

# LITTLE WOLFORD PARISH MEETING

## Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting, 28 January 2013, Little Wolford Village Hall

**Present:** Bob Large, Shirley Large, Chris Cond, Roz Warriner, Henry Warriner, Michael Revere, Colin Ablewhite, Charles Hobbs, Jane Revere, Beryl Braithwaite, Simon Lewis, David Farman (Chairman), Diz Farman

**Apologies** were received from Arran & Melinda O'Dell, Chris Stretton, Chris & Jim Heritage.

The meeting opened at 19.30.

**Minutes** of the previous meeting were not reviewed as that meeting had been the Parish Annual Meeting, and the minutes would be reviewed at the next such meeting.

The Chairman stated that the meeting had been called to consider:

1. ratification of the previously agreed parish precept requirement for 2013/14;
2. the 2013/14 parish budget;
3. a proposal to apply for the grant of certain additional powers.

These items would be discussed in reverse order.

### 1. Application for the grant of additional powers

The Chairman had attended relevant training courses, and learned that a Parish Meeting, as distinct from a Parish Council, may precept in order to incur expenditure only on allotments, cemeteries and not much else. There is no power, for instance, to recoup administrative expenses, e.g. stationery, postage or hire of the Village Hall for meetings. Under Section 109 of the Local Government Act 1972, a Parish Meeting may apply to the District Council for the grant of specific additional powers of a parish council. Of particular relevance is the power conferred by Section 137 of the 1972 Act to incur expenditure, in the interest of its area or population, for purposes for which no power would otherwise exist; the annual limit on such expenditure is currently equivalent to £6.80 per elector which, in our case, would amount to around £600.

It was proposed by Jane Revere, seconded by Beryl Braithwaite and **unanimously agreed** that we should seek the grant of such powers by Stratford District Council.

Beryl Braithwaite was concerned that we may become responsible for cutting the grass on our village green; the Chairman advised that we would be seeking specific powers in relation to expenditure, rather than any additional obligation, so this would not be the case.

### 2. Budget

On the assumption that the above-mentioned additional powers would be granted before the start of the new financial year, the Chairman proposed that we do not change the draft budget of £500 agreed at last spring's Parish Annual Meeting. £200 would be for maintenance of our parish cemetery (Wolford Churchyard); up to £100 (more likely £50) would be for stationery, postage and hall hire; and the remainder would be for future community projects. It was suggested that examples of such could be additional signage or contributing towards the cost of improved broadband provision. (In the event that additional powers were not granted, of course, the budget would probably need to be reduced to £200 for maintenance of the cemetery).

Endorsement of the £500 budget was proposed by Chris Cond, seconded by Charles Hobbs and **unanimously agreed**.

There followed a brief discussion on signage. Beryl Braithwaite suggested signs to nos. 4-6 The Green and Michael Revere suggested Hunter's Moon. The Chairman would establish whether this lies within the remit of the District Council. Shirley Large asked whether we

will have to appoint and pay for an auditor; the Chairman replied that an auditor has already been appointed for all parishes in Stratford District, and that, at our level of turnover, no fee would be payable. The Chairman observed that the audit process had identified that Wellesbourne had exceeded its authority with spending on a museum.

### **3. Ratification of proposed precept requirement**

The Chairman advised that there have been system changes since the last meeting with effects on our proposed precept. Firstly, the government has decreed that all elements of Council Tax, including parish precepts, for 2013/14 should not increase by more than 2% compared with the current year. Since we have raised no precept to date, a strict interpretation of this directive would mean that we could raise no precept at all for 2013/14; clarification was currently awaited.

Secondly, assuming the 2% restriction proves not to be an issue, we are also required to review our previously agreed precept requirement in the light of recent changes to the way in which council tax benefit is paid, as a result of which our taxbase (the number of Band D equivalent properties liable to council tax) will be reduced from 57 to 51.31. The question is whether to maintain the proposed precept requirement at £500, or whether to reduce it to £450 in order to maintain the level of individual charge previously indicated? (We should bear in mind that, depending on the outcome of decisions made by others, the precept awarded could still be reduced to £200 or zero).

Henry Warriner proposed, Bob Large seconded and it was **unanimously agreed** that the precept requirement should remain at £500.

### **4. Any other business**

The next meeting would be the Parish Annual Meeting, to be held between March and June. A second meeting would be called in the autumn to consider the budget for the following financial year.

A variety of other issues were briefly raised, including potholes in the road through our village leading to cars being driven in the centre of the road; the state of the pavements; flooding around Broadmoor Lodge; poor drainage of excess rainwater in front of the fountain in the Manor wall leading to flooding in Rosary Lane (a situation made worse by erosion of the verges, largely caused by waste collection vehicles, resulting in the drain now being 18" from the edge of the lane!); and road safety problems with the Shipston Gyrotory System (Beryl Braithwaite had heard from Jeff Morris of WCC Highways Department that, despite the frequency of accidents, funding is currently not available to renew the road markings; she will update her article in The LINK and will include Jeff Morris's email address). Charles Hobbs proposed that alcohol be served at Village Meetings in future and this was heartily endorsed!

### **5. The Chairman thanked all for their attendance. The meeting closed at 20.05.**