

HIGHLEY PARISH COUNCIL

An ordinary meeting of Highley Parish Council was held via video conferencing on Tuesday 3rd November 2020 at 7.00pm .

Present: Chair :Cllr.M.Brooks, Cllrs. P.Vinall, N.Barker, D.Tremellen, J.Law, D.Thakrar, J.Marshall, R.Honeybourne, A.Rodgers, A.Honeybourne, R.Broome. D.Bayley
Clerk: Mrs.E.Preston
Parishioners: 0

00.Parishioners Time - No Parishioners present.

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 the interest is entered in the register of member's interest maintained by the monitoring officer.

01 Mr.T.Shrowsbee, Ms.Andrea Cox, – Shropshire Council- Housing Needs Survey

Mr.T.Shrowsbee explained about the Right Homes Survey, and why this is being carried out. It was to find out what type of housing needs are required in the area. They planned to begin this survey in November this year. He also explained about Community Led Schemes. Mr.Shrowsbee told the Council how the survey would take place and said that the Parish Council would be consulted on how best to promote the survey and at the end would be shown the results before the survey goes live on their website.

Andrea Cox said it was important that Shropshire Council and Highley Parish Council understood what parishioners would like to see in their communities in terms of housing needs and this is what it was hoped the survey would provide. It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish assist with this survey.

02 Apologies for absence and reasons for absence – Apologies received Cllr.Phipson – unable to access Zoom.

Absent – no apologies – Cllr G.Court.

03 To confirm the minutes of the meeting dated 13th October 2020 . RESOLVED to accept minutes.
Chair to sign the minutes

04. Matters Arising

CCTV – Start date November 2020.

Youth Project – Cllr.Vinall has forwarded information to the Committee for their comments. .

Bus Shelter Village Centre – Shropshire Council could see no problem with relocating the Bus Shelter at the South End of the Village. Need to look at the exact dimensions of the Bus Shelter in the village centre to see if anything could be put here to replace the Bus Shelter

05. Correspondence

SALC – News in Brief

Keir – Mr. George Frost-Jones – details of work to be carried out on B4555 Borle Mill Junction to Junction of B4633

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Shropshire Council – Covid Information

Lord Lieutenant Garden Party – Invite to Garden Party.

SALC AGM – Representatives from the Council are Cllr. Bayley and Cllr.Tremellen – to be the voting Representatives.

Severn Centre – Wrote to say that as from Thursday the Severn Centre would be closed. All staff furloughed except for the Centre Manager who is only furloughed for four days a week.

Cllr. P.Atkinson – Sent a letter resigning from the Parish Council due to personal reasons.

06 Planning

Reference: 20/04166/FUL (validated: 13/10/2020) - Address: 3 Hazelwells Road, Highley, WV16 6DJ - Proposal: Erection of two storey side extension. **RESOLVED** No Objections.

Outline application for the erection of two semi-detached dwellings – Beech Street **RESOLVED** No objections.. Abstained Cllr.Broome

07..Cemetery Land /Burial Authority - to discuss options

Cllr.Tremellen said that St. Mays Church were looking at the wooded area again as a possible extension to the churchyard. It would need a survey carried out to see if it were suitable. If the trees were grubbed up and the water table was not too high the land should be stable to use for Burials. If this was suitable it would give another 10 years grave space.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council move ahead and take the first stage along this process .

08. Severn Centre – Report from Monthly Meeting – Report from Carl Gregg – Area Manager

“ Following the lockdown, the centre reopened with limited services on the 17th August, this included the gym and outdoor pool. With the social distancing measures in place we initially reduced the weekly opening hours from 80 to 37 hours per week to reduce the overall operating costs. This is set to increase week commencing 5th October in order to accommodate other centre activities and will be extended to 58 hours per week.

Participation. Initially the pool opened with lane swimming only, participation averaged between 100-120 swimmers per week. Family swims were introduced on the 2nd of September and numbers increased to average between 120-150 swimmers per week. We introduced limited group exercise classes from 24th August which included Circuits and Yoga, which were previously well attended prior to Covid-19. Although working closely with the marketing team to promote the classes attendance was low with only 2-3 attendees for the first 2 weeks. Numbers have since increased and are now averaging between 5-7 attendees for each class with a capacity of 10 due to regulations in place. Although the popularity of the pool has been well received, the gym and library usage has seen a poorer uptake than expected.

Human Resources General Manager now been appointed. There is one other full-time member of staff and two part time.

Maintenance & Equipment Halo Technical department have undertaken work during August to mobilise the pool and fix a leak in the dry side toilets. In addition to this we have had the following safety checks completed under a new contract with Magg Group Ltd : -Commissioning of the fire alarm system. Annual fire alarm test. Annual emergency lighting test. Annual service of fire extinguishers.”

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Concern expressed by Councillors about the security of the Centre during lockdown. Clerk reported that the Centre manager would be going in on a weekly basis to check on everything at the Severn Centre. Clerk reported that the Severn Centre were still getting quotations to repair the CCTV System .

Cllr.Tremellen said that it would be a good idea if the System was linked into the Parish Council CCTV System. It was **RESOLVED** that the Parish Council look into .

Cllr. Barker asked if Halo could let us know what impact this next lockdown would have on the financial forecast of the Severn Centre. **RESOLVED** to do this.

09 Shropshire Councillors Report. Cllr. D.Tremellen gave a written report as follows:

“Shropshire Council highways department obviously took the words of their £130,000 highways consultant literally to heart when he told them to work more efficiently, planning work programmes to avoid shifting heavy plant from one side of the county to the other by planning jobs in adjacent areas to be done together, but it would have made more sense NOT to have scheduled them just a weekend apart, then adding insult to injury by ignoring the dreadful state of the length of New Road through the woods just this side of the Borle Brook bridge, choosing instead to work on a stretch of road that no one who used it has ever found a problem with since it was rebuilt just a few years ago! I wish that was only issue arising out of this latest highway work. For the record, the failure of Kier to start the road closure on the 23rd October as originally notified, meant the extra 5 buses, 5 inspectors, and 4 drivers on duty to cover the original closure weren't needed. And let us not forget the dozen or so local people who, taking Kier (for which read Shropshire Council) at their word, travelled the extra mileage around the detour at both ends of their working day. Whilst we have suffered and continue to suffer from two historical problems that directly impact on the roads in our part of the county, there is absolutely no excuse for what happened on the 23rd October which led to the following exchange, itself the third email, responding to my complaints and requests for information that could be relied on...

Sent: 26 October 2020 17:30To: Dave.Tremellen@shropshire.gov.uk
Subject: FW: B4555 Bridgnorth - Highley resurfacing works

Good evening David

Apologies for the delay in responding to you. We have spoken to Kier, and they have taken this up with their sub-contractor who are undertaking this work on their behalf.

Unfortunately, Kier have been let down by what are usually a reliable contractor. I have had confirmation that the resurfacing works at the above location will be starting on Wednesday 28th and completed by the 30th October.

Again, please accept our apology for this delay. Kind regards, Andy

Incredulous, I replied...

Thanks Steve/Andy, you can imagine the anger, both my own and that of everyone else impacted by the shambles.

I was particularly angry because I've worked to defuse a lot of the acrimony coming from the community over the way they've been let down over the years, emphasising in my articles to

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the local community magazine, Facebook, and reports to the parish council, that since losing £10 million from its budget, highways has had to try and operate without any laces in its boots! I have done that despite our losing all the work programme in 2017 when we were 'sacrificed' in favour of Idsall School's work.

None of that lost programme of work was reinstated despite repeated promises; we're still waiting to see the pleas from local traders to get the waiting restrictions and the associated white lining in the pull-ins in place answered, and let's not even mention the extension by about 20 FEET of the double yellow lines that would allow brewery wagons to get into the yard of the Bache Arms, a job that the parish council would have bought a pot of yellow paint and done itself had we even had a response authorising it.

Meanwhile, we have had to sit back and read about Shrewsbury town centre being tarted up and Steve Charmley getting millions from central government for a road that will most certainly benefit his constituency if only the rest of us cough up the balance of £17 million that will be needed to see his pet project completed.

