

**Minutes of No Man's Heath & District
Parish Council Meeting
held at Cholmondeley Coronation Hall, Bickley
at 7.00 pm on Thursday 7th November 2024**

PRESENT

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Chairman: | Cllr David Lithgow Smith | |
| Cllr Kathryn Collings | Cllr James Crossland | Cllr Peter Guildford |
| Cllr Tim Harrop | Cllr Charles Higgle | Cllr Fran Lithgow Smith |
| Cllr Stephen Roberts | Cllr Michael Voisey | |

Clerk - Mrs Ruth Shackleton.

Members of the Public and Parish – none

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Trevor Parker

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no consideration of this item.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:- that the minutes for the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 5th September 2024 (previously circulated) be accepted as a true and proper record.

Proposed by Cllr Voisey and seconded by Cllr Guildford.

5. CASUAL VACANCY

There is currently one vacancy on the Council; the notice of co-option has been posted on the noticeboards, Facebook and website.

6. POLICE

6.1 To receive update:-

The PCSO report was previously circulated.

6.2 To receive report from meeting with the police:-

A joint meeting of the Ward Councillor, No Mans Heath and District Parish Council, Malpas Parish Council, Agden Parish Meeting and Threapwood Parish Council with the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Chief Constable and his local policing team took place last month to discuss local policing concerns. Cllrs D Lithgow Smith and Harrop represented the Council. Notes of the meeting were previously circulated to Cllrs.

Cllr Harrop advised that it was productive meeting. The police explained how they operate including the levels of police staffing due to budget constraints.

Residents can report incidents in various ways (e.g. calling 101 or Dragon Hall, report issues online, email the PCSO directly). The Speedwatch initiative was discussed.

There is to be a quarterly cluster meetings of the local policing team with all the parish councils and parish meetings in the Malpas ward. The first meeting is to take place in January.

Cllrs Harrop and Roberts agreed to represent the Council at the police cluster meeting.

7. ACCOUNTS AND PAYMENTS

7.1 Accounts:-

RESOLVED:- that the Council approve the accounts as previously circulated.

Proposed by Cllr Higgle and seconded by Cllr Guildford.

7.2 **Payments:-**

| Chq No | Payee | Amount |
|--------|---|-----------|
| 991 | Running Costs | £ 55.93 |
| 992 | Cholmondeley Coronation Hall | £ 30.00 |
| 993 | DONATION:- Royal British Legion | £ 100.00 |
| 994 | T Harrop - Reimburse cost of mirror | £ 71.96 |
| 995 | R Shackleton – backdated pay | £ 103.16 |
| 996 | K Collins - Reimburse cost of Christmas lights | £ 35.75 |
| 997 | Centrewire - 10 kissing gates | £4,896.00 |
| 998 | R Shackleton - Reimburse cost of lamppost poppies | £ 60.00 |
| 999 | Core Highways - CAD Drawings for road closure | £ 150.00 |

RESOLVED:- that the Council approve the above payments.

Proposed by Cllr Higgle and seconded by Cllr Guildford.

7.3 **Bank Account:-**

Reconciled balance of the Current Bank Account as at 30th September 2024:-
£9,735.68.

Balance of the Deposit Bank Account as at 30th September 2024:- £ 7,772.62.

7.4 **Budget to Date:-**

The Council received the Budget to date as at 30th September 2024.

8. CIL

The Council has received the sum of £17,003.64 in respect of CIL monies. Cllrs are to consider how to allocate the money.

9. PLANNING

Planning Register:-

The Council noted the planning register and the observations previously circulated. Concerns were raised regarding the new arrangements for the tip in Whitchurch which could lead to an increase in fly tipping and CO2 emissions from increased car journeys. This is to be considered at the January meeting.

10. HIGHWAYS

10.1 **To note the reply from CEO CWaC:-**

The CEO of CWaC has replied to the letter that the Chair sent on behalf of the Council regarding outstanding highways issues (this included the resurfacing and repainting of white lines at the mini roundabouts in No Mans Heath). The CEO advised that the works will take place during the current financial year.

10.2 **Report:-**

Cllr Harrop circulated a report including the following updates:-

- Speedwatch activities have included the extended loan of a SID and some practical, on the job training of two new volunteers.
- Reporting of highways problem (especially blocked drains and dangerous amounts of mud on roads) needs to be a priority for all.
- Cllr Harrop has purchased the mirrors and a metal post for the safety mirrors for the 'cut through' and is to proceed with installation.
- Concerns were raised regarding the recent heavy rainfall which caused flooding and mud / debris on roads.
- Concerns were raised regarding the balancing pond located next to the A41 which flooded across the main road causing a serious safety issue for vehicles. The Clerk is to raise this with Highways.

10.3 **Pedestrian Road Safety Access for Littlers Croft:-**

The Council discussed what could be done to make access to the play area safer on Back Lane and at Cross o th Hill. The Clerk is to arrange a site meeting with CWaC to discuss available options.

11. ACCESS TO PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Cllr F Lithgow Smith circulated the following update:-

- Ten Kissing Gates to replace existing stiles have been delivered. Quotes are to be obtained to install the gates.
- Cllr D Lithgow Smith and Cllr F Lithgow Smith David had a positive meeting with United Utilities in September regarding funding for additional gates. Whilst they can only potentially fund gates that are in the immediate vicinity of their pipeline, they are keen to do so under a scheme where smaller amounts of funding does not have to be subjected to the wider funding strategy. United Utilities are hopeful they will be able to fund a handful of gates.
- The almost permanent flooding on both the Sandstone Trail at Bickley, and the footpath that merges with it from No Mans Heath has been reported to Public Rights of Way, CWaC; they have suggested that a board walk on small stilts is needed to allow both of these footpaths to continue to be used effectively. Public Rights of Way, CWaC are already aware of the issue, as the landowner has requested a footpath diversion. Unfortunately there is no resource available at CW&C at the moment to look at this, nor is there any funding available to pay for a boardwalk for either path. A request has been made to Public Rights of Way, CWaC for a quote for this work to be carried out, with a view to looking into potential grants to fund this work in due course

12. LITTLERS CROFT

Cllr Collings sent out the following report prior to the meeting:-

- CW&C had appointed external contractors to cut the park this year, and they did a great job each month. Cllr Collings has passed on the Council's thanks for their work.
- The new drainage has been installed near the seating area / path, hopefully this will help with future flooding.
- Cllr Collings has reported the flooding to CW&C at the grassed area between the trees and new fences near the new equipment, as it was extremely high and dangerous for children.
- Residents would like to purchase some football goal nets with the Fete money raised. Cllr Collings is looking into prices to be installed next year.

13. REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

13.1 Malpas Joint Burial Committee (MJBC):-

13.1.1 The Clerk previously circulated the following update:-

Notes of the Meeting of Malpas Parish Council (MPC), No Mans Heath and District Parish Council (NMHDPC) and Malpas Joint Burial Committee (MJBC) held on 7th October 2024 have been sent separately.

CHALC have replied to confirm the following issues that were raised at the meeting:-

(i) Members of MJBC who are not representatives of Parish Councils / Meetings:-

Suggested that they be referred to as co-opted representatives'.

Co-opted representatives' of MJBC, who are not representatives of a Parish Council / Meeting, can still participate in committee meetings even though they have no voting rights.

(ii) External Audit arrangements:-

CHALC have referred to the Parkinson Partnership LLP (accountants) for professional advice.

(iii) Standing Orders / Financial Regulations:-

As Malpas Parish Council is the lead body then MJBC is governed by their Standing Orders / Financial Regulations.

(iv) Loan:-

The Chairman of MJBC has confirmed that he signed the loan agreement and advised that the loan was made to the MJBC on the basis that the individual / organisation who made the loan remained anonymous. CHALC require sight of the agreement before they can properly advise and have advised that this information cannot be withheld from the Clerk as the Councils proper officer.

(v) MJBC Day to Day Operations:-

CHALC has clarified the day to day financial operation of the MJBC:-

- As Malpas Parish Council is the lead Council, therefore it is their role is to ensure visibility and oversight of the accounts and to arrange both the internal and external audits.
- Malpas Parish Council would not get involved in the day to day operation of the MJBC accounts as this is the responsibility of the Committee who are in turn responsible to all the Parish Councils / Parish Meetings jointly.

13.1.2 Cllr D Lithgow Smith circulated a summary of the current situation including the background, the legal and financial position. This includes a loan that was taken out by MJBC to carry out refurbishments to The Lodge (the property is owned by MJBC and rented out to a private tenant).

13.1.3 The Chairman (Trevor Parker) and the Clerk (Jackie Clegg) have both submitted their resignation from the MJBC with effect from the end of November.

A meeting is due to take place to discuss what action is required including the appointment of a new Clerk to MJBC and to forming a new committee.

RESOLVED:-

The Council agreed to the following statement:-

"No Mans Heath and District Parish Council confirms that it has confidence in the current Chair and Clerk of the Malpas Joint Burial Committee and is satisfied that they have consistently acted in good faith for the benefit of the local community.

The Council places on record its thanks to the Chair and the Clerk on their resignation and its appreciation for all the work they have performed during their terms in office."

Proposed by Cllr F Lithgow Smith and seconded by Cllr Guildford.

RESOLVED:-

The Council agreed to write to Malpas Parish Council to remind them that LGA 1972 schedule 26 1(d) requires all decisions relating to cemeteries jointly owned by more than one parish to be taken by all the parishes acting jointly. In the absence of a Joint Committee with appropriate agreed terms of reference any decisions must therefore be taken jointly by the Parish Councils, including but not restricted for managing the finances and banking arrangements of the MJBC and the establishment of a new Joint Committee, No Mans Heath and District Parish Council will regard as void any decisions taken without its' consent.

Proposed by Cllr D Lithgow Smith and seconded by Cllr Roberts.

RESOLVED:-

The Council agreed to appoint Cllrs D Lithgow Smith and Crossland to represent No Mans Heath and District Parish Council on the new MJBC.

Proposed by Cllr D Lithgow Smith and seconded by Cllr Roberts.

13.2 Bickerton Joint Burial Committee:-

Cllr D Lithgow Smith advised that the Committee is currently negotiating with local landowners in the hope of acquiring more land.

14. CHRISTMAS EVENT

14.1 Update:-

Events Application Form:-

This has been completed and submitted to CWaC for consideration (to date, there have been a number of queries dealt with).

Cllr Collins informed the Council:-

- The Christmas Tree Switch On Event will take place on Saturday 30th November 2024.
- Planning is still ongoing for the event.
- Letters have gone out to local residents affected by the road closure.
- Over 300 flyers have been hand delivered locally for the event.
- The Christmas Tree and Mince pies are being donated by Wise Ltd and supplied by Edge Christmas Trees.
- The mulled wine has been donated by Steelforce.
- There are 50 local children booked into see Santa and receive a gift (this sold out in just 4 hours).

14.2 Insurance for event:-

Zurich has confirmed that the Council's insurance policy will cover the event.

14.3 Road Closure:-

Core Highways are to arrange the road closure for the event to take place. The Council has applied to the Ward Members Budget to pay for the road closure)

15. VILLAGE SIGNS

The Clerk has obtained quotes for the metal village signs and applied to Highways for a licence to install the village signs and gates.

16. ISSUES REGISTER

The Council are to delegate key areas or responsibility to individual Cllrs therefore this means that the Issues Register is no longer required.

17. COUNCIL PROCEDURES

Cllr D Lithgow Smith circulated a report regarding individual Councillors having delegated authority to progress matters within defined areas of responsibility.

He suggested the following initial 'Ground rules' to formalise this; these can be adapted in the light of experience:-

- (i) The PC will nominate Councillors to hold special responsibility for aspects of the Council's business, and define the area of responsibility, in the minutes of a full meeting.
- (ii) Nominated Councillors, in relation to their area of responsibility:
 - a. Must be:
 - i. Included in all discussions
 - ii. Included in all correspondence (including emails)
 - iii. Involved in any decisions
 - b. Will be the Council's main point of contact
 - c. Will report to the Council at each meeting, and between meeting where appropriate, and highlight to the Council any decisions required.
 - d. Will include the Clerk in any matters impacting on finance or financial decisions.
 - e. Will include the Clerk and the Ward Councillor in any correspondence with CWAC.
- (iii) It is expected that all Councillors will raise matters falling within a Nominated Councillor's area of responsibility with the Nominated Councillor, but that this will NOT be a substitute for routine reporting of relevant issues direct to CWAC in the normal way (e.g. Report It).

RESOLVED:-

The Council agreed to delegate the following key areas as follows:-

- Highways – Cllr Harrop

- Littler Croft – Cllr Collings
- Footpaths / PROWs – Cllr F Lithgow Smith
- Police Liaison – Cllrs Harrop and Roberts

Proposed by Cllr Higgle and seconded by Cllr Crossland.

18. CLERK'S REPORT

- 18.1 2025 dates:– booked Cholmondeley Hall for meetings.
- 18.2 Police meeting:– arranged joint meeting of parish councils and parish meeting (notes from meeting circulated previously).
- 18.3 CIL Form:- CWaC form completed to state how any CIL money was spent in the 2023 / 24 financial year; this has been emailed to CWaC and posted on the website.
- 18.4 Lamppost Poppies:- order placed and delivered.

19. CORRESPONDENCE

A list of correspondence received was previously circulated.

PART 2

RESOLVED:- The Council agreed to exclude members of the public and press so as to discuss employee related matters.

Proposed by Cllr Higgle and seconded by Cllr Crossland.

1. CLERK'S SALARY AND HOURS

The Council considered Clerk's salary and hours for the 2025 – 2026 financial year. It was decided that she will remain on SCP 26.

Signed

Dated

Scheduled Parish Council Meetings

DATES FOR 2025 MEETINGS

Thursday 9th January 2025
 Thursday 6th March 2025
 Thursday 1st May 2025
 Thursday 3rd July 2025
 Thursday 5th September 2025
 Thursday 6th November 2025