aware that the shelter has been further damaged by vandalism and is now structurally unsafe. The Clerk has reported the matter to T&WC with a request for urgent action to make the shelter safe. **Agreed:** to carry forward to Matters Arising.
- (b) Cllr McKeown noted that one planter needed the summer plants removing and offered to carry this work out in the next week. This was acknowledged and appreciated by all present.
- (c) Cllr Richards reported that he had been contacted by a resident from The Folly who was concerned by dog waste bags being thrown a hedge along the Folly and related request for provision of a dog waste bin. Cllr Evans confirmed he was aware of the concerns and that he supported the request. Following discussion it was suggested a new bin should be located adjacent an old gate to the right of the entrance to The Folly from The Dale. This was agreed. **Action:** Clerk to contact T&WC to request an additional waste bin at the location identified.

Meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Signed Chairman:

Date