

## VOWCHURCH GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

Michaelchurch Escley, Newton, St Margarets, Turnastone, Vowchurch

Minutes of the Vowchurch Group Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020  
at 7.30pm via Zoom

*Please note that the meeting is being recorded*

**PRESENT** – Councillors P Mason (Chair), E May, E Williams, A Picton, T Williams, S Cole, M Engel and J Kernahan.

**IN ATTENDANCE** – Ward Councillor Peter Jinman and Mrs L Cowles (Clerk)

**1. ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Councillors H Franklin, R Lloyd and the Police.

*The Chair welcomed Mr Engel to the meeting, this being his first meeting since co-option in February. Due to coronavirus restrictions Mr Engel had signed his declaration of acceptance of office on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020. The Parish Council confirmed its previous agreement that Mr Engel should be co-opted onto the parish council.*

**2. RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & CONSIDER ANY WRITTEN APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION**  
– There were no declarations of interest or written requests for dispensation.

**3. ADOPT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ORDINARY MEETING** – 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020 – The minutes were signed as a true and accurate record.

**4. OPEN DISCUSSION** - For residents to raise local matters – No members of the public attended the meeting and therefore no additional points were raised.

**4.1** Correspondence received from local residents since the February 2020 meeting was noted and included:

- I. Footpath in Vowchurch - It had been proposed by a local resident that the parish council set aside its objection to the diversion of footpath VO53 & VO57 in return for the resident providing part of a field to be used as a car park for people attending church and the village hall. The parish council agreed that it would not be appropriate to accept the offer.
- II. Verge cutting – In July 2018 the parish council wrote to Balfour Beatty requesting that they would like to follow the Plantlife guidelines regarding verge cutting. Unfortunately, Balfour Beatty have informed the Clerk that they have no record of the correspondence and as a consequence all areas have been cut in line with the agreed specification with Herefordshire Council. A copy of the email sent in July 2018 has been forwarded to Balfour Beatty along with a request to update their records so that this does not happen again next year.
- III. Speeding & bench through Vowchurch village – Speeding on the C1206 through Vowchurch continues to be a concern for local residents. The parish council are aware of the concerns and once current restrictions are eased sufficiently a meeting will be arranged. A group of local residents have purchased a replacement bench to sit by the river in Vowchurch and have requested that the parish council pay for installation. It was agreed; by majority to cover the cost in principal although it was requested that the Clerk check any restrictions with Balfour Beatty and the parish council insurance company. It was also agreed to obtain a quote from the Lengthsman for installation.
- IV. Dog Fouling Vowchurch Common – Dog fouling has become an issue on Vowchurch Common. It was agreed that whilst the parish council is sympathetic, they have very little enforcement powers to make dog owners clean up after their pets. It was agreed to include a reminder in the monthly newsletters and on the parish council website.

## 5. REPORTS

**5.1** Local Police – The Police were unable to attend the meeting.

**5.2** Ward Councillor – Ward Councillor Peter Jinman has been in regular contact with the Clerk whilst meetings have been suspended.

The Covid 19 pandemic has been occupying a lot of Herefordshire Councils time including the recent outbreak near Malvern. Currently there are 93 positive cases out of 200.

The flooding issues raised before the outbreak of Covid 19 are not off the agenda. There are still major problems within the county and these issues still need to be resolved. There are grants available to assist those affected.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Environment and Development will be taking a cycling holiday through Herefordshire and they are being encouraged to visit the Golden Valley to come and get to know the area.

There is a major requirement to invest money in Peterchurch Primary School for development, refurbishment and re-build and discussions are on-going.

Central Government funding will be restricted, the outlook could be interesting and we need to be careful in the future.

**5.3** Lengthsman report and any new road defects – The Lengthsman was unable to attend the meeting.

**5.4** Footpath Officer – Councillor May has been back walking the footpaths in Michaelchurch, Newton and most of St Margarets since June. Waymakers are currently in short supply.

The Clerk confirmed that Neil Lewis has resigned as Public Footpaths Officer covering Vowchurch and Turnastone. The Chair thanked him on behalf of the parish council who have been very grateful for this time and effort. Councillor May confirmed that she has found another volunteer who has agreed to take on the role. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact them.

**6. CLERKS UPDATE** – The Clerk reminded Councillors that there is a Parish Council summit on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July via zoom at 7pm.

The drainage grant of £9150 was been applied for.

The website has been updated to cover the new accessibility regulations for public sector organisations which comes into force on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020. However, it cannot display attached files, including PDF's, but it is hoped that those who need assistance would already have Adobe Acrobat accessibility functions built into their computer to enable them to view.

## 7. CONSIDER PLANNING

**7.1** Planning applications and decisions made since February 2020 were noted. A copy is available; on request; from the Clerk.

## 8. FINANCE

**8.1** Payments made since February 2020 were noted. A Payment schedule is available; on request; from the Clerk.

**8.2** Confirmation of bank balance - £11,981.11 Statement Sheet No. 146 issued 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

Receipts – £1669.97 VAT claim and £6168.25 1<sup>st</sup> precept payment.

**8.3** Payment to Mrs Linda Cowles for June 2020 Clerk's hours, £11.99 plus VAT for Zoom monthly subscription and £15.40 plus VAT for ink cartridge – **Payment agreed.**

**8.4** Payment to Mr T Griffiths, invoice no. TGC1127 for roads account June 2020 of £373.00 plus VAT – **Payment agreed.**

**8.5** Payment to Microshade Business Consultants Ltd of £99.00 plus VAT for Internal Audit – **Payment agreed.**

**8.6** Payment to SLCC of £109.00 for Clerks annual membership – **Payment agreed.**

**8.7** Payment to HMRC of £59.40 for PAYE April -June 2020 – **Payment agreed.**

**8.8** Certificate of Exemption 2019/20 – The Certificate of Exemption 2019/20 for smaller authorities was approved and signed accordingly.

- 8.9 Consider and approve Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 – The annual governance statement was approved and signed by the Clerk and Chair.
- 8.10 Consider and approve Accounting Statement 2019/20 – The accounting statement was certified by the RFO prior to be approved and signed by the Chair.
- 9. **AUGUST NEWSLETTER** – Parish Council meetings currently via zoom, why verges have been cut, dog fouling.
- 10. **RAISE MATTERS FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** – Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020 at 7.30pm either remotely or in Newton Church Room, subject to Covid-19 restrictions. It was agreed to provisionally book Vowchurch & Turnastone Memorial Hall for the August meeting to allow for social distancing if an in-person meeting can take place. Agenda items – Response in local area to Covid 19 and Parish Councillors dispensations.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.25pm.

Signed.....  
Dated.....

