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## **MINUTES of the Meeting of Coughton Parish Council, 25th November 2019 at The Old School, Sambourne Lane, Coughton**

In attendance: Cllrs Len Carter; Roy Piddington; Oliver Stiley, Lynne Stanton; Christine Lewington, Clerk Joy Pegrum, SDC Cllr Gill Forman; WCC Cllr Clive Rickhards plus 5 members of the public.

- 1) **APOLOGIES:** None received.
- 2) **Public Participation:** members of the public were invited to speak by the Chairman and raised concerns over parking in Sambourne lane: most offenders were believed to be nursery staff with possibly one from the primary school. Concern centred on access to pavements, particularly for a resident who is a wheelchair user, along with possible collision with wide farm vehicles and the resulting obstruction that could cause. The Chairman instructed the Clerk to write the nursery on the matter.

Mr Gittins reported that residents on Coughton Lane were looking into having mirrors installed for safe egress from their drive & Cllr Rickhards agreed to look into this on their behalf.

- 3) **INTERESTS:** None disclosed.
- 4) **Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 23rd September** (*previously circulated*) were agreed as a true account of the meeting and duly signed.
- 5) **School Report:** Alex Kolb, new head at Coughton Primary School, attended to introduce himself and will act as Council's liaison on school matters from now on. He reported that there were 161 children on the roll, that a new curriculum had been introduced and that a drop off system was in force to ease parking problems. He will be monitoring this and will take prompt action on any issues reported to him.
- 6) **District and County Councillor's reports**
  - A **WCC Cllr Rickhards** reported that he continues to support Mappleborough Green in their opposition to the Redditch Gateway traffic scheme. He still has not been invited to attend a steering group meeting and does not consider that group's reliance on virtual discussions to be effective. The bid for capital funding for A435 Average Speed controls is in and the result expected soon. He is optimistic of a successful outcome. Sambourne are installing verge gateway features in the New Year, to deter speed offenders, one at the Coughton boundary. Councillor Lewington asked if the Safer Routes to School budget remains open and was assured that it is.

B **SDC Cllr Forman** reported that the planning application for a Power Station in Alcester had received an objection due to a water issue but that in her view it will eventually succeed; SDC have initiated a Climate Emergency Committee to look at suitable changes to associated planning policy; the District leisure centre contract is about to be reviewed; plans are being drawn up to develop a recycling centre in partnership with other local councils, to be operated for profit as service to wider authorities and consultation is currently live on the issue of new charges for green bin collections. Cllr Lewington asked if the impact of introducing a charge had been considered and was assured that other authorities reported no increase in fly tipping or similar issues as a result. Cllr Lewington also expressed concern that the rate suggested would produce a considerable profit for SDC, but Cllr Forman responded that the income was needed to offset cuts and support other services. Home compost bins should be offered for sale mid 2020.

7) **Clerk's Report on actions and matters arising from previous minutes was presented as follows:**

- **Item 7B Abandoned Road signs:** collection eventually effected
- **Item 8B Exploration of possible joint project with NT for monument restoration:** Cllr Piddington has reached out to prospective partner organisations but had no response.
- **Item 9A Development of Rickyard Site by National Trust:** NT's Alison Hopewell has advised that Michelle Bolliver (NT) is now overseeing the project. Email sent requesting a meeting and drawing attention to the recent flooding from the field. To date no response.
- **Item 9B CPC Website upgrade for accessibility compliance:** a report of suitable providers previously circulated for consideration.
- **Item 9C Clerk vacancy:** job description distributed to Councillors; local colleague clerk's as far as Henley in Arden canvassed; vacancy notices posted on CPC website; & notice board; in The Link, school & Nursery PTA newsletters & on local community/WALC social media pages & SDC website.

**Other Correspondence:**

- **Bridge maintenance** - inspected by WCC bridge team: several repairs needed, which may require new aluminium castings to be commissioned, some bolts to be tightened and others replaced where missing. This bridge is considered unusual, being a sectional aluminium bridge and presents some challenges in terms of remedial works, but they are currently preparing a job pack for action by the maintenance contractor. "Whilst of some concern, the bridge is still safe to use in the short to medium term".
- **School** – responses received from both new deputy Alex Kolb and Head Adam Walsh, both saying they will liaise & provide school updates for CPC meetings (dates clash with Governors meetings for Adam).

8) **Village Reports**

A **Transport and traffic report** – John Gittins reported that the last planning meeting regarding Redditch Gateway had been on aesthetics and it appears that the traffic issue is now closed: there have been no new applications from the developers. He had gleaned that the reduced status of Redditch DC in respect to their presence on

planning committees was due to the fact that only a very small parcel of land on the site was within their boundary. Concern regarding the anonymity of the major tenant at the site continues and he believes that it will now be a major distributor rather than the technology company that had initially promised to bring a significant quantity and range of related jobs to the area.

