

Whixall Parish Council



Chairman: Ian Mercer

Minutes of the Parish Council's Monthly Meeting held on 9 March 2022 at Whixall Social Centre starting at 7:30pm

Present:

Councillors: I Mercer (Chair); J Spenser; B Harris; C Weedall; A Rawlinson; P Rodenhurst; M Evans; and D Edgerton

Shropshire Councillors : E Towers

Clerk: A Roberts

Other Organisations

Members of the Public 3

16/22 Public Session

Miss Charlotte Clorley and Miss Jessica Evans attended and each outlined their strong connection to the Parish in relation to item 22/22c

Miss Jessica Edgerton attended and explained how planning application 22/00805/FUL had been amended based on comments from planners following refusal of a previous application.

Miss Clorley and Miss Evans left after the public session..

17/22 Apologies for Absence

None

18/22 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllr Evans declared an interest in item 7c (Confirmation of Local Connection).

Cllr Edgerton declared an interest in item 7a (22/00805/FUL)

Cllr Spenser declared an interest in Item 7e as the Parish Council's representative on the Graveyard Trust.

19/22 Minutes of Previous Meeting

It was proposed by Cllr Rawlinson that the draft minutes, of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 9 February 2022 were an accurate record. This was seconded by Cllr Spenser and agreed by all present. **Resolved**

The Chairman signed the minutes.

20/22 Reports

- a. Councillors Broomhall and Towers had circulated their report in advance of the meeting (Appendix A).
- b. Cllr Rawlinson reported that the Jubilee Oak Tree had been collected and would be delivered to the school along with a commemorative plaque. Both were supplied by Shropshire Council. He also reported that flooding had worsened and ditches needed to be cleared.
- c. Cllr Edgerton reported complaints about overgrown hedges at Hollinswood.
- d. Cllr Mercer reported potholes at Abbey Green and a second flooding location on the Edstaston to Waterloo road. He was unable to attend the Helicopter Liaison Group and Cllr Towers provided a verbal update.
- e. Cllr Spenser reported that the Whixall Walks publication will not be taken forward by the existing group. If a reprint is needed the walks need to be checked and someone needs to take it forward. Cllr Rawlinson offered to check the walks.
- f. The Clerk gave a verbal report (Appendix B).

21/22 Parish Matters

- a. New Model Code of Conduct
Members considered the report (Appendix C).
Proposed Cllr Harris, seconded Cllr Rawlins, agreed all

Resolved: Whixall Parish Council will adopt LGA Model Code of Conduct in its entirety as the member Code of Conduct for the Parish Council from 1 April 2022 and all members will attend Code of Conduct Training within the next 12 months.

b. The Marlot

- i. The Clerk reported that a joint meeting will be arranged as soon as possible and asked members to confirm dates when they are unavailable in March.
- ii. Graham Turnbull provided an activity report (Appendix D)

c. Hollinwood Green

Martin Spenser has reported that the Crab Apple Tree was damaged in recent storms and suggested that it should be removed.
Proposed Rawlinson, seconded Cllr Evans, Agreed All

Resolved: The Council gives Martin Spenser permission to make the tree safe by whatever means. A replacement tree will be found.

The Clerk will speak to Shropshire Council and if there are no free trees available, this item will be discussed in April.

d. Bowling Club Lease

The Clerk reported the Bowling Club has now paid £300 towards the cost of renewing the lease and the matter is now concluded.

e. Grant Funding

- i. Cllr Spenser left the room during this item.
Proposed Cllr Mercer, seconded cllr Rawlinson, agreed all.

Resolved: Grant funding of £50 will be paid to Whixall URC Graveyard Trust

- ii. The request from North Salop Wheelers is deferred until April

f. Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire's Garden Party

All Town & Parish Councils have been invited to send a representative to the Garden Party. The representative must have made a contribution to the community of Whixall.

Proposed Cllr Harris, seconded Cllr Edgerton, agreed all.

Resolved: The following will be invited to represent the Parish Council at the Lord-Lieutenant's Garden Party on 8 June 2022:

Martin Spenser for his many years of invaluable work volunteering for and leading the Marlot Conservation Group.

Julie Ankers for providing Christmas meals for Senior Citizens during the two years of the pandemic.

The Clerk will write to Mr Spenser and Ms Ankers before submitting the nomination form.

22/22

Planning

a. To Consider Applications

i.22/00790/FUL	Erection of two storey rear extension and demolition of single storey a structure. New House Farm, Chapel Lane.	Support No comment
ii.22/00805/FUL	Erection of 2no. local need dwellings including provision of access, parking and garaging. Land East of Rack Lane Garage	Support No comment
iii.22/00883/FUL	Erection of a single storey extension to side 1 Canal Side, SY13 2PQ	Support No comment

Cllr Edgerton and Miss J Edgerton left the room during item 22/22a ii.

b. To Receive Planning Application Decisions

21/02645/FUL	Conversion and change of use of existing redundant barn to form 2No. agricultural workers dwellings, installation of package treatment plant and associated works. Whixall Hall, Whixall, Shropshire	Grant permission
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c. To consider requests for confirmations of local connections

Cllr Evans did not participate in the consideration of the application made by Jessica Evans.

