

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

**Minutes of the Vowchurch Group Parish Council meeting held on
 Thursday 15th August 2019 at 7.30pm in Newton Church Room.**

PRESENT – Mr P Mason (Chair), Mr E Williams, Mr A Picton, Mr H Franklin, Ms E May, Mr T Williams and Mr R Lloyd.

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

1. ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Mr S Cole and Mr J Kernahan.

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 – 18th July 2019 – The minutes were signed as a true and accurate record.

4. OPEN DISCUSSION - For residents to raise local matters. To include correspondence received regarding:

- a. Road surfacing on B4348 in Vowchurch – The correspondence received from a local resident about the impact of road surfacing and improvement work on the B4348 was noted. In response the Parish Council had informed the resident that it had requested a reduction in the speed limit on the B4348 through Vowchurch approximately four years ago. The last report on the status of this was that we were number 37 out of 105 schemes waiting for commencement of investigations. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Balfour Beatty for an update as to where the scheme is now on the list. It was also agreed to contact Balfour Beatty to ask whether future road works in the area could be done using noise reducing material. It was also suggested that a ‘slow’ marking on the road could be included in the scheme.
- b. A member of the public present requested the road verge adjoining the churchyard to be strimmed by the Lengthsman. The Clerk explained that it is not the Lengthsman responsibility to cut roadside verges other than on bends and junctions. The member of the public also asked whether the Parish Council would agree to remove the tree guard around the George V Silver Jubilee oak tree since this was potentially dangerous and was being absorbed into the now mature tree. It was agreed that the Clerk would seek quotes to remove the tree guard and replace the post for the tree plaque.

5. REPORTS

5.1 Local Police – PCSO Witcher reported that the area has been relatively quiet. The new Police Officer should be starting in September.

5.2 Ward Councillor – Ward Councillor Peter Jinman was unable to attend the meeting.

5.3 Lengthsman report and any new road defects – The Lengthsman was unable to attend the meeting. His monthly report had been forwarded to Councillors prior to the meeting.

6. CLERKS UPDATE – Herefordshire Council will be holding another Parish Council summit on Friday 20th September at 6.30pm at the Shire Hall in Hereford. An emailed had been forwarded to Parish Councillors prior to the meeting regarding the Hereford Transport Package and South Wye Transport Package decision, this has also been widely advertised in the press. Details of the West Mercia Police, We Don’t Buy Crime Town and Village Initiative had also been forwarded to Councillors. It was agreed that the local policing team already offered to mark property with Smartwater for free.

7. CONSIDER PLANNING

7.1 PLANNING CONSULTATION

Site: Land adjacent Chanstone Mill, Chanstone Court Farm, Vowchurch. HR2 0QE

Description: Change of use of workshop/store to holiday let.

Application No: 192569

Grid Ref: 336729:235732

NO OBJECTIONS**7.2 PLANNING CONSULTATION**

Site: Rockfield House, Micaelchurch Esley, Herefordshire. HR2 0JW

Description: General purpose agricultural storage building.

Application No: 192674 **Grid Ref:** 331865:233624

NO OBJECTIONS**7.3 PLANNING CONSULTATION**

Site: Yew Tree House, Batcho Hill, Vowchurch. HR2 9PF

Description: Demolition of existing single garage and attached lean to and erection of a double garage with study over for private residential use.

Application No: 192750 **Grid Ref:** 339524:236071

NO OBJECTIONS**7.4 PRIOR APPROVAL GRANTED**

Site: Agricultural building south of Kings Arms, Urishay, Herefordshire.

Description: Notification for prior approval for a proposed change of use of an agricultural building to a dwelling house (Class C3) and for associated operational development to create a single larger dwelling house.

Application No: 191913 **Grid Ref:** 331412:236702

8. FINANCE

8.1 Confirmation of bank balance - £12,814.43 Statement Sheet No. 135 issued 17th July 2019.

8.2 Receipts – None

8.3 Payment to Mrs Linda Cowles for July 2019 Clerk's hours, £208.00 home office use 1st February 2019 – 31st January 2020 and ink cartridges of £38.67 plus VAT – **Payment agreed.**

8.4 Payment to Mr T Griffiths, invoice no. TGC0841 for Roads account July 2019 (1) of £364.00 plus VAT – **Payment agreed.**

9. PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION ORDER – The Chair invited members of the public present to make comment on the Public Path Diversion Order in relation to public footpaths VO57 and VO53 (part) in Vowchurch. Local residents objected to the diversion on the basis of the fact a historic footpath would be lost, that the route is less direct, offers poorer views of the local landscape, including the River Dore and the local church, and provides a poorer experience of the natural history of the area, including trees and birds. In addition, the existing stile at the point where the diverted footpath would join the road in Vowchurch can only be used by fit people and would need to be replaced by a gate. Local residents were disappointed that an alternative route had not been considered. They also questioned why part of the existing footpath close to the River Dore could not be retained even if the path through the garden was diverted. All comments were noted.

In discussion by the Parish Council its previous objections to this diversion were noted. It was agreed that, whilst the route had changed, the Parish Council's objections were still valid with regard to the significant reduction in enjoyment of the landscape and other local features of interest offered by the historic route. This included more interesting views of the Church, River Dore and the Old House than the diverted route across open farmland. It was agreed that the Chair and Clerk would draft a response to the Order to be circulated to all Parish Councillors for agreement prior to any objection being formally made.

10. BT TELEPHONE BOXES REMOVAL CONSULTATION – It was agreed that the Parish Council would object to the removal of the telephone box on the U74208 at Lower Common, Lower Maescoed due to poor mobile phone signal. The Parish Council will adopt the telephone box if BT still choose to remove the equipment.

- 11. WEBSITE SECURITY** – The Clerk confirmed that the website has been updated with the following:- WordPress core and plugins are kept up-to-date, passwords are secure and include random characters with numbers and caps etc., there is only one admin account, the free security plugin called Securi has been installed, the login URL has been changed from the standard /wp admin and the site is benefitting from a monthly rolling backup. Mr Kernahan had also suggested obtaining an SSL certificate. GVwebdesign have advised that this would cost £60.00 per year. It was agreed that since the website does not hold any personal details and is not used to make any financial transactions this was not needed.
- 12. VERGES** – The Parish Council has previously agreed to support Verging on Wild initiatives to follow Plantlife’s guidelines on cutting verges and has advised Balfour Beatty accordingly. Ms May had attended the recent meeting in Longtown which was well supported. Balfour Beatty have already agreed their cutting program for this year but are quite keen to work with parishes and support the scheme in the coming years if practical.
- 13. STOCKLEY HILL FARM VISIT** – As Mr Kernahan was unable to attend the meeting this was deferred to the September meeting.
- 14. SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER** – Verges, Smartwater and fire safety check for over 70’s.
- 15. NOTE THE CORRESPONDENCE SHEET** – The correspondence sheet was noted.
- 16. RAISE MATTERS FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** – Thursday 19th September 2019 at 7.30pm in Vowchurch & Turnastone Memorial Hall – Stockley Hill Farm visit.
A RESOLUTION WILL BE PASSED TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC & PRESS DUE TO EMPLOYMENT MATTERS
- 17. PARISH CLERK ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND SALARY REVIEW** – The Parish Council were happy with the Clerks’ performance over the previous year. It was agreed to increase the Clerks salary to SCP 22 (equivalent to SCP 28 in the previous grading scale) from 1st August 2019.

Signed.....

Dated.....