### HIGHLEY PARISH COUNCIL

**An Ordinary meeting of Highley Parish Council was held on Tuesday 5th February 2019 at 7.00pm at the Severn Centre, Highley.**

**Present**: Cllr. G.Court – Chair**,** Cllrs**.** R.Honeybourne, A.Honeybourne, D.Thakrar, N.Barker, D.Bayley ,T.Holford, P.Atkinson ,P.Vinall, M.Brooks

Clerk: Mrs.E.Preston

**00. Parishioners Time -** No Comments

**Declaration of Pecuniary interests: Declaration of any disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter to be discussed at the meeting. Members are reminded that they are required to leave the room during the discussion and voting on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, whether or not the interest is entered in the register of member’s interest maintained by the monitoring officer.**

**01. Apologies for absence.** Apologies received Cllr. M.Phipson, Cllr. J.Marshall, Cllr. Law, Cllr. Tremellen - illness Cllr. Broome - Holiday. - ***RESOLVED*** to accept apologies

**02.** To confirm the minutes of the meeting dated 15th of January 2019. Following amendments by Cllr. R.Honeybourne - 04. Precept – Cllr. A.Honeybourne had asked if we had to Justify the precept not Cllr.R.Honeyboure and 05. Correspondence item 1 – Cllr. P.Atkinson left the room due to aninterest. It was ***RESOLVED***to confirm the minutes as a true and correct record. Chair signed the minutes.

**04. Matters arising from minutes:-**

CCTV – Clerk advised that the application for the new CCTV system had now been sent to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Environmental Maintenance Grant – Highley Parish Council has been awarded a grant of £1500.

**04. Correspondence:**

Tracey Johnson – Place Plan Officer for the Bridgnorth/Highley/Much Wenlock and Broseley Area wrote to the Parish Council to say that she had been asked to arrange a meeting on the review of the Highley and Surrounding Area Place Plan which will enable the parishes to get together and look at the draft place plan for the area. The meeting will take place on Tuesday 19th March at 10.am to 12.00pm at the Severn Centre. The meeting will be for Parish Councillors, Shropshire Councillors and Clerks in the Highley Place Plan area only. It is not a public meeting. They envisage each Council attending with a clerk and two members of each Council who will report back to their respective Councils.

It was ***RESOLVED*** that the Chair Cllr.Court and Vice Chair Cllr. Barker would represent Highley. Council.

Councillors R.Honeybourne and A.Honeybourne asked if they would be able to attend the meeting and listen but not take part. Clerk to ask Shropshire Council this question.

Mrs. June Guest wrote to the Council regarding the neglected state of the village and the Silent Soldiers Chair Cllr.Court confirmed that a skip had been ordered to remove the flower baskets. It was agreed that the Silent Soldiers would be taken down and stored until October when they would again be erected .

SALC – Briefing note on the Community enablement Team

Shropshire Council – Road Closure at Kinlet from the 1st to the 8th March

Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital – Media Release on the future of the two Hospitals in the County.

**05. To look at any planning applications received.**

19/00052/FUL – Application under Section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the conversion of a triple garage into annex to main dwelling – Whitehouse Farm Barn – Netherton Lane.

***RESOLVED NO OBJECTIONS***

19/00423/FUL – Erection of single storey rear extension and associated alterations to roof – 15 Willow Drive. ***RESOLVED NO OBJECTIONS***

Planning Decisions

18/05425/FUL – Erection of side and rear extension – 13 Netherfield – ***GRANT PERMISSION***

**06. Petition from Highley Residents**

A petition from the residents of Highley regarding the proposed Highley Place Plan was given to Highley Parish Council. The petition read as follows:-

. The Infrastructure is brought up to an acceptable standard that can accommodate current and future needs of our village

 .A proper consultation takes place on all available sites.

 They asked if the Parish Council could forward the petition to Shropshire Council.

Clerk advised that she had received an email from the Solicitor as Shirehall regarding Councillors signing the petition as follows:

“*Is difficult to comment without the exact details of the petition.  If it suggests that there should be no development in the village generally then they probably should avoid signing it if they want to consider future applications which come before the Council.  If there is a less specific recommendation, then it may be acceptable.  I doubt there would be any harm if the petition said that future applications might be acceptable if the infrastructure was satisfactory to cope with it.”*

Cllr. Holford stated his concern about this advice. He said that he had tried to represent Parishioners and had always acted with integrity and could not see why he could not sign the petition and also comment on future planning applications.

