

# **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in Morville Village Hall on 8<sup>th</sup> November at 7.30pm.**

## **Present:**

Judy Miles (Chairman), Robin Melley (Vice Chairman), David Digwood, Grant Brown, Alison Nichol Smith, Luke Greenwood, Pam Yuille, Alan Spafford, Robert Pugh, Eileen Reynolds (Clerk)

## **Apologies:**

Chris Caine, Rebecca-Lucy Brown, John Cantrill and Robert Tindall (Shropshire Councillor).

## **In Attendance:**

17 parishioners attended the meeting.

### **1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

None presented.

### **2. Reports:**

#### **a. Chairman's Report:**

- i. The Chairman read out her report, a copy of which is attached at Annex A.

#### **ii. Item 8: Morville Primary School and Public Access to the Playing Field.**

- (1) In response to the Chairman's comments regarding the wicket gate leading to the playing field adjacent to the School remaining unlocked during the day for parishioners' access, Tricia Pearce, Chairman of the Local Academy Board of Governors, informed the meeting that the Chairman, the Executive Head, The Head of School, The Operations Manager of the Diocese of Hereford Multi Academy Trust, known as DHMAT, which administers the school, and myself, met at Morville School on 23rd June 2021 to discuss access to the playing field adjacent to the school.

On 3rd August, the Chairman sent an email to the Operations Manager of DHMAT asking that the gate remain open to the public at all times and suggested its use be monitored during the month of September when school resumed for the Autumn Term. The School however stated that leaving the gate open during school hours would contravene safeguarding regulations as set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE). As a consequence, if the gate was to remain open during school hours, the 59 children currently on the school roll, would not be allowed to use this space.

Tricia Pearce asked the Parish Council if they would agree to a compromise whereby the gate is locked from 08.50 - 15.20 Monday - Friday and is left open at all other times until such a time that the licence is amended and renewed?

During the discussion a parishioner asked if it would be possible to use a combination lock on the gate to which only local parishioners had the code. Tricia Pearce said that she would put this to the Executive Head but felt, that in her experience this would not be acceptable. Tim Heatley, a parishioner, supported Tricia's proposal especially as the original complaint about the locked gate came from one parishioner, albeit in 15 separate emails.

Cllr Alison Nichol Smith asked whether this matter had been highlighted at a previous Ofsted Inspection; Tricia replied that she did not know but would find out and let her know.

Cllr Pam Yuille proposed that the Chairman and a member of the Bythell Trust which originally set up the agreement, and Tricia Pearce meet informally to discuss Tricia's proposed compromise.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Robin Melley and was passed by a show of hands. Tricia Pearce added that this meeting should take place as soon as possible and at least before the end of this Autumn Term.

**Action:** The Chairman and Tricia Pearce.

(2) In addition to the above Tricia Pearce asked the following question:

At the 23rd June meeting held in the playing field adjacent to Morville School, we discussed the matter of resurfacing the service road. Can you tell me where we are with this? The Clerk to the Parish Council informed the meeting that she had brought up the matter with Shropshire Council's Highways Department and had spoken to their solicitor, Mr White. She reported that she had not heard anything more.

Tricia Pearce asked the Clerk to get back in touch with the Department and establish a timeline for the commencement and completion of the work. She also asked the Clerk to send the contact details of Mr White to her.

**Action:** The Clerk

### iii. **Item 9: Road Closure Notices**

(1) It was noted that The Clerk receives road closure notices from Shropshire Council and forwards them to the councillors to disseminate to their parishioners. However, it was clear that this information was not reaching enough parishioners.

The Chairman asked Cllr Alison Nichol Smith if she would print out the notices she received and post them on the Morville Village Noticeboard She agreed to do this.

**Action:** Alison Nichol Smith

(2) It was noted that most parishioners present had learnt of tonight's meeting not from the Parish website but from the Morville Newsletter but it was agreed that, as the newsletter was a monthly production, this would not work for road closures.

Cllr Robin Melley informed the meeting that he had an email database for Monkhopton parishioners which worked well.

Anthony Pitchers, a parishioner, suggested both Facebook and the Parish Website should be used to keep parishioners informed on what was going on in the parish.

Cllr Pam Yuille suggested that the reason why few parishioners looked at the website was because such useful information was not posted there. She proposed a pilot during which she would forward the notices that she received from The Clerk to the volunteer who posts such info on the website, but only if he was willing to undertake the extra work. This was seconded by Cllr Grant Brown and passed by a show of hands.

