

Weston under Wetherley Parish Council
Ordinary Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday 10th December 2014
Weston under Wetherley Village Hall 7 pm

Present: Cllr Miss B Roberts (Chairman)
Cllr Mr P Haine (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Mrs S Chambers
Cllr Mrs B Boardman
Mrs M Norman (Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer)

Also present: Cllr Wallace Redford, Cllr Norman Pratt, Cllr John Hammon and 4 members of the public

1	<p>Apologies</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
2	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>Cllrs Roberts, Boardman, Chambers and Haine had previously applied for and been granted a dispensation to discuss the precept.</p>
3	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting of the Council on the 10th September 2014</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting on the 10th September were unanimously agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.</p>
4	<p>Casual vacancies</p> <p>The Chairman announced that two former Councillors, Andy Coles and Lesley Mobbs had, by virtue of s.85 Local Government Act 1972, ceased to be members of the Parish Council on the 22nd November 2014, through their failure to attend any meetings of the Council during the six month period commencing the 21st May 2014. Two casual vacancies had accordingly arisen. It was unanimously resolved to co-opt Mr Robert Atkinson and Mr Stephen Richards to fill these vacancies. Both signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Parish Councillors.</p>
5	<p>Dispensations:</p> <p>Cllrs Atkinson and Richards requested and were granted dispensations to discuss the precept.</p>
6	<p>Progress reports:</p> <p>a) Clerk: i) alleged financial irregularities: The allegation that the Parish Council was acting irregularly with regards to its bank mandate was made in</p>

an agenda item for an Extraordinary meeting on the 17th November 2014. The Clerk and two Councillors had written to the conveners of the meeting (Andy Coles and Lesley Mobbs) requesting clarification about these irregularities, but the response merely reiterated the original point made, together with a statement that the matter would be fully discussed at the meeting. The meeting on the 17th November was inquorate and did not take place. Following this the Clerk visited HSBC bank to ask if they could shed any light on these alleged irregularities. She was assured that the Parish Council was acting entirely within the terms of its mandate and also in strict accordance with its own Financial Regulations. However, the HSBC adviser informed the Clerk that Andy Coles and Lesley Mobbs had, on the 25th November, placed a "contention" on the Parish Council's bank accounts, the effect of which was to freeze both bank accounts until a new bank mandate was signed by the Parish Council. This action, described as grossly irresponsible by the HSBC adviser, meant that the Parish Council was unable to fulfil its contractual obligations.

ii) blocked drains and gullies: The Clerk had been informed by Mr Tom Mannion of Warwick County Council that preliminary work on clearing the gullies had revealed problems with two of them, which could not be remedied without excavation work. No date had as yet been set for completion. Cllr Haine expressed his concerns about the delay as black ice formed on the Hunningham bend, posing a grave danger to road users. Cllr Redford suggested that Tom Mannion be contacted again and informed that the problem was now a road safety issue. This should ensure that the matter was speedily dealt with.

iii) report on pensions seminar: The Clerk to Weston Parish Council came into the category of "non entitled worker" so the Council was under no obligation to contribute to a qualifying pension scheme. The Council would, however, be required to facilitate the Clerk joining a pension scheme, if such a wish was expressed. The Council could, therefore, be required to pay for the time taken by the Clerk in finding a suitable scheme.

iv) dog litter bins: The District Council was not in a position to empty any more bins, even if the Parish Council were willing to make a financial contribution to this service. Discussions with the Dog Warden had revealed that more dog waste bins did not alleviate the problem of dog fouling. The Warden suggested that the most effective way to remedy this problem lay in educating the public about the dangers posed by dog faeces. It was agreed that the Council would take further steps to draw this to public attention.

v) Weeds on Sabin Drive pavement: The District Council would spray the pavement between 15th and the 19th December, weather permitting.

b) Cllr Haine: i) This report was considered under item 9 of the agenda.

ii) A report on the visit by the HS2 Select Committee had been posted on the website. It was anticipated that the Weston, Offchurch and Cubbington team would be called before the Committee towards the end of January. The team was now working on its presentation to the Select Committee, requesting that the track bed be lowered and a tunnel created through South Cubbington wood to save wood and farmland and reduce noise.