Proposed Cllr Mercer seconded Cllr Rawlinson, agreed all.

Resolved: Whixall Parish Council confirms Miss Jessica Evans' strong local connection.

Proposed Cllr Mercer seconded Cllr Rawlinson, agreed all.

Resolved: Whixall Parish Council confirms Miss Charlotte Clorley's strong local connection.

23/22 Financial Matters

a. To receive monthly bank balance record.

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

DATE	ACCOUNT NAME	AMOUNT
28 Feb 2022	Current Account (Working Budget)	£1590.67
	Savings Account (Reserves)	£10,551.90
TOTAL		£12,142.57

b. To resolve to approve outstanding accounts

Orders for the payment of outstanding invoices and all payments approved remotely (under "Power to Spend" LGA1972 s.112(2) and 124(1). Proposed by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Spenser and agreed by all.

Resolved: The outstanding accounts should be paid and the payment transactions authorised by two authorised councillors.

Recipient	Reason for Payment	Amount	Power of Expenditure
Employee	Salary (for February)	£201.49	LGA 1972 s112
HMRC	PAYE	£134.00	LGA 1972 s112
NEST	Pension Contributions	£35.14	LGA 1972 s112
Whixall Social Centre	Hall Hire for Meetings 2022	£112.00	LGA 1972 s112
	Total	£482.63	

c. Appointment of Internal Auditor

Proposed by Cllr Spenser, seconded by Cllr Harris, agreed all

Resolved: Should he wish to do so Graham Murphy will be appointed as Internal Auditor for 2022-23 and the Parish Council will consider seeking a new auditor for the following financial year.

Scheduled date of next meeting: **13 April 2022**

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Report 5 to Whixall Parish Council by Shropshire Councillors Peter Broomhall and Edward Towers – March 2022

Dear All – Please find below our fifth written report as your Shropshire Councillors.

Rachel Robinson, Shropshire Council's director of public health in giving the latest weekly Covid update from Shropshire Council last Friday reports:-

"Last week the Government announced the next step in its coronavirus strategy, "Living with COVID-19", and we are supporting this by providing advice to help people make informed decisions, in order to live safely alongside coronavirus. While cases continue to fall, legal restrictions have been removed, and most testing reduced, the pandemic is not over.

To help us all live safely alongside coronavirus, and to protect the NHS, vaccines remain the best form of protection. It's never too late to get vaccinated. Good hand hygiene, wearing masks in crowded spaces, and social distancing, remain important in helping reduce infections.

Since 24 February you are no longer legally required to self-isolate if you test positive with a Lateral Flow Test or a PCR test. However, we strongly advise everybody to stay at home and avoid contact with others if you test positive or have symptoms. Free tests are still available until Thursday 31 March."

Full Shropshire Council Meeting.... the latest took place on Thursday 24th February 2022 at Clayton Hall - Shrewsbury College, London Road, Shrewsbury. SY2 6PR

The Agenda had items on it about:

- Financial Matters: Amongst things discussed in a lengthy debate was the setting of the budget with various alternatives being put forward by the differing political groupings. These were all turned down and the **Council Tax rate eventually agreed to be 3.99% for the forthcoming financial year.**
- Shrewsbury Town Centre Redevelopment Phase 1
- Shropshire Council Sustainable Warmth Programme
- Care Leavers Covenant
- Paper v digital agendas

There were also some Motions presented, namely:

1] One on behalf of 'Stoma Group' for people with Colostomy bags. This was for all Shropshire Council run toilets to have:

A) A shelf on which to lay out items needed when changing their appliance. This did not need to be huge. It was suggested that if there is already a surface that is within reach such as a baby changing mat or the like that would be sufficient.

B) Two clothes hooks.

C) A sanitary bin within the Cubicle.

D) All Town and Parish Councils in Shropshire be written to, to ask them doing the same.

The Motion was Passed

2] One to ban all Sky Lanterns and Balloon release from Council Property to help the environment.

The Motion was Passed

3] A final one to get Shropshire Council support to save the driving test centre in Whitchurch.

This Motion passed unanimously

Regarding Whixall Parish, there is less to report with a few planning applications coming forward and their being accepted or refused. There have been no road closures so far as we are aware.

Shropshire Council Briefing – We were given a Member ‘Teams’ Briefing Session – ‘CIL and Strategic Infrastructure Priorities’ on Monday 7th March. If you’d like powerpoint details we can send them to you.

