

HIGHLEY PARISH COUNCIL

An ordinary meeting of Highley Parish Council was held via video conferencing on Tuesday 3rd March 2021 at 7.00pm .

Present: Chair :Cllr.M.Brooks, Cllrs. P.Vinall, D.Tremellen, J.Law, J.Marshall, R.Honeybourne, A.Honeybourne, D.Bayley, Mr. D.Thakrar, R.Broome, T.Quinn, A.Rodgers.

Clerk: Mrs.E.Preston

Parishioners: 2

00. Parishioners Time - No comments

Declaration of any disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter to be discussed at the meeting. Members are reminded that they are required to leave the room during the discussion and voting on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, whether the interest is entered in the register of member's interest maintained by the monitoring officer.

01 Apologies for absence and reasons for absence

Apologies received Cllr. M.Phipson – unable to access Zoom. Cllr. N.Barker – Personal

Absent no apologies: Cllr. G.Court,

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02 To confirm the minutes of the meetings dated 2nd February 2021 – RESOLVED to accept minutes as a true and correct record. Chair to sign the minutes

03. Matters Arising

CCTV – Eon to finish works week ending 5th March. Tech Services to complete their works the following this.

Youth Project – On Agenda for discussion

Medical Issues – No Comments from Councillors

Waiting Restrictions High Street – Still going through the Legal process at Shropshire Council

Elections – To be held on 6th May. Pre-election period starts 15th March 2021

Annual Parish Meeting - Must be held this year. Need to investigate how this can be achieved.

04. Correspondence

SALC – News in Brief - Contact Information, Lockdown Summary

Revd. M.Harris – School Governor Vacancy Information

Road Closure: Halfway House Lane, Eardington, Bridgnorth

SALC – Community Reassurance Team Update

SALC – Criminal Exploitation of Children

Shropshire Council Elections Office – Nomination Papers

SALC - Community Governance Reviews

05. Planning

1 Oak Tree – 17 Hawthorne Drive – Reduce the Crown Width – Planning Committee recommended No Objection if approved by the Tree Conservation Officer at Shropshire Council

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Prune top Section of 1 Oak Tree – 1 Staley Grove - Planning Committee recommended No Objection if approved by the Tree Conservation Officer at Shropshire Council

21/00975/HHE | Erection of a single storey rear extension to an attached dwelling, dimensions 4 metres beyond rear wall, 4 metres maximum height, 2.5 metres high to eaves | 37 Rhea Hall Estate Highley Bridgnorth Shropshire WV16 6LH- **RESOLVED** No Objection.

06. Email System – from December 2020 Meeting - **RESOLVED** to contract OGL to supply email system Clerk to sign the contract on behalf of the Parish Council

07. Churchyard Maintenance – St. Marys PCC sent two Tenders for the maintenance off the Churchyard. Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED** that we recommend to the PCC that the Parish Council prefer the Contractor we have at present if all aspects of the contract are fulfilled to the PCCs satisfaction. Abstained Cllrs. R.Honeybourne, A.Honeybourne (both Councillors left the meeting during discussion). Cllr.D.Tremellen, A.Rodgers and T.Quinn.

08. Youth Project – Cllr.Vinall – Committee resolved to award the contract to Shropshire Youth Association. To help run the Youth Reach Project. Cllr.Vinall explained more about the association and project. **RESOLVED** to award the contract for this service to Shropshire Youth Association.

09. Netherton Lane – Cllr. Thakrar provided photographs of the flooding and road condition on Netherton Lane and New England. He stated that the road and signage in this area was in a terrible condition. Cllr.Thakrar was concerned that the Satnav sent vehicles down Borle Hill . Clerk reminded Council that the issues of a footpath and speed limit had been previously discussed and the Council had been told that there was no room for a footpath and that a speed limit could not be put on an unclassified road. Cllr.Broome said that the problems we are currently experiencing is due to the poor condition of the main road going out of the village. He said that Netherton Lane was a Country Lane and if it was unclassified. Cllr. Bayley said that other roads like the main infrastructure needed to be a priority. Cllr. Bayley suggested the Parish Council write to the head offices of the Supermarkets to ask them to ask their Delivery Drivers to not use New England and Borle Mill.

10. Shropshire Councillors Report.

Democracy has an enemy, it is called apathy, which is why everyone needs to get behind the campaign to get people registered to vote NOW and to push those who are either too busy or otherwise indisposed to get registering for a postal vote.

It is not just the (county) unitary council elections this time, our parish council is also up for re-election, on which subject I would remind fellow councillors that in the 2017 parish elections a few **parish** voting slips were thrown away because of lack of instructions about where they should go in the return envelopes. That had significance when the two-vote difference between two candidates was close enough for a recount to be called. I did raise the matter with Shropshire Council's Returning Officer, but I was accused of being mischievous, her attitude was that it was a parish council election and who cares about them. In other words, do not make life difficult for someone who cannot accept that they have slipped up, despite clear Electoral Commission guidelines to Returning Officers **NOT** to take for granted that members of the public would instinctively know that

the parish returns could be sent back in the large envelope alongside the sealed county returns envelope, an instruction that should have appeared in the instructions but did not. It was not just a few elderly parishioners who were confused, several younger voters were also concerned that they would “thrown away their vote”.

There are a lot of changes coming to the way our community develops. Planning laws are changing to give greater power to the executive to make decisions on our behalf which, roughly translated, means we will be told what we really, **really** need and have it explained to us in simple terms that can be expressed in that classic four-word riposte: “Like it or lump it”. Mummy knows best, although in this case Mummy looks and acts remarkably like a South American dictator.

You will have seen the CCTV cameras going up, largely thanks to the sterling persistence of our parish clerk, Ella Preston. It will cover the entire length of the village, from the junction of the main road at the pen factory end of Netherton Lane, to Hags Corner/Bynd Lane/Netherton and on to cover the entrance to Highley at the top end. The system incorporates Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and although reactive (not “policed”), it is monitored by security cleared volunteers who can react to a reported situation in a matter of minutes from the control room in the police station at the Severn Centre.

On the 4th of last month, I attended the Police & Crime Panel (PCP) meeting where I raised the matter of working more closely with our local SNT to overcome the additional constraints imposed by Covid, to the extent of including them in the list of regular attendees at our online parish council meetings, something that used to happen regularly on a face-to-face basis a few years ago. Hopefully, the promised new recruits will start feeding through into the divisions within the next few months and we can get back to how we used to work.

Of course the Highley Action Group made up for that loss of regular contact and in a lot of ways was mutually beneficial, not least the informal exchange of information that kept both the SNT and the parish council up to date with local trends, but there was still a need for a more formal set-up on a more regular basis and because, given the public platform on which the parish council operates, it demonstrated to the public that there WAS a partnership and that their concerns were being taken seriously. I think the February meeting with PC Steve Mellor was considered a success by all concerned.

I reported to the PCP how successful Steve Mellor’s attendance had been and also commended Inspector Nikki Roberts’ proactive approach to the management of our local SNT, suggesting that on the basis of the success of that first online meeting the Chief Constable might consider promoting that initiative to other SNTs encouraging them to ‘attend’ parish council meetings. In fact, Nikki Roberts has written to all SNTs on her patch encouraging them to do just that!

The Licensing Act Sub Committee meeting on the 12th was of a complexity none of we three members had ever encountered before. Such meetings are by their nature an exercise in balancing probabilities, but this one was especially conflicting for me because I had been dealing with a complex local example of how a “breach of conditions” can result in some pretty outrageous decisions that seemed to fly in the face of reason. In this case we were being ‘strongly advised’ to

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reject the application because of a ‘predicted’ public nuisance based on what had happened elsewhere, and there was I asking how come enforcement were happy to allow a public nuisance here caused by an admitted breach of planning conditions to continue just because the company had “mitigated” the nuisance, despite that “mitigation” failing on a number of occasions, causing the nuisance to re-occur. So, in the Highley case we had an admitted breach of planning conditions allowed to continue, creating a dangerous precedent for a neighbouring development subject to the same planning conditions, whilst here we were being advised to refuse permission because of a public nuisance **that had yet to occur**. But then in drawing the distinction between justice and the law who said life was fair?

Otherwise, it has all been about what I call “domestic” stuff, not least highways. I took up a few local issues arising out of the way local people had been treated by Kier sub-contractors. A couple of those had involved people from outside Highley, but my reason for following through on them was because the incidents were symptomatic of the failure of both Shropshire’s highways contractors AND Shropshire Council management to actually supervise staff, because their attitude towards the people their work was directly affecting showed a lack of care that carried over into the sub-standard work they were being paid to do by Shropshire taxpayers!

11 . Finance:

Skilton Artwork	Thank you Cards – Chairman’s Allowance	50.00
M.E.Preston	Working from Home Expenses	156.00
M.E.Preston	Salary	1012.96
HMRC	Tax & NI	80.06
S.J.Maintenance	Maintenance Issues	80.00
S.J.Maintenance	Maintenance Issues	380.00
S.J.Maintenance	Maintenance Issues	550.00
M.E.Preston	Containers for Christmas Lights	67.20
Shorthouses	Skip Hire	175.00
Herbert & Sons	Hedge cutting	324.00
N.Power	Street Lighting	2027.53

Meeting Closed 8.55pm

Signed:m.Brooks.....Chair Date: