

VOWCHURCH GROUP PARISH COUNCIL
Michaelchurch Escley, Newton, St Margarets, Turnastone, Vowchurch
Minutes of the Vowchurch Group Parish Council meeting held on
Thursday 20th August 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, R Lloyd, J Kernahan and M Engel.

IN ATTENDANCE – Ward Councillor Peter Jinman, Mrs L Cowles (Clerk) and 3 members of the public.

1. ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Councillors T Williams, S Cole, H Franklin and the Police.

2. RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & CONSIDER ANY WRITTEN APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

- Councillor E Williams declared a non-disclosable interest in agenda item 6; due to Covid 19 restrictions the declarations book was unavailable to sign. There were no written applications for dispensation.

3. GRANTING COUNCILLORS DISPENSATION FOR NON-ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS – It was agreed to grant a 6-month attendance dispensation to Councillors unable to attend council meeting remotely.

4. ADOPT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ORDINARY MEETING – 16th July 2020 – The minutes were signed as a true and accurate record.

5. OPEN DISCUSSION - For residents to raise local matters – Other than agenda items 6 and 7 no additional points were raised.

6. C1206 VOWCHURCH – Local residents are concerned about both the speed and the size of lorries and tractors using the C1206 through Vowchurch and Turnastone villages and beyond. Residents realise that farmers need to move around and to transport their animals to market but have noticed a considerable increase in the number of large three-tiered lorries driving overly fast through the villages. On one occasion two lorries were unable to pass one another without driving over property. There have also been near misses with cars. Drivers refuse to slow down when asked and some have been seen using mobile phones whilst driving. The parapet on the bridge has also been damaged in recent months. Residents feel some respect should be shown to neighbours. There is also the question of whether the bridge is capable of carrying the size and weight of lorries using it and are there any weight restrictions on the bridge. Councillors suggested that the increase is caused by the need to supply lamb for religious festivals. All this is made worse because local abattoirs have had to change their working hours because of Covid 19 restrictions, which explains why lorries have been heard during the night. The C1206 through Vowchurch is the only route to and from local farms, but this does not excuse drivers from driving too fast or using mobile phones.

Councillor Mason explained that the Parish Council had requested a reduction in the speed limit on the B4348 and through Vowchurch village some years ago and are still waiting for an assessment to be made. Ward Councillor Jinman pointed out that the lorries are legally allowed on the roads and cannot be banned. Rural roads were not designed to carry large lorries or tractors. This is a national, not just local problem.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would write to Herefordshire Council asking for its application for speed limits be considered quickly given local concerns about the speed at which vehicles are being driven. There are also concerns regarding average stopping times when lorries are full and farmers responsibility for their livestock's welfare. It was also agreed that local residents would also write to encourage Herefordshire Council to consider implementing a speed limit through the villages. The Clerk will provide contact details at Herefordshire Council. The Clerk confirmed that she had already reported the bridge damage which has been inspected by the Locality Steward but will enquire regarding any weight restrictions. It was also agreed to contact the police to highlight concerns about



safety given the speed at which vehicles are being driven through the villages and mobile phone usage by some drivers.

- 7. VOWCHURCH BENCH** – The Locality Steward confirmed that he has no objection to the replacement bench by the river in Vowchurch. The Lengthsman confirmed that his public liability insurance would only cover the installation of the bench and no cover thereafter. Came & Company stated that unless the Parish Council agreed to accept ongoing responsibility to maintain the bench their policy would not cover public liability insurance either. Similarly, loss and damage cover would not be provided unless the Parish Council assume ownership. The Clerk was not aware there that would be any increase in insurance premium if the Parish Council did take over responsibility and local parishioners were happy to donate the bench. It was agreed to accept the Lengthsman quote of £50 plus VAT for installation and for the Parish Council to take responsibility for the bench.

8. REPORTS

- 8.1** Local Police – The local police were unable to attend the meeting.
- 8.2** Ward Councillor – Ward Councillor Jinman reported that most of his time recently had been taken up with flooding issues. Some road works in the area have been completed but there are still more to be done. Confirmation that parishes have been approved for the additional drainage grant. Herefordshire Council must be prepared to accommodate people from rural communities when considering car parking charges as there is limited public transport available.
- 8.3** Lengthsman report – The Lengthsman was unable to attend the meeting. His monthly report had been forwarded to Councillors prior to the meeting. The Clerk confirmed that a drainage grant of £9150 has been approved by Herefordshire Council. It was agreed to instruct the Lengthsman to start works.
- 8.4** Footpath Officers - Councillor May advised she would continue to walk the paths when possible. The Clerk confirmed that she has now received additional Wayleave Markers which would be given to Councillor May. The Clerk also confirmed that Mr Ben Salmon has agreed to be the Footpaths Officer covering Vowchurch and Turnastone and has signed the PFO Guidelines accordingly.
- 9. CLERKS UPDATE** – The Parish Council codes & policies are usually reviewed at the May annual meeting which did not take place this year because of Covid 19 restrictions. The Clerk suggested that these should now be updated/reviewed and to also include an Accessibility Statement regarding the website. It was agreed that these will be reviewed in the coming months. The Clerk has received some interest in the Newton Parish Councillor vacancy, it was agreed to invite the applicant to the September meeting. The Clerk will be on holiday from 3rd September – 11th September therefore the September agenda may not be available until Saturday 12th September.

10. CONSIDER PLANNING

10.1 PLANNING PERMISSION GRANTED

Site: Land adjacent to Ponty Pinna, Vowchurch, Herefordshire HR2 0QE
Description: Change of use of agricultural land, installation of three burrows for holiday let use, creation of a new access and car parking area, installation of a package treatment plant.

Application No: 200353 **Grid Ref:** 337259:235701

10.2 PLANNING PERMISSION/LISTED BUILDING CONSENT GRANTED

Site: Barn (known as The Cottage) at, Old Kate's Farm, Michaelchurch Escley
Description: Proposed conversion of barn (known as The Cottage) to form residential accommodation.

Application No: 183961/183962 **Grid Ref:** 329096:237325

11. FINANCE

- 11.1** Confirmation of bank balance - £10,929.12 Statement Sheet No. 1407 issued 17th July 2020.
 Receipts – None.
- 11.2** Payment to Mrs Linda Cowles for July 2020 Clerk's hours, £11.99 plus VAT for zoom subscription, £16.92 stamps and £208.00 home office use 1st February 2020 – 31st January 2021 - **Payment agreed.**



- 11.3** Payment to Mr T Griffiths, invoice no. TGC1158 for roads account July 2020 of £373.00 plus VAT – **Payment agreed.**
- 11.4** Payment to Vowchurch & Turnastone Memorial Hall of £105.00 for hall hire January 2019 – January 2020 – **Payment agreed.**
- 11.5** Payment to Newton Church room of £105.00 for hall hire January 2019 – January 2020 – **Payment agreed.**
- 12. COVID-19 AND LOCAL RESPONSE** – As Councillor Engel had poor internet connection it was agreed that he would send a report via email to be included again at the September meeting. Councillor E Williams and a member of the public had supported residents in Michaelchurch Escley. It was thought that the take up for help had been low including neighbouring parishes.
- 13. PARISH SUMMIT 23RD JULY 2020** – Councillor May reported that the parish summit was successful and the general discussion was good. Karen Wright; Director of Public Health and Amy Pitt from the Talk Community response team both spoke about the Covid 19 response and reiterated the importance of controlling the virus and requested that parish councils promoted this within their areas.
- 14. BT TELEPHONE BOX REMOVAL CONSULTATION** – It was agreed to object to the removal of the telephone box at Lower Common, Lower Maescoed and Michaelchurch Escley because of poor mobile phone signal in both areas.
- 15. HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL CAR PARKING CHARGES REVIEW 2020** – It was agreed that Herefordshire Council should not be increasing charges at this time and should be encouraging visitors to the city centre and local shops. It was agreed that Councillors’ Mason and May would complete the consultation survey to be circulated to Councillors for approval.
- 16. PARISH CLERK ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND SALARY REVIEW** – It was agreed to consider at the next face to face meeting.
- 17. SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER** – Concerns regarding farm traffic and ‘help control the virus’ instructions.
- 18. RAISE MATTERS FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** – Thursday 17th September 2020 at 7.30pm in Vowchurch & Turnastone Memorial Hall – None at present. It was agreed to hold a face to face meeting in September whilst following social distancing guidelines.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.50pm

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