North Salop Wheelers Community Bus Project

- a) Their Coffee Morning held at Whitchurch Civic Centre on **Friday 04 March**, was successful and raised £308.30
- b) Their AGM was held on **Monday 07 March 2022**, 10.30am at **Wem Baptist Church**. Amongst other things:
 - Needed new Officers were appointed for Administration (Terry Fry) and serving as Treasurer (Sally Jones) upon the retirement of Phoebe Ashton, as well as representatives for both ‘Drivers’ and ‘Passengers’ on their committee headed up by the two other Officers, Andy Everett (Chairman) and Robin Nelson (Secretary)-both re-elected.
 - A revised Constitution was also provisionally agreed
 - Annual reports received
 - News given of an increase in the number of drivers
 - New publicity cards were distributed giving the new email and mobile number contact details of WheelersCBP@gmail.com and 07597273959

This proved a very successful meeting and showed great progress had been made in the last 6 months in reviving ‘Wheelers’. There **next AGM is to be on Monday 27th March 2023 at 10.30am at Wem Baptist Church**.

Whitchurch Food Bank - Whitchurch Food are always so grateful for the help they receive. As you may know, they bring help to residents in Wem regularly and they say that the people of Wem area are so generous to Whitchurch Food Bank as they receive contributions from groups in Wem every week - wonderful!! They write *‘who can say how the next few months will turn out for so many people who are already struggling, once the Fuel Bills, Cost of Living, etc. kick in, and we have to be there for them. So it is thanks to so many like-minded, generous communities who come to our rescue - we could not do it without all the help we receive! THANK YOU! Please continue to support Food Bank’*.

Wem Railway Station - Some good news that we have recently had is.....that Transport for Wales (TfL) have installed a defibrillator on Wem Station (and Whitchurch Railway Station) a couple of weeks ago. This is a welcome addition to the support network in our town.

The Wemian – Please don’t forget that The Wemian is still looking for a new Editor and a couple of new volunteers to help support the production of this important quarterly production. As you know Cllr Geoff Soul (Wem Town Council) has agreed to help as its Treasurer and so can be a point of contact for any who may want further details. This is long running and valued local publication that is freely available locally as it is paid for entirely by its advertising. Do help in searching and suggesting new team members to help ensure it is able to continue to flourish, adapt and serve our community.

Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Celebrations – June 2022 – Minutes of our latest Zoom meeting held on Tuesday 15th February are being prepared by Mandy Roberts-Project Officer at Wem Town Council and can be sent to you if you ask either of us.

To help give you a feel for what is being planned, the days of celebration the outline of activities being discussed are....(taken from some minutes/notes):

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS DISCUSSION

<u>Day</u>	<u>Event</u>
Thursday 2 nd June	Lighting the Beacon https://www.queensjubileebeacons.com The information is specific to the <i>Beacon Lighting Event on Thursday 2nd June 2022</i> .
Friday 3 rd June	Youth Day (Disco in the Town Hall in the afternoon/evening)
Saturday 4 th June	Big Festival – based on Wem Rec....as previously in 2012 for the Diamond Anniversary!
Sunday 5 th June	Church Service and Street Lunches

The planning group are following the guidance being offered by 'the Palace' on their website. <https://www.royal.uk/platinum-jubilee-central-weekend> and <https://www.local.gov.uk/queens-platinum-jubilee-central-weekend-2022>.

What is now being discussed are the details related to each of these.....such as parades, the Jubilee Band involvement, the use of the Town Hall and other spaces....the planting of trees, etc.

The next meeting for the Planning Group for these Celebrations is set for Tuesday 15th March at the Wem Conservative Club at 7.15pm.

Hopefully this brings you up to speed with issues that affect us here in Wem Rural Parish. If there are things not covered, or you would like to raise, then let us know.

Kindest regards,

Peter Broomhall and Edward Towers

Shropshire County Councillors for the Wem, Wem Rural & Whixall Division

Date: 7th March 2022

Highways

Potholes on Cumberland Lane and the road to Moss Cottages have been reported to Shropshire Council

An update on drainage issues between Edstaston and Waterloo has been received – work is now complete.

Banking Mandate

This has now been updated and Cllr Rawlinson is authorised to view the online account and approve transactions.

Pay Award 2021/22

Agreement has now been reached with a pay award of 1.75% to be backdated to April 2021. The increase along with back pay will be paid in April 2022, subject to Council approval.

Parish Meeting 2022

The Marlot Conservation Group is in support of the proposal to combine the Parish Meeting with the official launch of the Marlot LNR. Graham Turnbull has suggested that it could also include the P3 work. This will be discussed at the April meeting.

Laptop Issues

The parish laptop needs some maintenance as it is running too slowly and is not functioning fully. Options for replacement will be reported to the April meeting.

New Model Code of Conduct Adoption

Introduction

Councillors are being asked to consider whether to approve the recommendation to adopt the LGA New Model Code of Conduct in its entirety to replace the Parish Council's current Code which has been in place since 2014.

Shropshire Council adopted the New Code in 2021.

The 2019 Report 'Local Government Ethical Standards' produced by the Committee on Standards in Public Life recommends that 'Parish Councils should be required to adopt the code of their principal authority (or the new model code)'

Revised Code of Conduct

The new Code includes the following principles from the current Code:

- Not using position improperly to advantage or disadvantage of anyone (i.e. act solely in public interest).
- Not using resources of Council improperly for political purposes.
- Promoting high standards of conduct.

The new Code does not include the following principles from the current Code:

- Make all choices based on merit
- Being Accountable for decisions
- Being open about and give reasons for decisions and actions

However, Shropshire Council's monitoring officer has stated that this does not weaken the new code as they are principles that should be applied by members in their day-to-day decision-making whether set out in a Code of Conduct or not.

The new Code states that members must not compromise the impartiality of anyone who works for the Council and now includes a more comprehensive registration and declaration of interests process designed to ensure members identify and avoid conflicts of interest

The new Code introduces some important new principles such as:

- Not compromising the impartiality of those who work for the Council
- Treating staff, other councillors and members of the public with respect;
- A detailed framework for dealing with confidential information

Currently members are required to register disclosable pecuniary interests and declare certain non-pecuniary interests. This is considerably expanded within the new Code which links to the key principles of bias and pre-determination. There is also considerable guidance on gifts and hospitality.

Recommendations

1. **To approve the adoption of the LGA Model Code of Conduct in its entirety as the member Code of Conduct for the Parish Council from 1 April 2022**
2. **For all members to attend Code of Conduct Training within the next 12 months**

Marlot Conservation Group (MCG) Work report to Whixall Parish Council meeting 9 March 2022

During the first week of February Mr Paul Martin (Cattle Farmer) put 4 cows on the Marlot for the start of the conservation grazing. The MCG continued to dig out re-generated willow growth in the front meadow by hand. Although heavy and laborious work the team has managed to clear a considerable patch in the front meadow adjacent to the creeping willow patches. It is intended to prepare this cleared area and sow the remaining wild flower seeds (750g) later on in March.

On 11 February the MCG met to discuss the annual work activity plan based on the 2013 Marlot Management Plan and previous years experiences. The work plan will be used as a basis for work on volunteer days (every Tuesday) but is, of course, fluid depending on changing circumstances.

The ever changing weather and incoming storms disrupted work in the third week of February with only daily checks on the cattle being conducted and Alan Lomas singularly carrying out additional willow clearance on a non-volunteer day. Once the storms had passed a full assessment of the Marlot was made to ascertain the extent of any damage. One large oak tree on the perimeter between the Marlot and Plantation House field was found to have been uprooted and had fallen along the bank and was now leaning onto another tree inside the Marlot. Luckily this was the extent of the storm damage. The owners at Plantation House were informed of MCG work to clear those oak limbs and branches that had come down into their field. The oak was too large to fully cut down and only those limbs and branches that were safe to cut were processed – however it was fully cleared off Plantation House field and wood stacked for the owners at Plantation House.

In the last week of February, the cattle escaped and pushed through the electric fence into the pond area and over into Plantation House field. Paul Martin was informed and the cows re-located back into the Marlot. It was understood that a loose dog (from Plantation House) spooked the cows.

At the beginning of March, the MCG decided to check and clear the “Jubilee Hedge” area in preparation for the event in late March. This consisted of measuring and checking the hedge planting plan and a full brush-cut and clear of brash and debris from the immediate area, together with an initial health and safety risk assessment for the event. Willow clearance in the front meadow also continued.

On 4th March the cattle once again escaped and this time Paul Martin recovered the cows and took them to a new location as it would appear there is very little grazing left for the cows in the Marlot. Unfortunately, the weather and the cows have conspired against us and excessive poaching by the cows has caused considerable damage to the main path and meadow and pond pathways which will require a lot of work to level out and make safe. The MCG has discussed this with Peter Boyer at Natural England and asked for assistance, in the guise of a tracked vehicle with shovel, to assist in re-levelling and flattening the pathways – this will be dependant of on their availability and workload. The MCG will in the meantime attempt to repair some of the damage on the meadow and pond pathways by hand. The first newt surveys of the year will take place on Friday 11 March and Saturday 12 March with Nicky Hunter again conducting them. Attendance will be restricted to MCG members only, due to the safety concerns of the pathways – later surveys may include Natural England volunteers.

Graham Turnbull
Marlot Conservation Group
7 March 2022