

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council held on Tuesday 9th January, 2024 at Blakedown Sports Pavilion which commenced at 7.00p.m.

PRESENT: Chair - Cllr Sue Fowler; Cllrs Benney, Bryony Hayward, Brian Hession; Jim Long; Claire Wood

In attendance: PCSO Kate Easthope; 3 residents; Parish Clerk – Louise Sahota.

1/24 Chair's Opening Remarks: Happy New Year to all. There will be consideration of a co-option at this meeting, it will be handled in private session at the end of the meeting.

2/24 Apologies: None.

3/24 Declarations of Interest: None.

4/24 Community Policing:

- a) **To receive report from the Beat Officer/CSO** - The police report was displayed. A resident reported that there are potential poachers in the area and the police were notified about this at the meeting to be passed to the Rural Crime team.
- b) **To decide on priorities for January – March 2024** – After some discussion in the light of recent events, the council **resolved** on making the following priorities for the quarter:-
 - 1) Traffic – mainly speeding on Stakenbridge Lane, and parking in the villages
 - 2) Burglaries – across Parish.
 - 3) Anti-Social Behaviour – mainly at the site of the Sports Pavilion.

The meeting was adjourned for **Public Participation**, notes of which are attached at the end of these Minutes.

5/24 Dispensations: None.

6/24 Minutes: A member proposed approval of the minutes of the meeting on 5th December 2023 and they were **approved and signed**.

7/24 District and County Council Matters: The county council report was displayed; a few items were referred to. In relation to item 9, it was discussed that the item should relate to the lack of delineation between the parking space area and the pavement and then the parking spaces being marked out properly. It was observed that there is a £20m funding gap in the budget for next year and how this will be met is being looked at. The budget goes to full council for approval of Cabinet's recommendations, on the 1st February 2024.

The district council report was displayed, and the following points were observed: -

- There is 1-hour free parking in Bewdley on Mon – Fri until 31st March 2025. As part of budgetary proposals for 2024/25, WFDC may be offering 1 hour's free parking Mon – Fri in a car park in each of the Districts 3 towns.

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

- Each district councillor will be allocated £1000 for the community leadership fund to spend on projects or organizations in their ward. This brings a different approach to Localism.

8/24 Traffic Issues: Update on Highways developments and on speed control measures:

- a) **VAS Sign for Stakenbridge Lane** – There was a discussion about the location suggested by the Highways Liaison Officer and some confusion about this, about potential vandalism, repairing/replacement of current broken VAS sign and speed limit changes to the area. The clerk was asked to arrange a meeting on site with Cllr Hart and the Highways Liaison Officer.
- b) **Churchill Lane** – A concern was raised by a member regarding the narrowing of the highway and a few accidents as a result, outside of No 10, Churchill Lane. The member has written personally to Cllr Hart. The concern being that this part of the highway where the footpath disappears is used by pedestrians and dog walkers. It was mentioned about the ownership of the bank on the other side of the road but nevertheless WCC are responsible for the safety of the Highway. The clerk was asked to raise this with the Highways Liaison Officer.

9/24 Items for consideration:

- a) **To approve meeting dates for the municipal year, 2024-25** – It was noted that Cllr Long suggested introducing an August meeting. After some discussion, the dates were approved. The annual parish meeting will be held in May.

10/24 Items for Information: None.

11/24 Planning and Development Control:

a) Planning Application received:

- i) 23/0912/FUL – 75 Belbroughton Road – Formation of a dropped kerb – No objection.
- ii) 23/0941/LBC – Ismere Hall, Stourbridge Road – Listed building consent for the construction of two sets of entrance gates and piers (part-retrospective)- No objection.
- iii) 23/0940/HOU - Ismere Hall , Stourbridge Road - Construction of two sets of entrance gates and piers (partretrospective) – No objection.

b) Additional Planning Applications or other Planning Matters:

- i) **Land off Station Drive** – This land is up for sale. This PC has asked the planners if it can be involved in any future discussions about this land. Following a discussion at the last meeting, Cllr Fowler has drafted a Design Brief and circulated to all for comments. Comments should be sent to Cllr Raggett.
- ii) 23/0897/PNR – [FOR INFORMATION ONLY] - Barn At Os 387751 277871, New Wood Lane - Prior notification for the change of use of an agricultural building to 1No. dwelling – Noted.
- iii) 23/0900/CLP – [FOR INFORMATION ONLY] - Common Farm House , Crown Lane, Iverley - Lawful development certificate for the proposed construction of an outbuilding – Noted.

c) Planning Notifications:

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

- a. 23/0411/LBC - Ismere Hall Stourbridge Road - change of use of Ismere Hall from Hotel to single dwelling (Use Class C3), to include general refurbishment works, alterations to floor layout and erection of a single storey extension, conversion of barn to provide plant room and private leisure facilities including swimming pool and gym, conversion of outbuilding to residential annex including erection of a conservatory, and construction of a garage (part retrospective) – Granted.
- b. 23/0410/FUL - Ismere Hall Stourbridge Road - Change of use of Ismere Hall from Hotel to single dwelling (Use Class C3), to include general refurbishment works, alterations to floor layout and erection of a single storey extension, conversion of barn to provide plant room and private leisure facilities including swimming pool and gym, conversion of outbuilding to residential annex including erection of a conservatory, and construction of a garage – Permitted.
- c. 23/0804/HOU – 36 Mill Lane – Erection of a summerhouse/log-shed (retrospective) – Permitted.
- d. 23/0797/HOU – 33 Birmingham Road - Erection of two storey side extensions, two storey front extension, flat roof rear dormer to facilitate loft conversion and removal of existing chimney – Refused.

12/24 Financial Report and Payment of Accounts:

- a) **Members noted Bank Balances as of 4th January, 2024:**
 - a. **Lloyds Treasurers Account £2,002.28**
 - b. **Unity Trust Treasurers Account £11,233.14**
 - c. **Lloyds Business Instant Access Account £23,247.94**
- b) **To approve the accounts for January 2024, (as per schedule) –** The lead councillor for finance proposed approval of the January accounts stating that the items were everyday items, and they were **unanimously approved and signed.**
- c) **To receive and approve the bank reconciliation to 4th January 2024 –** The clerk stated that copies of the bank statements are with the bank reconciliation. The bank reconciliation was **approved and signed.**
- d) **To receive the Qtr 3 Finance Update as circulated by email –** The Qtr 3 update was displayed. The clerk went through the presentation, and it was received. A deficit of £1766 was forecast at the start of the financial year and so with the projected underspend and income not being received in monetary terms, it is projected that this parish council will have a balanced budget at the close of the year.
- e) **To consider and agree on the budget for 2024/25 as circulated by email –** The Finance working party had met to discuss the draft budget. The draft budget showed a 5% inflationary increase in all areas except where the cost is known and includes an increase in grants and donations of £1500. Together with increasing costs as Localism funding from District and County Councils decreases over time and with the increase in employee costs and contracts set to rise by 5%, the parish council is looking at increasing the precept by £14,165 on last year to provide a balanced budget. Some questions were answered, and a discussion took place around S137 of the Local Government Act and how monies in General Reserves can be used for this. It was also discussed how the council could advertise the availability grant/donation funds and encourage application and it was seen as something that could be shared at the Annual Parish Meeting in May. Following a further discussion about how over several years the precept hadn't been increased or had been increased very

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

nominally, it was proposed to accept the budget as set out, for 2024/25 – **approved (5 for, 1 abstention).**

- f) To consider and agree on the Parish precept for 2024/25** – In line with the budgetary requirement, the proposal from the working party to increase the precept by £14,165 on last year, amounting to a £17.82 increase over the year, £1.49 per month, 34p per week (as per Band D property), was **resolved (5 for, 1 abstention).**
- g) To consider the Unity Trust mandate following removal of previous clerk as circulated by email** – The proposal by the clerk was displayed. The proposal to remove the stated ex-councillors and an ex-clerk was carried with an amendment not to remove an existing councillor – approved with amendment **(all in favour).**
- h) To consider and approve the draft Risk Management Schedule** – following a discussion and two amendments, this was **approved (all in favour).**

13/24 Clerk’s Report: This had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. The chair told the meeting that the Christmas Tree has been removed from the site. The parish bins will be reviewed again in the summer when more dog walkers have tested the current locations. The phone box needs clearing out and Cllr Hayward advised the clerk that the Environment Agency needs to be contacted regarding the flooding of the river at Churchill Lane.

14/24 Councillor’s Reports and items for future agendas: None.

15/24 Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 13th February, 2024 commencing at 7.00pm

Signed.....
(Chair to Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council)

Dated 13th February 2024

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Public Participation - 9th January 2024 – Notes of discussions

A resident reported 9 matters of concern:-

- 1) Level crossing – 15/12/23 – closed down completely. This caused illegal crossings of the railway line. Someone attended the issue when the button was pressed and a complaint made.
- 2) 11a Wannerton Road – Fence panel has dropped out onto footpath and into Churchill Lane.
- 3) Litter bins – various movements of litter bins have taken place. The resident drew particular attention to the additional one that has been put on the post leading to the Playing Fields on the Belbroughton Road. It was stated by the resident that one should have been put on the access to the path that leads down to LadiesPool, on the other side of the road.
- 4) Bus Stops – leaf debris remains in there.
- 5) Shopper's Car Park & Village Green – vegetation has been cut back and there is a bag of rubbish dumped on the car park.
- 6) Flooding at Churchill Lane – storm water drain to the stream needs clearing.
- 7) Road sweeper – there hasn't been one for along time.
- 8) Defibrillator – The kiosk needs the panels to be put in.
- 9) Potholes – Half way up Crown Lane.