**Draft minutes of a meeting of Great Wolford Parish Council held Tuesday 16 November 2021 at 7.30 pm in The Wolfords Village Hall**

**Present: Lynn Mathias (Chair, LM), Christopher Wolverson (CW), Keith Murphy (KM), Lynn Bryan (LB), Sarah Whalley Hoggins (SDC, SWH), Sue Finlay (Clerk)**

**Members of the public: Nick Rew (NR)**

**2021:48 Apologies:** Jennifer Green, Jo Barker (WCC)

**2021:49 Approval of the minutes of the last meeting and minutes of a Zoom meeting held 2 November 2021:** Approved

**2021:50 Matters arising**

(a) Update on Four Shires Stone Farm: The matter is with Warwickshire County Council (Planning Enforcement). A number of movements on and off the property have been noted still.

(b) Tree planting: Various members of the Council had viewed prospective tree-planting sites with NR, but many came with various problems. The utilities at the Barton turn would cause planting problems, the area opposite was unsuitable because of visibility issues and has now been ruled out as it belongs to the Highways Department who purchased it specifically for a visibility splay. It is planned to plant two or three small ornamental trees by the post box and perhaps one by the dog bin. SWH asked if there was an intention to put plaques on the trees, marking them as jubilee trees. LM confirmed this was the intention. The owner of Wolford Woods had been asked some time ago if they would be willing to have some trees planted there, but they had not responded and the meeting felt it was too far out of the village. SWH asked if there were any large enough gardens in the village where some could be planted. CW said he had considered the churchyard, but that it was too problematic. LM said it was agreed to go ahead with those sites that had been confirmed and asked NR if he could source some ornamental cherries for them. She also thanked NR for all his work on the project.

(c) Garages at Ingram Close: There had been problems in having the verge removed for extra parking, having had no response from Highways or Orbit regarding a request to remove the verges. Jo Barker had said she would follow this up for the council, but had not sent any further information. The Chair will follow this up

(d) Proposed amalgamation of SDC, WDC and WCC: the Parish Council had responded to the SDC/WDC survey about the proposed merger to an amalgamated council on 15 October 2021, as follows:

*In general, the Parish Council recognises that there are advantages to combining the two Councils to deliver economies of scale and reduce duplicated costs across a wide range of services that they both deliver to their communities. The Parish Council recognises and supports moves that have already been made to work together in such areas as the Local Plan where the combination of effort can, and will, result in reduced costs for each of the councils.*

*However, the Parish Council finds itself unable to give the full proposal, its full support.*

*The main reason for this is that the Council Tax in Stratford could well rise to match the levels in Warwick with no discernible improvement in Council Services to Stratford residents. Being a rural parish some distance from the centres of population, we are even less likely to see any improvements in services in our immediate area, even if Council Tax does rise.*

*The projected savings of up to 3.9% of existing costs after five years seem very small. There is a risk that these savings may not materialise, and the Parish Council also notes that integral to the proposal, the number of District Councillors will be reducing.*

 SWH reported that as yet, no results had been collated. SDC were making it sound as if it was already agreed, but there may not be a mandate in the area for it. There had been insufficient response so far and no breakdown of the demographics of the responses that had been received. KM pointed out that there had been no space on the survey form for a PC response, although he had made clear he was filling it in on behalf of the PC.SWH reported that the council had already appointed a team to smooth the way to a unitary council and handle the publicity for it, even though it was not yet agreed.

(e) Speeding: LM reported that she had registered to do a speed camera use course, with a view to organising a traffic speed survey in the village. CW reported that having had previous experience of this, the biggest offenders turned out to be residents. CW and SWH both offered their help.

**2021:51 Planning**:

*New*

21/03234/COUQ, Barn Adjacent To Wolford Lodge Great Wolford Road Moreton-in-Marsh. Proposed change of use of agricultural barn to single residential dwelling [No objection]. Members of the PC had made a site visit

*Ongoing*

21/02181/FUL, Mr W. Coates, land adjacent to Four Shires Stone Farm, conversion to a travellers site with static and touring caravans. (West Oxon CC): KM had submitted an objection on behalf of the council. LM had spoken to WOCC planning and given them details of the environmental officer in charge of the problems at the farm (Going to committee on 20 September 2021) (Refused). The council now were waiting to see if they would appeal. SWH felt this was an unsuitable location due to lack of transport. CW pointed out that there would be problems with schools locally, public transport and available space at the nearest medical centre. LM felt the site was quite small although, as had happened elsewhere locally, they tended to expand quite quickly.

21/03230/VARY, Rectory Farm Great Wolford Shipston-on-Stour CV36 5NG, Variation of condition 2 (plans) of planning application 21/00538/FUL (dated 02.07.2021) to insert a window in the north elevation (A response of No objection has been submitted).

21/03326/LDE, Jackdaws Roost. , Lawful development applied for. The clerk was instructed to send a comment of ‘No objection’.

**2021:52 Finance**

(a) *Expenditure since last meeting:*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 26/07/2021 |  | Sue Finlay | Clerks salary & exp | 302.88 | 7985.55 |
| 26/08/2021 |  | Sue Finlay | Clerks salary & exp. | 144.35 | 7841.20 |
| 17/09/2021 |  | WCC | Grant | 900.00 | 8741.20 |
| 20/09/2021 |  | SDC | Precept  | 2750.00 | 11491.20 |
| 28/09/2021 |  | Sue Finlay | Clerks salary & exp. | 109.15 | 11382.05 |
| 29/09/2021 | Lt Wolford village hall | Grant transfer | 900.00 | 10482.05 |
| 29/10/2021 |  | Sue Finlay | Clerks salary & exp. | 189.55 | 10292.50 |

CW felt that there was a healthy bank balance and the council would be able to fund projects such as the tree planting.

The clerk handed out a set of accounts for the previous 12 months for councillors to take away and consider before the next PC meeting when the precept will be discussed.

**2021:53 Any other business:**

*Possible merger with Little Wolford*: A meeting was held with John Crossling (WALC on 3 November. The primary reason for this meeting was to discuss the possible merger with Little Wolford Parish Meeting (LWPM). This has been requested by the Chair of LWPM, who is due to retire in April 2022 and fears that no one will be willing to replace her. The details of this meeting are minuted separately. LM reported that the Chair of Little Wolford had sent out a questionnaire to Little Wolford residents, specifying that if no one came forward as replacement Chair for LWPM by 31/01/2022, then the current Chair would progress the possible merger. At this point a questionnaire would be sent out to both villages to judge feeling. Depending on a favourable result of this, SDC would then be asked to instigate a Community Governance Review. SWH reported that this had happened with Stourton and Cherington and seemed to work well. Both villages would get a better deal because of the economy of scale and it would be easier to access funding. It also brought the community together, SWH also said residents should be made aware that it could result in an increase in precept for LW. She asked to be invited to future meetings on it.

**2021:54 Councillors reports:** SWH reminded the council that, theoretically, the next DC elections would be in May 2023, but could be pushed back if the Unitary councils proposal moved forward. LM asked when the next PC elections would be. SWH was not sure but said if the merger with LW went forward an election may have to be called for this.

*Fox and Hounds:* SWH reported that this was moving on and that the council were currently concerned about damage being done to the structure of the building by the ingress of vegetation. She was keen for it not to become lost in the unitary councils merger.

*Four Shires Farm waste problem:* WCC is aware of this problem and are monitoring it.

She reported that COVID rates are rising in the area, but vaccination and booster rates were low, mainly due to the fact that travel for some distance was involved, which was a problem for those without their own transport. KM reported that there were two groups that would provide transport (Cotswold Friends and VASA) but there were costs involved. SWH said could the PC perhaps offer help in cases of financial hardship. CW pointed out that it was difficult finding out who was in need. It was possible for those who had difficulty of meeting the cost of transport to apply for support. KM suggested utilising the email care system that was put in place during lockdown. LM suggested leaving this until the possible merger with LWPM had been resolved.

**2021:55 Issues raised by members of the public:** NR pointed out that the Nethercote road had been closed without prior notice.

CW said that the post collection had been changed from late afternoon to 9 a.m.

**2021:56 Date of next Parish Council** **Meeting:** The next meeting was arranged for 11 January2022, at 7.30 p.m., venue to be confirmed nearer the time.