

COLWALL PARISH COUNCIL**The minutes of the meeting of Colwall Parish Council held in the Jean Simon Room of Colwall Village Hall, Mill Lane, Colwall at 7.30pm on Wednesday 29th July 2015.**

Present: Councillors, Beard, Cottam, Fraser, Haynes, Hughes, Mills, Rees, Stock, Turner, the Clerk, County Councillor A Johnson and the Footpath Officer D Rees.

- 1. Welcome and Apologies:** The Vice-Chairman welcomed those present and apologies for absence were received from Councillors Butler, Carless, James, Kendrick, Trafford-Roberts.
- 2. Co-option of Councillors.**

The Clerk advised no applications have been received for the current vacancy. An advertisement has been posted on both the Parish Council website and the Parish Council public notice board.
- 3. Declarations of Interests:** The Vice-Chairman reminded Councillors of the need to declare any Interests in items on the agenda.
 - i) Councillor Beard declared an interest in item 8 (i) on the agenda.
 - ii) Councillor Turner declared an interest in item 8(ii) on the agenda.
- 4. Minutes:** The minutes of the last meeting of the Parish Council held on the 24th June 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Vice-Chairman.
- 5. Progress Report –**
 - i) Neighbourhood Development Plan**

Councillor Stock reported the following:-

Draft Plan and Policies.

We have been working with the consultant to prepare the draft Plan, in particular drafting the policies. We received the latest revision on 15 July 2015 and are now reviewing it and talking informal advice from the Herefordshire Neighbourhood Development Plan team.

Allocation of School Site

Historically the Governing Body of Colwall CE Primary School requested that sites suitable for a new school were ‘safeguarded’ from alternative development in the NDP and this is currently being followed. However we have now been asked to ‘Allocate’ a site in the Plan.

This is an appropriate matter for the Plan and is where an area of land is identified and the planning requirements (eg a school) are defined. If the Plan is then approved the land effectively has planning permission to carry out what was specified. Allocating a site is quite a process and includes an appraisal of options and an assessment of individual sites against clearly identified criteria and consultation with the community. The Plan examiner will want to see we have actively consulted the community and built on the responses.

This allocation must be considered in the same way as the additional land housing; that is using the Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment to determine what areas should be developed first, but bearing in mind the school will require approximately 4 acres. Meetings have been arranged with Herefordshire Council for Friday 31st July 2015 to discuss the implications, both for the Plan and the school. The main ones being the risk the community does not choose Herefordshire's preferred site and the timescale for the Plan to be approved may be too long. Additional costs will also be incurred.

ii) Colwall Green

Councillor Rees reported the following based on a meeting held at Colwall Green on Friday 26th June 2015:-

Present: Mr. Jonathan Bills - Conservation Officer for Malvern Hills Conservators, Mr. Phil Kendrick, Mr. Jim Beard, Mr. Paul Butler and Mrs. Gwyneth Rees - Colwall Parish Councillors.

The meeting was called to discuss the condition of Colwall Green and the cutting regime, both the cut and wild areas. Jonathan Bills explained that the Green was "Acid Grassland" and a UK priority habitat. Jonathan advised that the Malvern Hills Conservators Warden visited the area on a regular basis on an average of three times per week. Phil Kendrick said that many residents of the Green Area disliked the untidy uncut middle sections and felt that over a period of time this area had become less attractive with fewer plants visible and there was a feeling that it was being neglected. The ground looked compacted in some places and there were a number of bare earth areas, evidence of rabbit and mole activity. Jonathan advised that the Warden visited the area and checked for any problems.

A lengthy discussion was held about how the Green used to look and the increase in the wetter areas. Comment was made about the drainage on the Green since the ditches were filled in. Jonathan felt he couldn't comment on what had happened in the past but thought that the change in climate could be something to do with the change of plant habit on the green, the rush grass in the wetter areas seems to be increasing according to residents. Jonathan explained that the cut area of the whole Green was approximately 73% with the other 27% managed for wildlife, which seemed to be a good division, especially as the wildlife areas are still accessible by people. Jonathan raised the point that the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires that all public Authorities, including Parish Councils, have a duty to conserve Biodiversity. It was suggested that perhaps a further meeting in August could be helpful to ascertain the plants and insects to be seen and what condition the Green was in.

The Conservators have an Arboriculture Expert tree safety survey on the trees on the Green on a three yearly cycle (which exceeds the H and S recommendations of 5 yearly) There was comment regarding fallen branches on the green and a suggestion was made that perhaps residents could, if they wished, place any branches on the cut grass piles on the football area. The warden should be clearing any large or dangerous obstructions whenever possible during his visits.

One resident had contacted the Conservators and the Parish Clerk regarding overhanging branches onto her property, we looked at the tree and branches and Jonathan could see no Health and Safety problem. The branches were barely over home owner's hedge and not

touching the house or overhanging the conservatory. Jonathan felt that the owner of Providence Villa could, with authorisation from Malvern Hills Conservators and at their own expense, if they wished remove any offending branches.

Parking on the Green was discussed and Jonathan advised that the Conservators are actively looking into a solution which would be acceptable to residents.

The Malvern Hills Conservators Notice Board opposite the school which was erected in 2009 was originally to be used by the school to advertise their nature studies. Any problems with the board were to be reported to the Conservators. During this time the Head of School has changed and no contact with the Conservators made. The notice board is now in a dilapidated state and Jonathan advised that it would be removed by MHC, repaired and reinstated at a later date in consultation with MHC Community and Conservation Officer.

The seat around one of the trees on the green is in need of repair, wooden slats are broken and rotten.

Action Points – Colwall Parish Council Clerk has contacted the Malvern Hills Conservators to arrange a meeting with Director, to date no dates have been put forward. Councillor Rees will arrange a further meeting in August, attendees as above.

iii) Chevenham and the Community

The Clerk reported that the concerns raised through Councillor Turner have been responded to by the Housing Officer Anne Cave, on behalf of Fortis. Some points have been actioned and others will be considered as part of the ongoing reinvestment program of Fortis Housing.

6. Financial Matters.

i) Colwall Parish Council considered the Income and Expenditure for July 2015, as per the list circulated at the meeting. IT WAS RESOLVED that the payments be made.

7. Home to School Transport Briefing

The meeting was suspended to allow County Councillor Tony Johnson to provide a summary of the changes to the Herefordshire Council “Home to School Transport Provision “.

Changes to the Policy

Between 4 September and 18 October 2013 the council undertook a consultation on our school transport policy and post 16 special educational needs transport policy, to ensure we delivered to a statutory minimum in a fair way and to contribute to required savings.

Scrutiny considered the issue in January 2014 and Cabinet made the following decision on 13 March 2014.

(a) To withdraw the Herefordshire free home to school transport policy eligibility based upon nearest and catchment school and replace with eligibility based upon:

i) Nearest suitable school with places

ii) Where the nearest suitable school is in Wales, transport will be provided to that school or the nearest school in England

(b) To withdraw free transport for Herefordshire post 16 years with SEN and replace with the requirement for all post 16 years with SEN to pay the same contribution as all other post 16 students from September 2015.

(c) To apply the policy change in a) only to those children newly entering a school from September 2015.

(d) The implications of these policy changes to be reviewed annually or sooner in the event that the impact of the proposed changes is materially worse than anticipated.

What this means is that:

1. We have changed the home to school transport policy so that we provide the statutory minimum we are required to
2. The policy change has come into effect a year later than originally planned - September 2015
3. In addition, the policy has been introduced on a phased basis to give time to raise awareness/plan:
 1. Free transport entitlement for those starting schools in September 2014 was provided on the basis of their nearest and catchment school
 2. All pupils have kept their current entitlement to transport through to when they leave their school (subject to point 4 below)
4. For children starting or transferring school from September 2015 their transport entitlement is on the basis of nearest school only
5. All post 16 SEN students will be asked to contribute the same as other post 16 students from September 2015
6. The level of charging for vacant seats, denominational and post 16 transport in September 2015 is £735. We have introduced a direct debit payment scheme which spreads the cost over a 9 month period when paying for a vacant seat or denominational transport

Information sent out to parents

All parents of Herefordshire year 6 pupils in September 2014 at Herefordshire schools received an individual Transfer Round letter and Important Notes booklet at the start of the current admissions transfer round.

Information relating to the changes and how to appeal the process can be viewed on www.herefordshire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools/school-and-college-transport/school-and-college-transport-policy-amendments.

There was general disquiet from the Councillors as it will disadvantage some families in the Parish, Parishioners are encouraged to complain or follow the appeal process as stated above and Councillors will also take the opportunity to comment in the Budget Review (see 8 (iii) below).

County Councillor Johnson will also feed the comments back to Herefordshire Council.

The meeting was reconvened.

8. Correspondence for Processing

i) Diversion of CW29/CW29B

The Councillors considered the joint report from the Footpath Officer and the Chairman of the Parish Council, following a meeting held at the Elms on the 26th June 2015.

Further information had become available at this meeting which may clarify some points queried at the Full Parish Council meeting in April (29/04/2015).

The school has recently had an OFSTED inspection during which the safeguarding of pupils was raised, especially in regards to site safety.

The school has a legal agreement with the landowners, the Houlbrook family, over which the major part of proposed diversion will be routed.

The meeting was suspended to allow the Footpath Officer to speak on this matter

The meeting was reconvened.

Councillor Beard declared an interest in this item on the agenda and did not enter into discussion or vote on the matter.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Parish Council would support a move to redirect the path - within the school grounds and away from the new school buildings - as long as the path was clearly delineated. This might be achieved by a low fence around the edge of the play area, so that there could be no doubt of the correct route - such fencing would also serve to define limits for the pupils.

The clerk will also forward the Chairmans independent views on the proposed to Herefordshire Council, as requested, clearly stating that they do not represent the views or decision of Colwall Parish Council

ii) Request for funding from Ledbury CVS for the Mobility Centre in Ledbury.

Councillor Turner left the room whilst this item was discussed and voted upon.

IT WAS RESOLVED that Colwall Parish Council make a one off donation of £200 to this cause, and that the Clerk advises Ledbury CVS that this is a one off payment whilst they have time to explore options for the ongoing sustainability of this service based on the increased rent being requested by Herefordshire Council at the current premises.

iii) Herefordshire Council Budget Consultation

Following attending a meeting regarding this matter Councillor Mills volunteered to collect the views and feedback from the Councillors and collate a joint report on behalf of Colwall Parish Council which he will present at the next Full Council meeting on the 26th August 2015 before finalising and submitting to Herefordshire Council.

The Clerk will also forward the consultation to all Councillors to enable them to respond as individuals.

9. Correspondence for Information

None.

10. Reports of Committees.

i) IT WAS RESOLVED that the report from the Planning & Development committee meeting held on the 15th July 2015 was received, approved and adopted.

11. Representatives on Outside Bodies. To receive reports from Councillors who have represented Council at meetings since the last Full Council meeting.

None.

12. Date of next meeting:

To confirm the date of the next Full Council meeting, this will be held on Wednesday 26th August 2015 and would be held in the Jean Simon Room of Colwall Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.05pm.

Signed: