

# Whixall Parish Council

Chairman: Ian Mercer

Minutes of Parish Council's Planning Meeting held on 11 September 2019 at  
Whixall Social Centre starting at 7:30pm

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**Present:**

**Councillors:** I Mercer (Chair); R Harris; J Spenser; A Hague; A Rawlinson; M Howard

**Shropshire Councillors:** C Mellings.

**Clerk:** A Roberts

**Members of the community:** 0

**Representatives of other bodies/ organisations:** Mike Crawshaw (Natural England)

**86/19 Apologies for Absence**

G Turnbull; D Farrington.

P Dee (Shropshire Council)

**87/19 Public Participation**

Mike Crawshaw (Natural England) outlined the BogLIFE Winter Works Programme to Members. His presentation covered the following:

- Turf scraping and re-turfing of the former scrapyards site;
- Tree Works; and
- Bird Hide

There will be a public drop in session on Saturday 12 October at the Social Centre.

The full report will be provided separately and published on the Parish Council website.

**88/19 Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests**

Members were reminded of their obligation to declare any interests/ gifts/ hospitality.

**89/19 West Mercia Police Report**

Graeme Baines provided an email report which was circulated to Members before the meeting. He specifically requested that residents should keep their eyes open for anything suspicious and call 101 to report as well as making sure that their belongings are secure.

**90/19 Minutes of Previous Meetings**

**a. Meeting of Whixall Parish Council held on 10 July 2019**

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

**b. Minutes of the planning Meeting held on 7 August 2019**

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

## 91/19 Planning

### a) Response to Applications

Reference	Detail	Response
<a href="#">19/03437/FUL</a>	Scottie Cottage, 9 Platt Lane, SY13 2NR  Erection of stable block and hay store; formation of stable yard with 1.1m high boundary fencing and field gates; to include change of use of land to equestrian use	Support (no comment)
<a href="#">19/03768/VAR</a>	Garden Cottage, Church Lane, SY13 2NA  Variation of Condition 2 of planning permission 18/02944/FUL Alterations to roof height and dormer windows to improve internal headroom	Support (no comment)
<a href="#">19/02978/FUL</a>	Land to The East of Roving Bridge  Engineering operations, works to provide water level management and the introduction of a bird hide and access Re-consultation due to amendments	Support Comment: Following re-consultation, the Council wishes to re-emphasise its previous comment: The Council seeks assurance of a robust management system which will ensure that water levels are controlled and can respond to concerns raised by residents.

## 92/19 Clerk's Report

### Correspondence

- Updated 'Model Financial Regulations' have been received from SALC. The Clerk will use these as a basis for updating the Council's financial regulations prior to sign off by Council.
- SALC have sent a formal invitation to their AGM and 70<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration evening to be held on Friday 15 November.
- Wem Town Council have invited Members to the Mayor's Civic Service to be held on Sunday 15 September at 9.45am. This invitation was forwarded to Members last month.

### Actions Since the Last Meeting

- The Clerk met with Penny O'Hagan (Wem Town Clerk) to discuss alternative options for banking. A proposal will be brought to Members in October.
- All other actions relate to items on the current agenda.

## 93/19 Financial Matters

- To receive monthly bank balance record.  
The Clerk advised the council of the council's bank balances.

DATE	ACCOUNT NAME	AMOUNT
28 August 2019	Community Account	£8,470.05
	Business Saver Account	£926.86
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£9,396.91</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 Spenser and agreed by all present.

**Resolved: The outstanding accounts should be paid and the cheques signed by two authorised councillors.**

**94/19 Whixall Bowling Club Lease**

Cllr Harris raised two queries in relation to the lease:

1. Why is the Social Centre listed within the 'parties' section of the lease?
2. The lease states that the Executive Officers can decide to dissolve the Bowling Club yet is unclear on precisely who the Executive Officers are.

The Clerk will seek clarification from Hatchers and, subject to satisfactory responses and any relevant amendments to the lease, Members will agree to sign the lease in October.

**95/19 Whixall Social Centre**

Following the Council's meeting in July, Steve Grogan (Chair of the Social Centre Committee) wrote to the Clerk and provided the information held by his organisation in relation to land ownership and use.

There was discussion amongst members regarding what land was owned by the Parish Council and the conclusion was that this was unclear. In particular Members wished to understand asset ownership, rights of access and responsibilities.

**Resolved: The Parish Clerk will identify the Parish Council's assets and land ownership information. Following this, any unregistered land will be formally registered.**

**96/19 Policies and Procedures**

a. Declaration of Non-Pecuniary Interests

The Chair explained that when Members attended Parish Council meetings they were there as Parish Councillors, representing the residents in that role. He outlined the reasons why non-pecuniary interests should be declared in order to ensure that when Members who were also members of a second organisations spoke on issues relating to that organisation were clear on who they were representing and that this would be stated in the minutes.

