

# **Whixall Parish Council**

**Chairman: Ian Mercer**

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at  
Whixall Social Centre starting at 7:30pm**

---

## **Present:**

**Chairman:** I Mercer

**Councillors:** J Spenser, D Edgerton, C Platon, J Hardiman, B Harris, J Fitton, M Howard

**Shropshire Councillors:** P Dee

**Clerk:** K Hatton

**Public:** None

**Guests:** P Ashton (North Salop Wheelers), Karen Townend (Principal Planning Officer), Luke Neal (Shropshire Wildlife Trust/ Meres and Mosses Landscape Partnership Scheme).

## **121/15 Introduction**

Cllr Mercer declared the meeting open. He welcomed Phoebe, Karen and Luke to the meeting.

## **122/15 Guest presentations**

**Phoebe Ashton – North Salop Wheelers-** PA reported on the activities and services of North Salop Wheelers; they have recruited two new, much needed, volunteer drivers but always need more volunteers. PA discussed the potential impact of the team's increasing age on the future of the service. Passenger numbers are illustrating the need for the service. The organisation (NSW) is still reliant on grants, fundraising and donations from a variety of sources and it hopes that the Parish Council will consider this, as they have done in the past, and grant a donation.

PA was advised that NSW write to formally request a donation as soon as possible.

**Karen Townend- Principal Planning Officer, Shropshire Council-** KT provided an outline summary of the hierarchy of policy that guides decision: i.e. National Policy> Shropshire Council's Core Strategy> Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's). KT reported on the latest position regarding the Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev): The plan will be presented to the full council in December for adoption and as such the plan now carries nearly full weight.

Policies relevant to Whixall were referred to: CS5, CS7, MD7A and Build Your Own Affordable Home- (all available to view at [www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk))

Discussion ensued through questions from the Parish Councillors regarding interpretation of policies and of policies that appear to be in contradiction to one another e.g. the subjectivity of what is an in-keeping design and the weight carried by sustainability etc.

Further discussion ensued with regard to enforcement policy, barn conversions and permitted development.

**Luke Neal- Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT)/ Meres and Mosses Landscape Partnership Scheme-** LN briefly re-capped on Phase 1 of the Landscape Partnership Scheme, referring to his attendance at a Whixall Parish Council meeting in February 2013. LN presented an outline view of what is hoped for Phase 2 of the project saying that its focus will be around 'the mosses'. LN stressed that it is "early days" but that potentially it could have a significant impact on the parish of Whixall. LN showed a map of the area that identified the Whixall, Fenns and Bettisfield Mosses as part of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is a European designation and as such is the highest level of protection. Natural England (NE) owns most of the area in question with the exception of one or two pockets of land. Natural England is in the process of trying to acquire more of the land within the SAC.

To maintain the area as wetland the water level on the mosses needs to be raised but there is a limit to how high the levels can be raised as there is strong legislation which states that they cannot flood neighbouring land.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) is in the process of purchasing the scrap yard site (Furbers) at Morris' Bridge and the flooded fields on the other side of the canal, on both sides of the road.

LN stressed that SWT want to have control over the water level on these flooded fields although it is the intention for them to remain wet as it makes for good bird-watching. LN also stated that NE is very keen to stop any leak from the canal because the water from the canal is mineral-rich which will damage the peat/moss. LN stressed that they are already looking at ways to ensure that there is no adverse affect on properties in the vicinity.

LN discussed the well-known fact that the land at the scrap yard is polluted; they have been advised that the site, which is protected with a concrete cap, is not leaking and therefore should be left alone.

These facts lead to a process of consultation with the parish about what best to do with the scrap yard site. NE and SWT have a desire to make the area; i.e. the Moss, a better understood site and as such are interested in exploring ideas around education and tourism. LN stated that they were very interested to hear the views and feelings of the Parish Councillors and residents about increased visitors etc.

LN pointed out that the canal runs straight through the area and therefore a focus on canal users may be appropriate as they pose much less impact in terms of traffic on roads.

In short, LN stated that the project/ SWT is wide open to ideas and he has 1 year to plan and consult.

LN re-iterated that SWT is in a position to protect houses from flooding and would be good neighbours.

**The Clerk agreed to assist with planning and co-ordinating a consultation process regarding the project.**

#### **123/15 Public Participation**

No members of the public were present.

#### **124/15 Apologies for absence**

S Marlow- work commitment

C Mellings

#### **125/15 Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests**

Cllr Spenser declared a prejudicial (not pecuniary) interest relating to planning application ref: 15/04379/FUL-Conversion of redundant church into residential dwelling with associated internal works at Whixall United Reformed Church, Stanley Green on the grounds of perceived bias as she is a trustee on the United Reformed Church Graveyard Trust.

#### **126/15 Minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

It was proposed by Cllr Spenser that the amended minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. Seconded by Cllr Howard and agreed by all present.

<b>It was resolved</b> that the minutes of 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2015 be signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting.
---

## 127/15 Planning

-All planning applications and decisions can be tracked on line at [www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)

Applications received- to consider response

-15/04379/FUL : Conversion of redundant church into residential dwelling with associated internal works at Whixall United Reform Church, Stanley Green, Whixall, Shropshire, SY13 2NE

....Cllr Spenser left the room.

**Resolution:** Proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Hardiman.

**Support without comment.**

-15/04502/FUL: Erection of first floor extension and minor internal alterations at Greenacre Farm, Abbeygreen, Whixall, Shropshire

**Resolution:** Proposed by Cllr Edgerton, seconded by Cllr Spenser.

**Support without comment.**

- 14/00834/FUL: Erection of two agricultural sheds; siting of temporary agricultural workers dwelling; extension to access track at Little Acorn Farm, Dobsons Bridge, Whixall, Shropshire- Re-consultation

**Resolution:** Proposed by Cllr Mercer, seconded by Cllr Harris

**Object with the following comment- Whixall Parish Council wish to state that their position has not changed in light of the new information (ecology report) available in connection to this application, in fact, it reinforces concerns about the impact on adjacent sites.**

**Furthermore, the Parish Council has concerns about the impact of the current use of Little Acorn farm on the adjacent sites.**

Decisions- to note

- Ref: 15/04101/FUL- Erection of single storey extension to side elevation and conversion of detached garage into two bedroomed ancillary accommodation at Southern Ash , Gilberts Lane, Whixall, Shropshire, SY13 2PR. **Decision: Grant Permission**

Ref: 15/00193/FUL- Replacement of an existing wooden bungalow and garage with a two storey dwelling and garage; installation of package treatment plant at Rhos, Church Lane, Whixall, Shropshire, SY13 2NA. **Decision: Grant Permission**

Ref: 15/03611/FUL - Conversion of existing garage into living accommodation Marhaba, Platt Lane, Whixall, SY13 2NY. **Decision: Grant Permission**

## 128/15 Clerk's Report

### a) **Correspondence- To note**

Notification of Citizens Advice Shropshire AGM

Marie Curie- Request to consider donation

Notification from Rural Housing Enabler re: Applicants' qualification for Build Your Own Affordable Home – 2 Applications: land at Bridge Farm, Platt Lane and proposed plot at Alders Lane.

### b) **Rotary Donation- To note**

A donation from Whitchurch Rotary of £75 towards the Senior Citizens' Christmas Party has been received. We will need to request any future donations in writing.

**c) Community led Road Safety Concern- Nameplate signs**

On submission of request of nameplate signs as per last month's meeting (minute ref:116/15c) David Gradwell confirmed that: If possible, he will try to fund these signing works from this year's budget, however, if unable to do this, the works will be carried out as part of next year's works programme.

**d) Marlot- Update on progress towards fencing boundary to enable seasonal grazing**

A Section 38 notice/ application (consent to carry out works on land registered as common land) and consultation process will be presented at a future meeting.

**129/15 Financial matters****a) Monthly Balance sheet- To note**

October's balance sheet was presented and confirmed as accurate with the current bank statements by Cllr Mercer.

Balances at end of October 2015...

DATE	ACCOUNT NAME	AMOUNT
29.10.2015	Community Account	£5,364.43
	Business Saver Account	£3,921.49
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£9,285.92</b>

**b) Outstanding accounts- To approve**

Orders for the payment of money (listed below) as per the financial report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) were proposed by Cllr Mercer, seconded by Cllr Spenser and agreed by all present.

DATE	CHEQUE NO.	DETAILS	AMOUNT
11/11/15	101058	Roy Bickley- Signwriter to update Chairman's board	£28.00
	101059	SALC- Chairmanship training part 2	£20.00
	101060	K Hatton- Clerk's pay for October	£300.30
	101061	C Jones- Grass cutting x 4 cuts	£80.00
	101062	M Spenser-Fuel reimburse for grass cutting at Hollinwood Green	£32.83
		<b>Total</b>	<b>£461.13</b>

**It was resolved** that the outstanding accounts should be paid and cheques were signed by two authorised councillors.

**c) Draft 2016/17 budget forecast**

Councillors confirmed receipt of the draft budget and the Clerk summarised responses to the following questions raised by Cllr Harris:

- ☐ **Social Centre Hire- Is there anything to be gained by making this a donation rather than a payment?**  
>Probably nothing to gain by making a donation. Rates and payment methods might be under review by the Social Centre Committee but it can be reasonably anticipated that it will cost the Parish Council about the same amount per year as it does currently.
- ☐ **Donations – (Relevant to churches) do we make these automatically or do they have to apply?**  
>St Mary's and Welsh End get an automatic donation in the sense that it has been agreed year on year (they don't write to request it, just write to thank the PC). The money is stated as being towards grounds maintenance.

URC's donation is to the Graveyard Trust, again for grounds maintenance. The Trust was set up and the donation was agreed to be reinstated in September 2013 after the church closed (£50).

In the past we have donated to the school at their request e.g. towards their cycle shelter and signs for picnic and play area.

- **Poppy Appeal – is this directly to the Appeal or to buy a wreath?**  
> It is part donation and part payment for the wreath- the actual minimum payment is for the wreath is £25, the extra £10 is a donation.
- **Use of the wording Chairman's Fund implies personal use. If it needs to be clearer other than Contingency what about Council Discretionary Fund?**  
>The Chairman's Fund was suggested at the Chairmanship training. It would be for a minimal amount.

Further discussion will take place when donations are decided in January or February.

d) Grass cutting tender

The Clerk confirmed that it would be in line with Standing Orders to advertise the tender in a local newspaper. The cost of such an advert is approx. £80. It was suggested that by extending the length of contract the cost of advertising would be reduced.

A draft advert was tabled for approval.

**It was resolved that a contract for 3 years + 2 years extension would be advertised.**

### 30/15 Parish Matters

a) Community Led Parish Plan- Actions Review

Councillors confirmed that they had received a copy of the updated action plan. No matters were raised for further discussion.

Cllr Mercer proposed that the document was accepted as up to date, seconded by Cllr Harris.

b) Senior Citizens' Christmas Party- Arrangements to finalise

Arrangements for the Christmas party were discussed. The Clerk agreed to send finalised shopping list to Cllrs Spenser and Hardiman for food shopping – the list will include approximate cost and copies of last year's receipts. Cllr Mercer was provided with last year's drinks receipts as a guideline for this year's purchase. Money's to be reimbursed on the night of the party. Contributions by Cllrs were acknowledged and agreed.

### 131/15 Highways

a) Referrals to Shropshire Council

- Re: Construction site hoarding around the Waggoners site. There have been complaints that the hoarding is impeding the line of sight of oncoming traffic from a northerly direction when at the junction.

- Re: At the canal bridge just west of The Waggoners there is a slope down from the roadside to steps that lead to the tow path – this slope has become hazardous as cattle pass across the area regularly making it muddy and slippery.

b) Scheduled works by Shropshire Council

Ongoing road closures re: BT works.

**132/15 Councillors' Reports**

Cllr Platon reported on a meeting and inspection of the canal leak (issue first reported to the Parish Council in June 2015 – minute ref 72/15.) The meeting was requested by Mr Cadman and attended by Cllr Platon, Cllr Mellings and Shropshire Council's Land Drainage Officer.

Cllr Platon confirmed that there is a substantial leak from the canal. Mr and Mrs Cadman continue to be dissatisfied with the support and response from the Canal and River Trust.

Cllr Platon has provided the Cadman's with Google Earth images of the site dating back which evidences that the site has only flooded in the last 3 years. He has also provided them with rainfall figures for the area for the last 10 years.

**133/15 Consider Future Agenda Items**

Cllr Spenser requested that every entry in the CLP actions document was read through in order to approve/ propose further updates.

Cllr Mercer requested that the Annual Parish Meeting be included on the agenda in relation to the subject for discussion, i.e. consultation on development ideas for scrap yard site.

The Clerk reminded Cllrs that a representative from the Social Centre Committee had been invited to the next meeting re: use of the burial ground.

The meeting closed at 10:16pm

<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at 7.30 pm</b>
--