

Welsh Newton & Llanrothal Group Parish Council

Minutes of The Annual Meeting of the Group Parish Council,
Held at Welsh Newton Village Hall
On Thursday 20th May 2021
At 7.30pm

This meeting may be recorded under Standing Order 31

Present: Councillors: Mr. Craig Bligh (Chairman), Mr. Steve Wilkes, Mr. Martin Barter, Mr. K. Simmons and Ms. Elissa Swinglehurst

In attendance: Mrs. Emma Thomas – Parish Clerk

Public: 0

1. **To elect the Chairman of the Council and to receive Chairman's signature on the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.**
Cllr Craig Bligh was ELECTED as Chairman for the coming year and signed the 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**
Cllr Steve Wilkes was ELECTED as Vice-Chair for the coming year and signed the form.
3. **To receive and accept apologies for absence**
Apologies were RECEIVED and ACCEPTED from Debbie Clarke and Waqas Manzoor
4. **To receive any declarations of interest or written applications for dispensation from Councillors on agenda items**
It was NOTED that a Parish Councillor lives at the address for item 8.2.1.
5. **Councillor declarations**
 - 5.1 **To remind councillors to review their Register of interests form held with Herefordshire Council.**
All Councillors were REMINDED
6. **To agree and sign the minutes of The Group Parish Council meeting held on 8th April 2021**
The minutes were APPROVED and duly signed by the Chair.
7. **Public Question Time**
The following items were RAISED:
 - Several parishioners have expressed their frustration over the time taken by Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty to repair the Llanrothal Road.
 - Could there be a sign on the Common road saying "20 is plenty"?
8. **Planning**
 - 8.1 **To note planning application approved / refused by Herefordshire Council since the last meeting**
No decisions have been made.
 - 8.2 **To note planning applications for determination by Herefordshire Council.**
 - 8.2.1 - 211068 - Willowgate, Welsh Newton, Monmouth, Herefordshire NP25 5RT
Proposed replacement of existing timber outbuilding with new building, linked to the existing dwelling with new conservatory.
It was RESOLVED to support this application but to comment that the application was lacking information and the proposed use of the building was therefore unclear. The impact on local waterways was therefore unknown. It was also noted that good insulation and thermo-efficiency should be included in the design.
 - 8.2.2 - 210588 - Oaklands House, Llanrothal, Monmouth, Herefordshire NP25 5QJ
Installation of a clean burn high efficiency solid biomass wood burning stove. The work will involve the provision of an ICS insulated metal chimney which will terminate just below the level of the existing roof ridge.
It was RESOLVED to support this application
 - 8.3 **To note the appeal dismissal for The Old Shop, Manson Lane, Manson NP25 5RD**
NOTED
9. **Reports**
 - 9.1 **Ward Cllrs report & Q & A time**
The Ward Cllrs report included the following items:
 - A recent Judicial Review found against Herefordshire Council Children's Services.
 - The issue of phosphates in the waterways is still causing problems
 - The Llanrothal Road repair is slow but underway.

10. To note the attendance record of councillors at meetings during 2020-21

NOTED

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

11.1 Standing Orders – Appendix 1

11.2 Code of Conduct – Appendix 2

11.3 Financial Regulations – Appendix 3

11.4 Donations/Grants policy – Appendix 4

11.5 Risk Schedule Assessment and Finance Controls – Appendix 5a and b

11.6 Risk Management Policy – Appendix 6

11.7 Publication Scheme – Appendix 7

11.8 Complaints Procedure – Appendix 8

11.9 Asset Register – Appendix 9

11.10 Media and Press Policy – Appendix 10

11.11 Equality Policy – Appendix 11

11.12 Bullying and Harassment Policy – Appendix 12

11.13 Policy for dealing with planning applications between meetings – Appendix 13

11.14 Discipline and Grievance Policy – Appendix 14

11.15 Health and Safety Policy – Appendix 15

11.16 Training and Development Policy – Appendix 16

11.17 Unacceptable Behaviour Policy – Appendix 17

11.18 Urgent business between meetings policy – Appendix 18

11.19 Data Protection Policy, General Privacy Notice, Staff Privacy Notice, Subject Access Request Form, Security Incident Procedure, Retention Schedule and Privacy Consent Form – Appendix 19 and 19a – 20f

11.20 Reserves Policy – Appendix 20

The clerk REPORTED that all of the policies above in plain typeface had not had any changes made since they were last adopted in 2019. It was RESOLVED to readopt all of them.

The following policies – in bold type above – had had the following changes made:

Standing Orders - p10 to allow for paper ballots if needed

Code of Conduct – a new and more weighty Code.

Risk Schedule – no changes but needed fully discussing to ensure all risks are covered for the coming year.

Asset register – updated to include the Unknown Tommy

Data Protection - minor updates to include video images and online meetings

Retention Schedule - changed from Herefordshire Council to NALC's schedule as more linked to Parish Councils

Reserves Policy - new - required by audit this year.

It was RESOLVED to adopt all of the above policies. It was AGREED that the risk schedule did cover all risks adequately. It was further AGREED that the Reserves Policy should be reviewed when setting the budget in November.

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

It was AGREED to continue to comply with the Code.

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

It was CONFIRMED that the Council were still eligible to act under the GPOC. It was AGREED to do so.

11.23 To remind councillors of the self-disqualification law

All Councillors were REMINDED

12. Finance

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

The clerk REPORTED that the income and expenditure appeared higher than budget – this is due to the drainage grant income received and drainage project expenditure paid out during the year. Finances remain healthy. The report was APPROVED as evidence of budget monitoring and bank reconciliation and signed by Cllr Keith Simmons

12.2 To consider and approve the internal audit report 2020-21 – Appendix 22

The report was CONSIDERED and APPROVED.

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

The statements were CONSIDERED, AGREED WITH and APPROVED. The Chair and clerk SIGNED the form.

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

The report was CONSIDERED and APPROVED. The Chair SIGNED the form.

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

It was AGREED that the Council were eligible to be exempt from an external audit this year and the Chair and RFO SIGNED the certificate.

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

It was NOTED that the insurance policy was still adequate for the coming year. The clerk REPORTED that this insurer has put premiums up by nearly 100% this year. She has obtained a quote from BHIB Ltd which is lower at £414.40 if a three year deal was agreed. It was AGREED to swap to BHIB Ltd.

12.7 To consider the internal auditor for 2021-22

It was AGREED to continue using Mr. Philip Brough for the coming year.

12.8 To consider continuing to use the "payments and receipts" accounting method for 2021-22

It was AGREED to continue with this method

12.9 To note the VAT return for 2020-21

The VAT Return of £3670.99 was NOTED

12.10 To consider the following invoices for payment:

12.10.1 Clerk's May Salary

12.10.2 Clerk's May expenses £34.79 – previously circulated

12.10.3 HALC whole Council planning training £210

12.10.4 Terry Griffiths – Drainage projects as per grant received £8,700

12.10.5 Defibrillator and accessories for Welsh Newton Common £2069.40

The above invoices were APPROVED for payment. It was NOTED that HearstStart Training should be arranged once it is able to. Cllr Martin Barter AGREED to arrange this.

13. Common

13.1 To consider taking on ownership of the Common

Due the restrictions on numbers allowed to attend a meeting indoors – due to the Pandemic – it was AGREED to defer this item until restrictions have been lifted.

14. Lengthsman and footpaths

14.1 To consider work to be carried out by the lengthsman

The following items were NOTED for undertaking:

- The area around the War Memorial needs trimming back.

14.2 To consider work to be undertaken on the parish footpaths

None although it was AGREED the clerk should ask if the footpaths works requested had been undertaken yet.

14.3 To consider options for LO11.

It was REPORTED that the proposed agreement to a modification on this path has now been withdrawn by the landowner. It was AGREED that the Parish Council would submit a Deemed Dedication to add the customary route to the Definitive Map.

15. Highways

15.1 To consider road issues for reporting to Balfour Beatty

None

15.2 To consider an update on installing white gates (traffic calming) on the approach to the village

It was REPORTED that ideas were being looked at and would be brought to the next meeting.

15.3 To consider an update on the grant-funded drainage works

The clerk REPORTED that all except £4473 of drainage grant has been claimed. These final works are being completed at present. It was AGREED that once the tasks are all finished the lengthsman should show Cllrs the works done so photos could be taken and added to a parishioner newsletter

15.4 To consider the highway closure of the Welsh Newton to Llanrothal road.

It was REPORTED that an email had been received today from Balfour Beatty: This read as follows:

"We are currently getting Phase 1 ecology surveys done, which were planned for this week but have been delayed slightly. We are hoping to be out tomorrow or Monday to complete. The outcome of these will define the nature of the licenses and permits we will need to seek from the EA regarding habitats, this is a sensitive ecological area as a tributary of the Monnow. I'm expecting the reports next week which will allow us to better define the programme. We have already carried out a level survey of the area and the new culvert design is underway as is liaison with Welsh Water who have a distribution pipe running at the carriageway edge at this point. We will update again when we have a better defined programme." The clerk REPORTED that she had been in discussions with Herefordshire Council Highway Officers today in an attempt to get the project moved along." It was AGREED that the clerk should continue to liaise with The Cabinet Member responsible for Highways and Herefordshire Council.

15.5 To consider an update on Free Cycle Parking and Installation at the Village Hall.

The clerk REPORTED that all free items have been claimed.

15.6 To consider arranging a litter pick

It was AGREED that Cllrs Steve Wilkes and Elissa Swinglehurst would liaise with regards a date and let the clerk know so that an email could be sent to parishioners.

16. Defibrillator

16.1 To consider an update on the registration of the Welsh Newton Hall machine

It was NOTED that the defibrillator has now been registered on the National Emergency database. It was NOTED that it ideally needed checking monthly. It was AGREED that the machine would be checked when attending Parish Council meetings and any findings reported to the clerk.

17. Environment

17.1 To consider an update on promoting wild flowers on the wide verges in the parishes

The clerk REPORTED that the one-cut verges had been given to Balfour Beatty to add to their rota. The clerk will email the map of where these are to Cllrs.

18. To consider the placing of the unknown Tommy

It was AGREED that Cllr Swinglehurst would speak to the landowner to see if the area could be slightly enlarged. It was then AGREED that parishioners should be asked for ideas to upgrade the area. This will be discussed further at the next meeting

19. Correspondence

HALC – Meeting legislation

Safer Neighbourhood Team – want to set up a contract to attend meetings or give email updates.

20. To consider the outstanding actions

None

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

Parish newsletter; War Memorial

22. Date of next meeting – 10th June 2021

NOTED

The meeting closed at 21.29

Signed: _____



Dated: _____

10/6/21