It was acknowledged that, on most occasions, the other Councillors would agree to the Member taking part in discussion and voting.

It was suggested that membership information should be provided formally, but Members agreed that declaring interest on a 'meeting by meeting' basis was more manageable. The Clerk advised members that the purpose of declaring non-pecuniary interest was to ensure that no accusations of bias were raised against individuals or the Council, and that, on the rare occasion where Members are not allowed to take part in discussions or vote, they are still allowed to speak during the Public Session.

**Resolved: Members will declare non-pecuniary interests relating to items on meeting agendas and should seek dispensation if they wish to take part in discussions and voting on the matter. In deciding to grant dispensation the Council will consider the requirement for Councillors to act in the best interest of local tax payers.**

b. Standing Orders

Members agreed to the following within the draft standing orders:

- Members of the public can speak for no longer than 3 minutes
- The Annual Meeting of the Council will take place at 7.30pm
- At least 3 Councillors are required in order to reverse a resolution
- The Proper Officer will not record planning applications on a spreadsheet as this information is now available on the Planning Portal
- The Staffing Committee will comprise the Chair plus two other Members. The Chair will also chair this committee.

**Resolved: The Standing Orders will be signed off by the Chairman once the agreed changes have been made.**

**97/19** Highways

Members expressed concern about the safety of drivers pulling out of Platt Lane, due to poor visibility. Cllr Spenser stated that at one point in the past a mini-roundabout had been proposed for this location but members agreed that this was probably an expensive solution that would not be implemented. Cllr Turnbull had asked for this item to be discussed as he believed a mirror could be a solution. The issue had been raised with him by residents. Cllr Mellings suggested that Shropshire Council may pay for the installation of a mirror as this was a safety issue.

**Resolved: The Clerk will write to Shropshire Council and ask for a mirror to be sited or other appropriate action to be taken in order to improve visibility at the junction.**

**98/19** Parish Matters

a. The Marlot – Actions Following the Site Visit

The Chair formally passed his thanks to Martin Spenser for his time leading the site visit to the Marlot earlier that evening.

A discussion followed and a number of points of view were expressed. The key points made were:

- The work carried out by Martin and Graham was acknowledged. It was recognised that at the moment they are the only ones who are able to operate some of the tools on site and that we need to find a way to resolve this.
- There is too much to do and a defined plan is needed because it is so daunting. Can it be broken down into smaller, less daunting areas?
- One of the reasons it is so daunting is because of the size of the site which has been divided into four sections. Each section has its own priorities but the pond section is taking a disproportionate amount of time to manage. The existing management plan is difficult to follow.
- It is frustrating that no larger machinery can be used on the site
- Is it possible to cut a clear path through the whole site which can then be easily maintained?
- The restrictions make it an almost impossible task
- We need more people and we need help to get them
- It is very difficult to get people interested in volunteering
- At the moment there are no labour costs
- Cllr Mercer's daughter (Sian) wants to get involved and to encourage teenagers from across the County to get involved too. It was pointed out that teenagers can't use the equipment, but her aim would be to increase awareness and use of the site. This is something that would be done almost exclusively online.
- The Council needs to agree the best way forward- maintain it as it is, or simply let it go?
- Can we get SWT or NE to assist us in the development of an updated management plan?
- Would SWT be willing to take over site management in the future?
- Could we use a roller to flatten so that mowing could take place?
- At present there is no management budget and no continuity plan, with the Council relying on two very willing volunteers.
- Is there an opportunity to increase school use? The Primary school has its own wildlife area and may not be interested but there is scope for increasing secondary school use.
- It is difficult to see how the Council can carry out long-term management of the site on its own.

**Resolved: Another site visit will be carried out after the grazing period and Steve Dobbin from Natural England will be invited to attend. Ongoing management of the Marlot will be a specific agenda item for future meetings.**

b. Marlot Grazing Agreement

The Clerk explained that the grazing agreement was unchanged from the previous year and had simply been updated ready for signing.

**Resolved: The 2019/20 grazing agreement will be signed**

**99/19 Councillor Reports**

**a. Parish Councillors**

None

**b. Shropshire Councillors**

Councillor Mellings provided a report to members in advance of the meeting. This will be published on the Parish Council Website. In addition, Cllr Mellings offered to organise a meeting of interested parties to discuss ongoing drainage issues.

Scheduled date of next meeting: **09 October 2019 at 7.30 pm**

The meeting closed at 9.14pm