

Whixall Parish Council

Chairman: Ian Mercer

Minutes of the Parish Council's Monthly Meeting held on 10 February 2021 on the Zoom Platform starting at 7:30pm

Present:

Councillors: I Mercer (Chair); J Spenser; A Hague; B Harris; J Broadhead; D Edgerton;
A Rawlinson; M Howard;

County Councillors: C Mellings

Clerk: A Roberts

Members of the community: 1

Representatives of other bodies/ organisations: 1

13/21 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Dee (Shropshire Council)

14/21 Public Participation

Mr M Peel attended in order to answer any questions in relation to planning application 21/00032/FUL. None were raised.

Mike Crawshaw (Community Engagement Officer, the BogLife Project) provided an update to members. His report can be found in Appendix A.

15/21 West Mercia Police Report

The report was circulated by email prior to the meeting (Appendix B).

16/21 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded of their obligation to declare any interests/ gifts/ hospitality. None were declared.

17/21 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Meeting of Whixall Parish Council held on 13 January 2021:

It was proposed by Cllr Hague that the draft minutes, of the meeting detailed above, were an accurate record. This was seconded by Cllr Spenser and agreed by all present.

(As the meeting was online, the Clerk signed the minutes on behalf of the Chairman).

18/21 Planning

a) Planning Applications Received

Reference	Detail	Stance
21//00203/CPE	Application for Lawful Development Certificate for the existing use of outbuilding as an engineering workshop, repairs and restoration. The Haven, Ossage Lane, SY13 2QB	Support
21/0032/FUL	External alterations to previously approved scheme in order to increase height of eaves by 500mm. Garden Cottage, Church Lane, SY13 2NA	Support
21/00292/FUL	Installation of 8.5m x 6m ground-mounted solar panel array. Park Gate, 5 Hollinwood, SY13 2NW	Support

b) No planning decisions were received

19/21 Clerk's Report

The report was circulated by email prior to the meeting (Appendix C).

20/21 Financial Matters

a) To receive monthly bank balance record.

The Clerk advised the council of the council's bank balances.

DATE	ACCOUNT NAME	AMOUNT
31 January 2021	Current Account	2730.39
	Savings Account	5701.25
	Barclays Account	0.13
TOTAL		£8,41.77

The Clerk explained that the Barclays balance would be dealt with once the Council reverted to physical meetings, as at this point a letter could be signed.

b) To resolve to approve outstanding accounts.

Orders for the payment of outstanding invoices (under "Power to Spend" LGA1972 s.112(2) and 124(1)). As per the financial report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)/ Clerk proposed by Cllr Hague, seconded by Cllr Broadhead and agreed by all present.

Resolved: The outstanding accounts should be paid and the payment transactions authorised by two authorised councillors. In addition, payments authorised by email are approved.

(Due to Covid-19 the Clerk signed the paperwork on behalf of Cllr Hague).

c) Grants and Donations

Requests for funding were received from North Salop Wheelers, Whixall URC Graveyard Trust and St. Mary's Church for upkeep of the graveyard.

The clerk reminded members that, based on legal guidance from NACL, the Parish Council is able to provide funding for the 'closed' churchyard at the URC church, but not for the 'open' churchyard at St Mary's. Members expressed disappointment that this was the case.

Members discussed each application and noted that North Salop Wheelers needed funding to assist with transporting local people for Covid testing and vaccinations. Cllr Hague was of the view that any funding should not wait until the end of the year, but should be paid immediately.

Resolved: Donations of £100 will be made to North Salop Wheelers and £50 to the URC Graveyard Trust. The clerk will action these payments immediately.

Resolved: The Clerk will write to St Mary's Church and explain why the Parish Council is unable to make a donation to the upkeep of the churchyard.

21/21 Parish Matters

a) Marlot Local Nature Reserve

Graham Turnbull provided an update: The task and finish group is now at the point where the management plan needs to be approved and the Parish Council needs to write to Shropshire Council requesting the delegation of authority to enable it to declare the Marlot as a Local Nature Reserve.

Resolved: The Council approves the updated Marlot Management Plan. The Clerk will send a copy of the Plan to Shropshire Council along with a request for delegated powers.

b) Whixall Parish Plan

Cllr Harris explained the purpose of the Plan in relation to planning matters within the Parish. In response to Cllr Broadhead's query about the local housing exemption he explained that the initial proposal had been to allow infilling using 'hubs' and 'clusters' but Parishioners wanted Open Countryside designation and, consequently, the only development that is allowed is for proven strong local connections. It was noted that even where strong local connections have been proved and supported by the Parish Council, this does not guarantee that planning officers will recommend planning consent. Cllr Mercer commented that it is difficult to find a balance for local residents and their children, but any significant change would require consultation with parishioners.