- B Ford Report** – Councillor Carter reported that the last cut had been done and that CTKT Ltd had been invited to quote to continue the service in 2020. Recent high water had flooded the recreational area and displaced the rustic log seating – one of which had been swept away. Councillor Stiley has obtained and prepared an additional log and this will now replace the loss. River bank trees at Milford are a concern – Cllr Carter will inspect for imminent danger and liaise with Clerk on reporting to Highways. The litter bin did not appear to have been emptied – perhaps due to flood water. Mr Lippett offered some insight into the history of the Ford area and loaned Council his personal journal on care of the local River area during his years working for the Environment Agency.

**ACTIONS:** Clerk to chase litter collection with SDC & Councillor Stiley will manage installation of new log, repositioning and securing both logs when weather permits.

- C Flood group** - Karen met surveyors working on A435 drainage issues & showed them images of the area in flood, discussing the flow of water and effectiveness of the existing surface water drainage. WCC's Jeff Morris has reported that following this visit "they are looking to draft up the final solution".

Karen has also been in touch with Severn Trent again as several properties were affected by sewer flooding too. They are going to survey the line (sewer) to check for obstructions and cleanse if necessary. Karen has asked them to check if the problem was hydraulic because the network had reached capacity. Their Luke McCusker, responsible for Coughton, is looking into this now and will report back ASAP. ST commented that no one had reported flooding - essential for their records as they act on the number of 'events' reported. Karen gave details of the number of properties affected and explained that often residents are too involved in diverting the flood to worry about reporting it at the time. In response to a question regarding having the annual sewer cleanse as agreed in November 2015, they say this has not carried on as there have been no issues reported. Karen has advised that is not the case.

Clerk has informed the group and reminded Council that CPC have the power to spend public funds on remedial drainage issues. Suggestions of sandbags and flood pillows were made and Council agreed to purchase a quantity of the latter to be available for residents to help themselves to.

- D Community group** – at the last Cemetery volunteer weekend perimeter hedges were cut & the site generally tidied but rubbish burning has been held up by bad weather. Tree pruning has been completed & also professional pollarding. Thanks to the Volunteers has been put in the Link. Another session will take place in April.

**Festive Feet Local Walk** – planned for Sunday 29th December to start at Coughton School, Coughton Lane, 11am. The route will depend on weather & conditions but is usually 3 to 4 miles and ending at Throckmorton Arms, for refreshments.

9) **Planning - New planning notices & decisions since last full meeting were circulated for information. Full details are published on the SDC website and summarised on the CPC website.**

10) **Finance & Accounts**

A **RFO Financial Summary** accepted as follows:

**Schedule of Payments**

DATE	DESCRIPTION	by	EXPENSE
02/10/19	Clerk's pay & expenses - Sep	TSFR	433.06
02/10/19	Clerk's expense reimbursement (lap top repair)	TSFR	29.95
02/10/19	CTKT Ltd Inv1990 (Ford maintenance ss.10)	TSFR	70.00
01/11/19	Clerk's pay - Oct	TSFR	350.00
01/11/19	CTKT Ltd Inv2032 (Ford maintenance ss.10)	TSFR	70.00

**Receipts:**

<b>26/9/2019</b>	<b>Precept 2 of 2</b>	<b>2500.00</b>
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**Summary**

Bank bal c/fwd 1/6/17		8721.64
Payments received	2500.00	
Payments out	953.01	
Balance to take forward		<b>10268.63</b>

B **Quarterly budget review accepted** – copies circulated and published on the website (see appendix to these minutes)

C **Draft budget for 2020-21** – RFO reported to Councillors that the reserve continued to be inappropriate and that the previously agreed strategy for reduction via resident led projects and service requests (promoted via Council Newsletters and The Link) had not been supported and subsequently had failed. Council agreed to defer discussions and decisions to an extraordinary meeting in the New Year to allow new ideas to be researched. RFO referred Councillors to the Duties and Powers list available on the CPC website for consultation. (Item 14 refers)

D **Funding application received from VASA** – considered but after discussion Council concluded that whilst they would consider supporting the service, this could only be commensurate with direct benefit to Coughton residents. A decision was deferred pending more information on how this could be assured.

**ACTION: Clerk to request a renewed application on that basis.**

11) **Governance**

A **Internal Checks** – Cllr Carter reported that internal checks had been completed on all payments made and bank reconciliation and that all was in order.

**B Clerk's replacement strategy:** Council decided on an interview panel of any 2 Councillors, to be determined by availability, to be convened adhoc as and when required. Clerk confirmed that her chosen retirement date is 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019, but offered to continue through the first half of January if necessary and on an adhoc basis after that, but will be unavailable 19<sup>th</sup> January – 1<sup>st</sup> March.

12) **Correspondence** – none received by Councillors

13) **Any Other Business**

A Cllrs reported an issue with a broken bollard, a safety concern but currently covered by a plastic cone, on the corner of Birmingham Road and Coughton Lane.

