

WELSH NEWTON & LLANROTHAL GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on
Thursday 8th February 2024 at 19.30 at Welsh Newton Village Hall**

Present

Councillors: Craig Bligh (in the Chair), Martin Barter, Keith Simmons, Debbie Clarke.

In attendance

Clerk Helen Tinson – on behalf of HALC (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils); 7 members of the public plus Terry Griffiths, Lengthsman.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Apologies were received from Cllr Sue Parkinson. It was noted that there are two current vacancies.
2. **Declarations of interest & written dispensation requests:** There were none.
3. **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9th November 2023:**
It was RESOLVED: to approve the minutes as a true and proper record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chair.
4. **Public Question Time:**
 - 4.1. A query was raised concerning the various bus services and members were asked whether timetables could be posted on the bus shelters and on the Parish website. It was agreed that the Parish Council would contact the service providers to request the information.
 - 4.2. Members were asked to consider a sign on the end of the bridleway which says 'No Motorbikes'. West Mercia Police produce signage and samples were given to the Chair. It was agreed that this would be an agenda item to consider at the next meeting.
 - 4.3. Members were also asked to consider placing 'Slow' signs only outside the properties of commoners who had consented to having them erected.
 - 4.4. Multiple concerns were raised about a wide load which had passed through the village a few days previously. The load was carrying a mobile home, had encountered difficulties and subsequently blocked the road for approximately three hours. A vehicle waiting to pass was damaged - agreed was a police matter. It was noted that fortunately this is not a regular occurrence.
5. **Planning:**

Members noted the following planning approvals granted by Herefordshire Council:

 - 5.1. Application 232383: Land at Woodside Stables, from Great Hall Road to St. Woolstons Road, Welsh Newton. Proposed variation of condition 2 of planning permission 203907 (proposed new dwelling) to increase roof height. Approved with conditions.

5.2. Application 233329: Lower Skenchill, Llanrothal, NP25 5QJ. Proposed erection of a 3-bay timber garage/store. Approved with conditions.

5.3. Application 233262/3: Upper Cwm Farmhouse, Welsh Newton, NP25 5RW. Reinstatement of Cider Barn as new external office space. Approved with conditions.

6. Reports:

6.1. Ward Councillors Report: The Ward Councillor was not present but had submitted a report which was taken as read. The following items were raised as matters of particular interest:

- 6.1.1. Openreach are asking residents for an Expression of Interest to connect to ultrafast full fibre broadband. Members considered this to be a positive action for the parish and urged anyone who can to sign up. The Chairman asked that this be shared via email to the Parish Council Mailing List.
- 6.1.2. Changes will be forthcoming to the waste collection service though no dates have been confirmed yet.
- 6.1.3. It was noted in national media that the River Wye has been categorised as a dying river and that a legal case is being taken against the Environment Agency because of the levels of phosphate.

7. Finance:

7.1. Bank Balances:

Lloyds - Treasurers Account: £13,391.73 (3 November statement)

Lloyds – Business Bank Instant: £6,918.12 (4 January statement)

Cambridge and Counties Bank: £10,000.00 (1-year fixed rate bond deposited July 2023)

7.2. Payments:

It was RESOLVED: to approve the following invoices for payment:

- 7.2.1. HALC, Clerk Cover 8.2.24, £316.20 including VAT
- 7.2.2. Herefordshire Council, Election Recharges, £265.42
- 7.2.3. Terry Griffiths Contracts, Lengthsman, £528.00 including VAT
- 7.2.4. Sue Parkinson, Expenses for electricity and refreshments during defib training, £25.00
- 7.2.5. HALC, 2024/25 Subscription, £515.26 including VAT

7.3. Payments:

It was RESOLVED: to ratify the following payments made between meetings:

- 7.3.1. Terry Griffiths Contracts, Lengthsman, multiple invoices totalling £4116.00 including VAT
- 7.3.2. Welsh Newton Village Hall, Meeting room hire Nov 2023 and 8 meetings 2024, £159.00
- 7.3.3. HMRC, PAYE, £25.80
- 7.3.4. Autela Payroll Services, £37.29 including VAT

7.4. 2023/24 Lengthsman Grant Received:

- 7.4.1. It was noted that £918.00 has been received from Herefordshire Council.

7.5. Draft Budget 2024/2025: Members considered a draft budget for 2024/25. It was noted that the 1-year fixed bond would pay £501.37 interest in July 2024. Two minor amendments were proposed to remove the budget for Parish information Kiosk and Chairman's Expenses. It was proposed to maintain the precept at its current level. The Acting Clerk was asked to clarify whether the insurance was part of a three-year fixed term, and to calculate the Parish Tax Base to provide the precept rate per Band D or equivalent property.

It was RESOLVED: to approve the draft budget for 2024/25, as appended (Appendix A).

It was RESOLVED: to set the precept at £13,900.00 for 2024/25.

8. Lengthsman and Footpaths:

8.1. To consider works for the Lengthsman:

It was reported that some grips have silted over again. The Lengthsman confirmed that these would be addressed during a routine maintenance day. It was noted that the volume of water fallen over the last few days has negatively impacted some drains.

Safety concerns were raised about water on the highway at Smallacre which becomes treacherous in icy weather. The Lengthsman reported that the solution would be to install larger pipes, but that BBLP had not previously been supportive of the proposal.

It was RESOLVED: to establish contact with the Locality Steward and invite him/her to a site meeting with the Chairman and Lengthsman.

Parishioners were encouraged to report any other local drainage issues to the Parish Council.

8.2. To consider tasks to use the £2002 match funding:

Members considered drainage tasks to utilise the remaining £2002 of the Lengthsman matched funding from Herefordshire Council.

It was RESOLVED: to ask the Lengthsman to prepare a costed 'wishlist' of tasks that can be carried out before 31st March 2024 for consideration at the next meeting.

8.3. 2024/25 Lengthsman Scheme:

Members were informed that the Expression of Interest and application for matched funding had been submitted to Balfour Beatty Living Places between meetings in order to meet their deadline of 31st January 2024.

It was RESOLVED: to ratify the submission.

9. Highways:

There were no issues reported.

10. Defibrillators:

Members received a brief report of the defibrillator training, and it was agreed that it had been a successful and informative event attracting 12 attendees. As the event is funded by donations, members considered making a financial contribution. It was confirmed that the defibrillator at the Village Hall and at Welsh Newton Common have both been registered with The Circuit, but the register needs to be checked to establish if the defibrillator at Llanrothal is registered.

It was RESOLVED: to donate £60 (£5 per attendee)

It was RESOLVED: to check the registration of the defibrillator at Llanrothal

As the Emergency Services often have difficulty locating properties due to their rural position, it was recommended that a What3Words reference is recorded for each defibrillator and that parishioners would be encouraged to identify their own property with a What3Words reference.

It was reported that each defibrillator (battery and pads) should be checked weekly, and the Acting Clerk recommended that each weekly check is recorded in a book kept with the defibrillator. A small group of volunteers are being sought to co-ordinate the checks.

It was RESOLVED: that Cllr Debbie Clarke would seek volunteers for the defib at Welsh Newton Common. Three parishioners volunteered to look after the defib at the Village Hall (x1) and Llanrothal (x2)

Finally, the Chairman reported that he is in possession of ten self-training packs from the British Heart Foundation (comprising dummy and DVD) which are available for parishioners who wish to train at home.

It was RESOLVED: to publicise the availability of the packs.

A member of the public raised a question about general first aid training and compiling and maintaining a list of volunteers to provide support in an emergency. The Acting Clerk recommended that the Parish look to create a Community Resilience Plan once a new clerk has been recruited.

11. Noticeboards:

Members considered relocating the noticeboard at Llanrothal. The Lengthsman reported the requirements of siting noticeboards a minimum of 600mm from the highway. It was agreed that this could also be discussed with the Locality Steward when a meeting is arranged.

It was RESOLVED: that Cllrs Bligh, Simmons and Barter would research and liaise with the Locality Steward.

Members also considered the noticeboards at the Church and Welsh Newton Common and agreed they both need to be repaired or replaced. It is understood that there is a spare noticeboard in storage. The Lengthsman offered volunteer labour to support the projects.

It was RESOLVED: that Cllr Bligh would liaise with Ward Cllr Swinglehurst regarding the spare noticeboard.

It was RESOLVED: to undertake an inventory of all parish noticeboards, recording location with What3Words reference, photographs etc. Members to liaise to complete.

It was RESOLVED: that Cllr Clarke would research options for the Welsh Newton Common board.

12. Councillor Resignations:

It was noted that Cllrs Elissa Swinglehurst and Rhiannon Marks have both resigned. The casual vacancies have both been advertised and HC Elections Office have confirmed that the vacancies can now be co-opted. Members were asked to raise awareness with parishioners.

13. Participatory Budget:

Members considered a Participatory Budget. The Acting Clerk provided a brief explanation of what this entailed. It was suggested that examples of what might be possible are shared with parishioners when consulting for the budget.

It was RESOLVED: that Cllr Bligh would draft some text and share with members for approval, then communicate via the normal channels (email, website, noticeboards)

14. Items for the Next Agenda:

- 14.1. To consider concerns about tree maintenance on the Common
- 14.2. To consider 'No Motorbike' signage
- 14.3. To consider Lengthsman 'wishlist' for matched funding work

05/2024

15. Date of the Next Meeting: Thursday 14th March at Welsh Newton Village Hall

16. To consider a resolution to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, to consider a confidential employment matter:

It was RESOLVED: to pass the resolution. Members of the public left the meeting at 9.15pm.

17. Clerk Recruitment:

Members received a brief update concerning a potential candidate currently discussing the role with HALC prior to applying.

The meeting closed at 9.22pm.

SIGNED *Craig Bligh*

DATE: 18th April 2024

APPENDIX A: APPROVED BUDGET 2024/25

Income	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	Budget	Budget	Draft Budget
Bank Interest Lloyds 30day Account	£5.00	£5.00	£5.00
1 year Fixed Term Bond			£501.37
Annual Precept	£13,900.00	£13,900.00	£13,900.00
Vat Recovered	£1,500.00	£1,500.00	£1,500.00
Grants/Donations			
Total Income	£15,405.00	£15,405.00	£15,906.37
Expenditure			
Administration - clerks salary	£6,800.00	£7,000.00	£7,000.00
Payroll Provider	£200.00	£250.00	£250.00
Vehicle Expenses	£300.00	£250.00	£250.00
Stationery & Consumables	£100.00	£75.00	£75.00
Computer Software	£30.00	£30.00	£30.00
Postage	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00
Insurances	£450.00	£450.00	£450.00
Subscriptions	£450.00	£500.00	£500.00
Web Site and Additional Publications	£150.00	£150.00	£150.00
Audit	£250.00	£250.00	£250.00
Parish Lengthsman Scheme	£3,000.00	£3,000.00	£3,000.00
Parish Footpaths	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
SID	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Neighbourhood Planning	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Training	£200.00	£200.00	£200.00
Community Projects	£500.00	£500.00	£500.00
Defibrillator	£400.00	£400.00	£400.00
Parish Information Kiosk	£50.00	£50.00	£0.00
PC Meeting Room Rent	£250.00	£250.00	£250.00
Contingency	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00
Chairman's Expenses	£25.00	£25.00	£0.00
Elections	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00
Legal Costs	£1,000.00	£500.00	£500.00
Notice Board Repairs	£50.00	£50.00	£50.00
VAT Paid	£1,500.00	£1,500.00	£1,500.00
Total Expenditure	£17,555.00	£17,280.00	£17,205.00