

## **CRADLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

Cradley Parish Council met for its monthly meeting on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February in Storridge Village Hall. Here are some of the issues that were discussed:

### **County Councillor**

Councillor Patricia Morgan told us that, as ever, the budgeting process for 2016/17 and beyond has been bruising and painful. She reminded us that there are tremendous pressures from adult social care and child safeguarding for resources, but she felt the county has shown improvements in these areas. By 2020 Herefordshire Council will have had to save a total of £87 million pounds in the 10 years leading up to that, and the Council feels that it must raise the council tax by 3.9% for the 16/17 financial year. Councillor Morgan felt that the county's MPs had made a useful contribution in pressuring the Government to recognise the needs of this rural county in the allocation of Government funds. On another matter of great concern to many people in our parish, she informed the Parish Council that the planning application for a travellers' site in Storridge was still under consideration, and the results of some necessary surveys were awaited.

### **Proposed Housing, Shop/Café, and Community Orchard Development at Church Stile Farm**

Richard Stoddard made a presentation to the Parish Council on his proposals for around 30 houses, shop/café and community orchard. This was purely for information and not a planning application at this stage. He is intending to hold a consultation with the community in Cradley Village Hall at a date to be announced, and his website would soon be updated with the latest ideas on the proposal.

### **Co-option of Councillors**

It had been stated at the November 2015 meeting that the Parish Council had acted unlawfully in dealing with the application of Bruce Herriot to be co-opted at the October meeting of 2015. The Council has checked with various advisory bodies, and they have advised that the actions of the Council were not unlawful. The Council's procedures for co-option will be re-examined in the next month or two to ensure that best practice is followed in future.

### **Lengthsman Scheme**

Councillor Geoff Fielding informed the meeting that he and Councillor Ken Nason had attended a county meeting run by Balfour Beatty and he informed us that significant cuts were being talked about over the next few years, which would affect the funding of our Lengthsman scheme. However, the current funding for Cradley will be retained in 16/17. After that? – you can imagine the answer!! It could well be that the Lengthsman scheme, if we want it, will have to come from the Parish Precept after that date. I am sorry to be bringing you all so much bad news in these monthly reports – all I ask is: don't shoot the messenger!

### **Footpath, Wildlife and Environment Working Group**

This is just an unapologetic repeat of the plea in my last report for people in the parish to contribute to this group – please contact Councillor Geoff Fielding if interested. There have been some offers of help but more would be excellent.

### **Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)**

Councillor Tanya Lloyd-Jones reported that there had been a meeting with the Heart of the Village Group to discuss the Strategic Gap policies in the Neighbourhood Development Plan, and, at the time of the meeting, advice was awaited from David Croft, the planning consultant engaged by the Parish Council. Please look out for the stage when you as residents can comment on the draft Plan; the aim, at the time of writing, is for this to be in the relatively near future. It will be on the Parish Council website with access to hard copies at certain places – details to be announced. The overall target date is currently for our Plan to be in place by October 2016. It seems that, after all, we shall receive some financial support from Herefordshire Council to help with the costs of developing our NDP.

### **Public Question/Comment Time**

Roman Iwanczuk pointed out that the Council's Standing Orders had not been accessible on the Council website for a considerable amount of time (Councillor Ken Nason promised that it would be reinstated), and he felt that the Council was not showing enough fiscal responsibility with some of its procedures (e.g. a lack of information/invoices from organisations who receive Council grants).

### **A Future Item**

Traffic speeding in the parish – we hope to discuss this matter at a future meeting, and it would excellent if as many of you as possible could write to Mary Barnett, our Parish Clerk, with suggestions of favourite (sort-of the wrong word, but you know what I mean) places for consideration – thank you for that.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will take place at Storridge Village Hall on 8<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30 pm with the Planning Committee beforehand at 7 p.m.

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