

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council held on Tuesday 14th May, 2024 at Blakedown Sports Pavilion which commenced at 7.00p.m.

PRESENT: Cllr Sue Fowler; Cllrs: Richard Benney; Lucy Chawner; Martin Hickman; Bryony Hayward; Brian Hession; Jim Long; Jo Raggett; Claire Wood.

In attendance: District Councillor – Ian Hardiman; 3 members of the public; PCSO Kate Easthope; Parish Clerk – Louise Sahota.

62/24 Election of Chairman: Cllr Fowler is stepping down. Nominations were received in respect of Cllr Hession and Cllr Benney and both were willing to stand for the role. A vote was taken: 5 for Cllr Hession and 3 for Cllr Benney. Cllr Hession was voted in and thanks were given to Cllr Benney for standing.

63/24 Chairman to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office: Cllr Hession signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

64/24 Apologies: None.

65/24 Election of Vice Chairman: Cllr Wood was nominated and willing to stand. A vote was taken and Cllr Wood was unanimously voted in.

66/24 Chairmans Opening Remarks: Cllr Hession expressed being pleased with the appointment. The PC is at full compliment of members and there is a good mix of people with which the load can be shared more pro-actively due to the effective set of skills. Due to Cllr Hession and other members working full time hours, the clerk will help by organizing others to step in where time is limited.

67/24 Declarations of Interest: Cllr Chawner declared a DPI on agenda item 16a)a. due to it being a relatives property.

68/24 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. Due to the absence of the police at the meeting, the report was acknowledged and noted.

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

69/24 Dispensations: None.

70/24 Minutes – The clerk confirmed that even though the priorities hadn't been confirmed at the previous meeting, the clerk had informed the police to continue with the current priorities. Another member had highlighted an error to the clerk on minute no 56/24. Cllr Benney had queried how it should be minuted that he had been seated in the public gallery and the council

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explained that the situation had been dealt with in minute number 47/24. The amended minutes were displayed, they were seconded, and **approved (all in favour)**.

71/24 To decide on the appointment of a lead councillor for the following areas of council business:

- Finance – Cllr Benney was willing to continue in this lead councillor role – **agreed (all in favour)**.
- Environment – After a brief discussion, it was agreed that Cllr Fowler would continue in this lead councillor role and that it involves matters of the Neighbourhood Plan and Contracted services – **agreed (all in favour)**.
- Highways – Cllr Hickman was voted **(all in favour)** to be lead councillor.
- Staffing – Cllr Wood was voted to continue in this lead role for staffing **(all in favour)**.
- Planning – Cllr Raggett was voted to continue in this lead role for planning **(all in favour)**.

72/24 Community Policing:

- a) **To receive report from the Beat Officer/CSO** – PCSO Kate Easthope had joined the meeting and the chairman gave opportunity for the report in person. PCSO Easthope apologized for being late due to having been at a stabbing incident in Kidderminster. To report on Churchill and Blakedown: there has been no calls regarding ASB but the police are still keeping up with patrols. There has been an increase in the last two weeks of Vehicle Crime in Wyre Forest involving car key burglaries. Advice to residents is install a steering lock, this slows the thieves down and have Ghost immobilizers fitted. Don't leave valuables in vehicles. A member asked the police about the installation of bleed kits in the area and the police confirmed that they don't provide them. Questions were answered with reference to the recent stabbing incident at a pub in Hagley and the incident in Kidderminster near the college. The police stated that this week is Knife Awareness week.

73/24 Appointment of members to existing working parties and further working parties and arrangements for reporting back - To receive nominations and decide on members to the following Working Parties:-

- a) Finance Working Party – It was **decided (all in favour)** that Cllrs: Benney, Hayward, Fowler, & Long would form this working party.
- b) Staffing Working Party - It was **decided (all in favour)** that Cllrs: Wood, Benney, Hayward would form this working party.
- c) Neighbourhood Plan Working Party – It was **decided (all in favour)** that Cllrs: Fowler, Long, Raggett & Chawner would form this working party.
- d) Localism working party – After some discussion about Localism, it's origin and meaning, it was **decided (all in favour)** that Cllrs: Fowler, Hayward & Hickman would form this working party.
- e) Planning working party – After some discussion, it was **decided** that this working party would be abolished as the lead councillor for planning can pick up matters to do with planning, especially during the month of August when there is no meeting, but applications require commenting on.

It was stated that the chair of the parish council is a member of all working parties.

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74/24 To decide on the appointment of representatives to serve on other bodies –

- a) Wyre Forest Area CALC – It was **decided** that Cllrs Benney & Long will serve on this body. There are meetings run by CALC just for the Chair and they are in the evening.
- b) Churchill and Blakedown Sports Centre Working party – It was **decided** that Cllr Hession would represent the parish on this committee.
- c) PACT Representative and Police Liaison – It was **decided** that Cllr Raggett would represent the parish council with the police.
- d) Footpaths Officer with WCC – Cllr Hickman is interested in this role and the clerk will provide Cllr Hickman with a pack about the role, from WCC – **all in favour**.

A member stated that human excrement had been found coming out of the drain near Churchill crossroads. It had been reported to WFDC.

75/24 District and County Council Matters:

The district council report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was displayed. District councillor, Ian Hardiman reported that the Worcester Street is coming on well with a car park being used for housing. An outdoor cinema wouldn't be committed to but hopeful that the land will be put to good use. Housing is best placed there and there is good capacity which is better than seeing empty shops.

The county councillor's report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was displayed and Cllr Hardiman asked for questions on it. Points 1 and 4 were mentioned as being ongoing.

Thanks were given by the council to Cllr Drew.

76/24 Parish Council Policies: To adopt the draft policies & procedures as follows:-

- a. Data Protection Policy
- b. Data Retention Policy
- c. Email contact Privacy Notice
- d. General Privacy Notice
- e. Staff Privacy Notice

These documents had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting and some positive comments were made as to their content and clarity. There was a question about their purpose and it was answered that these policies deal with the protection of sensitive and personal data only. All the documents were adopted by the council (**all in favour**) and thanks were given to the clerk for this piece of work.

77/24 Items for consideration:

- a) **To receive the C&BPC – Neighbourhood Plan Review Support Package document from Kirkwells and approve to commence with application for grant funding from Locality** – Cllr Fowler reported that she had contacted Kirkwells who had been instrumental in the compilation of the existing Neighbourhood Plan and the same key people were still there. A working party

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meeting had taken place with Lisa Hill and involving Rob Handford and Kevin Langford which was very useful. They focused in on pre-occupation of the C&B Neighbourhood Plan considering proposed development sites at surrounding areas: Hurcott Lane, Lea Castle at Ismere and the demands upon Bromsgrove District Council affecting Hagley. The information in the plan needs to be strengthened to defend us against Kidderminster and Hagley development and C&BPC needs to be careful how it takes the NP forward. It is thought that there will be a working party meeting in advance of a meeting with Kirkwells, to refine thoughts first.

Hagley have undertaken a proprietary study to gather data on biodiversity which then layers the terrain on a mapping system. There is a blue and green infrastructure. They are looking to build on the work they do into Churchill and Blakedown to protect the infrastructure.

A proposal was made by Cllr Fowler to appoint Kirkwells on the basis that Kirkwells find the funding – this was unanimously approved. A working party meeting will be called to summarise and scope the works for approval at a subsequent PC meeting.

Some questions were raised regarding opening this out to residents. It was answered that the NP is on the agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting. It was mentioned that the public meeting will be used for fact finding. The newsletter has gone out and we will be asking for people who can help.

78/24 Planning and Development Control:

a) Planning Application received:

a. 24/0086/HOU - Newbury House , 1A Roxall Close - Garage conversion to facilitate self- contained annex – Cllr Chawner left the meeting room whilst this item was discussed and decided. The council voted on a No objection.

Cllr Chawner re-joined the meeting.

b. 24/0218/LBC – St James Church, Birmingham Road – Proposed alteration to existing Bell Tower roof detail – No objection – WFDC should be told that the Heritage Statement contains the wrong map.

b) Additional Planning Applications or other Planning Matters:

i) Land off Station Drive – A member stated that the planning department were due to come to this meeting and if the PC is going to make comments, they should be made appropriately to hold the developer accountable. A discussion was held about the design brief that was sent to WFDC Planning Dept.

Action: The clerk was asked to circulate the planning brief document that was sent to WFDC Planning Dept.

c) Planning Notifications:

a) 24/0090/HOU – Woodcroft Barn, Waggon Lane, Ismere – Construction of an attached single garage – Granted.

b) 23/0897/PNR – Barn at OS387751 277871 New Wood Lane, Blakedown – Prior Notification of a Change of use of an agricultural building to 1 dwelling – Granted.

c) 24/0045/HOU – 33 Lynwood Drive – Proposed two storey side extension – Granted.

These were taken as noted by the council.

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79/24 Financial Report and Payment of Accounts:

a. To note the bank balances at 9th May 2024:-

Lloyds Treasurers Account (Reserves) -	£24,120.96
Unity Trust Treasurers Account -	£25,614.51
Lloyds Business Instant Access Account (Signal Box)	£2,140.80

These balances were taken as noted.

- b. To approve the accounts for May, as per receipts and payments schedule presented – it was proposed that these be approved as they were as expected - **approved and signed.**
- c. To receive and sign off the bank reconciliation to 9th May, 2024 – **approved and signed.**
- d. To receive the Internal auditors report and approve to implement the recommendations – The council received the report and thanked the clerk for the good work on this with getting all the recommendations of the previous report, closed. The council has a good bill of health.
- e. To approve Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, the Annual Governance Statement for financial year to 31st March 2024 – this was displayed and the assertions were considered one by one. All were positive except for no 4 as the appropriate time for the period of the exercise of public rights was not at the correct length of time last year. This was **approved, signed and dated.**
- f. To approve section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, the Annual Accounting Statements for financial year to 31st March 2024 – the figures were gone through line by line. There was a discussion about the figure for the assets and a question raised as to whether the signal box should be valued at a proxy figure of £1 because it was gifted to the PC by Network Rail. The clerk advised that the figure remain as it is until further clarity can be sought in the current year. This document was then **approved, signed and dated.**
- g. To make the appointment of DKE Audit Services to carry out the internal audit for 2024/25 – **approved.**

80/24 Insurance policy – to confirm arrangements for insurance cover are in place in respect of all insurable risks – it was confirmed by the clerk that insurance is in place for all insurable risks.

81/24 Asset Register – to review the Asset Register for 23/24 – This was displayed and approved, not withstanding review needed as recorded in minute 79/24f (all in favour).

82/24 Clerk's Report: This had been circulated to all councilors prior to the meeting and was displayed. The clerk went through the report and there was mention/updates on the following: -

New Items

1. Cllr Hickman has completed the New Councillor Training with CALC.
2. Station Adoption: There are 12 helpers. Our role is to facilitate the group setup and pass the details over to Network Rail.
3. Natural Networks Grant – because the parish council owns the land freehold, the application should come from the PC. The Historical Society will work with the Trust on the implementation of the works.

On going Items

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1. The VAS is on order for Stakenbridge Lane, the pole is in situ ready.
2. Bins review: Send contact details of the contractor over to Cllr Hession.
3. Pauline Hayward memorial bench: The work is nearly complete – by next Monday/Tuesday.
4. Dog Waste bag dispensers – all disposed of now.
5. Insurance on bench – see where we get with the claim.
6. Station Drive parking – there is no delineation.
7. Flooding at Bridge Farm and pool adjacent to Birmingham Road – riparian owners.
8. Localism meeting – The clerk is to ask for a statement of intent and agenda before the council will engage with WFDC.

Thanks were given to the clerk for the report.

83/24 Councillor's Reports and items for future agendas: Purchase of Bleed Kits

84/24 Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 11th June, 2024 commencing at 7.00pm

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Signed.....

(Chair to Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council)

Dated 11th June 2024

Public Participation - 14th May 2024 – Notes of discussion

A resident reported the following:

- 1) That he would submitting a Freedom of Information request to the clerk. The clerk cordially informed the resident of the letter that had been given to him before the meeting which may answer his questions, otherwise stating that the resident is very welcome to make an FoI request.
- 2) There are 15 drains blocked in the village. Members informed the resident that the Lengthsman is and will continue reporting these to the clerk.

The resident was thanked for his contribution.