### HIGHLEY PARISH COUNCIL

**An ordinary meeting of Highley Parish Council was held on Tuesday 6th July 2021 at 7pm at the Severn Centre, Highley**

**Present**: Chair :Cllr.D.Tremellen, Cllrs**.**  P.Vinall, ,J.Marshall, . D.Thakrar, T.Quinn, A.Rodgers. E.Moore, M .Moore, T.Pinches, J.Law, N.Waterson

Clerk: Mrs.E.Preston

Parishioners: 0

**00.Parishioners Time - No Parishioners present**

***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 or not the interest is entered in the register of member’s interest maintained by the monitoring officer.***

**02 Apologies for absence and reasons for absence**

Apologies received, M.Williams – personal. Cllrs. P.Heath , J.Rakric – Holiday.

A Dispensation was granted to Cllr.N.Barker for indefinite absence from Council meeting due to a family commitment***. RESOLVED*** to accept apologies.

**03 To confirm the minutes of the meetings dated 8th June 2021 and extraordinary meetings of the 28th of June 2021 *RESOLVED*** to accept minutes as a true and correct record Chair signed the minutes

**4. Matters Arising**

CCTV – All Cameras now working . Problems with the monitor in the police room. On Agenda for discussion

Youth Project – Cllr. Vinall gave an update on the Highley Reach Youth Project. Cllr. Vinall said that the Youth Club was now on holiday until September. He said that more volunteers were needed to grow the project.

Litter – Cllr. A.Rodgers reported a positive response from the schools. Highley County Primary School had requested litter pickers for the children to use. Clerk to arrange this. Oldbury Wells were going to shoot a video in the village for one of their projects. The School Buses were going to provide bags on the buses to encourage the pupils to put the litter in them before they leave the bus. Overall, it had been a good and encouraging response to the subject.

Communications Working Group – Report from Meeting emailed to all Councillors. Cllr. Vinall said that it was proposed that a board be placed in the Severn Centre to display all Councillors contact details and photographs together with any relevant information for parishioners. ID Badges for the Councillors to wear on official business to be explored.

Housing Needs Survey Results received.

New Email System – To be installed on 12th August 2021.

**05.Correspondence**

PCSO J.Fletcher- Parish Charter – Charter distributed. Can be reviewed and amended as required.

**Road Closure:** Church Lane, Highley. **Start Date:**16th August 2021**. End Date:**20th August 2021.

**Purpose:**Road Closure: Cadent - New gas connection

Bridgnorth Area Committee SALC – Notes from meeting – emailed to all councillors

SALC – Safety Alert -sharps and positioning (Info Only)

SALC – The Queens Platinum Jubilee Beacons – 2nd June 2022

SALC – News in Brief

 **Road Closure:**  Ingram Lane, Chelmarsh - **Start Date:**15th July 2021 - **End Date:**23rd July 2021**Purpose:**Road Closure to enable Multievo carriageway repair.

**Road Closure:**  New Road Highley- - S**tart Date:**12th July 2021 - **End Date:**14th July 2021 - **Purpose:**Road Closure to complete Multievo Highways works

**06. Planning** Reference: 21/03055/TPO (validated: 18/06/2021)

Address: Adjacent St Peters View, Highley, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 6LB

Proposal: Crown lift by up to 2.5 metres & selective branch reduction of approx. 1-3metres of 4no Lime protected by the Shropshire Council (South of Vicarage Lane and west of St Peter's View, Highley) TPO 2019 (Ref: SC/00445/19)

Applicant: STAR Housing (The Spruce Building, Sitka Drive, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6LG) – RESOLVED to take the advice of the Tree Protection Officer at Shropshire Council.

Planning Decisions

21/02328/full -Erection of single storey rear extension and porch to frontages No 15 and No 17 Ash Street – Planning Decision – Grant Permission

**07. CCTV Monitors – RESOLVED** to accept the quotation of £887.17 to replace the CCTV Monitors.

**08. Christmas Lights – Display 2021- RESOLVED to purchase new lights for village centre. Village Maintenance Group to meet to discuss this.**

**09. CIL – General Discussion**

**A discussion took place on CIL with the Chair explaining about the Community Infrastructure levy. Highley had a pot of money in the form of CIL Local which could be spent on infrastructure project relating to the development from which the CIL had been collected. It was agreed that further meeting to discuss how the parish council wished to proceed with putting together a business case to use the funds.**

**10. Grant Request – Highley Brownies - no further information received. Clerk contacted them to ask about the Grant Form they replied that they were awaiting information regarding accounts and would get back to us. Remove from Agenda until grant application received.**

**11.Shropshire Councillors Report**

Following on from Shropshire Council CEO Andy Begley’s last regular email to all staff, in which he rallies his troops by repeating what has become Shropshire Council’s most fundamental approach to governance *(the main tenet of which Brian Williams quotes in his email below: ”A new partnership between councillors and officers”)*, the overall reaction from elected Members across the political divides has been one of disbelief that our CEO actually believes what he’s saying because, given our own experiences in the real world, it is difficult to see where he’s coming from.

The significance of Brian Williams’ email (circulated to all Members) is in his normally being one of (if not THE) staunchest supporter of whatever comes out of the ruling group’s collective mouth, any voiced criticism of a Cabinet decision put down by Brian Williams in the most patronising way, so to see this coming from his pen is indeed of a significance that would pass most people by. And if that were not earth shattering enough, he signs it as the Vice-Chair of the council.

**From:** Brian Williams <brian.williams@shropshire.gov.uk>
**Sent:** 24 June 2021 15:49
**To:** Andy.Begley@public.govdelivery.com
**Cc:** Members <Members@shropshire.gov.uk>
**Subject:** RE: Message from Council Leader and Chief Executive

I welcome the Chief Executive’s statement yesterday of ”A new partnership between councillors and officers”. In keeping with that ambition, I trust that the Chief Exec will remind all officers, of whatever seniority, that there is a Council protocol which states that all e-mails (whether from members or the public) should be acknowledged within two working days and responded to within five working days, even if the e-mail at that time is simply to acknowledge that a full response is taking longer to prepare.

In the same spirit of cooperation, it would be helpful if members making telephone calls to officers, if those are not immediately answered, could receive a call back within 24 hours, always assuming that the officer is not ill or on leave.

Brian Williams

Vice Chairman of the Council.

Chairman of the Audit Committee.

What Andy Begley is saying simply isn’t happening and hasn’t been happening since well before Covid came along with its “Covid opportunities”, every one of which has been eagerly grasped as justification for cuts in council in-house services, the impact of which has been felt by every town and parish council clerk in the county, let alone every elected Member and the people whose interests they’re elected to represent.

The irony in all that is happening - the removal of effective avenues of representation - is that this would have happened had Keith Barrow remained as Council Leader and carried his vision for ‘ip&e’ (the council-owned trading company) through to fruition.

He was also putting Shirehall on the market and “moving council closer to local communities by moving it out to the market towns”, but as was pointed out in a 2016 police report following his standing down as Leader (and resignation as a councillor following my Code of Conduct Complaint against him), the effect of his policies was not only to move council operations away from Shirehall but, crucially, scrutiny, which is exactly what’s happening with Andy Begley’s promulgation of his and his fellow service director’s policy of making the council more of a business and council employees more accountable to service directors instead of the people who actually pay their salaries – the taxpayers of Shropshire. Recent events involving my exchanges with highways highlight this trend!

Planning is following the same trend, although in planning’s case it’s no longer so much a ‘trend’ because it’s reached the point of cementing evolving practices into place, thanks in large part to changes in government policy that have swung the emphasis away from protecting communities from excessive development towards persuading them to accept over-development which they didn’t know they needed. When that still didn’t meet government targets for house building then “persuasion” swiftly changed to compulsion, the clear indication of which we saw in the recent circular selling us the idea of ‘Right Home, Right Place’ (RHRP), the central theme of which was hidden amongst the ‘need’ for more ‘affordable’ housing.

It’s worth looking closely at the spiel put out by the RHRP teams. It’s one of the cleverest con tricks I have ever seen in my decades of involvement with Local Authority Planning departments, not as a developer but as someone trying to earn an honest living in a specialised area of the construction industry – the joinery involved in Conservation and Listed Buildings – whilst navigating a way through national policies that seemed to change annually, a process rendered almost impenetrable by the inconsistent interpretation of national policy by individual planning officers. It’s why I retired three years earlier than I’d intended; at the time my actual words were: “I really don’t need this”.

But at least the killer stroke is out there with this RHRP scheme; there’s nothing hidden because what would earlier have been a hidden agenda is now blatantly front and centre. “We will screw you so you might as well at least pretend you’re enjoying it.”

There is the threat...‘A small number of parishes believe that by not taking part – and encouraging residents not to take part either – they will protect their area from housing development. However, that isn’t the case. If the survey reveals a clear housing need, and a parish doesn’t wish to get involved, they may be in a position where the housing is built anyway, but without their input.’Then the come on...‘The most successful housing schemes across Shropshire are those in which the parish council takes an active interest and involvement, and understands that by taking part, they will have a far greater influence over the type of housing created and how it fits into their community.’Those of us who enthusiastically took part in the “consultation” process for the preferred site adjoining TC Homes’ current 20 affordable home development, only to see our “local opinion” completely ignored, know how criminally misleading the whole “consultation” process is. Up to that point, I was a keen advocate of closer involvement in the planning process, it’s why having at enthusiasm kicked out of me by an arrogant little planner came as so much of a shock!And this simply adds insult to injury...‘Shropshire Council’s Affordable Housing Team will provide guidance and support throughout this process, and once a Registered Provider has been selected and confirmed, representatives from the chosen Registered Provider will join the steering group and the group explores potential sites and selects the most suitable location. The RP then take on all the risk – so there’s no financial risk to the parish council.’

‘The chosen Registered Provider will then secure the land and handle the negotiations, while the steering group consider what they’d like their affordable homes to look like, and who ay be living in them based on local need - subject to the advice of the Council’s Planning Department.’

And the coup de grace? It’s what the recent housing survey was all about. It was not and never intended to be a partnership thing with mutual benefits, a coming together of minds.

What you’re about to read isn’t new, it’s what’s been happening for years, and here in Highley is what happened with the ‘preferred site’ on which TC Homes is building. Despite all the environmental protections in place on the site, all of which were dismissed with the stroke of a pen from the man who had, ironically, put them there in the first place, that plot of land became a Standard Exception Site on which to build 20 “affordable” houses despite Highley Parish Council’s objections, based on local knowledge and supported by reservations over the safety of the site access expressed in earlier planning officer reports going back well over ten years. What follows applies to the TC Homes development, every word!

‘The second option for parishes is a Standard Exception Site Scheme. In this instance, a Registered Provider will find and acquire a plot of land based on evidence of need. While the parish council may have some input into the planning application, they wouldn’t have any further say once development begins.‘The Registered Provider will handle everything from site selection to planning permission to build. Registered Providers usually have a standard model for the type, size, and aesthetics of their properties, so it’s likely that this model would be applied to any new affordable homes built within a parish.‘The benefits of choosing a Standard Exception Site Scheme over a Community-Led Scheme are that the parish council won’t have to do any work, and Standard Schemes tend to be completed more quickly than Community-Led Schemes because while they meet the needs identified in a parish’s Housing Survey, they don’t need to take into consideration the Parish Council’s preferences around site location and building design.’

Now consider the implications of the recent RHRP housing survey again. If a watchword is needed it’s probably: “Proceed with extreme caution tempered with cynicism”. Mind you, that’s always applied to dealings with a planning department anyway.

As I said throughout the “consultation” process on the current TC Homes development, whilst those 20 affordable homes might well be the “Right Homes”, they are in the “Wrong Place”.

**12 . Finance:**

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| HMRC | Tax & NI | 85.16 |
| Eon | Street Lighting  | 1254.00 |
| M.E.Preston | Salary  | 1014.76 |
| S.J.Maintenance | Village Maintenance  | 80.00 |
| S.J.Maintenance | Village Maintenance  | 360.00 |
| NPower | Street Lighting | 1730.05 |
| NPower | Street Lighting | 119.41 |
| S.J.Maintenance | Village Maintenance | 36.86 |
| Shorthouses | Skip Hire | 175.00 |
| Severn Centre  | Room Hire  | 69.76 |
| Severn Centre  | Room Hire – Youth Project | 49.50 |

Signed: Chair ………………………………….. Date: ……………………………………………..