

WEOBLEY PARISH COUNCIL

WEOBLEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Weobley Parish Meeting which was held on Thursday 16th April 2019 at the Hopelands Village Hall, Weobley, commencing at 7.30pm.

In the chair: Mrs Lorraine Anderson

Present: 16 members of the electorate and the Clerk to the Council.

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Cllr Anderson welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ward Cllr Cooper, Jo Ware and PCSO Rawlinson.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th April 2018 were approved and signed.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The following matters were raised:

- The Victorian lamppost in the centre of the village was now operational following the purchase of a new bulb;
- The Parish Council had appointed a Traffic & Parking Working Group to consider highway matters and develop options to help address the concerns raised previously;
- Yellow lines were suggested at various locations as a possible deterrent to help address parking issues, but these would need to be enforced and there was a cost for a new Traffic Regulation Order that would need to be met by the Parish Council;
- A brief overview was provided regarding S106 funding that had been generated by the development at Gadbridge Road. There was a sum allocated to improving the highway as well as other infrastructure, but the allocation was the responsibility of Herefordshire Council. A sum had been secured towards the proposed skate park by the Parish Council;
- A resident requested a bus shelter at the bus stop on the other side of the road to the existing shelter. The Working Group would consider both replacing the seating in the existing bus shelter and the cost of providing a canopy on the opposite side of the road.

5. Policing Issues

Apologies had been received from PCSO Rawlinson. The following written report was received:

- Around summer 2018 the Police received many reports of youths firing "catapults" into people's gardens and occasionally at their properties. Those involved were identified and spoken with. We were assured the catapults were destroyed and no further reports of catapults recently have been received;
- In August last year a burglary took place in Portland street. Unfortunately, no charges were brought forward;

- Between August and November last year the Police received many reports of vehicles having their wing mirrors damaged, especially in the Burton Gardens area. Patrols were increased in the area. No further reports of any recent damage happening in this area have been received although a report of a vehicle being damaged in Meadow Street car park was received recently;
- At the start of the year there were several reports of items being thrown at properties, especially near Meadow Street. Potential offenders were identified and spoken with at the time;
- Over the previous few weeks there have been a number of reports of incidents occurring near the Church and surrounding fields. Patrols were increased in this area to identify potential offenders and deter those who may be involved;
- Reports of youths knocking on doors in Burton Gardens and running away, causing distress to residents have been received. The Police actively patrol the area in the afternoon and evenings to identify and deter those involved;
- Several residents have raised concerns over speeding in the village. The Police will attempt to conduct some speed enforcement when and where possible. Residents have requested that the speed limits be changed to 20 throughout the village;
- Many residents are now reporting issues to the Police and this was welcomed.

6. Herefordshire Councillor Update

Apologies had been received from Cllr Cooper. He requested residents to submit any concerns to him so that he could take any action required.

7. Parish Council Report

Cllr Anderson, Chair of the Council, presented the following report:

- Thanks were extended to Councillors for all their hard work and support during the previous year, and for standing for the forthcoming election, though it would be uncontested in Weobley;
- Brenda Havard had resigned her position during 2018 and a bench had been installed in Bell Square in recognition of her long service to the Council and the community;
- Cllr Ian Dyer had been co-opted on to the Council to fill the vacancy;
- The Ward Councillor and the Police regularly attended Parish Council meetings;
- There had been a number of planning applications during the year that had caused concern. Permission was granted for a single dwelling on the old Bowling Green and outline permission was granted for a further 50 dwellings at Pepperplock despite over 130 comments being lodged. This was passed at the Planning Committee by 8 votes for and 6 against;
- The Gadbridge Road site had commenced development and new residents were already living in some of the new dwellings. £375,000 of S106 funding would be generated by the site of which £120,000 was allocated towards highway improvements;
- The Parish Council had expressed its objections to the development at the old Bowling Green. The original application had been for two dwellings but this had been reduced to one.
- The Locality Steward continued to encourage additional investment in Weobley and a number of improvements had been delivered;
- A Traffic and Parking Working Group had been set up to address highway issues. Among its aims was better use of existing car parks;

- A new skate park was currently being developed. It would be sited on the existing play area;
- LEADER funding had been secured to help improve the local signage;
- A maintenance plan was being developed for the library and toilets, which were now the responsibility of the Parish Council;
- Negotiations were in progress to secure an asset transfer of the Pump House from Welsh Water;
- The telephone kiosk at the entrance to the Castle grounds had recently been refurbished. Thanks were extended to the volunteers involved in both raising the money and carrying out the refurbishment;
- The Parish Council continued to receive support from the Tree Warden, Alan Jones, who was also Chair of the Herefordshire branch;
- Funding had been withdrawn by Herefordshire Council for both the Lengthsman and P3 footpath schemes. These were currently being funded by the Parish Council directly;
- The 2018 fireworks had been another success and the 2019 display would take place on Tuesday 5th November 2019;

The following matters were raised:

- Concern was expressed that one of the footpaths along Hereford Road was being misused. The matter would be reported to the Locality Steward and the local Police;
- Concern was expressed regarding the naming of the new development at Gadbridge Road. The Parish Council had requested a name change but the matter was no out of its hands.

Cllr Ware, Vice Chair and Footpath Officer, presented the following report:

- The local footpaths were very popular and attracted a significant number of visitors to the area;
- There were 25 official footpaths with a combined length of 35 miles. Infrastructure included 26 stiles, 81 gates and 10 bridges, all of which has to be maintained;
- Recent works undertaken has included clearing the footpath in the Garnstone Hill area and replacing signage;
- Approximately 60 hours were spent mowing the footpaths in 2018. The mower was owned by the Parish Council but it hired the tractor to pull the mower and paid for the fuel;
- Weekly walks were organised and were open to all.

8. Post Office

The meeting received an update regarding the post office in Weobley, which covered the original application in 2016, its opening in March 2017, the issues it has faced using the new operating model which required a host business to support a post office and the current uncertainty about its future. An article had appeared in the Parish Council's newsletter along with a form asking residents whether they were willing to support the post office financially. Some funding had been ringfenced by the Parish Council as well to meet overhead costs in return for as Tourist Information Point being provided in the Post office. This would be subject to a Service Level Agreement being entered into. The meeting was reminded that the closing date for the return of support forms was 18th April 2019.

The following comments were made:

- Concern was expressed that a commercial business was requesting a subsidy from both the Parish Council and local residents. This would not normally be available for other small businesses;
- If the village wished to retain a Post Office then it would probably need some sort of subsidy to make it viable;
- The proposed private trust to oversee any donations would not be part of the Parish Council and would be managed by independent Trustees. At present no Trustees had been formally identified or recruited;
- Any support from the Parish Council would be subject to a Service Level Agreement for the provision of a Tourist Information Point;
- It was acknowledged that it was a national issue that post offices were no longer viable to run as single businesses in rural areas;
- A number of people relied on the post office for basic financial transactions;
- It was confirmed that Costcutter The Old School Shop would be happy to host a post office but would not run it.

9. Neighbourhood Plan/Planning Update

The following Neighbourhood Plan update was noted:

- The Plan had developed from the initial Planning for Real exercise to the current version;
- Two consultations had been held at Regulation 14 and 16 and the Plan had been amended after each of those consultations;
- The final draft had now been approved by Herefordshire Council and would now proceed to Examination, followed by referendum.

10. Play Area Update

The following play area update was provided by Cllr Breen:

- The Play Area was managed and maintained by a Working Group with financial support from the Parish Council;
- An annual ROSPA risk assessment was carried out and a number of repairs were undertaken as a direct result of this;
- The Working Group met on a monthly basis and there was a mowing and litter picking rota in place. A new member had recently joined and the Group were always looking for additional volunteers;
- £90,000 had been secured to help towards the cost of building a new skate park. The funding was specifically for recreational facilities and was not available for other initiatives such as resurfacing roads;
- Two tenders were required to meet the requirements of the funders and one had already been received;
- There was a very positive liaison with the local schools. Skate boarding was to become an Olympic sport and some of the funding would be used to purchase skate equipment. The school would be making skating part of the school curriculum.

11. Open Forum

The Parish Council was asked whether it had considered a previous request to endorse the Next Door Weobley website. The meeting was informed that a Parish Council was not in the position to endorse a privately run website although Councillors were able to use the facility.

Prior to the closure of the meeting thanks were extended to Cllr Anderson, Chair of Council, for all her hard work during the year, which seemed to be increasing.

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9:11pm.

CHAIR:

DATE: