

Malvern Wells Parish Council

Minutes of full Council Meeting held on Wednesday 26th July 2023 at 7.30pm at Malvern Wells Village Hall.

Present:

- a) Cllrs. D Preece [DP] in Chair, J. Black [JB], S. Freeman [SF], A. Pitt [AP], R. Price [RP], C. Gates [CG], M. Birks [MB], C O'Donnell [CO].
- b) **Absent:** None.
- c) **In Attendance** - Dr K Howe (Locum Clerk), Ann Dobbins, Cllr. Christine Wilde CW (District Councillor).

Public Participation: No requests to speak.

1. Apologies for absence:

- a) Cllr. P. Stanier – accepted by Council.
- b) Cllr. G Turrell – accepted by Council.

2. Declarations of Interest – none notified at this point of meeting.

3. Minutes of the previous Council meeting held on 28th June 2023. CO proposed, MB seconded, Council unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve.

4. Matters Arising from above - verbal reports received:

- a) Malvern Hills Trust – Council **noted** SF and AP have submitted agreed questions to CEO who will respond within 2 days.
- b) Defibrillators – Council **noted** MB and AP collecting additional data and registering.
- c) Clatterbridge – Council **noted** Locum Clerk report - beyond repair and has been removed. Contacted play equipment suppliers to survey and quote for new more accessible and inclusive play equipment.
- d) AONB Information panels – Locum Clerk circulated copies of artwork. Council **noted** waiting for AONB sign off and inclusion of their new logo.
- e) Communications – Council **noted** RP leading on councillor email set up and website admin.
- f) NDP – Council **noted** due to pressure of priority projects and actions – deferred to September meeting.

5. Malvern Hills Trust presentation

- a) Council **noted** presentation from Richard Fowler [RF] of Malvern Hills Trust.
- b) Q&A session – Council asked:
 - Could access to Hills be threatened? RF confirmed potentially it could happen.
 - Is fencing to be installed to protect grazing animals from road deaths? RF confirmed it has been suggested but no approval to date.
 - Concern raised on lack of accountability and transparency to residents and public. RF confirmed there is a conflict as MHT prime interest now is to represent the trust, not levy payers. Private members bill in public arena and there will be public consultation.
- c) Chair thanked Richard Fowler and requested he return to Council later in the year with further update.

6. Cemetery Committee

- a) Council **noted** resignation of Michelle Alexander (Burial Ground Manager), notified 9th July without notice. Council thanked Locum Clerk for immediate actions contacting all funeral directors, obtaining external advice, administering funeral notified.

- b) Council **noted** Chris Wayman (Worcs. CALC) and Steve Maund in attendance at burial on 1st August. Council thanked Chris Wayman for his help.
- c) Council **noted** Cemetery Committee to **agree** date of meeting – to consider backlog projects and agree way forward. Suggested 9th August to be confirmed.
- d) Council **noted** Cemetery Committee to **appoint** councillor as Committee Chair at their next Committee meeting.
- e) Council **noted** cemetery memorial safety check report received with some red alert items identified. Locum Clerk to obtain advice on legal position. Cemetery Committee to consider at their meeting (document circulated).
- f) Council **noted** Martin Thomas surgery, recovery time and cover arranged.

7. Assets Management

- a) Council **noted** update from Locum Clerk - number of issues being notified by public. Gas Lamps Working Group agreed to take on project and respond to public accordingly. Locum Clerk to forward communications and contract documentation to Gas Lamps Working Group.
- b) Council **noted** Locum Clerk requesting site visits and quotes from specialist suppliers for new play equipment in Assarts Park to be supplied to Play & Open Spaces Working Group when available.

8. Finance Matters

- a) Council **noted** internal audit full report (as circulated) evidencing no matters to report. MB proposed, JB seconded, Council unanimously **confirmed** adoption of internal audit full report.
- b) Council **noted** completed AGAR and internal audit report submitted to external auditor and receipt confirmed 30/7/23.
- c) Council **noted** exercise of Public Rights published on website and noticeboard 30/7/23.
- d) Council **noted** bank reconciliation for May (circulated).
- e) Council **noted** bank reconciliation for June (circulated).
- f) Council **noted** Lloyds current account bank balance at 30/6/23 £33,914.85.
- g) Council **noted** quarterly budget comparison (document circulated).
- h) Council **noted** annual VAT reclaim 2022-2023 notified to HMRC total £6,611.98.
- i) Council **noted** payment made by Sarah Hart on Locum Clerk delegated authority – All About Magazine advertising for Fete £192 18/7/23.
- j) Council **noted** payment to be made to Worcs. CALC for 4 unpaid invoices from 2022 (nos. 8925/ 8906/ 8904/ 8898). Ann Dobbins confirmed non-payment during year end process. Invoices previously approved by council for payment. SF proposed, CG seconded, Council **approved** payment of £180 to Worcs. CALC.
- k) Council **noted** payment made by Sarah Hart on Locum Clerk delegated authority - £500 & vat to Newsquest for Malvern Wells / Worcester News on 18/7/2023 for clerk advert.
- l) DP proposed, MB seconded, Council unanimously **approved** payments schedule (as circulated) for payments dated 1st July to 24th July 2023.
- m) Council **noted** duplicate June payments made inadvertently to suppliers on 18th July (document circulated). Council **noted** suppliers immediately notified and duplicate payments being reimbursed to Lloyds current account.
- n) Council **noted** Finance & Governance Committee to convene a meeting prior to next 27th September Council meeting. Councillors reported numerous reserve accounts were instituted to minimise financial risk. Ann Dobbins advised simplifying reserve holdings to investment with CCLA (Charities, Churches and Local Authorities Investment Fund). Council **noted** CCLA don't have risk limit and provide instant access. F&G Committee to set up meeting with CCLA.
- o) Council **noted** Arkell & Hurcombe inv. no. 33471 £204.72 (not approved for payment by Council on 26th July) now confirmed paid direct by client and removed from MWPC payment record.

- p) Council **noted** Ann Dobbins advice if Locum Clerk now administering burials - needs to understand what system in place and relevant legislation. Ann will determine current system, produce new streamlined system, provide advice report. This work will be additional hours to those previously contracted. DP proposed, JB seconded, Council **approved** required hours to undertake survey and advice.
- q) Council **noted** Steve Maund request for replacement long handled hedge cutter. Council **approved** Locum Clerk delegated authority to purchase battery operated hedge cutter in line with green principles, noise reduction. £845.09 inc. VAT.

9. Planning Matters

- a) Council considered and unanimously **resolved** to submit comments agreed on the following applications (documents previously circulated):

- **23/00840/FUL Arosfa, Upper Welland Rd**

No objection to pitched roof on proposed single storey extension to the rear as subordinate to existing roofline and (as specified Drwg. SK01 rev C), will be constructed in roof tiles to match existing roof finish. Council **noted** Drwg. SK01 rev C also details provision of extensive proposed post and wire fence but fails to document relevant existing site features - existing gateway access. Proposed post and wire construct in keeping with rural environment, but omission of site entrance means difficult to comment on issues such as curtilage, pertinent to any planning decision given sensitive location on a settlement boundary adjacent to open countryside in AONB.

- **23/00827/HP 151 Upper Welland Rd**

MWPC have **no objection** to dropped curb on proviso there is a clear need, facilitating access to off road parking space. Many dwellings in Upper Welland located off road with pedestrian access only, or on road with no vehicular access. Road parking is absolute premium at this location. Demand for on road parking exacerbated by absence of any bus service and ageing demographic. Drop curb, not facilitating off road parking, will further reduce available on-street parking. Upper Welland designated a Neighbourhood Heritage Area. If District Council approves this application, seems appropriate to match existing historic curbs (double blue engineered brick and historic feature of the village) not to degrade aesthetic value.

- **23/00994/HP 178 Upper Welland Rd**

No objection to proposed works with proviso consideration given to installation of automatic blinds to prevent light pollution via the roof lights.

- **23/00850/HP 16 Wyche Rd**

No objection to proposed works if current 'Streetscape' broadly retained, gateposts and Malvern stone walls reinstated 'as is', and replacement of felled trees with indigenous species, set back from reconstructed walls and gateposts.

- b) Council **noted** MHDC planning decisions advised:

- **M/23/00430/HP** - 3 Yew Tree Lane, Malvern, WR14 4LJ.
Additional window to side of extension. **Approved**
- **M/23/00665/FUL** - Ground Floor Flat, Bernard Lodge, 262 Wells Road, Malvern, WR14 4HD. Replacement of individual window units to lounge and bedroom to front (East) elevation. **Approved**

10. Consultation

- a) DP proposed, MB seconded, Council **approved** agreed response to consultation on the Welland Neighbourhood Plan (previously circulated). MWPC commend them on producing NDP and having a plan for their village.

- b) Council **confirmed** previous agreed response to Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended) Worcestershire County Council (Malvern Hills District) (Civil Enforcement Area) (Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places) Consolidation Order 2013 (Variation) Order 2023 [Prohibition of Waiting on B4218 Wyche Road/Lower Wyche Road, Malvern Wells] (documents circulated). Reiterate previous response: **Approve proposal** to improve sight lines in both directions at junction. But request if double yellow lines – these are narrow version to limit visual impact in AONB. Council **noted** this request not included in most recent consultation.

11. Staffing Matters

- a) Council **noted** – Clerks delegated authority (with Staffing Committee approval) to extend response deadline to Monday 14th August – due to delay in uploading advert and documents to MWPC website and advertising via SLCC and NALC with awareness of holidays period impacting.
- b) Council **noted** permanent Clerk role advertised via MWPC noticeboards, MWPC website, Worcs. CALC, SLCC, NALC, Worcester Clerks network with closing date Monday 14th August 2023.
- c) Council **noted** due to submission dates and to obtain ‘best value’, local transparency and reach across qualified Clerk’s network, closing date extended (via Clerks delegated authority notified to Staffing Committee 18/ 7) to Monday 21st August 2023 with advertising via Worcester News and Malvern Gazette.
- d) Council **noted**. **CG** proposed, **SF** seconded, Council **approved** costs for advertising Clerk role through all channels (as document circulated).
- e) Council **noted** need for Staffing Committee to agree a date for shortlisting Clerk applications received, finalise interview arrangements and report to Council meeting 27th September. **RP** proposed, **JB** seconded, Council **resolved** for Staffing Committee to shortlist and recommend applicants for interview to next Council meeting.
- f) Council **noted** Burial Ground Manager resignation created additional burden on Locum Clerk and unexpected issues impacting. Council **noted** limit expectation of immediate project progress and email traffic.
- g) Council **noted** combined Clerk/ RFO / BGM ‘interim’ arrangements to be discussed in confidential session and appropriate decisions **resolved**.

Council unanimously **resolved** to suspend standing orders at 9.30pm due to urgent matters of business.

12. Governance

Council **noted** Malvern Hills notified 6 members of MWPC council elected not returned their register of interest forms. **SF** and **MB** reported they had personally returned forms and there must be in office problem at Malvern Hills. If not done already all Councillors elected and co-opted to return register of interest forms to Malvern Hills urgently.

13. Events

- a) Council **noted** minutes of Events WG and revised costings supplied for Fete by Ian Burrage. **RP** advised costs higher than budgeted to include crazy golf. **JB** proposed, **RP** seconded Council **resolved** to approve revised costs.

14. External Committees

- a) Council **noted** brief report from Chair attendance at Wyche Institute trustees meeting.
- b) **DP** proposed, **JB** seconded, Council **resolved** **GT** as new MWPC councillor appointment to Wyche Institute Committee.

15. Correspondence

- a) Council **noted** email from GT 29/6/23 and actions taken concerning Old Wyche parking issues outside her house. MB confirmed she will take over from GT on this matter.
- b) Council **noted** email 13/7/23 regarding overgrown hedge covering pavement on Upper Welland Road. AP notified he has reported and will respond.
- c) Council **noted** email 1/7/23 (different MOP). AP will respond as above.
- d) Council **noted** email 1/7/23 requesting update on gas lighting Holywell Rd. SF and JB confirmed they will take on and respond to information requests.
- e) Council **noted** email 28/6/23 regarding Malvern Wells signs. Council considered this is probably Malvern Hills DC – notify Christine Wilde. CG will contact David Prescott (3 Counties CEO) re. potential support for signage.

16. District Councillor report

With limited meeting time available Christine Wilde gave brief report on:

- Malvern Theatre project
- Volunteering Service launch
- MH Rural Fund
- Community Builders

17. Council noted matters for future agendas as:

- a) Neighbourhood Development Plan
- b) Website upgrade
- c) Defibrillators registration – MB confirmed she is dealing with.
- d) AONB noticeboards progress – Locum Clerk confirmed waiting on AONB approval.
- e) Fruitlands

18. Council CONFIRMED the date of the next scheduled meeting as **Wednesday 27th September 7.30pm** at Village Hall.

18. Exclusion of the Public and Press

- a) Council **resolved** to exclude the public and press due to confidentiality.

19. CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

Council considered Staffing Committee recommendations and:

- a) JB proposed, SF seconded, Council **resolved** to approve new LCC contract. Kate Howe as 'interim' Clerk on new 37 h.p.w. contract from 1st August to end December 2023 to allow time for permanent Clerk appointment and handover.
- b) MB proposed, SF seconded, Council **resolved** new 'interim' Clerk be approved as bank authoriser / signatory/ debit card user.

Meeting closed 10.20 pm. Chair thanked all councillors for their attendance and contributions.

Chair.....

Date.....