

Welsh Newton & Llanrothal Group Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Group Parish Council,
Held at Welsh Newton Village Hall
On Thursday 9th May 2019
At 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: Mr. Craig Bligh (Chairman); Mr. Steve Wilkes, Ms. Elissa Swinglehurst, Mrs. Moira Cox, Keith Simmons and Mr. Martin Barter

In attendance: Mrs. Emma Thomas – Parish Clerk

Public: 27

1. To elect the Chairman of the Council and to receive Chairman's signature on the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Craig Bligh should continue as Chair for a further year (proposed: Cllr Steve Wilkes; seconded: Cllr Moira Cox). Cllr Craig Bligh signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

2. To elect the Vice-Chairman of the Council and to receive Vice-Chairman's signature on the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Steve Wilkes should continue as Vice-Chair for a further year (proposed: Cllr Martin Barter; seconded: Cllr. Craig Bligh). Cllr Steve Wilkes signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

3. To receive and accept apologies for absence

None – all present.

4. To receive any declarations of interest or written applications for dispensation from Councillors on agenda items

None

5. Councillor declarations

5.1 To remind councillors to submit their Register of interests form to be held with Herefordshire Council.

Noted. The clerk has copies of all Register of Interest forms.

5.2 To receive all councillors Declarations of Acceptance of Office forms.

The clerk has RECEIVED all Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms.

6. To agree and sign the minutes of The Group Parish Council meeting held on 11th April 2019

The minutes were APPROVED and duly signed by the Chair.

A resolution was passed to take items 8 and 9 before item 7, due to public interest.

8. Public Question Time

The Chair AGREED to allow the public to speak about item 9 during item 9. No further issues were raised.

9. Planning

9.1 To note planning application approved / refused by Herefordshire Council since the last meeting

The following table was NOTED

Date	App. No.	Description	PC Comment	HC Decision
11.01.18	173774/F	- Biddlestone Farm, Llangarron, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 6NT Erection of up to 32 hectares of fixed polytunnels over arable crops grown on table-tops	Object	Awaited
14.03.19	190572	Magur, Welsh Newton, Monmouth, NP25 5RW Change of use from of a solely residential property to a partial D1 property (Dental Surgery on ground floor), residential remaining above	Support	Awaited
14.03.19	190685	Trefassey Bank, Llangrove, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire Proposed subdivision of existing dwelling to form two dwellings	Support	Awaited

9.2 To note planning applications for determination by Herefordshire Council.

a) 190827 – Woodside Stables, Welsh Newton Common, Welsh Newton, NP25 5RT

Proposed new dwelling

Members of the public raised the following issues:

- The application does not fit in with the NDP's description of the character of homes on WN Common.
- It changes the nature of the character of the Common.
- The access to the Common is difficult – with only one small lane in and out – already servicing all the properties – this application would exacerbate the issue.
- Will the strict rules about crossing the Common be adhered to?
- Why can't the present barn be converted instead?

- There are no services on the Commons at present. More development would make this situation worse.
- This may set a precedent for future development.
- Concern was raised about the positioning of the traffic survey – it was confirmed that the survey was not there to count traffic but to help assist with the siting of visibility splays.
- Loss of ecological habitats was a cause for concern.
- Why is Welsh Newton Common listed under RA2 as suitable for development?
- Pre-application advice has been sought and it deemed the site suitable.
- The application is in keeping with other neighbouring properties

A lengthy discussion took place as to how planning legislation has changed over recent years and now has a “presumption in favour of sustainable development”. Welsh Newton Common has been designated within the Core Strategy as being suitable for development based on a point-led system. The scoring of WNC is considered incorrect. It was REQUESTED that the Parish Council raise concerns over this issue with Herefordshire Council, in order that this may be considered for change when the Core Strategy is reviewed in 2020.

2 more members of the public arrived:

It was RESOLVED to SUPPORT this application with the following conditions:

- The right of access over the Commons was confirmed as legal
- The issue of limited highway access was properly investigated
- No further development of existing or new buildings are allowed on the site in the future.

b) 191286 - Steepways, From St Wolstons Road to Nythfa Property, Welsh Newton, NP25 5RT

Proposed development of three dwellings

Members of the public raised the following points in addition to those already made above for item 9.2a:

- All the issues raised above would be much worse with a development of three dwellings.
- The scale of this application is inappropriate and is not “sporadic and organic” as mentioned in the draft NDP.
- Drainage and flooding issues are already a problem on this highway and will be made worse if this development goes ahead.
- There will be a negative impact on the utility services on the Commons that are already under strain.
- The ecological assessments are flawed – there are two protected species on the Commons – Great Crested Newt and Bats.
- The development could add light pollution.
- The design is not appropriate for the area.
- The Tree Officer has raised concerns that the development is very near to two large beech trees.
- New access routes will have to be created over the Commons – is this legal?
- The single lane highway access is already unsuitable for the properties there.
- Once this development is built, will the rest of the paddock be developed?
- it will set a precedent for further such developments.

It was RESOLVED to OBJECT to this application for the following reasons:

- o It would alter the character of the area as written in the draft NDP (at examination stage) as this is not “sporadic or organic” development.
- o It would add to drainage and flooding issues already causing problems in the area.
- o It would affect the ecological habitat of the area including having an impact on local trees.
- o Highway access is not suitable for such a size of development.

7. To consider the co-option of a Parish Councillor for Welsh Newton Parish

It was RESOLVED that the Welsh Newton Parish vacancy should be advertised on the Council website and names given to the Clerk before the June meeting. Possible candidates will then be invited to attend the June meeting to present why they wish to be a councillor and a vote taken.

All but 2 members of the public left the meeting.

10. Reports

10.1 Ward Cllrs report & Q & A time

No report at this time due to the purdah period in the lead up to the elections.

10.2 Locality Officer Report

Not present

11. To note the attendance record of councillors at meetings during 2018-19

The following table was NOTED.

Name	Total meetings attended	Total meetings held
Craig Bligh	8	11
Steve Wilkes	11	11
Moira Cox	10	11
Keith Simmons	8	11
Martin Barter	11	11
Elissa Swinglehurst	10	11
Matthew Hall	5	11

12. To review WNLGPC policies and (re)adopt as necessary

12.1 Standing Orders – Appendix 2

12.2 Code of Conduct – Appendix 3

12.3 Financial Regulations – Appendix 4

12.4 Donations/Grants policy – Appendix 5

12.6 Risk Management Policy – Appendix 7

12.7 Publication Scheme – Appendix 8

12.8 Complaints Procedure – Appendix 9

12.9 Asset Register – Appendix 10

12.10 Media and Press Policy – Appendix 11

12.11 Equality Policy – Appendix 12

12.12 Bullying and Harassment Policy – Appendix 13

12.13 Policy for dealing with planning applications between meetings – Appendix 14

12.14 Discipline and Grievance Policy – Appendix 15

12.15 Health and Safety Policy – Appendix 16

12.16 Training and Development Policy – Appendix 17

12.17 Unacceptable Behaviour Policy – Appendix 18

12.18 Urgent business between meetings policy – Appendix 19

12.19 Data Protection Policy, General Privacy Notice, Staff Privacy Notice, Subject Access Request Form, Security Incident Procedure, Retention Schedule and Privacy Consent Form – Appendix 20 and 20a – 20f

It was RESOLVED to reapprove the above policies. The policies in bold had all had minor alterations made which were discussed and approved. The risk schedule and finance controls were deemed appropriate for the coming year. The Code of Conduct was the only new document. This was necessary following new legislation shortly being put in place that states a Parish Council must adopt either the Local Authority or LGA Code of Conduct. It was NOTED that HALC are asking HC to amend Schedule 2 procedures to reflect that of Parish non-pecuniary interests.

12.20 To consider agreement to continue to comply with the transparency code

It was RESOLVED to continue to comply with the Transparency Code.

12.21 To reconfirm eligibility to act under the General Power of Competence

It was AGREED that following the re-election of councillors the Council were still eligible to act under the General Power of Competence. It was RESOLVED that the Council would continue to do so.

12.22 To remind councillors of the self-disqualification law

The clerk REMINDED all Councillors that if they did not attend a Council meeting during 6 months they would disqualify themselves from the position of Councillor.

13. Finance

13.1 To note the End of Year Finance report and bank balances – Appendix 21

The clerk gave her end of year finance report stating that finances were healthy. The report was APPROVED and signed by the Chair.

13.2 To consider and approve the internal audit report 2018-19 – Appendix 22

It was RESOLVED to approve the internal report. The report had no recommendations for improvement.

13.3 To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement – Appendix 23

It was RESOLVED to approve the Annual Governance Statement. This was signed by the Chair and Clerk

13.4 To consider and approve the Annual Return Accounting Statements – Appendix 24

It was RESOLVED to approve the Annual Accounting Statements. This was signed by the Chair.

13.5 To consider exemption from the external audit process and sign the certificate – Appendix 25

It was RESOLVED that the Council did meet the criteria for exemption from an external audit and the certificate was signed by the Chair and the Responsible Financial Officer.

13.6 To review the council's insurance policy and decide upon any amendments required then approve renewal.

It was NOTED that the new SID's had been added to the schedule. It was RESOLVED to approve the schedule as adequate for the coming year.

13.7 To consider the internal auditor for 2019-20

It was RESOLVED to continue to use Mr. Philip Brough as internal auditor for the 2019-20 financial year.

13.8 To consider continuing to use the "payments and receipts" accounting method for 2019-20

It was RESOLVED to continue to use the "payments and receipts" accounting method for 2019-20

13.9 To note the VAT return for 2018-19

The VAT return for £2489.49 was NOTED as having been submitted.

13.10 To consider the following invoices for payment:

13.10.1 The clerks expenses £33.37 – previously circulated

13.10.2 The clerks salary – May

13.10.3 Came and Co Insurance £330

13.10.4 Terry Griffiths – Road Maintenance as agreed £450

It was RESOLVED to approve the above invoices for payment and the cheques were signed.

13.11 To note the payment of invoice to Balfour Beatty for SID posts as agreed by email following clarification of amount.

Noted

14. Lengthsman**14.1 To consider the lengthsman tenders received and appoint a lengthsman for 2019-20**

It was RESOLVED to approve the tender received from Terry Griffiths Contracts for the year 2019-20.

14.2 To consider work to be carried out by the lengthsman

It was RESOLVED that the clerk request the Lengthsman undertake the following tasks:

- Replace the post by Elephant and Castle to mount the new road sign.
- Cut the tree by the Welsh Newton Village Hall SID back more.
- Strim and tidy the area around the War Memorial.

14.3 To sign the Balfour Beatty Lengthsman and Footpaths Contract 2019-20

The Contract was SIGNED by the Chair.

15. Highways and footpaths**15.1 To consider road issues for reporting to Balfour Beatty**

It was RESOLVED that the clerk should continue to chase up the drainage issue near Small Acre.

15.2 To receive an update on any highways/locality issues

The clerk has forwarded the Locality Stewards emails to Councillors. It was RESOLVED that the Chair would write to the Locality Steward regarding contact and updates

15.3 To consider work to be undertaken on the parish footpaths

It was REQUESTED that the clerk check that the fallen tree has been cleared by the Lengthsman.

15.4 To receive an update on the Market Path DMMO submitted in 2015

The clerk REPORTED Balfour Beatty did have all the paperwork relating to this item but nothing had been done with it. The clerk now had copies of all paperwork. Further forms (MO2) needed filling in to complete the application. The clerk would continue to work on this.

16. To consider the update regarding ownership of Pembridge Castle

The clerk REPORTED that neither Herefordshire Council, Historic England nor English Heritage claim responsibility of Pembridge Castle. It was RESOLVED that the clerk would continue to investigate the issue.

17. Neighbourhood Plan**17.1 To receive an update on the NDP examination**

The Clerk and Councillors have RECEIVED the examiners queries. It was RESOLVED that all Councillors should contact the clerk with their comments on the queries by the end of Wednesday 15th May in order that the responses can be submitted back to Herefordshire Council by the deadline.

18. To consider an update on the Mallybrook Cottages

Cllr Swinglehurst had spoken to members of Herefordshire Council about these but all discussions stopped over the election purdah period. She will keep the Council informed of any updates.

19. To consider the future of the Post Office

It was RESOLVED that the clerk should contact the Outreach Post Office for Ewyas Harrold as well as the Area Post Office Manager to enable a similar service to be set up in the parishes.

20. To consider any further information needed for the inter-parish meeting on 23rd May 2019 and note the meeting on the 13th May at 6.30pm

Cllrs NOTED the time and date of the next inter-parish meeting as well as the meeting with Walford Community Support Scheme Co-ordinator on Monday 13th May at the Old Court Hotel – Whitchurch at 6.30pm

21. Correspondence

None

22. To consider the outstanding actions

None

23. To consider items for the next meeting – No discussion

None

24. Date of next meeting - 13th June 2019

Noted

The meeting closed at 9.45pm

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

