

EWYAS HAROLD GROUP PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 8th August 2023

Present

Councillors: Malcolm Watkins (Chair), Sarah Eynon, Tony Ling, Will Lloyd, Liz Overstall, Sally Probert.

In attendance ... Lynda Wilcox (Acting Clerk from HALC), two members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Alex Culpin. Stephen Clayton was not present.
2. **Declarations of interest & written requests for dispensation ...** There were none.
3. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th July 2023.**
The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.
4. **Resolution Log**
 - 4.1 It was noted that the bench at the end of the field had been repaired and the boundary trees removed.
5. **Matters arising between meetings ...** There were none.
6. **Open Forum for public comments**
 - 6.1 A prospective candidate in the forthcoming Ward election introduced himself and gave a brief account of why he was standing for election.
7. **Brief reports were received from:**
 - 7.1 PC Chairman ... Malcolm Watkins:
 - 7.1.1 Herefordshire Council's (HC) website was not up-to-date with all new councillor names, or their Registers of Interest. However, there was a link from the PC website to the HC one.
 - 7.1.2 HALC had suggested that member PCs need not comply with a recent HC request for parish clerks to scan all Registers of Interest and then send them over to HC for publishing. This was because most parish councillors had already complied with legislation and sent their forms back to the Monitoring Officer and the compilation/maintenance/publishing of Registers of Interest. It was sufficient for PCs to have a link to the HC website.
 - 7.2 No PCSO report was available.
 - 7.3 Footpaths Officer ... There was no report, but it was noted that:
 - 7.3.1 One gate had been installed on the Herefordshire Trail, leaving one more to be sited.
 - 7.3.2 Some footpaths were completely impassable due to thistles and docks.

7.4 Liz Overstall reported:

- 7.4.1 There had been no planting as yet, but two dead trees had been removed from the pavilion site, in line with due diligence.
- 7.4.2 Trees had been ready for planting on the Kemble site for some time. Tree guards were very expensive, but costings were requested for the next meeting because the guards could be funded from the Kemble Centre budget.
- 7.4.3 The Willows were in need of pollarding.
- 7.4.4 Instructions had been given to tidy up the car park area.
- 7.4.5 Parishioners' views on the siting of trees would be helpful – Sally Probert offered to pass that request on to Alex Culpin for advertising.

8. Peter Jinman

- 8.1 Various suggestions had been put forward for the parish to honour the exceptional contribution that the late Chair – Peter Jinman – had made to the local area, including naming a path after him and/or the MUGA project or a plaque at the Railway Station.

9. Kemble Centre update and considered action:

- 9.1 Sally Probert gave a brief update, and it was RESOLVED to allow the process to continue and discuss options at the September meeting.
- 9.2 The Chair commented that he had retrieved the keys from HALC and would be seeking a copy of the Memorial Hall deeds.

10. Planning

It was RESOLVED to support the following application which would be determined by Herefordshire Council:

- 10.1 Application P232129/L ... Rowlestone Park Farm, Pontrilas HR2 OHE
Proposed partial rebuilding of the South West elevation chimney, removal of cement mortar and re-pointing, replacement of unauthorised uPVC windows and doors with timber framed windows and stabilisation of over window arches.

11. Recreation Ground/Pavilion

- 11.1 Developments on recreation ground since the last meeting:
 - 11.1.1 The moles were back ... It was RESOLVED to bring in the mole catcher.
 - 11.1.2 The trees had been sorted.
 - 11.1.3 The bench had been repaired.
- 11.2 Developments on the proposed MUGA since last meeting:
 - 11.2.1 Three quotes were being sought.
 - 11.2.2 A planning application was in preparation – Lynda Wilcox commented that applications submitted by parish councils were half price.
- 11.3 Developments on the proposed work on the toilet block:
 - 11.3.1 The Chair and Will Lloyd had met with the contractor to finish off the design for the patio area. Further discussion would take place at the September meeting, including a flood report.

- 11.3.2 The Chair reported that the Football Club would like to site a bench with a plaque in memory of one of their members who had sadly just taken his own life.

12. Lengthsman

- 12.1 Update and consideration of vital work around the parish:
- 12.1.1 Jobs were being completed, although there were things outstanding from 2022 that Herefordshire Council's Localities Manager had not yet come back on.
 - 12.1.2 In response to a request for warning markers on the Dulas Road, the Localities Manager had said that he didn't want more plastic around the countryside.
 - 12.1.3 It was noted that the parish Lengthsman was doing a lot of work, but the bigger things were not being done and it was therefore RESOLVED that the new Ward Councillor would be asked to exert pressure on Balfour Beatty.
 - 12.1.4 Councillors were urged to report any matters of concern.
 - 12.1.5 It was noted that weeds had been cleared by the parish Lengthsman but it was RESOLVED that a visit by the Road Sweeper would be requested when a new Clerk/RFO was in post.
- 12.2 Quotations for painting the railings in the village centre:
It was RESOLVED to accept the quotation from Tim Howells in the sum of £1060.
- 12.3 Footbridge issues within the group of parishes:
- 12.3.1 Monnow Valley Walk ... There was detailed discussion concerning Herefordshire Council's current design for replacement footbridges which appeared to be far in excess of simply replacing like with like at a fraction of the cost.
 - 12.3.2 It was RESOLVED that the parish council was minded to restore the footbridges to their prior functional state, subject to the agreement of Herefordshire Council, as the responsible body.

13. Finance

- 13.1 Current Bank Balance:
It was understood that the outgoing Clerk would be forwarding Bank statements.
- 13.2 Authorisation of payments: It was RESOLVED to make the following payments:
- 13.2.1 DM Payroll ... First half of financial year £60.00.
 - 13.2.2 B E Chance ... Toilet cleaning £209.65.
 - 13.2.3 CT Ground Care ... July invoice £495.00.
 - 13.2.4 Oli Stinchcombe ... Tree surgery £1344.00.
 - 13.2.5 J M Probert ... Lengthsman/general maintenance £1198.51.
 - 13.2.6 Outgoing Clerk ... Final salary in accordance with contract.
 - 13.2.7 Outgoing Clerk ... Expenses (tax fare to meeting) £60.00.
- 13.3 Confirmation of monies received: Receipt of a VAT claim was noted.
- 13.4 Grant requests: None received.

- 13.5 Up-to-date valuations of parish council buildings through insurer to avoid underinsurance in the event of a claim:
 - 13.5.1 The insurers had quoted £140 per property valuation. It was RESOLVED to go ahead with the valuations.
- 13.6 Update on Business Rates:
 - 13.6.1 Following the PC's request for discretionary relief on a business rate bill of £8k for the Community Room, Herefordshire Council had verbally confirmed that they would write off a portion of the outstanding invoice. The Chair had asked them to come out and look at the building.
 - 13.6.2 The Chair was working with Connexus who used the Community Room as their office. He therefore failed to understand why the parish council was expected to pay business rates.
 - 13.6.3 A peppercorn rent of £100 p.a. for use of the Community Room as a library, was last paid in 2018/19.
 - 13.6.4 Thanks were accorded to the local volunteers who ran the library service.

14. Roads

- 14.1 Sally Probert commented that the narrowing of the road was a good thing because it led to traffic slowing down.
- 14.2 Elmdale: There were no lines at the entrance and the area had a large number of residents who had to cross a busy road.
- 14.3 The footpath system was not good, and a resident had fallen on a path last year.
- 14.4 There were road safety concerns about the proposed 25 new homes opposite the Fire Station.
- 14.5 It was RESOLVED that parish councillors set up a site meeting with the new Ward Councillor and the Lengthsman, to consider road safety issues.
- 14.6 It was further RESOLVED that Herefordshire Council's planning officer be requested to check whether the work had been done in accordance with planning consent.

15. Clerk Recruitment

- 15.1 It was noted that no applications had been received but HALC was endeavouring to find a CiLCA qualified clerk because the parish was so busy.

16. Clerk Correspondence ... No items to discuss.

17. Informing parishioners of the work of the GPC including social media

- 17.1 It was RESOLVED to publicise:
 - 17.1.1 Tree work.
 - 17.1.2 Telephone Box.
 - 17.1.3 Thank you to library volunteers and library opening times.
 - 17.1.4 Lengthsman ... road photographs.

18. Matters raised for next agenda.

- 18.1 Move to on-line banking.

- 18.2 Football Club request to site a memorial bench.
- 18.3 Costings for tree guards.
- 18.4 Proposals to mark Peter Jinman's contribution to the parish.
- 18.5 Cost of Mole Catcher

19. Date of next scheduled meeting – 12th September in the Pavilion.

SIGNED

DATE