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Bank mandate:

- a) It was unanimously resolved that the Clerk be the primary user on the internet bank account with HSBC.
- b) It was unanimously resolved that the Chairman be the secondary user on the internet account with HSBC.
- c) The Chairman proposed an amendment to this motion, namely that the signatories to the accounts be Maria Norman, Elisabeth Roberts, Sue Chambers and Peter Haine. It was unanimously resolved to accept this amendment.
- d) It was unanimously resolved that cheques and other instruction for payments to be signed by the Clerk and one other Councillor.

8 **Notice boards:**

After discussion, the Council agreed that it was not ready to commit to purchasing any new notice boards. Further consideration of this matter would be deferred to a later meeting.

9 **Habitat improvement:**

The Council discussed the habitat improvement document (see Appendix A attached). It was resolved to draw up plans for improving identified areas 2.1 and 2.2 (see attached). Residents would be consulted on the plans and if agreed, approval would be sought from Joe Bell.

10 **Parish Plan Steering Committee:**

It was unanimously resolved to fund the hire of the Village Hall on 13th December 2014 for a public meeting hosted by the Parish Plan Steering Committee.

11 **Parish Council newsletter:**

Cllr Chambers offered to draw up a further edition of the Parish Council newsletter. This would include contributions from all Councillors and would be published towards the end of January 2015.

12 **Village Entrance Signs:**

As the planning application fee for installing the new signs would be halved if it were submitted by the Parish Council, it was unanimously resolved to sponsor the planning application submitted by the Parish Plan Steering Committee.

13 **Freedom of Information Publication Scheme**

It was unanimously resolved to adopt the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme (see Appendix B attached).

14 **Standing Orders**

It was unanimously resolved to delete Standing Order 3(k) ("Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is not permitted without the Council's prior consent.") in order to conform with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014.

15 **External audit:**

The external audit prepared by Grant Thornton was presented to the Council. The auditors' view that "... in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met." was duly noted by the Council.

16 **Finance:**

The clerk presented the financial report (payments and summary schedule attached). Listed payments were authorised and approved. The Chairman and Cllr Chambers were authorised to sign the finance sheets and supporting documentation.

17 **Precept:**
The Council discussed the draft precept document and agreed to finalise this at the next meeting with Councillors putting forward more detailed budgeted items reflecting key objectives for the coming year.

18 **Planning applications:**
W/14/0965; The Parish Council objected to the revised planning application on the grounds that the proposal was out of keeping with adjoining properties and did not conform to the view of sustainable development expressed in the Parish Plan.

19 **Business from members of the public:**
There was no business from members of the public.

20 **Councillors' reports and items for future agenda:**
Further consideration be given to obtaining the services of a local handyman. The Lengthsman pilot scheme to be investigated by the Clerk to assess its suitability for possible adoption.

Correspondence not noted in other items

- i) W/14/1304 Planning application 8 Simpkins Close
- ii) WALC newsletter
- iii) Draft Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
- iv) Warwick District Council: Standards Committee letter to Eric Pickles
- v) WALC: minutes of the Annual General Meeting
- vi) Warwick District Council: Code of Conduct documents Appendices 1-10
- vii) Licensing and Regulatory Committee meeting 21/10/2104
- viii) WALC: Housing Assessment needs – briefing
- ix) WALC: obligatory documents to be posted on website
- x) Draft Complaints Procedure document
- xi) Planning application Weston House, Weston under Wetherley
- xii) WALC newsletter
- xiii) Warwick District Council: copy response from Eric Pickles re Standards Committee letter
- xiv) Planning application (revised): W/14/0768 Weston House, Weston under Wetherley

21 **Signing of cheques and payment list:**
The Clerk and Cllr Haine were authorised to sign the cheques. Other supporting documentation was signed by the Chairman and Cllr Chambers.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place on Wednesday 14th January 2015.

Appendix A

See reports

Appendix B

See website