**ACTION:** Clerk to report to Highways & request urgent repair.

B **Cllr Lewington** announced her intention to start a Health & Wellbeing group in the village with the intention of assisting isolated residents and those of all ages who could benefit from localised support and activities. She expressed the hope that Council will be willing to support these activities financially through the grant process.

C **Cllr Stanton** announced her intention to launch a Coughton in Bloom group, to install and maintain roadside seasonal planters, again with Council's financial help through the grant process.

Councillors indicated that they would be prepared to support applications from both groups. Clerk referred Councillors to the Budget Review for details of the current status of the s137 provision fund for this financial year.

14) **Dates of next meetings:**

**An extraordinary meeting** will be held on 6<sup>th</sup> January at 7pm to discuss the budget and precept for 2020-2021

**Next Scheduled meeting** will be held on 27<sup>th</sup> January at 7pm

Expense Type	Budget 2019-2020	July Qtr Review	Oct Qtr Review	Initial Notes & Rationale	Review: 1st Qtr to July 2018	Review: 2nd Qtr to Oct 2018
<b>Ongoing OPERATIONAL COSTS (met from precept)</b>						
Clerk salary	4,000	1,015	2,025	Budget allows for retirement handover period		
Travelling & Office Costs	300	108	203	Includes travel for training (including potentially for New Clerk in 2020)		
Insurance	175	149	149	Allows for potential increase	No increase this year :)	
ICO Fee - (Data Protection)	35	35	35	ICO registration is a legal GDPR requirement		
Internal Audit	50	50	50			
External Audit	0	0	0	We are currently exempt from external audit		
Printing	0	0	0	Costs of general admin & printing are now covered under office allowance and expenses below		
Village Event	50	0	0	Parish Assembly costs for 2020		
Village Maintenance (Open Spaces Act 1906, ss. 10)	1,500	180	320	Allows for ongoing Ford maintenance costs: weed control, SDC Litter collection; path repair etc. The cost of this can initially be covered partially from existing reserves and partially by a gradual increase in precept over the next 3 years	Expense this quarter covers Ford tidy & summer cutting so far.	Regular summer cutting at Ford - Second litter bin installed but not yet invoiced by SDC
Stationery / Postage	10	4	4	1 x toner + 1x ream paper + postage		
WCC - School Hire	0	0	0	No longer applicable		
Election	0	0	0	See Below	See below	
Website/Internet	55	30	30	Upgrade to improve navigation & usability is desirable at a cost of £500 - 1K: however, if election costs prohibit this, perhaps the WCC or another grant scheme could be utilised	Website Hosting	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,175</b>	<b>1,571</b>	<b>2,816</b>	<b>To be met from precept with shortfall from reserves</b>		
<b>OTHER COSTS (met from reserves)</b>						
Election	2,000	0	100	Risk assessed & advised to budget this amount by SDC (G. Raspin) but unlikely outcome - could be as little as £100 if election is uncontested.	No election in Coughton & so far no SDC costs charged	
Clerk/Councillor Training & Resources	500	0	0	I have not taken up Cilca as I plan to retire 12/2019, with potential election costs this year, potential Cilca for new Clerk to be included in 2020-21 budget		
S137 grants & expenses	0	170	170	£0 planned for start of this budget: any unused election funds may allow applications to be met from reserves later (2018/19 capped @7.86 per capita, so max allowable spend for Coughton = c £1383)	Contribution to Alc. 1st Responders for Defib training delivered FOC	
Capital expense	0	0	0	Seats & recreation etc. + upgrade of Village gates & speed signs		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>270</b>			
<b>SUBS &amp; DONATIONS</b>						
WALC membership	110	104	104	Allows for a possible increase	lower increase than expected	
Link magazine	100	0	0			
Churchyard Maintenance	230	0	0			
<b>Total</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>104</b>			
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>9,115</b>	<b>1,845</b>	<b>3,190</b>			
<b>INCOME</b>						
Precept	5,000	2,500	5,000	Planned Increase of aprox £2.90 per capita per year for next 3 years to cover the additional operational cost of maintaining the Ford		
VAT Reclaim	100	179	179			
Village Community Fund	0	0	0			
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>5,100</b>	<b>2,679</b>	<b>5,179</b>			
<b>Budget/Quarterly Balance</b>	<b>-4,015</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>1,989</b>	Negative balance to be used to reduce reserves to a more appropriate level - but this figure will potentially reduce in 2019-20 by £2k anyway, if election not contested	Election not contested & no grant applications received	Local appeal for grant applications unproductive
<b>Budget Projections</b>						
End of 2018/19 reserve balance	8,800	8,800	8,800	Disposable reserve + safeguarded contingency to take forward		
2019/20 expense & disposal bal from above	-4,015	834	1,989			
50% of precept figure to be held in reserve for contingencies	-2,500	-2,500	-2,500			
Remaining disposable reserve to c/fwd	2,285	7,134	8,289	2019-20 final figure may be higher dep. on election costs		