

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

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

PRESENT: Chairman - Cllr Brian Hession; Cllrs, Richard Benney; Sue Fowler; Claire Wood;

In attendance: 1 resident; 2 members of the C&B Wildlife Watch Group; 2 Planning Officers from WFDC; PCSO Rebecca Ruston & PCSO Charlotte Gunn; District Councillor – Robin Drew; 1 resident; Parish Clerk – Louise Harris.

100/24 Chair's Opening Remarks: Vice Chair, Cllr Wood opened the meeting due to the absence of the chairman and didn't make any opening remarks.

101/24 Apologies: Cllrs Chawner; Hayward; Hickman; Long; Raggett.

102/24 Declarations of Interest: None.

103/24 Community Policing:

- a) **To receive report from the Beat Officer/CSO** – The report that had been received from the SNT was displayed and PCSO Ruston gave an update saying:-
There has been a spate of burglaries after a quiet period. A trailer had been stolen from New Wood Lane and there had been an aggravated burglary. Residents are reminded to dial 999 if anything is seen and to sign up to Neighbourhood Matters for updates directly from the police and the parish council urged to keep priorities up to date.

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

104/24 Dispensations: None.

105/24 Minutes: A member proposed approval of the minutes of the meeting on the 11th June 2024. The minutes were displayed, the proposal was seconded, and **approved (all in favour)**.

106/24 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 is nothing to report that is local to the parish.

The county councillor's report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was displayed ready for questions on it. The chair of the meeting went through the points one by one, and the following were highlighted:

- Point 3 – The clerk confirmed that an advert had been put up on the PC's Website & Facebook page and the Blakedown Churchill News Facebook group.
- Point 7 – The bollards on the Birmingham Road had been repaired.
- Point 14 – There are more drains that need to be addressed moving forward as pointed out by the resident.

Initials_____

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

A member asked Cllr Drew about point no 5 – the narrowness of the lane at 10 Churchill Lane expressing that the approach to implement SLOW signage at either end of the area was feeble because the road there is one-way, there is no room for two way passing. Cllr Drew said he would take the comments back to Cllr Hart.

Thanks were given by the council to Cllr Drew.

107/24 Traffic Issues: Update on Highways developments and on speed control measures: None.

108/24 Items for consideration:

- a) **Approval to grant Churchill & Blakedown Recreation Centre £201.60 to cover the cost of the RoSPA play area annual inspection** - The item's agenda briefing had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting by the clerk together with the grant application form. A member gave some background information saying that despite the play equipment not belonging to the parish council, the PC had resulted in taking on responsibility for it in previous years by taking on the insurance and organizing the RoSPA inspections. This had been resolved with the Sports Committee because the liability for this play equipment lies with them; they were asking for a grant to cover the cost.

APPROVED (ALL IN FAVOUR).

Cllr Hession joined the meeting and Cllr Wood continued to chair the meeting.

- b) **WFDC funding pot to support town/parish council events** – The item's agenda briefing had been circulated by the clerk to all members prior to the meeting. There was a short discussion about this being an Events funding pot and that the parish council could consider having a Sports Day in the future. The clerk was asked to let WFDC know about the Blakedown Village Supper.
- c) **Decide on the most suitable option from 3 estimates obtained for new bench to replace damaged and disposed bench, on Birmingham Road** – The item's agenda briefing had been circulated by the clerk to all members prior to the meeting and the three options with costs were displayed. After a short discussion, **Option C was AGREED on** as it was a good price and the bench came with a 15-year guarantee.
- d) **Approve the plan for the biodiversity enhancement works & seating spaces at the Signal Box land as submitted by Natural Networks** – The report from Natural Networks was circulated to all members prior to the meeting. NN had met onsite with Cllrs Fowler & Long, the clerk and a member of the C&B Wildlife Watch group to discuss the idea to improving the area for biodiversity. The report reflects what was discussed at the meeting and contained some good ideas. NN will fund 70% of the works and further funding will be sought or the PC will make a grant. Members' questions were answered, the map of the area was shown, and some points explained.
A member proposed to proceed in principle with the report and to getting quotes for the work and obtaining the grant – **APPROVED (ALL IN FAVOUR).**
Thanks were given to the C&B Wildlife Watch group.
- e) **To adopt the Local Government Association Councillor Code of Conduct 2020, as circulated** – The clerk stated that she didn't think this, the most recent code of conduct, had been adopted by this council because the paragraph references in the notation of item 3d on the agenda had not been updated. The clerk was asked to speak to CALC to

Initials_____

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

investigate if there had been a point of controversy in the document that had hindered the parish council from adopting it.

- f) **To accept the quote from Westcotec to repair the VAS at Rocky Lane, under Financial Regulation 11.1a)iii. And/or vi. due to being a repair to a proprietary item** – A quotation from Westcotec had been circulated prior to the meeting and was displayed. After a short discussion, it was **APPROVED** to order the supply and fit of a new solar panel from Westcotec.
- g) **Approve to make a grant to St James the Great, Churchill and St James the Great, Blakedown for assistance toward cost of grass cutting in open churchyards at both sites, in the year 2024/25** – The grant application form and all the corresponding attachments had been circulated prior to the meeting with an agenda briefing. Some history of the church above being funded for the churchyard maintenance was given and a discussion held regarding the grant making policy, possibly setting a precedence for future years and the amount to grant. It was noted that the copy of the finances received as part of the application from the church, represented them as ‘standing still’. It was confirmed by the clerk that the parish council has powers to give to the church towards these works following the change in legislation in December 2023 when the 1984 Local Government Act was amended by the Levelling Up Act to allow general powers in other legislation to be used for Church property, e.g. providing maintenance for open churchyards (Local Government Act 1972 214(6), and although it has power, it is not its duty. After this discussion, it was **APPROVED to make a grant of £500 (all in favour).**
- h) **Matters with Public Right of Way over railway line – Wannerton Road to Birmingham Road – footpath 531B** – Cllr Wood led on this item stating that she had been approached by a resident asking if the parish council has a view on this crossing. After some discussion it was concluded that the PC does not have an issue with the crossing. It is a handy cut through and there is a good line of sight, and it should be kept. Cllr Wood will feedback to the resident.

109/24 Items for Information:

- a) **The AGAR has now been submitted to the external auditors – PKF Littlejohn** – the clerk updated the council saying that the submission had been acknowledged and that the AGAR was now in a queue for being audited. AGAR is acronym for Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- b) **This parish council is now in the Period of Exercise of Public Rights to view the accounts – 30 working days from 14th June 24 to 25th July 24 inclusive** - The clerk confirmed that the full 30 working days had been included this year.
- c) **Strengthening Communities Town and Parish Councils’ conference** – Cllr Fowler had attended the conference and gave the following report: The event was not well attended. Representations were made by: West Mercia Police Inspector, Dave King; Steve Aston – Digital Infrastructure; County Councillor, Karen May; John Fraser – WCC Highways; Worcestershire Regulatory Services; Citizens Advice. The Fire Service did not arrive. Topics discussed were PC’s being more pro-active, transparency being important, PC websites, communities reducing isolation. Cllr Fowler was thanked for attending.

110/24 Planning and Development Control:

- a) **Planning Application received:**

Initials_____

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

- i. 24/0321/HOU - High Bank House, Birmingham Road - Extensions and alterations including single storey rear extension, first floor side extension and raise ridgeline of existing roof – NO OBJECTION.
- ii. 24/0421/S73 – Land to the rear, 5 Mill Lane - Variation to Condition 2 (approved plans) of Planning Permission: 21/0598/FUL – WFDC TO PROVIDE CLARITY ON WHAT THE CHANGES ARE FOR.
- iii. 24/0428/TPO - 25 Brookside Way - Removal of tree – Comments : It would appear that the applicant has not taken any expert arboriculture advice as there is no report. The tree is also TPO'd and in a conservation area.

b) Additional Planning Applications or other Planning Matters:

- i) **Land off Station Drive – Representation Helen Hawkes, Planning Manager and Paul Allen, Tree and Biodiversity Officer, from WFDC Planning Department –** WFDC officers stated that outline planning application had been granted for the site in January 24 as the site had been allocated for housing in the WFDC Local Plan with land safeguarded for car parking. WFDC have been working with the developer to front load discussions with requirements according to the Local Plan, Housing Needs Survey and the C&B Neighbourhood Plan. An indicative drawing had been reached and was shown to members and discussions were held and questions were answered. It was acknowledged as being in line with the aspirations of the neighbourhood plan. The developer is co-operative, and a full application will be coming back to C&BPC for consultation in due course.

c) Planning Notifications:

- i. **24/0303/TPO - 12 Mill Close -** Reduction of the overall height and canopy of the tree to include a crown lift, to afford more light to No. 12 and adjacent properties – Refused.

