

CRADLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Cradley Parish Council met for its normal monthly meeting on Tuesday 12th January in Storridge Village Hall. I shall report on some of the issues raised at that, and also at the extraordinary meeting of Council on Tuesday 1st December.

New Councillors

Since my last report we have been pleased to welcome Bruce Herriot, Sam Roffe and Anne Scarsbrook to their first meetings as councillors. We are therefore now up to our official target number of 15.

Parish Precept for 2016/17

This was one of the reasons for holding an extraordinary meeting in December, in that the deadline for submission of parish precept figures to Herefordshire Council has this time been moved back, and it had to be in by December 31st rather than the previously used January date. It was felt prudent to increase the Cradley share of the Council Tax to £32,500 in order to compensate for any possible future cuts in other sources of funding and resources. It will, for example, help to secure the work of the Lengthsman system in the parish for the medium and long term; there are also considerable costs associated with the Neighbourhood Development Plan process.

Lengthsman

You only have to walk and drive around the Parish to realise that, already, the work of Rob Lambert together with Councillor Geoff Fielding is having a noticeable effect. There is of course a mountain of possible work to do, but we are all very grateful indeed for the results so far – appreciation was expressed by councillors and from the ‘public gallery’ at January’s meeting.

Surgery Car Parking

The Surgery and British Legion decided not to take up the offer of a meeting led by the Parish Council, but it seems that a **trial arrangement** is now in place whereby patients who park in the British Legion car park are asked to make a voluntary contribution in a collection box at the Surgery. This will run until the end of March, and then reviewed to see if sufficient income is generated to keep the arrangement in place. So, you can all help to keep this facility in place and improve road safety at the same time.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

At the December meeting, a draft version of the NDP was presented to Council for comments. It was agreed to move to the next stage and show this draft to Herefordshire Council for their initial comments before wider consultation with the whole parish – our NDP group met with officers at Herefordshire Council in December for this purpose. Comments and suggestions have come back from Herefordshire and these are being worked through as I write, to try to iron out any risks to the future adoption of the NDP at a Parish Referendum. At the January Parish Council meeting, Councillor Tanya Lloyd-Jones outlined the situation. The aim is to consult on the draft plan with the Parish soon (Parish Council website + hard copies available in certain places), around February, so please keep in touch with the website and notice boards for news on this, and then submit your views in writing directly to the Parish Council. This stage comes under Regulation 14 of the NDP process. After this, any necessary amendments will be made before the statutory consultation stage later in the year, where again feedback is possible from residents (Regulation 16). Following this the Plan goes to be assessed by a national inspector (Regulation 17). Then, a formal referendum on the Plan is held in the parish.

Footpath, Wildlife and Environment Working Group

Councillor Geoff Fielding reported to Council that there were various tasks allocated to members of this group, but, if it is to be successful in the long term, the group could do with some fresh input and expertise from parishioners – do come forward and play your part in helping to enhance these vital aspects of life in this area. Geoff will be delighted to hear from you.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place at Storridge Village Hall on 9th February at 7.30 pm with the Planning Committee beforehand at 7 pm. A little late I know, but, nevertheless, A Happy New Year to you all.

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