**Action:** Pam Yuille and the Clerk.

(3) Cllr Pam Yuille reminded the audience that a vote taken at a Parish Meeting is not binding on the Parish Council until it had been voted on by the Parish Council. The Chairman agreed.

### **b. Shropshire Councillor's Report:**

i. In Cllr Robert Tindall's absence the Chairman read out his report, a copy of which is attached at Annex B.

## **ii. Local Plan and the proposed TW proposals to build 1,050 homes:**

In response to Cllr Tindall's comments on the TW proposal and the Local Plan, Steve McDermott, a parishioner, was asked to comment:

- (1) He assured the Chairman that part of the development site is in Morville Parish, and drew her attention to the map of the Parish Boundary that is published on the Parish Council website.
- (2) He reminded the Parish Council that, as part of their submission to the Reg 19 consultation, they had indicated that they wished to attend a hearing session before the Planning Inspector, to put their case. That these hearings would commence when the Inspector had completed her scrutiny of the Reg 19 submissions, and it would be sensible if the Parish Council were to discuss and prepare for what could be a complex session.
- (3) He suggested that an orchestrated case should be agreed with other consultees, including Cllr Tindall, Tasley Parish Council and Bridgnorth Town Council, and proposed that this process could be expedited by the appointment of a single councillor to represent Morville Parish Council on a working party. On being asked if he, himself, would be prepared to contribute to such a working party, he said that he would.
- (4) Cllr Pam Yuille asked if any parish councillor was prepared to act as their representative. Cllr. Robin Melley said he might be willing but this would be subject to constraints on his time and availability and he would like to know more about what was involved before committing himself. Steve McDermott said it would involve making representations to the inspector who was scrutinising the plan, giving the opinions of the Morville people.
- (5) Cllr Pam Yuille proposed working party might include Anthony Pitchers who had drafted a large part of the Parish Council's submission to the Reg 19 consultation. Anthony said that all members of a working party would contribute but that the Parish Council's response had to be driven by the Parish Council and that they needed to prepare it now so as to be ready.
- (6) Steve McDermott added that the Inspector was currently scrutinising the submissions and one did not know how long that would take but it could well mean that the hearings would take place early next year.
- (7) A councillor asked if they could respond collectively to the working party rather than have one representative on it. Steve McDermott explained that one councillor would have to deliver the response in front of the Inspector and so that councillor needed to be a member of the working party.
- (8) The Chairman concluded that they would take a vote on it during the parish meeting that was to follow this one.

**Action:** Parish Council and Clerk

## **iii. Drainage at Underton:**

Cllr Pam Yuille informed the meeting that there were three sites along Underton Lane where work had been done. Cllr Grant Brown said there were still problems at West Farm despite the work done so far with water flowing into where the silage was stored. Cllr Grant Brown said he had emailed those responsible and copied in Cllr Tindall.

**iv. The Acton Arms:**

Cllr Yuille read out the following two questions which had been emailed to her by Gary Egginton, a parishioner, as he was unable to attend the meeting himself:

Q1: There are increasing environmental issues about the site with full and overflowing waste bins, the old caravan, etc all creating an environmental risk to the site and the village. Could the Council use some form of environmental legislation to enforce the site owner to undertake an urgent clean-up of the site?"

A: Cllr Pam Yuille informed the meeting that she had contacted Environmental Health at Shropshire Council who said they could not force the owner to clean up the site. However, as suggested by Cllr Tindall, she proposed that she draft a letter to James Collins, for approval by all the councillors, asking for permission to allow volunteers from the Save The Acton Arms Group (STAAG). This was seconded by a parishioner and passed unanimously.

**Action:** Cllr Yuille

Q2: What planning permission has been granted to the site owner regarding the pub being restored for use before any work is done to build the houses?

A: As stated in the Chairman's Report Clause 11 of Shropshire Council's Decision Notice of 9 September 2021 states that:

"Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a full detailed schedule of works and scheme for the refurbishment works of the Acton Arms Public House, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The refurbishment works shall be carried out and completed, strictly in accordance with the approved details, prior to the first occupation of the dwelling houses hereby approved."

**v. Speeding in the Corvedale:**

Cllrs Yuille, Caine and Melley attended a meeting organised by Munslow Parish Council on 25 October to discuss all the traffic issues along the length of the Corvedale and possible ways of addressing them.

Munslow Parish Council had presented a draft document covering their parish but it was agreed that this report should be extended to cover the B4368, B4365 & B4378 and that a collective response from all the parishes could be agreed which would then be circulated to Shropshire Councillors; MPs; Police; Shropshire Council Highways and the press.

**Cllr Robin Melley left the meeting at 8.50 pm.**

**c. Village Hall:**

No report was available as Cllr Caine was not present.

**d. Responsible Finance Officer:**

i. The Parish Clerk, in her role as the Responsible Finance Officer, read out her report, a copy of which is attached at Annex C.

ii. Referring to her report, Anthony Pitchers, a parishioner, asked what a Lengthsman was and what were their duties. The Chairman informed the meeting that the Lengthsman was responsible for collecting rubbish, unblocking drains and doing general maintenance throughout the parish. Parishioners Richard Dorrell and Lesley and Andrew Moxon from Weston asked if the Lengthsman was value for money as they had never seen him in and around Weston and that they did the litter picking themselves. The Clerk informed the meeting that the

Lengthsman produces a list of works completed during the month. However, it was noted that no-one actually checked his work. The Clerk informed the meeting that the Lengthsman was paid £10 an hour which included his transport, insurance and any materials required.

Tim Heatley, a parishioner, asked if there was any way that parishioners could alert the Lengthsman of any problems that they noticed. The Chairman suggested that any such matters should be report to the Clerk who would instruct the Lengthsman to attend to it.

### **iii. Parish Finances:**

Anthony Pitchers, a parishioner, noted that there was a current account balance of £14,000 and asked the Clerk what the end of year forecast ie once all known debts had been paid. The Clerk informed the meeting that this would not be known until the end of the financial year, 5 April 2022. Anthony Pitchers responded that surely it must be possible to forecast what the likely balance would be before then as the council would need to know how much they have to spend, what additional projects could be brought forward or whether any surplus was going to be carried forward into the next year. The Chairman and Clerk seemed unsure firstly whether or not any surplus could be carried forward and, secondly, if it could be, how much could be carried forward. The Chairman implied that, should there be a surplus, the Parish Council would reduce the precept for the next financial year. Anthony Pitchers informed the Chairman and Clerk that this was not an acceptable way of running things. Surely before it was agreed to reduce the precept a budget should be prepared setting out the known expenditure for the forthcoming year plus any other projects which the council had agreed in advance would be of benefit to the parish. Once that had been established the precept could be set so that all known income would match the expenditure.

The Clerk reminded the meeting that the Parish Council could only spend money on particular things as set out in relevant legislation. Anthony Pitchers expressed concern that the parish council appeared to have no ideas on how to spend any surplus that was generated yet it was clear from the topics already discussed at this meeting that there were projects which would be ideal for the Parish Council to support.

## **3. Any Other Parish Concerns.**

### **a. Parish Newsletter:**

A Weston parishioner noted that a certain amount of parish council information was published in the Morville Parish Newsletter but that they never received a copy. It was noted that the Editor of the magazine, Carol Skinner, was reliant on volunteers to deliver it to the outlying hamlets. However, it was pointed out that the magazine was available via email. It was suggested that those who wished to receive a copy of the magazine in either paper or electronic form contact Carol Skinner.

### **b. Survey about “Bridgnorth Future Connectivity Plans”:**

Anthony Pitchers asked if the Parish Council was going to participate in this survey, which ends 21<sup>st</sup> November, and also encourage parishioners to do so by putting details of the survey on the Parish Council website. It was important to inform as many people as possible that the survey was not just about Bridgnorth but also related to the Taylor Wimpey development.

### **c. Parish Council Website:**

(1) Anthony Pitchers said that he thought it would be a very good idea if a link to the survey mentioned above could go on the website. It was important that methods of communication were improved as, currently, important information was not being passed on to members of the parish.

(2) There was discussion about the Parish Council website, and the general standard of communication with parishioners. It was agreed that a Facebook page would be a useful addition to the methods currently used. It was noted the there already is a dormant Facebook page, ‘Morville Village Community’, which had been set up last year by Melanie Lewis. Steve

McDermott agreed to meet with her with a view to taking over the administration of it. This would not be controlled by the Parish Council, but could be used to broadcast local events and activities, including information about Parish Council matters. The Parish Meeting supported this proposal.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.35 pm.

Annexes:

- A. Chairman's Report (To be provided)
- B. Shropshire Councillor's Report (To be provided)
- C. Responsible Finance Officer's Report (To be provided)