It might be Kier who have cocked up this time, but as anyone who has ever run a business will testify, the buck stops with whoever employed the wastes of space who are not doing what they're employed to do, and that goes for Shropshire Council who are responsible for the actions (or failures to act) of Kier, and for Kier who are ultimately responsible for the failures of its sub-contractors.

We are asking for nothing more than a return on the investment we thought we were making when we paid our council tax.

And the reaction to the news that Kier reckon they will finish the current job by the original completion date of the 30th having started it six days late? No highways pun intended, but how many corners are they going to have to cut to achieve that? Or are they now going to have to close the road completely and work overnight to achieve that?

.....

I think you can sense my frustration as well anger, frustration made worse by having to 'have a go' at Steve Davenport and the highways officers who are, in truth, doing the best they can in a situation not of their making. But that said, if anything points up the sheer bloody lunacy of a local authority sub-contracting its operations to a company that then sub-contracts that work to another company, it's the mess Highley people have just had to contend with.

It is time Shropshire Council looked to bringing its operations back in-house and back under its direct control.

Not that that would necessarily overcome the two factors that have always worked against Highley - history and bias; history in the form of roads being little more than tarted-up dirt tracks put down several generations ago, and bias because we're in the wrong half of the county.

In an earlier report I mentioned a Freedom of Information request asking how general funding between the two halves of the county was split. The answer, based on Shirehall's own figures, was that the north gets TEN TIMES more than the south of the county.

At a recent committee meeting, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP, which distributes government and EU funding across its area) made much of the amount it had granted to Shropshire. I'm afraid I rained on their parade by pointing out that whilst the LEP had indeed disbursed millions to the **county** only SIX PERCENT came to the south and then only to one organisation - The Marches Centre of Manufacturing & Technology (MCMT) in Bridgnorth.

I went on to explain that we have fabulous potential in this part of the county for schemes that would celebrate our local history, our own David Poyner having done terrific work in researching a past that has been as vibrant as anything elsewhere in Shropshire – and beyond. One of the first things I did when I was elected in 2013 was present a case for the development of Kinlet Colliery to the then Tourist Officer, the late Tim King who, when I gave him a copy of the incredibly detailed 2004 feasibility study, commissioned by the Highley Initiative for the development of the old colliery site into a tourist attraction, enthusiastically embraced the idea. But then the Tourism Department was closed down, proving that where Shropshire Council is concerned ‘Myopia Rules, OK’.

The future for burials within the Highley parish (‘parish’ civil as well as ecclesiastical) continues to feature in my considerations, not just because I’m actively involved as a member of the parish council ‘graveyard working committee’, but because as the county councillor it’s always been central to my thinking that the development of a civic connection between the secular and non secular halves of the community is important, and there’s nothing that concentrates the mind in that direction than the prospect of being buried in the place you’ve lived in.

I was never particularly happy about abandoning the graveyard and its intimate connection with the church and going down the cemetery route, because even as an atheist I’ve always considered that Highley’s history can be traced through its church, so I was particularly pleased to learn that, despite all the misgivings that arose out of the earlier site investigation, there may yet be an opportunity to reclaim the wooded section of the current graveyard to extend the burial area.

To do that will require surveys to establish the stability of the ground once the trees have been grubbed-up and gauge the depth of the water-table in that area. To get some idea of those two deciding factors, at least two grave-depth trenches will need to be dug and left to see how quickly they fill with water and to what level. Expert opinion will then need to be sought to get some idea of how long it would take for the disturbed ground to stabilise enough to allow the safe digging of graves a practicable distance apart.

10. Finance:

S.J.MAINTENANCE	Maintenance Issues	210.00
S.J.MAINTENANCE	Maintenance issues	609.28
M..E.PRESTON	Salary	993.54
HMRC	Tax & NI	67.36
Shorthouses	Skip Hire	170.00
Eon	CCTV Poles	14,
N.Power	Streetlights	1,844.08

Meeting Closed 8.30pm

Signed:Chair Date: