

Minutes of a meeting of Cradley Parish Council held on Wednesday 13th April 2016 in Cradley Village Hall commencing at 7.30pm

Present - Cllrs. C. Lowder (in the Chair) K. Nason (KN) C. Lambert (CL) D. Scully (DS) G. Fielding (GF) G. Thomas (GT) S. Roffe (SR) T. Lloyd-Jones (TLJ) F. Beard (FB) A. Eldridge (AE) W. Harries (WH) S. Davies (SD). AE advised the Chairman that he would be recording the meeting.

Also in attendance - County Councillor P Morgan, Ian Baker from H/Council, numerous members of the public and the Clerk.

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received and approved from A. Carver, A. Scarsbrook and B. Herriot.

Declarations of Interest received and Register signed as follows -

- CL & KN - Cradley Village Hall (P)
- SD & KN - payment of Accounts due to them (P)
- CL - payment due to the Lengthsman (P)
- SD - Business interest (P)
- AE & WH - Heart of the Village (NP)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2016 were taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Guest Speaker - Attending the meeting was Ian Baker from Herefordshire Council to advise the Parish Council how they could assist in dealing with any emergency in the area. He advised that other Councils are developing the plan called "Community Resilience" which can consist of a Working Group made up of anyone in the Parish including Doctors, Nurses and Parish Councillors. He was told that such a plan exists at Storridge which is sponsored by the Village Hall and that although there was no financial outlay for the Parish Council, perhaps such a plan could exist sponsored by Cradley Village Hall but it was generally felt that a more central position would be beneficial rather than in the Village Hall. It was confirmed that Cllr Bruce Herriot indicated he would be happy to chair and lead on this suggestion and on a proposal by SR seconded by KN and carried (with one abstention) it was proposed that the Parish Council support the development of a Community Resilience plan and SR agreed to press the matter forward.

County Councillor Report - Cllr. Morgan reported on the lack of funding in the maintenance programme for repairs to roads, although some extra funding had been promised by the Government. She advised of a strategic plan working with the School Capital Investment Plan over the next twenty years and that Local Transport was being considered by Cabinet on the 14th April. She agreed to find out the position regarding the Bus Service Nod. 417 if at all possible and report back to us.

Planning - the following planning applications had been considered prior to full Council meeting -

No. 160778 - Poundbridge, Chapel Lane - reconfiguration black and grey waterpipe work to north elevation - no objections raised.

No. 160821 - Bulls Head Cottage, Cradley - proposed work to Acer tree - no objections raised.

April 2016/14.

No. 160601 - Kings Orchard, Cradley - proposed change of use from agricultural to community use. Creation of community orchard, children's play area, footpaths and parking for church and village events. Construction of community cafe and shop - See following report to allow public participation

The Chairman closed the Council meeting at this time to enable public participation on the planning issue regarding a "proposed change of use from agricultural to community use. Creation of community orchard, children's play area, footpaths and parking for church and village events. Construction of a community cafe and shop – application No. 160601 at Kings Orchard, Cradley"

Several members of the public indicated they could not support the proposed application in what was well known as the "Strategic green gap", in an area where flooding occurs, which would also involve the removal of ancient hedgerows, no Visual Impact Assessment had been carried out, and would considerably increase traffic on a country road. There had also been sewerage problems in the area which on occasions had overflowed into Cradley Brook, and the Parish Council were urged to reject the proposal.

Some members of the public were in support of the application which it was felt would bring the two parts of the Village together for the benefit of the Community as a whole and comments were made that other hedgerows in that area had been scrubbed out without any objections being raised.

The Chairman closed public question time and re-opened the Council Meeting.

The Chairman sought views from Councillors around the table with the main concerns being that the strategic gap should be strenuously defended as supported over many years in the Village Design Statement, Parish Plan, Parish Plan update and the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan, removal of ancient hedgerows, development in a flood risk area and additional traffic on country roads.

Comments in support of the application were made on the various issues which it seemed were of concern to Councillors and the public and it was felt that the planning application was in agreement with the initial proposals for the HOV as initially proposed to the Parish Council many months ago with development in the field offered by Mrs Heather Morgan.

On a proposal by KN seconded by TLJ and carried with eight Councillors in favour, one abstention one against, and two Councillors who could not vote, it was agreed -

"The Parish Council cannot support this planning application for the following reasons

- (1) The development and design is totally inappropriate for the sensitive site proposed in size and style.
- (2) The site sits within the area known and defined as the strategic green gap which has existed since 1998, defined in the Village Design Statement and the Parish Plan of 2004 to be kept free from development. This was further confirmed in the NDP preparation survey in 2015 and will be included in the final NDP. Hereford Core Strategy Policy SS6 states – Environmental quality and local distinctiveness:- ***Development proposals should conserve and enhance those environmental assets which contribute towards the county's***

April 2016/15

distinctiveness, in particular its settlement pattern, landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets and especially those with specific environmental designations.

- (3) The site is adjacent to the edge of the AONB and the conservation area.
- (4) The area was defined in the village landscape survey carried out on behalf of the Parish Council for the NDP which stated this area as one of the “most constrained and least suitable” for development.
- (5) The development proposes to interfere extensively with a considerable length of ancient hedgerow.
- (6) No landscape assessment has been offered for what is a very sensitive site, nor account taken of the adjacent Grade II listed building (Larks Hey Cottage, formerly Lower Churchfield Cottage UID 1349636).
- (7) Both the traffic survey and wildlife surveys need to be examined as they were carried out at the times of the year when traffic was at its lowest and most species would be absent. Based on national figures and the developments own projections, it is estimated that the development will add at least 15% to annual traffic levels experienced in that area. This is not acceptable in this area.
- (8) The flood survey needs to be re-visited as it relies too heavily on out of date data which contradicts local knowledge and experience of the flood risks. No account has been given to the effects of the large amount of earth moving required to achieve the desired building levels.
- (9) No evidence has been produced to show either the sustainability of the project or the level of community support we would expect a project of such sensitivity to achieve.
- (10) No account has been taken on the impact on existing facilities in the community such as existing shops, recreation areas or two village halls.
- (11) The application does not meet the recommendations made in the pre-planning advice given on 9th October 2015.

Matters for consideration –

Date of Annual Parish Meeting – it was proposed that this be combined with the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council to meet on Tuesday 10th May 2016 in Cradley Village Hall commencing at 6.15pm. A Budget of £50 was proposed and agreed for refreshments at the Parish Meeting.

Cost of defibrillator – Cost implication had been circulated to all Councillors but in the absence of Cllr. B. Herriot it was agreed the matter should be finalised at the Annual Meeting in May.

Donation to Beaver Group – Following request for donation from Mrs. Diane Merker of the Cradley Beavers Group for wild seed planting in the area as identified by GF, a donation of £100. This was agreed **on a proposal** by the Chairman, seconded by GF and carried.

Small Project Fund – It had been suggested that a working party be formed to consider requests from local groups for small amounts funding for projects in the Parish. It was agreed a working party of three members be discussed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council to discuss the criteria and bring the matter forward to full Council for final consideration.

April 2016/16

Poundbridge – GF advised on very serious dangerous situation arising in this area, exacerbated by recent flooding in the area. Both Balfour Beatty and Hereford Council were aware of the problems. Hereford Council had admitted liability and agreed to put up fencing and admitted that blocking it off was unlawful. This was discussed at length and agreed that GF should keep up the pressure and a letter was to be sent to County Councillor P. Morgan seeking support .

Review of code of Conduct – Deferred until meeting in May.

Lengthsman – Full report of year's activities/finances sent to all Councillors prior to meeting . GF advised that a new Contract with Hereford Council was required commencing on 1st April 2016. The current Lengthsman's contract had also expired on 31st March and no further work could be undertaken until new Contracts had been signed. Whilst funding was available for 2016/17 at the same level, it was proposed by Hereford Council/Balfour Beatty that after that date, funding for the Lengthsman would be down to Parish Council's out of their Precept. GF sought agreement to proceed with negotiations for the second year Contract scheme with funding, and also whether the Parish Council would fully fund the scheme from year three onwards. Whilst it was impossible for precise figures to be given in was agreed that in principle, this Council agrees that "GF continues with the Lengthsman scheme and his role as "Scheme Administrator" and endeavour to negotiate a new Contract for 2016/17. This proposal was carried with one Councillor against the proposal and one abstention. It was also agreed the Parish Council send Robert Lambert a letter thanking him for his work during 2015/16.

Financial matters – the Clerk advised the following accounts were due for payment – FB took the Chair and sought approval for payment –

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| • Inland Revenue, April | £150.00. |
| • HALC – training (A. Carver) | £25.00. ex vat. |
| • R, Lambert, Lengthsman/March 2016 | £230.00. |
| • County Building Supplies, Lengthsman materials | £122.09 ex vat. |
| • "Your Name on it" goal posts at Chapel Lane | £436.50. |
| • "Your Name on it" materials to fix goal posts | £24.00. ex vat. |
| • Storridge Village Hall hire fees (PC & NDP) | £105.00. |
| • Ken Nason, postages/materials | £127.50 |
| • Cradley Village Hall, copying & laminating | £435.93. |
| • Ken Nason – software for PC | £40.00 ex vat. |

On a proposal by GF, seconded by TLJ and carried, these Accounts were approved for payment and cheques signed accordingly.

Reports from Committees and working parties –

Footpath Wildlife & Environment – GF advised meeting on 26th April 2016 in the hope of resurrecting interest in this project.

Recreation Area - goal posts in place, football pitch in use and reported that the Cradley Cubs would be carrying out weeding on the mound.

April 2016/17

NDP – TLJ advised approximately half way through Reg 14 which finishes on 27th April, seventeen on-line responses have been received to date but that all boxes have not yet been opened. Application for additional funding in hand.

Lengthsman – see report above.

Public Question Time –

- (a) R. Ivanczuk very supportive of the Lengthsman and felt the Parish Council should take on the responsibility for this facility once funding from Herefordshire Council/Balfour Beatty had ceased adding that he felt that the money for the scheme should not go to a Lengthsman living outside the Parish.
- (b) I. Smart in agreement with the “small funding scheme” and suggested possible match funding in the Parish. (Clerk to enquire whether this was legal for the Parish Council).

Literature & Correspondence received –

1. Costing from Bruce Herriot for defibrillator (sent to all Councillors with Agendas).
2. Lengthsman/P3 Report to year end from G. Fielding (sent to all Councillors).
3. Letter from John Sands, Treasurer, Cradley PCC commenting on reduced level of donation by 21% particularly when PC had increased their Precept by 25.5%.
4. E-mail from Don Hurle commenting on new method for determining PC contributions to parishes for churchyard maintenance, noting that the PC not accepting any responsibility for work on other items such as pruning and tree surgery.
5. Letter from K & SC Knight regarding public path diversion order Footpath CD47 (in part) sent to both footpath officers who raised no objections to the proposal.
6. Letter seeking support for forthcoming Police & Crime Commissioner Elections in May 2016.
7. Letter Diane Merker on behalf of Cradley Scout Group (Beaver Section) seeking PC donation.
8. Local Council Review magazine.
9. Letter Dr. Ivan Smart to GF commenting on instability of bank at Poundbridge.
10. Notice from Grant Thornton date for External audit is 1st July 2016.
11. Letter – HSBC closing Ledbury branch on 1st July 2016.
12. Forty-two letters of support for development of land at Church Stile Farm.
13. Four Consultation Response Forms in connection with Parish Council NDP.
14. Letter of objection from Dr. I Smart regarding land at Kingsbridge (HOV planning).
15. E-mail David Croft (Escourt Planning) regarding HOV planning application.
16. Receipt of refund VAT return totalling £1,975.47.
17. Balance on HSBC current Account at 8th April 2016 - £11,746.63.

April 2016/18

Newsletter items –

- Visit by Ian Baker in connection with **Community Resilience** plan for Cradley (similar to Storridge) – Parish Council to support this facility,
- Parish Council does not support **HOV planning application** at Morgan’s Field.
- Ongoing problems to **Poundbridge** and lack of funding from Herefordshire Council,
- Lengthsman – Council looking at renewing Contract for 2016/17.
- Goal posts erected by Simon Davies and thanks expressed to him for his hard work.
- Donation to Cradley Beavers and Council to look at setting up fund for small local donations.
- Facebook Report.

Items for future Agendas – none mentioned apart from usual updates.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 10./05pm.

Next meeting to be combined **Annual Parish Meeting** and **Annual Meeting of the Parish Council** to be held in Cradley Village Hall on 10th May 2016 commencing at 6pm.

C, Lowder

10th May 2016.

Signed..... Dated.....

Chairman