

VOWCHURCH GROUP PARISH COUNCIL
Michaelchurch Escley, Newton, St Margarets, Turnastone, Vowchurch

**Minutes of the Vowchurch Group Parish Council meeting held on
 Thursday 19th September 2019 at 7.30pm in Vowchurch & Turnastone Memorial Hall**

PRESENT – Mr P Mason (Chair), Mr S Cole, Mr E Williams, Mr H Franklin, Ms E May and Mr T Williams.

IN ATTENDANCE – Mrs L Cowles (Clerk), Mr T Griffiths (Lengthsman), PCSO Fiona Witcher and four members of the public.

- 1. ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Mr A Picton, Mr J Kernahan, Mr R Lloyd, Ward Councillor Peter Jinman and Mr N Lewis (Footpaths Officer).
- 2. RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & CONSIDER ANY WRITTEN APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION** – Mr E Williams declared a non-disclosable interest in agenda item 7.4 and Mr T Williams declared a non-disclosable interest in agenda item 7.2; the declarations book was signed accordingly. There were no written applications for dispensation.
- 3. ADOPT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ORDINARY MEETING** – 15th August 2019 – The minutes were signed as a true and accurate record.
- 4. OPEN DISCUSSION** – For residents to raise local matters – The Chair of the Black Mountains & Golden Valley Bridleway Access Group was present and confirmed that the group were very happy to support the proposed diversion of restricted Byways ME38 and CZ46 (part). She has walked the route and been in contact with Balfour Beatty who have advised that if the proposed changes go ahead they are hoping to get the route open by next summer if possible.

The Parish Council confirmed to a local resident present that they had objected to the diversion order of public footpaths VO57 & VO53(part) in Vowchurch. The resident confirmed that they had also objected and were aware that three other parties had also objected. Having received a letter from Balfour Beatty asking whether they would consider withdrawing their objections they confirmed they were not minded to do so. The Parish Council explained that they have also received correspondence from Balfour Beatty but having only received the letter today it will be reviewed by the Councillors and discussed at the next Parish Council meeting In October.

A local resident enquired whether the Parish Council were aware of the applications for modifications to the Definitive Map in Vowchurch at Berrington Lane. The Parish Council confirmed that they were aware of the applications and had been in touch with the Rambler Association who are the applicants. They have made the application by the way of historical evidence. A deadline has been established for modifications which use documentary evidence and after 2026 no further modifications can be considered. The Ramblers have embarked on a national campaign to recover these lost ways before the deadline. Herefordshire Council has also advised the Parish Council that this will take sometime and as yet there has been no official notice. Another local resident had contacted Mr Evan William prior to the meeting to advise that he did sometime use this lane to move his sheep and followed on his quad. The Chairman advised that there will be plenty of opportunity for public discussion before any order is passed.

It was also confirmed that some members of the Parish Council were aware that the refuse lorry has refused to collect from Vowchurch Common because of the state of the road and overhanging trees. The Clerk confirmed that she has spoken to the Locality Steward who has highlighted two defects and written to three landowners requesting that within 14 days the hedges are cut back to an appropriate height for clearance. He has also advised the contractor that he feels the road is safe. He has asked for a Highway Engineer to attend and confirm but this will not occur until next week.

5. REPORTS

- 5.1 Local Police –** PCSO Fiona Witcher reported that PC Jeff Rouse has now started work in the area. You can now report incident online via the West Mercia Police website. This facility has only been available since last week but is hoped that it will alleviate some pressure on the phone lines. There have been no reported crimes in the parish.
- 5.2 Ward Councillor –** Ward Councillor Peter Jinman was unable to attend the meeting but reported through the Clerk that the request to look at the speed reduction on the B4348 had moved up one place in the ratings. This is not because of slow progress but because of the 15 or so that are decided each year others have leapfrogged it in terms of determined need. He has commented on this. It was agreed that the Clerk should follow him up on this.
- 5.3 Lengthsman report –** Terry Griffiths reported that all scheduled maintenance had been completed. The winter schedule will begin next month which will be more intense as clearing every drain ready for the winter season. Defect reported:
- U75403 junction with C1206 – Road gully blocked with tarmac spilt into it by resurfacing contractors, this is causing surface water from a ditch further up the road to run down into the main road.
- C1206, Michaelchurch Escley (west side of bridge) – Surface water is running down the road from water which is probably a spring under the road. Welsh Water have investigated in the past and disowned the issue. A drainage trench down the side of the road edge would help to keep surface water off the steep climb to the crossroads.
- C1206, Michaelchurch Escley (East side of bridge) – During heavy rainfall surface water coming from a break in the drainage pipe in the verge is running down the road flooding a field gateway. This needs a straightforward repair to the pipe to solve this problem.
- U74205 – Near Old House Farm entrance – The ditch opposite the farm entrance is silted up causing surface water to pool on the bend. Clearing approximately 10m of the ditch from the lead would get the water off the road.
- C1205 at The Quakers – The drainage grid in the driveway to the property is blocked causing surface water to run into the road. This grid has been cleared before at public expense on the understanding with the property owner that they would keep it clear.
- 5.4 Footpath Officer –** Neil Lewis was unable to attend the meeting but would like to thank Balfour Beatty for the two new stiles erected in the field adjacent to Vowchurch & Turnastone Memorial hall and the removal of the fallen tree branch and clear debris from the stile at the bottom of Vowchurch Common.
- 6. CLERKS UPDATE –** The Clerk reminded Councillors of the Armed Forces Veteran Survey, the Climate Change & HALC county area meeting on 25th September along with the public vote for Herefordshire Official flag. All had been emailed to Councillors prior to the meeting.
- Planning permission has been granted on planning application 192674, Rockfield House, Michaelchurch Escley for a general-purpose agricultural building.

7. CONSIDER PLANNING

7.1 PLANNING CONSULTATION

Site: Far House Farm, Lower Maescoed, Herefordshire. HR2 0HP

Description: Proposed extension and alterations.

Application No: 192931

Grid Ref: 334987:231197

NO OBJECTIONS

7.2 PLANNING CONSULTATION

Site: Upper Maescoed Methodist Church, Newton St Margarets. HR2 0QQ
Description: Proposed change of use from church to a dwelling and first floor rear extension.
Application No: 192708 **Grid Ref:** 332616:235120

NO OBJECTIONS

7.3 (PART 3) CLASS Q – PRIOR APPROVAL

Site: Agricultural building at Castle Ibo Farm, Newton St Margarets. HR2 0RF
Description: Notification for prior approval for a proposed change of use of an agricultural building to create two larger dwelling houses (Class C3) and for associated operational development.

Application No: 192895 **Grid Ref:** 332675:235401

NOTED - NO COMMENTS TO MAKE

7.4 PLANNING RE- CONSULTATION/LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

Site: Workshop at Michaelchurch Court, Michaelchurch Escley, Herefordshire.
Description: Change of use from ancillary building to independent accommodation For live/work unit.

Application No: 184112/183721 **Grid Ref:** 330851:234466

NO OBJECTIONS

7.5 PP – APPROVAL OF DETAILS RESERVED BY CONDITION – DEEMED ACCEPTABLE

Site: The Old House, Vowchurch, HR2 0RB
Description: Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 2 & 3 attached to planning permission 191275

Application No: 193115 **Grid Ref:** 336192:236366

8. FINANCE

8.1 Confirmation of bank balance - £11,548.27 Statement Sheet No. 136 issued 17th August 2019.

8.2 Receipts – None

8.3 Payment to Mrs Linda Cowles for August 2019 Clerk's hours – **Payment agreed.**

9. APPLICATION TO DIVERT RESTRICTED BYWAY ME38 IN THE PARISH OF MICHAELCHURCH ESCLEY AND RESTRICTED BYWAY CZ46 (PART) IN THE PARISH OF CRASWALL – Ms E May advised that she has

walked this byway recently. New fencing has already been erected with some obstructions making it very difficult to use the original route. Mr E Williams advised that he has spoken to the landowner who has walked the route with Herefordshire Councils Footpath Officer and he has agreed that the proposed diversion is the best course of action to take. It was agreed that the Parish Council would comment that they are content with the change, feel that the council has taken a pragmatic view although are sad that a historical route has been lost.

10. PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION ORDER – PUBLIC FOOTPATHS VO57 AND VO53 (Part) VOWCHURCH – The Parish Councils objections sent to the Public Rights of Way Manager at Balfour Beatty Living Places on 27th August 2019 were noted along with the response received dated 28th August 2019. The additional correspondence received from local resident was also noted. The Clerk has received an additional letter from Balfour Beatty requesting that the Parish Council reconsider it's objections. As this was only received on the day of the Parish Council meeting it was agreed that it would be emailed to Councillors to be considered at the October Parish Council meeting.

11. STOCKLEY HILL FARM VISIT – Mr Kernahan and Neil Lewis were unable to attend the meeting but through the Clerk reported that they had visited the farm and spoken to the owner. In their view the dogs are not a danger to the public and the landowner requested that if walkers have any concerns regarding the dogs at the property, they would be happy to discuss. The Landowner also advised that the gate has been formally signed off by Herefordshire Councils Footpaths Officer although it was noted that some residents felt it was not usable. The landowner also raised concerns as to why the police had been involved. It was explained to him that Herefordshire Council had been contacted first who had advised to contact the police. Mr Kernahan and Mr Lewis had been asked to visit to explain that the Parish Council had simply acted on concerns raised by local residents and that the Parish Council must act on these concerns if they are to carry out its responsibilities properly. It was agreed that if local residents have any further concerns they should contact the Parish Clerk.

12. HAY SWIMMING POOL – It was noted that some local children do use the pool and have swimming lesson there especially as the drive to Hereford can be difficult at times and it would be a shame to lose this facility. It was therefore agreed that a donation of £100.00 would be made to Friends of Hay Swimming Pool.

13. OCTOBER NEWSLETTER – None.

14. NOTE THE CORRESPONDENCE SHEET – The correspondence sheet was noted.

15. RAISE MATTERS FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – Thursday 17th October 2019 at 7.30pm in Newton Church room - B4348 speed limit.

A RESOLUTION WAS PASSED TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC & PRESS DUE TO EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

16. PARISH CLERK MONTHLY SALARY PAYMENTS – The Clerk explained that her salary has always been paid at 6 hours per week x 4 weeks per month. This means that she has actually only been paid for 48 weeks per year instead of 52 weeks. It was agreed that the annual salary will be paid at 52 weeks divided by 12 (months). This will be backed dated to August 2017. There is currently no mention of holiday entitlement in the Clerks contract. The GOV.UK website states that employees are entitlement to a minimum of 20 days holiday per year plus 8 days bank holiday (pro-rata for part time staff). It was agreed that this entitles the Clerk to 5 days holiday per annum, including bank holidays. If the Clerk is unable to use the 5 days holiday payment will be made in lieu. The Clerks contract will be amended to reflect these changes.

Signed.....

Dated.....