

DRAFT MINUTES OF BITTERLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON

Monday 18th March 2024

Clerk: Michelle Parker Tel: 07943762988

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Present: Mrs. A Holman (Chair), Mr. P Martin, Mr. G Dolphin, Mr. R Watkins, Mr. J Readon-Smith, Mr. D Rogers, Mr. T Millard, and Mr. J Gatehouse.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Michelle Parker (Clerk), Mr R Huffer, Ms. K Parry, Mr. R Lewis, Ms. D Humphries, Mr. J Amphlett, Ms. T Howard.

The Meeting commenced at 7.05pm

	ITEM	ACTION
2023/144	Apologies: Apologies were received from Cllr. R. Osbourne.	
2023/145	Public participation: The members of the public present have the arranged slot 2023/150. Therefore, no public session was held.	
2023/146	Shropshire Councillor Report: Mr R. Huffer, reiterated the financial situation of Shropshire Council which was covered in last month's meeting. He explained that he had no new information to add to this month's meeting.	
2023/147	Declarations of Interest: None.	
2023/148	Approval of Minutes: Councillors approved the minutes from 19 th February 2024, Cllr. A Holman signed the minutes.	
2023/149	Clerk's Report: Concerning actions points for the Clerk raised during the parish meeting on 19/02/24: 2023/135 – Planning, Objection to original plans submitted before 23/02/24 as requested. 2023/135 – Grant Policy, new policy & application form added to the website. 2023/137 - Roads - U8306 - Roundthorne to Bitterley, surface dressing concerns email sent to Shropshire Highways.	
2023/150	Possible Affordable Dwelling: Ms. D. Humphries, Chartered Town Planner, Mr. R. Lewis, applicant to potentially build local affordable housing in the parish, here to demonstrate strong local connections and local employment supported by Ms. D Humphries, T Howard and Mr. J Amphlett. Introductions were made. Ms. Humphries outlined Mr. Lewis's case and asked the parish	

	<p>council to endorse the evidence provided demonstrating Mr. Lewis's strong local connections and local employment.</p> <p>Discussion focused on Mr. Lewis's connections to the community and his work history as an agricultural contractor, specifically on the balance between paid work and community involvement. Questions were raised about the duration of Mr. Lewis's employment with individuals listed and potential future work opportunities.</p> <p>The next steps will involve reviewing additional materials provided by Ms. Humphries and confirming support for Mr. Lewis's application pending satisfactory validation of criteria. Ref 2023/157</p>	
2023/151	<p>Volunteers to Assist Parish Council - Update</p> <p>a) Website Mr. B. Shadlock from Cold Oak Farm volunteered to assist in website development. Members provided input on desired website features, emphasising user-friendly design. Cllr. Holman will collaborate with Mr. Shadlock and the Clerk to develop the website.</p> <p>b) Defibrillators Mr. C. Joynson volunteered to oversee the Farden and Bedlam locations. The mud has been cleared from around the Bedlam defibrillator. Ms. C. Gilbert volunteered to manage the Cleeton St. Mary location and Mr and Mrs Cherry the Bitterley site. While Ms. S. Jones identified a volunteer for Middleton, this is to be followed up to see if the volunteer can be verified. Training sessions for defibrillator volunteers will be sought from The Circuit. The Clerk will provide step-by-step instructions and support materials to Mr. D. Rogers for circulation. Ms. C. Gatehouse potentially providing additional volunteer support for Middleton depending on work commitments.</p>	<p>Cllr. Holman Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
2023/152	<p>Co-option/ Councillor Vacancy Update: Review application from Ms. K. Parry</p> <p>Ms. K. Parry was welcomed, following her submission of a letter of application expressing her interest in joining the council. Karen briefly discussed her connections to the village and parish, addressing any potential conflicts of interest. Council members had the opportunity to ask Ms. Parry questions. Mr Huffer expressed the benefits of having links to the school, Ms Parry clarified her intentions to remain impartial when dealing with school-related matters.</p> <p>Ms. Parry & Mr Huffer left the room, the council proceeded with a confidential vote. The outcome was seven votes in favour and one vote against, resulting in Ms Parry's co-option as a parish councillor. Karen then signed the declaration of office, which was countersigned by the Clerk.</p>	
2023/153	<p>Ledwyche – Progress on Community Liaison Group</p> <p>Cllr. Reardon-Smith expressed dissatisfaction with the complaints process, citing that it takes three months to address complaints and there is absence of a practical way to file complaints. The Liaison group</p>	

	<p>would not meet frequently enough to be effective. John proposed going back with comments on these issues.</p> <p>John suggested Mr. Huffer represent Shropshire council on the community liaison group and emphasised the need for a landowner representative. Cllrs. agreed that it wasn't necessary for the Chair to represent the council specifically but that a member of the council would be sufficient.</p> <p>Cllr. Holman expressed difficulty in understanding the proposed complaints procedure. particularly regarding the HD5 document.</p> <p>Regarding changes to the project plans, Cllr. Readon-Smith raised concerns about alterations to plans without community consultation, suggesting they be shared with the community before implementation. Rosie, the community liaison officer, was mentioned as the point of contact for this issue.</p> <p>He also raised concerns about document HD5 (a document noted within the Planning Inspectors report) missing from Shropshire Council planning portal.</p> <p>Finally, there was discussion about the lack of accountability from the developer and the frustration of trying to work with them. It was noted that the council should take a more proactive role in project oversight and execution.</p>	Cllr. RS
2023/154	<p>Employment of New Parish Clerk</p> <p>Cllr. Millard and Cllr. Holman provided an update on the interview with Heather Coonick for the position of Parish Clerk. They discussed Heather's current employment with four other councils and her familiarity with rural communities and administrative tasks. The council considered Heather's suitability for the role, given her experience and expertise.</p>	
2023/155	<p>Financial Matters:</p> <p>No additional payments were made in the last month</p> <p>Approved Payments -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Rocking Horse Media, website = Not paid, invoices were not presented. ii. Michelle Parker HMRC January = MP chose to be paid following last working day 29th of March 2024. iii. Michelle Parker February Salary = MP chose to be paid following last working day 29th of March 2024. iv. Shropshire Council Joint Energy Costs 4th Quarter = £217.36 v. Bitterley Village Hall Hire April 2023 to March 2024 inc. = £275.00 <p>Proposed by Cllr Holman. Seconded by Cllr. Dolphin. All agreed to the payments being made.</p>	
2023/156	<p>Action List:</p>	

	Cllr A Holman went through the action list, discussed progress made and recorded future actions:	
2023/157	<p>Private Session: Due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed under item 50 the public and press shall be excluded under S1(2) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Ref item 2023/150 . After discussion in the private session the Council voted to validate the information provided by Mr Lewis demonstrating strong local connections and local employment to support his application under the local affordable housing scheme. The vote was 6 for, 2 against and 1 abstention</p>	
2023/158	<p>Items for the next Agenda: None discussed.</p>	
	Meeting closed at 21:45	

Mrs. A. Holman Chair to Bitterley Parish Council