

LITTLE WOLFORD PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the 2019 Parish Annual Assembly,

22 May 2019, The Wolfords Village Hall

Present: Ralph Döring (RD), Chairman; Adam Bewsey (AB); Chris Cond (CC); David Farman (DF); Charles Hobbs (CH); Jane Hobbs (JH); Simon Lewis-Beeching (SL); Michael Revere (MR); Henry Warriner (HW).

The meeting opened at 7.05pm with a minute's silence in memory of Diz Shirley, who had died on Boxing Day.

1. **Apologies** for absence had been received from Cllr. Jo Barker; Cllr. Sarah Whalley-Hoggins; Colin & Gillian Ablewhite; Helen Bostock; Bob & Shirley Large; Arran & Melinda O'Dell; and Roz Warriner.

2. **Election of Chairman for 2019/20:**

Although unable to attend the Assembly due to prior work commitments, Helen Bostock had agreed to her name being put forward for election to the Chair. DF proposed and CH seconded a **resolution** that Helen Bostock be so elected; this was agreed unanimously. In Helen's absence, the Assembly unanimously agreed that RD, the outgoing Chairman, should chair the Assembly.

3. **Draft Minutes of the last Assembly of 11 December 2018:**

Approval of these was proposed by CH, seconded by MR, agreed by all and signed by RD as a true record of the meeting.

4. **Matters arising:**

RD reported that an FTTC (Fibre-To-The-Cabinet) broadband cabinet ("Long Compton 3") had been installed in the village and become operational in late January. Whilst properties within the Village were served by this cabinet, and those already connected reported downstream speeds of 75-80 Mbps, it was acknowledged that some properties outwith the Village remain connected to the "Long Compton 2" cabinet, which is located close to the telephone exchange in Long Compton, and continue to experience low broadband speeds; DF noted that the CSW Broadband plan was to provide an FTTP (Fibre-to-the-Premises) service to these properties, although the timescale was uncertain.

RD further reported that the 30mph speed limit road markings had been refreshed, and that the Christmas Tree had been installed on the village green.

Reports on other matters were deferred until the Past Chairman's Report.

5. **Past Chairman's Report:**

Construction of the new Parish Noticeboard had been completed; installation was planned for mid-June, following purchase of mounting posts. Costs involved had yet to be finalised, but were expected to be within the budgeted sum of £400. Unfortunately, this expenditure, which had been included within the 2017/18 budget, would now be incurred within the current financial year, resulting in an inevitable impact upon other planned Section 137 spending.

A second Lego event is planned for Saturday, 29 June 2019 to raise funds for the defibrillator project. The Village Hall Trustees have agreed to the installation of the defibrillator on the exterior wall of the Village Hall, and to a supply of electricity from within the Village Hall.

The problems arising from the number of vehicles, in varying states of repair, parked outside number 1-3 The Green had been raised with the Shipston Police "Safer Neighbourhood Team", Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Orbit Housing. Orbit Housing has failed to respond, but the other agencies have attended to review the situation. If the vehicles have not been removed by the end of May, the District Council (which owns the village green and the roadway cut into it to service the former Council properties, now owned by Orbit Housing), the District Council will arrange for their removal.

Although various potholes have been marked for repair, that related to a manhole close to the entrance to Broadmoor Farm has not been so marked; RD will follow up on this omission (**Action: RD**). DF observed that a pothole at the top of Rosary Lane had been marked for repair, but the cause of the pothole was a broken drainage culvert, so simply filling the pothole would not address the underlying problem; this was noted, but no action assigned.

6. Responsible Financial Officer's Report:

DF tabled the Draft Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2019, which had been approved by the Internal Auditor (SL).

- 6.1 SL proposed, CC seconded and the Assembly unanimously approved a **resolution** approving the Annual Governance Statement.
- 6.2 SL proposed, CC seconded and the Assembly unanimously approved a **resolution** that the Draft Accounts be adopted and the Annual Accounting Statement be approved.
- 6.3 DF reported that the 2019/2020 Budget, approved at the Assembly of 11 December 2018, was no longer deliverable, as expenditure on the new Parish noticeboard had not been incurred during 2018/19 as planned, but had slipped into the current financial year; this would reduce the scope for planned expenditure within the 2019/20 Section 137 Spending Limit of £8.20 per elector,
- 6.4 DF reported that the latest advice of the Joint Governance and Audit Panel had overturned the 2016 opinion of the 2016 external auditors that Little Wolford Parish Meeting's Financial Regulations were defective, and that the Chairman could not also fulfil the duties of Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). Current advice is that, in the case of a Parish Meeting of a Parish without a Parish Council, the Chairman is, by default, also the RFO, unless another elector is specifically appointed to fulfil that role. The Annual Return documentation has been revised to take this into account, in that only the Chairman is required to sign off the Certificate of Exemption, the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements.

7. Appointment of the Responsible Financial Officer for 2019/20:

CH proposed and MR seconded a **resolution** that SL be appointed as RFO for the financial year 2019/20, and this was unanimously approved by the Assembly.

8. Appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2019/20:

DF observed that, having been appointed to serve as RFO, SL could no longer act as Internal Auditor. DF therefore proposed and CH seconded a **resolution** that HW be appointed to the role, and this was unanimously approved by the Assembly.

9. Matters of Particular Local Importance: None raised.

10. Matters raised by an Elector of the Parish:

DF suggested that the Parish Meeting website, which he had created and continues to maintain, is no longer fit for purpose: a modern website, capable of updating by the Chairman or an appointed individual, without the need for web-coding skills, would be a more practical solution to the requirement to store and publish statutory documents and more general information. DF commended the Great Wolford Parish Council website, created and maintained by a professional web developer resident in that parish, as a model, and offered to discuss likely costs with that developer (**Action: DF**).

HW reported that, despite following the advice of our County Councillor, no progress had been achieved towards obtaining replacement footpath markers. RD will follow this up with our County Councillor (**Action: RD**).

HW reported that the District Council's contractor for mowing the village green had extended operations down Broadmoor Lane and had, in the process, damaged a manhole cover concealed within the grass verge, despite earlier agreement that the contractor should restrict operations to the village green. RD agreed to initiate contact with the District Council regarding this issue, and to brief the incoming Chairman for subsequent follow-up (**Action: RD**).

DF reported that the incoming Chairman would attend a free training course, organised by WALC and entitled, "Off to a Flying Start - An introduction for Councillors and Clerks", to be held at Alderminster Village Hall on 5 June 2019; although aimed primarily at new members and officials of Parish Councils, it was felt that its content would be useful for a newcomer to the local government arena.

DF suggested that the defibrillator fundraising process should be brought within the remit of the Parish Meeting. Currently, there is no formally-constituted body to which the Parish Meeting could grant

funds, or which could contract for the provision of a defibrillator on behalf of the Parish, yet the Parish Meeting would seemingly be expected to support the post-installation running costs.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm.