

Weston under Wetherley Parish Council

Ordinary Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday 27th February 2013
Weston under Wetherley Village Hall 7 pm

Present: Cllr Miss B Roberts(Chairman)

Cllr Mrs S Chambers

Cllr Mr P Haine

Cllr Mrs T McAllan

Cllr A Coles

Cllr L Mobbs

Mrs M Norman (Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer)

Also present: Cllr M Doody, Cllr N Pratt and 12 members of the public

1	Apologies Apologies were received from Cllr Hammon.	
2	Declaration of interests Cllr Doody reported that he had an interest to declare as a complaint had been made against him by two residents in connection with his alleged behaviour during the Council meeting of the 5 th December. He drew the Council's attention to comments that had been made on a public website concerning the lack of impartiality shown by District and County Councillors, together with derogatory comments made about some residents and former Councillors. The Chairman asked Cllr Doody to identify the person who had made the postings on the website, but Cllr Doody said he would leave it to the individual to identify themselves. A member of the public who had been present at the meeting on the 5 th December said that Cllr Doody had behaved properly throughout and offered to act as a witness in his support. Cllr Doody thanked him for his offer.	
3	Minutes of previous meeting 24th January 2013 The minutes of the previous meeting of the 24 th January were agreed and signed by the Chairman.	
4	Election of Vice Chairman The Chairman nominated Cllr Haine as Vice Chairman and this was seconded by Cllr Chambers. There were no other nominations. Cllr Haine was elected as Vice Chairman by a majority vote.	
5	Finance sheet and bank mandate	

	<p>The clerk presented the financial report (payments and summary schedule attached). Listed payments were authorised and Cllrs Roberts and Coles were authorised to sign the cheques accordingly. Cllr Coles queried the cost of the clerk's salary and asked if this was to be the pattern for the future. The Chairman replied that she hoped that in future the clerk would not be required to spend the time that she had been in responding to lengthy emails from councillors on procedural matters.</p> <p>It was resolved that the Chairman should be authorised to be the only secondary user on the internet bank account and that all councillors should be authorised to sign cheques.</p>	MN
6	<p>Public participation</p>	
	<p>The Chairman reminded the Council that this topic had first been raised at the meeting in December and deferred for consideration until now. Cllr Mobbs gave a resume of the statement she had made during the December meeting. Cllr McAllan felt it was important that the public had a right to express their views as the job of the Council was to represent the electorate. Cllr Doody suggested that the Council might like to consider suspending their Standing Orders for a limited period during the meeting, enabling the public to express their views irrespective of the agenda. The majority of councillors agreed that they wanted the public to feel engaged and to be able to contribute to useful debate. After discussion, it was resolved that there would be a six month trial period during which, directly after</p>	
7	<p>Declarations of Interest, the public would be able to speak for five minutes on a subject, with a maximum time allotted of 20 minutes. The Standing Orders would be suspended for that period.</p> <p>Standing Orders</p>	
	<p>There was general agreement that the Standing Orders were in need of revision. The clerk had forwarded copies of the NALC model Standing Orders to all councillors. The Chairman proposed that councillors should send their comments on the model to the clerk who would collate their responses as a starting point for further discussion.</p>	All Cllrs
8	<p>Communication with residents: availability of minutes</p>	
	<p>Councillors agreed that the minutes should be posted on the website as soon as the website was in place. Pending that, the Chairman proposed that the clerk should email a copy of the minutes to any resident who asked for them or should post a copy to the individual if necessary. The Council voted by a majority in favour of the Chairman's proposal.</p>	MN
	<p>The clerk agreed that draft minutes of the meeting would be available to councillors fourteen days after the date of the meeting.</p>	
9	<p>A member of the public asked if the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting could also be made available immediately, as they had been in the past. It was resolved that minutes of the APM should be available to any interested party as soon as was practicable after the meeting.</p> <p>Village appearance</p>	
	<p>There was some discussion about the work which had been carried out in the village to date.</p>	

10	<p>Some hedgerows had been savagely pruned, whilst there were still overhanging brambles in other places. Cllr Coles advised that these issues were the landowner's responsibility, though in the past the Council had used local contractors in order to improve the village's appearance. Cllr Haine reported that a number of residents were concerned about the damage to the natural habitat caused by excessive mowing of the grass verges and expressed the hope that in future their concerns would be borne in mind.</p> <p>Cllr Doody reported that the County Council currently paid for the grass to be cut six times a year, and the District Council paid for a further four cuts. New contractors were being appointed to carry out the work and the clerk would be notified as soon as the arrangements were in place. The contracts to carry out the work would be signed on the 1st April.</p> <p>Cllr Haine reported that Dr John Emery had kindly offered to donate a bench to the village in memory of his long association with Weston. Reservations were expressed by some councillors whether the bench would comply with Health and Safety Regulations and the District Council requirements as the bench would be situated on District Council land.</p> <p>Cllr Pratt offered to approach the District Council to obtain answers to these questions. The Chairman thanked him for this and thanks were also expressed to Dr Emery for his kind donation.</p> <p>Cllr Haine also suggested that the money saved through Dr Emery's gift should be spent on planting a copse of trees around the bench. It was agreed that further consideration of this would be deferred until the next meeting.</p>	NP
	<p>It was reported that some residents of the village have asked for access to the notice boards in order to place posters or advertisements. After discussion, it was resolved that one side of the notice boards should be left open for the public to have free access.</p> <p>Village safety</p> <p>The clerk reported that she had been in touch with the District Council concerning the location of the grit bins and was still waiting to hear whether the site was acceptable to them. A request had also been received from residents in St. Michael's Close for a grit bin to be installed there. It was agreed that a bin should be purchased for the benefit of the residents in the retirement bungalows. Cllr Haine provided the Council with the quotes he had obtained for the grit bins and the clerk is to contact the Council again concerning the proposed locations.</p> <p>The clerk provided the Council with a letter she had just received from the District Council asking for a contribution from the Parish Council towards the cost of replacing the street lamps. Such letters had also been sent to neighbouring villages. Cllr McAllan offered to scan the letter and send copies of it to all councillors who would then inform the clerk of their views.</p>	MN
11	<p>There had been a marked improvement in the flooding problem and thanks were expressed to Mr Simon Moreton for his help in swiftly resolving the problem.</p> <p>The potholes which had been complained of previously had now been filled in although one remains near the Bull Inn. The Chairman offered to contact the County Council about this.</p>	BR

	<p>Monitoring local issues</p> <p>The Chairman felt that in view of the number of national issues which would impinge on the village it would be useful to appoint representatives who would monitor these issues and keep the Council informed of developments. Cllr Haine volunteered to act as representative on HS2. The clerk gave Cllr Haine an invitation to attend a seminar on the topic hosted by Warwickshire County Council. It was agreed that all councillors would monitor developments concerning Coventry Airport and The Gateway Project and Cllr Haine would collate all information obtained.</p> <p>Meeting with Mr Stephen Hay (Warwick DC)</p> <p>The Chairman reported that the purpose of the informal meeting had been to ascertain whether there was any land within the village which could be used for housing development. Mr. Hay had stated that no such area had been identified within Weston as there were insufficient amenities to warrant such a development. The Council had presented him with a copy of the Housing Survey collated by the Parish Plan Steering Committee which showed that 79% of residents were opposed to further development.</p> <p>Cllr Doody informed the meeting that the County Council were currently working on the Local Plan to address housing needs within the County. It was hoped that the plan would be available towards the end of May. The County Council were now required by law to provide a minimum of three sites within the County to be used as permanent and transit sites for the travelling community and the County Council were in the process of investigating and identifying such sites. In response to the Chairman's question, Cllr Doody said that no such sites were being considered near Weston.</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Cllr Haine informed the Council that the Parish Plan Steering Committee had been awarded a generous grant to enable them to print and publish their report. Of the sum given, a further £650 was available to establish a village website, which could also be used by the Parish Council. The annual maintenance cost of the website, estimated to be in the region of £300 had already been budgeted for in the precept.</p> <p>The Parish Plan Steering Committee was anxious to have the website in operation as soon as possible. Cllr Haine also reported that the website designers would submit their designs to the Parish Council for their approval. Cllr Coles expressed reservations about MHP, the website designers, saying that if they were the designers he had in mind, they had proved uncooperative in the past when the previous website had been taken down. He informed the Council that WALC were proposing to have a portal on their website which could be used by parish councils and suggested that this might be a more suitable avenue for the parish council. The Chairman said that the funding of the website was being met by the Parish Plan Steering Committee. The committee was therefore responsible for the development and the decision on the suitability of the designers. She wished the Committee luck in its ventures.</p> <p>Matters arising</p>	<p>PH</p> <p>ALL Cllrs</p>
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15	<p>Matters arising had not previously figured on the Council's agenda. It was suggested that in future this should be placed on the agenda, after Minutes of the Previous Meeting, to enable the Council to monitor the progress of actions previously agreed in earlier meetings. The Council voted unanimously to accept this. The clerk to action.</p>	MN
16	<p>The clerk also reported that a planning application had been received from 26 Alderman Way. She asked all councillors to consider the application and report their responses to her by the 15th March.</p>	All Cllrs
17	<p>Business from members of the public</p> <p>There was no business from members of the public.</p> <p>Contribution to Church funds</p> <p>The clerk reminded the meeting that the Parochial Council had kindly given their permission for the meeting of the 24th January to be held in the church. The council agreed that the fee normally payable to the Village Hall for use of the premises should be made to the Church instead. The Chairman thanked Mr Stephen Evans for his hard work in making the church ready for the council meeting.</p> <p>Correspondence not dealt with in other items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Rubbish and recycling collections (ii) Community right to challenge (iii) Plastics recycling scheme (iv) Warwick Rural East Community Forum (v) Warwickshire District Council Meeting (minutes) (vi) Warks, Coventry & Solihull Green Infrastructure Strategy Consultation (vii) Quality Parish & Town Council Status Review (viii) WALC Newsletter (ix) NALC Model Standing Orders (x) Planning application: 26 Alderman Way (xi) Renewal of concessionary bus passes: Warwick.gov.uk (xii) HS2 Seminar Invitation: Warwickshire County Council (xiii) Rural Footway Lighting – letter Warwick District Council <p>The meeting closed at 9.25pm</p>	All Cllrs