**07**. **Grant Request – Highley Companions**

***RESOLVED*** That a grant of £1030.00 be given

**08. Grant Request – Highley Primary School -** No application received**.**

**09. Grant Request – Highley Park Homes Defibulator**

Clerk to clarify that the Defibulator could be used by anyone not living on Highley Park Homes if needed and that they were happy to have the location published. If all these conditions were met it was ***RESOLVED*** that a grant of £358.56 be given.

Cllrs. M.Brooks and P.Atkinson left the room and took no part in discussions on this issue due to an interest.

**10. Halo – Severn Centre Advisory Board Meeting – Cllr. Bayley.**

The Severn Centre Manager, Carl Gregg said that he had been having meeting with users and local organisations to try to promote the centre. There was to be a Celebration of the Alveley/Highley Mining History to be held at the Centre in February. He had agreed not to charge for use of the centre for the occasions.

Catering Update

Contract out to tender – Interviews to take place shortly. Have been assured that the catering facilities will be open for when the pool opens.

Carnival –Will be held on the first Saturday of July. Severn Centre keen to support this event.

Maintenance Issues **–** Work still ongoing. All staff up to date on Health and Safety issues.

OHP in Main Hall – Now working

Skate Park – Halo to assist with this project with regards to quotes and grants.

Clerk to forward all the reports from the last Board Meeting. Clerk also to ask about the Hearing Loop in the main hall and the disabled hoist for the pool.

**11.Report from Village Maintenance Working Group**

Maintenance Contractor

Chair Cllr.Court reported that three people had been interviewed for this position. It was felt although all candidates were well qualified that S.M.Maintenance had the more appropriate experience for the position. It was ***RESOLVED*** that S.M.Maintenance be offered the position at a rate of £15 per hour . Clerk to thank the other candidates for their interest.

Village Floral Displays

Councillor Court confirmed that a skip had been ordered to clear out all the old flower baskets, tubs and troughs. Cllrs. Court and Vinall to look into collecting the baskets etc.

Flowers for 2019 – Clerk confirmed Mr. Bill White has agreed to provide flowers for the baskets.

Colours to be Blue/Yellow/White.

Grit Bins

Clerk has contacted the Intermediate Advice Group who gave permission to purchase two Grit Bins. One for Netherton Lane and one at the top of Coronation Street. Graham Downes has confirmed that if the Parish Council purchase the bins, he would fill them.

Storage Container

Clerk contacted the Severn Centre to ask if they would have any objections to a Storage Container being placed on the Severn Centre Grounds for use by the Parish Council. They agreed that this would be in order. Councillor Brooks obtained quotations Clerk to meet with the Severn Centre to see which size container would be most appropriate for the area. When this has been decided the Intermediate Advice Group to be contacted to give permission to purchase the Container.

**House Numbering**

Cllr. Court to write an article for the Forum and Facebook to ask people to check that their door numbers are easy to see from the road for the emergency services

**12. St. Marys Churchyard Maintenance Contract 2019.**

Revd. Mike Harris provided the Chair with a copy of the contract for Churchyard maintenance.

It was agreed that as the contract was the same as last years that we ask Revd. Harris to put the contract out to tender. When Tenders received it was ***RESOLVED*** that the Intermediate Advice Group be given the power to agree contract.

Cllr.R.Honeyboure and A.Honeybourne left the room and took no part in the discussion on this issue due to an interest.

**13. Smart water**

Clerk provided copies of the application forms for the Smart water scheme. Following discussions it was agreed that the Clerk try to find out further information regarding how many packs would need to be purchased and the cost. ***AGENDA*** next meeting.

**14. Shropshire Councillors Report – written report** Just over 2 years ago I wrote in the Forum:

*“Having watched the way local land agents are challenging Shropshire’s 5-year housing land supply figures, I’m increasingly convinced that if we stick with the current unwritten policy of opposition to everything, we lose out on any leverage any proposed increase in population might offer to support the argument for better access roads, or at the very least roads that aren’t falling apart.”*

That reflected what we county councillors had learnt in briefings and those parish councillors who attended a number of “neighbourhood planning” briefing sessions – organised by SALC and held either at Shirehall or the Lord Hill Hotel - had been advised to do in the face of increasingly tight legislation that made objecting to planning decisions difficult-to-impossible. Basically, it was made clear to us that the world of planning had changed, and we’d better get used to it!

Well, we have tried to be reasonable and we have listened to what the planners have been saying to us, but instead of respecting those efforts to help match what the community needed with the county’s plans for the future – on the basis of our local knowledge – we have been ignored and our concerns ignored as irrelevant.

Nothing has highlighted that attitude like the response to our insistence that the current “round of consultation” on Shropshire Council’s “preferred option” is yet another example of Shropshire Council’s planning department “telling and selling”. They’ve told us what they intend to do and send their people out to sell the idea to us.

Overwhelming reactions at the two public meetings (the last one called by and paid for by me) demonstrated that Highley is simply not in the market for even more of Shropshire Council’s bovine ordure, otherwise known as…. Well, I’d better not or I’ll find myself the subject of yet another formal complaint.

I’ve spent most of my life in hard industries surrounded by hard people who give short shrift to the smelly stuff, so when you’ve spent so long saying it how it is (including time in the Forces where every third word in a verbal “technical” report of what’s wrong with a multi-million-pound aircraft is an expletive), you’re disinclined to defer to the faint sensibilities of a ‘civilian’ audience!

The attitude adopted by Shropshire Council’s Planning Department is an affront to the idea of what’s meant by “democracy”. What’s happening is arguably a direct consequence of the Cabinet system of governance and its tendency to filter down through the ranks.

For those who still fondly cling the idea that the “old” committee system of local government prevails, the reality is what’s officially called the ‘Strong Leader model’, where all powers that used to fall to the Executive are now discharged solely by the Executive **Leader** (whether personally or through delegation), and not by the Executive as a ‘body’.

In the same way that the ‘Strong Leader with Cabinet’ is a system of political elitism, planning is a system steeped in bureaucratic elitism wrapped in a force-field of technical-speak. Anyone who has read through the documentation that accompanies the preferred sites consultation will have gathered that, it’s why I’ve stressed the importance of everyone completing that “consultation” - not to bin it just because some of the questions asked are beyond a lay person’s understanding, an understanding that allows for an informed judgement on what are quite complex issues.

If someone does not understand a question the response needs to be: “I do not understand the question”.

The whole approach excludes meaningful involvement, whether by design or genuine lack of empathy on the part of the planners (I suspect a combination of the two), at least insofar as such involvement allows **meaningful** consultation. The Gunning Principles guide how the Executive should engage with those it claims to be working on behalf of…

*Consultation must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage: Decision-makers cannot consult on a decision that has already been made.*

I have made the point to the planners that the way the preferred sites have been handled favor’s the one that makes life easiest for them because it gives them 122 dwellings at a stroke of the pen. They vehemently deny this, insisting that the “consultation” is a genuine attempt on their part to reach agreement having considered the views of all. That is patently not the case.

They have presented their preferred site in a way that blights the alternatives. They deny this. I pointed to my being approached by a planning agent working on behalf of the owner of one of the alternative sites - a site that would actually cure a lot of traffic problems in Highley, not make them worse - asking if, in my opinion, it was still worth working on those plans now that Shropshire Council had publicly announced its preferred site. In all honesty I didn’t know what to say, other than to weigh his options and place his bet – it is that much of an odds-on gamble!

And since that approach I have received a letter from another agent saying: “We have identified a site within Highley and have a landowner that is happy with offering a piece of land for affordable houses. We would like to speak to you about the site and bring it forward positively with the Council and a housing association. Please let me know your thoughts and maybe we could meet up and talk about it in further detail.”

I can’t be sure, but I suspect that site to be the smaller of the two neighboring the telephone exchange, where there has been an earlier, rejected, application for nine bungalows. It is part of the Shropshire Council preferred site.

So, taking account of the impact of housing development assumed by the planners themselves, each new dwelling generates 5-6 vehicle movements a day.

Going back to that quote at the head of this report, the watch-word is “infrastructure”. Not another brick laid until “they” wake up to the crippling effect that their indifference is having on a community of 3,600 (and as that was at the 2011 census, it’s 3,600-plus people now).

**12. Finance:**

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| Viking Direct | Stationary | 151.38 |
| H.M.Customs & Revenue | Tax and National Insurance | 67.63 |
| M.E.Preston | Salary | 919.43 |
| Eon | Street Lights  | 2655.00 |
| Highley Companions (137) | Grant | 1030.00 |
| Highley Park Homes (137)(R.Aisthorpe) | Grant - Defibulator | 358.56 |
| S.K.Littlejohn | Audit Fee | 480.00 |
| Smith of Derby | Clock Repairs | 864.00 |
| Freda Morris | Expenses | 120.83 |
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**Meeting closed 8.50pm.**

Signed ……………………………………………. Date: ………………………………..

Agenda items for next meeting

Defibulator for Village

Smartwater