

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

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

PRESENT: Chair - Cllr Sue Fowler; Cllrs, Lucy Chawner; Martin Hickman; Bryony Hayward; Brian Hession; Jim Long; Claire Wood;

In attendance: District Councillor – Robin Drew; 2 members of the public; PCSO Kate Easthope; PC Ryan Bridgewood; Parish Clerk – Louise Sahota.

47/24 Chair’s Opening Remarks: The Chair opened the meeting to speak about Cllr Benney leaving the council due to moving outside of the Parish. A query was raised about this by the District Councillor, Robin Drew because Richard had been elected on to the council in 2023, this may not be the case. The clerk will find out the ruling on this.

48/24 Apologies: Cllr Raggett (accepted).

49/24 Declarations of Interest: Cllr Long declared a DPI on agenda item 9d stating that he didn’t know this was going to be on the agenda.

Cllr Long declared an ODI on agenda item 11a.ii. due to knowing the applicant.

50/24 Community Policing:

- a) **To receive report from the Beat Officer/CSO** – A police report had been received by the Clerk and was displayed at the meeting. Vehicle crime is a concern in the local area and the police are also working on the crackdown on the use of e-scooters by the underaged. A young person was seen in Blakedown but got away. Teenagers are often seen to be wearing balaclava & ski goggles to hide their age. E-scooters that are battery operated and mechanically propelled are illegal on the road – they require road tax, insurance, and a driving license. The police are educating on the matter and going into schools.

The report also highlighted Op-Prospero where bogus callers are pretending to be police officers. Residents are reminded not to give out personal details and bank details.

The parish council were advised by the PCSO to include Vehicle Crime in the priorities for the local area due to an attempted theft in Belbroughton Road. Unfortunately, there is no evidence on CCTV. Residents are reminded to be aware, not to leave any valuables in the car and to use a steering lock.

Some questions were answered about e-Scooters.

- b) **To decide on priorities for the next quarter – April to June 24** – No agreement was made on this.

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

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Cllr Wood joined the meeting.

51/24 Dispensations: None.

52/24 Minutes: A member proposed approval of the minutes of the meeting on the 12th March 2024 subject to the amendments that had been circulated by email on 12/03/24. The amended minutes were displayed, they were seconded, and **approved (all in favour)**.

53/24 District and County Council Matters: The district council report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was displayed. District councillor, Robin Drew reported that there were no outstanding issues in the parish and to contact him if anything arises. There are elections in Wyre Forest with elections in Kidderminster and for the Police and Crime Commissioner for which there are 5 candidates; elections are on the 2nd May.

The county councillor's report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was displayed ready for questions on it. Cllr Hayward asked Cllr Drew to change a Footpath sign that is off Churchill Lane, 150 yards down from the crossroads by Patricia Cottage. Cllr Drew said he would investigate this.

The cones that had been on the Birmingham Road when travelling towards Kidderminster, that pushed traffic over and were dangerous, had been reported and dealt with.

A query was raised about the narrowness of Churchill Lane around the golf club entrance, in that if large commercial vehicles are passing another vehicle, they can be pushed into the mud on the other side. Branches are also hitting the cars. Cllr Drew will have a look into this tomorrow and produce a report for Cllr Hart.

The mobile speed camera being parked in the bus stop on the Birmingham Road was mentioned and the obstruction it causes, instead of being parked on the pad especially allocated for this vehicle.

Thanks were given by the council to Cllr Drew.

54/24 Traffic Issues: Update on Highways developments and on speed control measures:

A question was raised about the VAS sign on Rocky Lane being repaired – it has a missing solar panel. The chair said that we need to find the technical details and perhaps look back in records to find the purchase.

Another query was raised regarding the new Lengthsman and safety for him on the highway particularly where roads above 30mph sharply become a 30mph speed limit, such as at Churchill crossroads. Cllr Drew responded that the Lengthsman should be wearing Hi Vis PPE, be equipped with two high cones, a flashing beacon on the vehicle and magnetic chevrons for the vehicle.

55/24 Items for consideration:

- a) **To ratify a predetermination made by a majority e-vote by members on the 25th March 2024, on the appointment of Churchill Gardening Services as the parish**

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Lengthsman, on a contract for services basis from 1st April 2024 – ratified (all in favour).

- b) **To approve the draft revised Lengthsman Contract for 2024/25** – Terms regarding PPE have been added to the contract and the contract will be updated to dates 2024/25 – **approved (all in favour).**
- c) **To decide on the format of the Annual Parish Meeting** – the clerk had circulated some ideas prior to the meeting together with notifying that the County and District Councillors are preparing reports. After some discussion and sharing of ideas, it was **decided** that the Neighbourhood Plan review would be covered - inviting ideas from residents; and that local groups would be invited; that we would let the police know and invite them. Refreshments will also be available.
- d) **Community shop/post office** – Cllr Long left the meeting for this item. Cllr Chawner mentioned that the parish stands to lose the post office and there is a small window for applying to the community fund. The matter of the shop being up for sale/rent was discussed. It was **decided** that this is not a matter that the parish council should get involved in due to the commitment required. However, it was **decided** that the parish council would get in touch with Clent to draw from their knowledge and experience of having a community shop there and ask them to speak at the Annual Parish meeting and if positive, this would be added to the APM agenda.

56/24 Items for Information:

- a) **Event for the late Derek Jackson** – The ex-signalman for Blakedown station had died and the family are honoring a 90th birthday event that was due to take place, that they will be holding in the Signal Box on Friday 26th April at 12 o'clock midday. The parish council are invited.
- b) **Event at the Signal Box with West Midlands Rail Partnership** – The Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership and West Midlands Railway are attending at 11am on the 16th May 24, for the unveiling of the new plaque that has been placed on the replica running in board. All members are invited for a photo opportunity. The Signal Box is also being furnished with a new tapestry at the event.
- c) **History Fayre @ Clent Parish Hall** – to be held on Saturday 15th June 24 from 10am to 4pm is an event being run jointly by the Historical Societies of Churchill & Blakedown, Hagley and Clent and is an opportunity to promote the villages and the history of each. All are welcome.

57/24 Planning and Development Control:

- a) **Planning Application received:**
 - i) 24/0157/HOU – 21 Wannerton Road – Formation of a pitched roof to existing garage, creation of porch and canopy to front and external alterations – no objection.
 - ii) 24/0045/HOU – 33 Lynwood Drive - Proposed two storey side extension (revision) – no objection.
- b) **Additional Planning Applications or other Planning Matters:**
 - i) Land off Station Drive – No further updates were brought to the meeting.
- c) **Planning Notifications:**

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- a. 24/0028/FUL – Castle Ash, Birmingham Road – Demolition of garaging and construction of 3 no. dwellings together with detached garaging including replacement garage for Castle Ash – Refused.
- b. 23/0921/TCA – The Great Barn, Churchill Lane - Walnut Tree - Reduce crown to previous points and reshape – Granted.

58/24 Financial Report and Payment of Accounts:

- a) **Members noted Bank Balances as of 4th April 2024:**
 - a. Lloyds Treasurers Account - £2,246.56
 - b. Unity Trust Treasurers Account - £5,649.27
 - c. Lloyds Business Instant Access Account - £24,096.07
- b) **To approve the accounts for April 2024, (as per schedule)** – There were no questions and the April accounts were **approved and signed**.
- c) **To receive and approve the bank reconciliation for 1st April 23 to 31st March 24** - The bank reconciliation had been circulated prior to the meeting and was displayed. The clerk stated that copies of the bank statements are with the bank reconciliation. There were no questions and the bank reconciliation was **approved and signed**.
- d) **To receive and approve the bank reconciliation to 4th April 24** – The bank reconciliation had been circulated prior to the meeting and was displayed. The clerk stated that copies of the bank statements are with the bank reconciliation. There were no questions, and the bank reconciliation was **approved and signed**.
- e) **To receive the Qtr 4 (end of year) report** – The report had been circulated prior to the meeting. No questions were raised.

59/24 Clerk's Report: This had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting and was displayed. The clerk went through the report with special mention of the following: -

- The four contracts have been compiled now – the Chair mentioned that the contract for the car park maintenance will come from the ear marked reserves.
- Thanks were read out from The Friends of Churchill Church for the grant.
- Two insurance claims are underway for the damage to the lighting column in Mill Close and the damage to the bench on the Birmingham Road.
- It was mentioned that the bins and benches in the parish look tatty. A discussion was had regarding the bins in the parish and whether the parish council should buy new ones or paint/re-letter the existing bins. Cllr Hession agreed to:
 - Research with the contractor any issues with the bins;
 - Look into the cost of repairing bins with/without lettering 'v' cost of buying new bins.
- The bollards have now been installed on the memorial green.
- The gully on Churchill Lane by Bridge Farm is being jetted. The clerk will contact the Environment Agency regarding the waterways in Blakedown and the flooding that is happening on Churchill Lane.

Thanks were given to the clerk for the report.

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60/24 Councillor's Reports and items for future agendas: Neighbourhood Plan review

61/24 Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 14th May, 2024 commencing at 7.00pm

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

Signed.....

(Chair to Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council)

Dated 14th May 2024

Public Participation - 9th April 2024 – Notes of discussion

A resident reported concerns regarding the following:

1. The bollards on the memorial green – are they legal and approved by WCC? The Chair answered 'yes', the specification was sent off to WCC and C&BPC received approval.
2. Precept increase – why the large increase? The chair answered that there had not been an increase in many years before and the parish council is taking on more admin, governance, and tasks because of devolution. The statement on the website states the figures in real terms amounting to an average of around 35p more per week.
3. The seats around the parish are in a state and haven't been painted for 15 years. 3 benches were painted, two of those painted in error as the parish doesn't even own them.
4. Police horses have been seen around the village. Not sure where they are being stabled. The chair acknowledged that this is appreciated.

The resident was thanked for his contribution.