

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council held on Tuesday 13th February, 2024 at Blakedown Sports Pavilion which commenced at 7.00p.m.

PRESENT: Chair - Cllr Sue Fowler; Cllrs, Richard Benney, Lucy Chawner; Bryony Hayward, Brian Hession; Jim Long; Joanna Raggett; Claire Wood.

In attendance: District Councillor – Robin Drew; PCSOs Kate Easthope & Alice Owens; 12 residents; Bill Waldron – Lengthsman; Parish Clerk – Louise Sahota.

16/24 Chair's Opening Remarks: There is a co-option in private session which is going to be brought up the agenda from the bottom. Welcome to Lucy Chawner who has been co-opted onto the council.

17/24 Apologies: None.

18/24 Declarations of Interest: Cllr Long made an Ordinary Declaration of Interest in the agenda item 11a.i, and will refrain from voting on the matter.

19/24 Community Policing:

- a) **To receive report from the Beat Officer/CSO** - The police report sent to the clerk was that there were no updates. The criminal damage incident at the Millenium Green was discussed and the council informed the police that the land belongs to the Millenium Trust. It was advised by the police that incidents such as this should be reported to 999 for an immediate response. Patrols for ASB will continue in the area. There are no incidents of ASB at the Sports Pavilion tonight – lighting on the car park would be helpful. There have been several burglaries and theft of cars and vans across Wyre Forest recently and Hagley has seen a keyless Mercedes stolen.

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

20/24 Dispensations: None.

21/24 Minutes: A member proposed approval of the minutes of the meeting on 9th January 2024 and they were seconded, **approved and signed**.

22/24 District and County Council Matters: The report from the county councillor was displayed and the following points were made:

- No 3 – Members had met with Cllr Hart and the Highways Liaison Officer at WCC regarding the location of the new VAS sign in Stakenbridge Lane. It was decided that the sign would be installed on a pole outside Churchill House. It will be installed asap.
- No 11 – Closure of A448 – impact being monitored.

Questions were raised regarding the boundary review and this was answered by Cllr Drew. Further information was volunteered by Cllr Drew regarding the law around Biodiversity and that a free survey can be applied for with 70% of a project being funded.

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The district council report was displayed. The local issue regarding the road sweeper reported that it had now visited the parish. Members reported that the team had done a great job – thank you.

Cllr Hayward raised the drain at Bridge Farm and that the pipe itself is blocked up.

23/24 Traffic Issues: Update on Highways developments and on speed control measures: The location of the VAS sign in Stakenbridge Lane has been decided on at a meeting of Cllr Marcus Hart, the Highways Liaison Officer, Cllr Benney and Cllr Fowler.

There have been some delays with the road/pavement works in Blakedown village where WCC have been reinstating the footways.

24/24 Items for consideration:

- a) **To adopt the draft Biodiversity Policy** – the document was displayed and after some comments were made, it was resolved to adopt the policy. A member suggested that the Biodiversity Survey for the parish also be investigated.
- b) **Respond to resident re use of charging spaces by non-electric vehicles** – the email was displayed and this matter was acknowledged as an ongoing problem. After a discussion about enforcement and signage, and the council relying on the goodwill of the people to use the car park properly, it was **resolved** that a composite reply is put together and put up on the website.
Action: the clerk to look at NCP parking controls and feedback to council.
- c) **Respond to the Issues and Options consultation on Worcestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy** – After some discussion, it was **decided** that some members would decide on responses and the response would be made via the clerk.
- d) **To approve, as Trustee, that the Clerk to the Council and Villages Trust has the authority to open the new bank account on behalf of the Villages Trust, as required by Lloyds Bank – approved (all in favour).**
- e) To participate in the Corporate Peer Challenge at WFDC – Cllr Wood expressed her interest if the dates and time would work.
Action: clerk to check on dates and times and feedback to Cllr Wood
- f) **Response to the Local Government Boundary Commission consultation on the WCC Division Boundary Review** – after some discussion, it was **resolved to support** the proposal of keeping all 5 parishes within the Chaddesley division, together with the Spennells Estate as is and with the addition of the new Lea Castle development.

25/24 Items for Information:

- a) **Receipt of Instavolt Profit Certificate for the year ending 31st December 2023** – an explanation of this as given and was received.
- b) **To note S106 monies relating to 22/0464/OUT** - Land At Os 388200 278800 Station Drive – this was displayed and some elements discussed. It was then noted with comments expressed that the parish council's demands on developers should be sent off to Wyre Forest District Council.
- c) To receive and note the approved minutes of the Trust meeting held on 24th October 2023 and the draft minutes of the Churchill & Blakedown Villages Trust meeting held on the 25th January 2024 and to note the next meeting date on 25th April 2024 at 7pm at the Signal Box – **Received and noted.**

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26/24 Planning and Development Control:

a) Planning Application received:

- i) 24/0038/TPO – Land At Os 388019 278570 – The Avenue – To fell and replace Sycamore Tree – Defer to the Tree Officer at Wyre Forest District Council.
- ii) 24/0028/FUL - Castle Ash , Birmingham Road - Demolition of garaging and construction of 3No. dwellings together with detached garaging including replacement garage for Castle Ash – Objection.
- iii) 24/0045/HOU - 33 Lynwood Drive - First floor front extension, increase in height of existing flat roof to side extension and new roof lanterns – No objection.

b) Additional Planning Applications or other Planning Matters:

- i) Land off Station Drive – to approve Cllr Fowler’s Design brief draft to be sent to WFDC Planning Dept – approved (1 abstention).

c) Planning Notifications:

- a. 23/0900/CLP – Common House Farm, Crown Lane – Lawful development certificate for the proposed construction of an Outbuilding – Granted.
- b. 23/0872/CLP – Ismere Grange, Beechtree Lane – Proposed replacement of a swimming pool enclosure – Granted.
- c. 22/0464/OUT - Land At Os 388200 278800 Station Drive - Outline Application with Access (all other matters reserved) for Residential Development (including associated ancillary matters) and Reservation of Land for Railway Station Related Car Parking (subject to future need assessment) – Approval.
- d. 23/0912/FUL – 75 Belbroughton Road – Formation of a dropped kerb – Granted.

27/24 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 £8,932.61
- c. Lloyds Business Instant Access Account £23,271.95

b) To approve the accounts for February 2024, (as per schedule) – The lead councillor for finance proposed approval of the February accounts and they were **unanimously approved and signed**.

c) To receive and approve the bank reconciliation to 4th February 2024 – The clerk stated that copies of the bank statements are with the bank reconciliation. The bank reconciliation was **unanimously approved and signed**.

d) To consider approval of the draft Reserves Policy – this was displayed and after some brief comments this was **approved unanimously**.

e) To consider and approve the Reserves Statement for the year 2024-25 including formal approval of creating earmarked reserves for the purpose of a car park sinking fund and to consider the clerk’s recommendations to have no more than 9 months of the value of the year’s net Revenue Expenditure, i.e. £42,028, in General Reserves – this was displayed and after some brief comments, this was **approved unanimously**.

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- f) **To approve movement of £2,500 from Unity Trust to Lloyds Business Instant Access Account – Earmarked reserves, before year end – after a short discussion, this was approved unanimously.**

28/24 Clerk’s Report: This had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. Point No 5 was picked up and the clerk was asked to go back to WFDC to query again the charging of the trade waste bins and report back to council. Point No. 6 – Cllr Fowler volunteered to attend as it was felt that a representative from the PC needs to be present.

29/24 Councillor’s Reports and items for future agendas: Neighbourhood Plan review

30/24 Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 12th March, 2024 commencing at 7.00pm

31/24 To consider the exclusion of the public and press in the public interest, due to staffing matters and data protection, for consideration of the following item:-

A vote was taken and it was **resolved** to enter into private session. The public left the room and the following business was transacted:

- a. Co-option of a councillor – this was moved up the agenda and it was **resolved (all in favour)** to co-opt Martin Hickman onto the council.
- b. Review of clerk’s pay and hours.

The clerk left the room whilst the following was discussed and decided.

- i. Review of the clerk’s salary & hours from 01/03/24 – **approved.**
- ii. Pay clerk for 55 hours overtime over 6 payments – **approved.**

Signed.....

(Chair to Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council)

Dated 12th March 2024

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Public Participation - 13th February 2024 – Notes of discussions

The chair reminded members of the public that the total time allowed for public participation in standing orders is 15 minutes, for matters on the agenda, and a maximum of 3 minutes would be allowed for each representation, due to the meeting being a busy one. The representations made are not for debate and so if necessary, responses will be by email.

Agenda Item 11a,ii

Mr Deem of Forge Lane reported his comments on the Castle Ash application to the meeting expressing his concern for the impact of the development on the neighboring properties being right at the back of Forge Lane. The area is private and has historical value with idyllic views and trees; it is a habitat for wildlife and an area containing 3 pools. The proposed development is in the back land of an existing property, it is hard to justify. I have grave concerns for the proposed buildings, they are two-story upside-down, full width to the boundaries with balconies and bi-fold doors. There will be an impact on myself right at the end of my garden. The general impact and suitability of properties needs consideration.

Agenda Item 9c

Mr Handford of the local wildlife group had been invited to work with the parish council on the response to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Issues and Options consultation. He gave some headline points and ideas concerning the area. Mr Handford will send the list of points to the clerk.

General

A resident reported concerns regarding the following:

- 2 grassed areas on Stakenbridge Lane
- A container in Broome Lane
- A tree sawn up on Cutthroat Lane is still there.
- An electric sign has gone from private fence.
- A grant was given to a Christmas party – how many people went?
- Bench on Birmingham Road has been damaged.
- Tree debris on Village Green has been there for 21 days.
- No minutes of the meeting are available for me to read.