Cllr Harris will submit a final version of the plan for approval at the next meeting.

c) Old Burial Ground

The Clerk provided a verbal report. The information received from the Diocese did not clarify the boundary between the Old Burial Ground (OBG) and the Social Centre. The Clerk was of the view that the agreed approach of formally leasing the OBG to the Social Centre Committee and underwriting all maintenance could be too formal an approach. She suggested that, ideally the two organisations could simply work together to formally identify three things that both parties would accept:

1. A nominal boundary.
2. Arrangements for the management of the site.
3. Arrangements for the maintenance of the site

Cllr Harris suggested that these matters could be resolved through the setting up of a task and finish group with membership from both organisations, and that he and Cllr Mercer were best placed to represent the Parish Council. He suggested that the group should develop specific proposals which both committees would then discuss and agree upon. Members agreed that this matter should be dealt with as soon as possible.

Resolved: A Task & Finish Group will be created for the purpose of developing a formal agreement with the Social Centre Committee. The Clerk will write to the Chair of the Social Centre Committee outlining the proposed approach and inviting the committee to put forward two people to join the group. Cllrs Mercer and Harris will represent the Council.

The Group will report back, and make recommendations to, the Parish Council and the Social Centre Committee with the aim of resolving this issue quickly.

4. Local Road Signage

Cllr Broadhead expressed concern at the lack of local road signage. Cllr Mercer explained that this issue had been raised in the past but, when residents were consulted during the development of the original local plan, their view had been that signage should not be improved. Additionally, it was recognised that this is not a priority for the highways team and therefore any additional signage would have to be funded by the Parish Council.

22/21 Councillor Reports

Cllr Mellings (Shropshire Council) had circulated his report by email prior to the meeting.

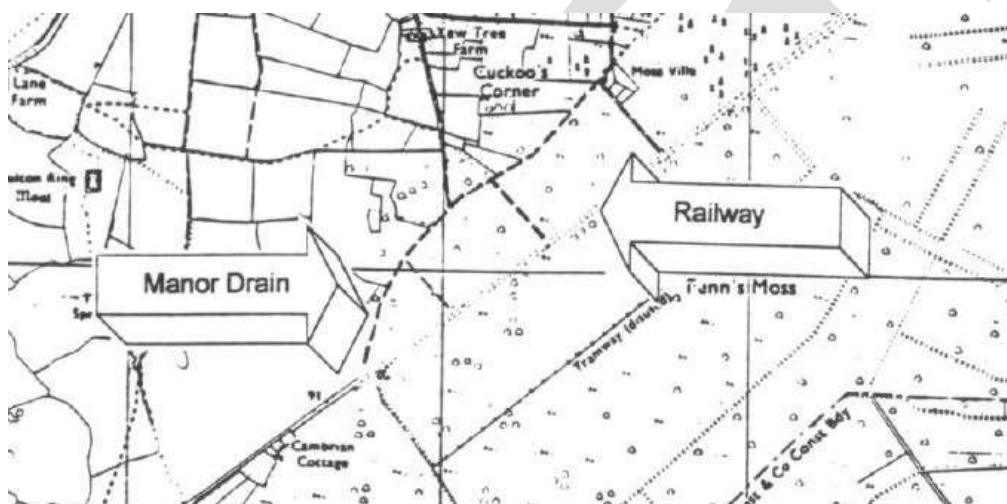
Scheduled date of next meeting: **10 March 2021 (to be confirmed)**

The meeting closed at 8.53pm

Whixall Parish Council – BogLIFE Project Update Report

10th February 2021

- **Restoration of bog on former fields near the Old Scrapyard:** Removal of turf from the fields at Morris' Bridge was completed last Autumn. The piles of turf stored on the scrapyard will be evenly spread this spring. The stripped fields have been bunded into cells and seeded with mire species – plants such as Sphagnum moss which would grow on the bog if it had not been drained. Some cells have been planted but it has been too wet to plant most areas, we expect this to be completed in the Spring as conditions allow.
- **Bunding work:** Bunds are the 'cells' on the moss surrounded by raised peat dams. They are designed to keep water on the mosses rather than allowing it to run off. This does several things – it keeps water on the Marches Mosses for longer, preventing it from running into surrounding watercourses and increasing the likelihood of flooding; it makes the bog boggy which is the ideal condition for a bog and allows the plants and creatures native to the bog to thrive; it filters the water as it passes into the Severn and Dee for abstraction to consumers. The bunding work has been very successful in rewetting areas and 'kick-starting' the recovery of the bog. By the end of March, 90% of the bunding work on the NNR will have been completed leaving a few small areas for work in the Autumn.
- **Bronington Manor Drain:** The Bronington manor Drain is one of a series of drainage ditches which have the cumulative effect of lowering the water table within the mosses. It does this by providing an outlet for surface water through a culvert beneath the old railway line and into the main drainage network of the mosses.