111/24 Financial Report and Payment of Accounts:

a) Members noted the Bank Balances as at 4th July 2024:

Lloyds Treasurers Account (PC account used for Villages Trust)	£2,108.55
Unity Trust Treasurers Account (PC Current Account)	£17,573.58
Lloyds Business Instant Access Account (PC Reserves)	£25,678.51
TOTAL FUNDS AT BANK AT 4TH JULY 2024	£45,360.64

- b) To approve the accounts for July 2024 (as per schedule) – After some items were explained by the clerk, the accounts were **APPROVED and SIGNED**.
- c) To receive and approve the bank reconciliation to 4th July 24 – The clerk explained that the bank statements had been presented to the lead councillor for finance. There were no questions, and the bank reconciliation was **APPROVED and SIGNED**.
- d) To receive the Qtr 1 Budget report for the year 2024-25 – This report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was displayed. The clerk stated that the quarterly expense is tracking in accordance with the budget. There were no questions asked.

Initials_____

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

112/24 Clerk's Report: This had been circulated to all councilors prior to the meeting and was displayed. The clerk updated the meeting paying particular attention to the following:-

New Items: Item 2 - War Memorial Bollards – The lengthsman, who cuts this area at his own cost, has straightened up the bollards, as requested at the last meeting.

Item 3 - Replacement lighting column and lantern – The damaged and removed lighting column in Mill Close has now been replaced at a cost of £1250.00 plus VAT. This cost covers the entire job and has been reclaimed from the third party who damaged the lighting column. Financial regulation 11.1a)iii covers the provision of this item without 3 quotes as the work was undertaken in an emergency situation.

Item 4 - Blakedown sign on A456 – posts corroding at base – I have reported this to Cllr Hart.

Item 5 - New blue 'P' sign, for both directions, to car park – Asked for by Cllr Long, I have asked Cllr Hart who has said he will investigate why it was removed and see about replacing it. Is this something the PC want the clerk to continue to pursue? Members were not keen to have the sign replaced due to there being a lot of signage in the vicinity. The car park is well used.

Item 7 - Grass area around the Pound/ Stakenbridge Lane – Churchill & Blakedown Gardening Services is now cutting the grass area around the Pound, strimming the area around the bench on Stakenbridge Lane and cutting the War Memorial Green – all as a goodwill gesture to the parish. I am told that a family from Ismere are looking after the Pound – keeping the toys clean and the area inside the Pound.

Ongoing Items: Item 2 – Parish Bins - A discussion was held about the bins. The contractor will only empty overflowing bins at an additional cost on instruction from the parish council.

Item 2 – Memorial plaque for the late Pauline Hayward – This is now complete but there are some adjustments to be made to the frame at the rear and at the front to remove the trip hazard – the clerk pointed out to the council that the trip hazard should be removed asap.

Item 3 - Blakedown Railway Station Adoption – Following the last meeting, Fraser Pithie has emailed Cllr Hession asking for a meeting on site to discuss the initiative further. Cllr Hession has made contact and whilst there was an initial response from Fraser, no contact was made regarding a date for a meeting. The clerk will make contact.

Item 4 - Localism –Cllrs Fowler and Long and the clerk will be attending a meeting on 30th July with WFDC - Cabinet Member Cllr. Tracey Onslow, Steve Brant Head of Community & Environment Services and Kathryn Underhill Community & Strategic Projects Manager.

The clerk also reminded the council that there is a Churchill and Blakedown Villages Trust meeting on Thursday 25th July 2024 and three members are required to attend for it to be quorate.

Thanks were given to the clerk for the report.

113/24 Councillor's Reports and items for future agendas: None.

114/24 Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 10th September, 2024 commencing at 7.00pm

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Initials_____

CHURCHILL AND BLAKEDOWN PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Signed.....

(Chair to Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council)

Dated 10th September 2024

Public Participation - 9th July 2024 – Notes of discussion

A resident reported concerns regarding the following:

1. Drains on Birmingham Road are blocked.
2. Bollards on the Birmingham Road have been repaired.
3. Grass cutting on Wheatmill Close should not be undertaken from kerb to property
4. Weed killing needs to be undertaken in Roxall Close and Brookside.

The resident was thanked for his contribution.

The two members of the Churchill and Blakedown Wildlife Watch group confirmed, subject to the parish council's approval to proceed as is on the agenda tonight, that they are happy to help implement and manage the changes at the Signal Box land in consultation with the parish council as per the Natural Networks biodiversity assessment report/grant offer, if the application is successful, all being well going forward, to maintain the site and with no further costs to the parish council.

The members were thanked for their comments.

Initials_____