This causes a loss of water on the mosses and prevents their ability to hold and store water, a necessary function in the regeneration of peatlands such as the Marches Mosses. The proposed diversion of the Bronington Manor Drain is designed to lessen the outflow and, at the same time, preventing any unwanted nutrients from peripheral agriculture reaching the mosses from surrounding farms and agribusinesses. The mosses need to be nutrient poor for the native plants and wildlife to thrive. The diversionary work is in progress, most of the works will be complete in March with further 'clean up' work in the summer.

- **Bettisfield timber removal:** Work to thin and remove timber from the Bettisfield area is continuing, this will allow the area to be bunded for rewetting. The timber work will be completed by the end of February and all the timber will be extracted by tractor and trailer.
- **Worlds End Drainage:** The drainage scheme was suspended due to coronavirus but is now going ahead. The planning application is going to Shropshire Council soon and it is anticipated that work will likely be completed by early Summer.
- **Removing Trees on The Mosses:** The removal of trees on the Marches Mosses has always been contentious. In a nutshell – trees are good, but bog is better at removing and storing carbon from the atmosphere. Most of the trees removed have either been conifer plantations

planted in the 1960s to be harvested and causing great damage to the ecosystem of the bog; or they are self-seeding trees which have grown up in the last 30 years. These latter would have been removed before reaching maturity by the peat extractors. Wet woodland will be encouraged at the edges of the bog where it would occur naturally, in addition a margin of trees will be left where appropriate. This will provide a weather and landscape buffer and will serve as a wildlife link between retained wooded areas. 90% of the planned tree works will be completed by the end of February. <https://themeressandmosses.co.uk/why-we-need-to-remove-trees-on-the-marches-mosses/> This link leads to a 5-page report fully explaining the basic principles of tree removal.

- **Viewing Tower:** The Mammoth Tower is now open, and interpretation will be added later in the year. The main theme will be around carbon storage, explaining how the Marches Mosses are playing a vital part in climate change prevention.
- **Bird Hide & Sinker's Fields:** Covid has led to additional unexpected costs over the last year and there is no longer budget to complete the whole scheme as planned. However, a scaled down version is being developed that will not include a stone access track. Potentially, it will include moving the hide to a different location. Once these plans are finalised, they will be shared for comment. The water management bunds will remain unaffected and the overall objectives are the same.

Mike Crawshaw
Community Engagement Officer
BogLIFE Project



Whitchurch Police station
Whitchurch Hospital
Claypit Street
Whitchurch
Shropshire
SY13 1NT

Direct Dial: 07890511398

www.westmercia.police.uk

09th February 2021

Good Evening,

Unfortunately there are no Safer Neighbourhood team (SNT) staff available on Wednesday. When there are staff on duty we will make every effort to attend, all the council meeting dates are in our diary. Please find below a monthly report for your area.

RTC's: report of vehicle on roof due to slipping on ice non injury,

Mobile Patrols: SNT have been carrying out regular mobile patrols within your area.

Highways: numerous reports of flooding due to the weather, report of lorry stuck on the bridge house junction.

Covid Breaches: 1 report of a covid breach has been received from your area, officers have attended no breach.

West Mercia website:

West Mercia website can be used to Report incidents, Did you know that West Mercia prioritise on line reports (www.westmercia.police.uk/ro/report) in exactly the same way as calls to 101. The site also provides Crime prevention advice and tips: (www.westmercia.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention)

SNT Inspector

Claire GREENAWAY has now return to SNT as an Inspector (3155) covering your area.

[MONTHLY Crime advice:](#)

SCAM TELEPHONE CALLS

Don't part with any of your personal information, bank cards, money or valuables. Remember:

Criminals may be calling: Suspect anyone you don't know, regardless of who they claim to be.

Answer 'NO' to any personal questions: Don't part with any of your personal information or money. Remember, the police and your bank would NEVER ask for such details as your PIN or account Numbers over the phone.

Leave the conversation: If you are suspicious or feel uncomfortable with the caller's questions, then end the call.



Let us know: If in doubt hang up and wait 10 minutes, then report to Action Fraud: 0300 123 2040 I www.actionfraud.police.uk or the police* on 101 or report online at: www.westmercia.police.uk/report

Report to the police if the crime is still happening, the suspect is in the local area or if you are vulnerable and unable to contact Action Fraud.

Campaigns:



As part of Operation Snap, members of the public can report and submit digital footage showing potential traffic offences via a secure online form. The form can be found on <https://www.westmercia.police.uk/operationsnap>

This can range from driving dangerously or carelessly to overtaking on solid white lines, using a mobile phone while driving, ignoring traffic lights or dangerous driving around other road users, such as horse riders and cyclists. Your submission will be sent to West Mercia Police where the evidence will be reviewed by one of our road traffic police officers.

Due to the large volume of submissions received each week, we are unable to update each submitter regarding the outcome of their allegation. However, all submissions are dealt with pro-actively to help reduce risk taking and poor driving on our counties roads.

Any footage submitted through the portal can be used by us to help educate other road users and to advice on case results.

For more information, please see the Frequently Asked Questions section or email OpSnap@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Mobile phones:

West Mercia Police are supporting the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) mobile phone campaign (8th – 21st Feb), by targeting motorists who continue to use their mobile phone at the wheel.

Distraction behind the wheel is such a significant contributory factor with regards to road collisions and this campaign demonstrates a willingness by police forces across the UK to tackle the issue of mobile phone use.

As part of the campaign motorists are being urged to really consider the impact using a mobile phone has on their driving ability, whether this is hand held or hands free and for all use, not just calls. Whilst hands free is still legal, it is still a distraction and has been proven that drivers are more likely to be involved in a collision, are far less likely to notice or react to hazards, show poor lane discipline and display variable speed choices. If being distracted is leading to dangerous driving behaviour then enforcement can still be an option whether hands free or not.

For some people ensuring that your mobile phone is kept out of easy reach or turning your mobile off whilst driving is an easy way of avoiding the temptation.

Motorists caught using a mobile phone could face a £200 fine and six points on their licence. Drivers caught twice face a lengthy ban – which could also then lead to a £1,000 fine. While new drivers - those who have passed within the last two years - face having their licence revoked if caught just once.

The SNT would like to thank the local residents for calling 101 and passing on information

PC 1158 Deb's WHEELER
SNT
Whitchurch

Parish Clerk's Report

Correspondence

1. **Graham Turnbull**

Following last month's meeting a letter was sent to Graham thanking him for his work and asking him if he was willing to continue to lead the Marlot LNR task and finish group. He has confirmed that he is willing to do so.

In addition, he has asked for the annual Marlot budget to be increased by £50. As the 2021/22 budget has already been agreed and the precept deadline has passed, I have noted this for a future meeting, when year-end surpluses will be discussed.

2. **Pensions Regulator**

The regulator has written to remind the Council of its duty to declare compliance. This is simply an administrative task and will be completed before the December 2021 deadline.

3. **Return to Online Meetings**

NALC has written to local councils with guidance on returning to online meeting as it appears unlikely that the current legislation will be extended beyond May. I will provide further information on this at the March meeting.

4. **Highway Maintenance**

Shropshire Council has written to all town and parish councils with an update on the current state of play with highway maintenance. (This was emailed to members by Cllr Mellings).

If you want to report issues, either do this through Chris or Pauline or phone 01743 250440 (in-hours) or 07990 085809 (out of hours).

5. **Elections**

It has now been confirmed that local council elections will definitely go ahead on 6th May 2021.

6. **Covid Support**

Shropshire Council has sent information on the following:

- Test and Trace Support Payments
<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/benefits/what-help-can-i-claim-from-the-council/covid-test-and-trace-support-payments/>

- Hardship Funds

Information can be found here:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/information-for-the-public/> or via the Covid helpline (0345 678 9028).

Actions

1. **Information Commissioner**

I've now investigated this fully and, because the Parish Council processes personal information we need to pay a data protection fee to the Information Commissioners Office. The PC falls into the lowest tier with a fee of £40 per year or £35 if paid annually by direct debit. This has been included in the payments to be authorised this month.

2. **Precept**

Following last month's meeting, the precept request was sent to Shropshire Council

3. **Planning Documents**

The Council has accumulated a large number of hard-copy planning applications which are all now available on the Shropshire Council website. The Parish Council's documents do not add any value to the online versions and it is my intention to dispose of these documents through a combination of recycling and shredding.

4. **Land Registry Consultation**

The land registry is carrying out a consultation with town and parish councils in relation to registering land. This high-level survey explores whether we know what we own, if it is registered and what our experience of registering land has been. It is an anonymous survey and I have responded in relation to our assets and experiences.

All other actions relate to items on the February agenda.