

Shobdon Parish Council Meeting May 2020

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 18th May 2020 at 7.45pm via zoom

Attendance: Mr W Stokes, Mr S Macdonald, Mrs A Boxhall, Mr C Jaques, Mrs A Walker, Cllr Roger Phillips, Parish Clerk Ms E Lewis

No members of the public were present.

1. **Nomination and election of Office of Chairman and signature of acceptance form:** Bill Stokes was nominated by Steve Macdonald and seconded by Adrienne Boxhall. He accepted the position and signed the acceptance form.
2. **Nomination and election of Office of Vice Chairman:** Steve Macdonald was nominated by Chris Jaques and seconded by Anne Walker. He accepted the position.
3. **Appointment of Councillors to Committees, working groups and outside bodies:** Appointments were agreed as follows: Lengthsman and PROW - Richard Bowen, Village Hall – Anne Walker, Website -Clerk, Social Media – Adrienne Boxhall, Newsletter editor – Adrienne Boxhall and Emma Lewis, It was **agreed** that the Finance working group would remain open to all councillors who wished to attend.
4. **To receive apologies for absence:** It was **agreed** that whilst Richard Bowen and Sue Whittaker were not at the meeting, this was due to issues with accessing Zoom rather than not being available to attend the meeting. It was **agreed** that should current restrictions result in virtual meetings being required for over 6 months, that councillors being unable to access meetings due to technological issues was approved as a reason for their absence.
5. **Declarations of interest and written requests for dispensation:** No declarations were made.
6. **Minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2020:** The minutes were **agreed** and signed as a correct record.
7. **Report by Ward Councillor Roger Phillips:** Cllr Phillips will check with Herefordshire Council legal department the status of the adoption of Bateman Close, and is pushing for work to be done on the blocked culvert under the B4362 by Pearl Lake to ensure the safety of the road. Following a request from Cllr Phillips, Bill Wiggin has written to Natural England to clarify whether the current Herefordshire Council position that no housing development may take place, following the phosphate ruling, is correct.
8. **Report by West Mercia representative:** A report had been emailed to the Clerk for the meeting. The airfield has had several incidents of trespassing, sometimes on foot and occasionally joy riders using the airfield at night-time and in April two people on the airfield were reported for breaches of COVID-19 restrictions. In March a generator was stolen from a business near the Kingspan industrial estate. In May, an electric bike was stolen from Shobdon; unfortunately, nothing was seen or heard and there's no CCTV available for this. A description of the bike has been shared on several social media pages.
9. **Finance**
 - 9.1 **Financial statement:** The financial statement was **agreed**. The current account has a balance of £24,733.17. Cheques were **agreed** for signature as follows - Hi Trees £744.00, Clerk wages £592.23, HMRC £52.80, Clerk (office allowance and PC Zoom subscription) £24.39.
 - 9.2 **Clerk's devolved power to raise cheques below value of £500:** This was **agreed** and confirmed that cheques would always be issued in liaison with the Chair or Vice-Chair and 1 other signatory.

- 9.3 Appointment of internal auditor for 2019/20 accounts:** It was **agreed** to ask Gill Vaughan to undertake the internal audit of the accounts.
- 10. COVID 19 Update and Issues:** The meeting was updated on the Shobdon COVID 19 volunteer group who had come together to support those self-isolating, shielded or vulnerable during the crisis. The group has been set up and co-ordinated by Adrienne Boxhall and Emma Lewis, and is operating separately to the Parish Council. The initial call for volunteers resulted in over 35 people offering help, and a leaflet was delivered to all households in the parish by volunteers to ensure all residents had information on how to access help and what grocery services were available in the village. The group is linked into central support via the Herefordshire Talk community hub, with a link worker assigned to the ward. Since the start of lockdown the group has helped over 15 residents, some on an ongoing basis, mainly with prescription pick-ups and grocery shopping. The co-ordinators have been using social media to post regular updates to keep residents informed as more delivery services have become available from local companies, and also to help boost community morale. The group will continue to support residents as long as required. It was **noted** that most recent government guidance would suggest that the MUGA could be opened but it was **agreed** to leave it closed until advice was received from Herefordshire Council. The Bar Meadow playground will remain closed until government advice changes.
- 11. Planning**
- 11.1 Updates on any planning issues:** No additional issues to report. (See minute 7 for reference to adoption of Bateman Close.)
- 12. Updates and action**
- 12.1 Lengthsman/PROW:** Alan Jones had provided a price for work to remove dead wood and mulch the oak tree T11 at the Birches; it was **agreed** that Richard Bowen would be consulted prior to taking a decision to agree the work. It was **noted** that there had been problems with sewerage overflow on the North Road. This has been reported to Welsh Water, who had sent a jetter out to try and resolve the issue. It was **noted** that with more people out and about walking footpaths in the Parish, more issues were being reported to the Parish Council. It was **agreed** that a footpath policy, that clarifies who has responsibility for maintenance of the footpaths, what work the Parish Council does, etc should be drafted.
- 12.2 Footpath Bridge:** The outline plans for the bridge have been sent to BBLP and Hereford Council for initial feedback, following which it has been suggested that a virtual meeting be held to discuss how the project can be moved forwards. The Chair will hopefully report back from this at the next meeting.
- 12.3 Parish Bins -to agree purchase of additional bin:** It was **agreed** that the Clerk would check with BBLP whether an additional bin could be purchased by the Parish Council and placed on the lamppost opposite the entrance to Old School Lane.
- 12.4 Gigaclear:** Works in the village are continuing, although communication from Complete Utilities and Gigaclear with the village and Parish Council remains extremely poor. Updates on progress of the work/where it will be going next, have been repeatedly requested and no information received. Issues with late working and damage to pavement have been reported to the network build team.

- 12.5 Traffic:** Residents have raised concerns about the speed of traffic passing through the village and the police have been asked to do extra speed patrols where possible. Speeding has been a concern for many years, and the Parish Council has investigated all the possible ways it can work to alleviate the problem, including the provision of the safer route to school away from the B4362. The national standard at which traffic enforcement is introduced by police is 10% plus 2 of the speed limit, which in Shobdon equates to 35mph. In 2015 4,000 vehicles per day were recorded on the road, which is extremely high for a B road, and the police undertook a period of enforcement in 2015/16. If this makes ½ mph difference this is counted as a success: in December 2015 the recorded 85th percentile was 33.5 mph and in May 2016 it was 33.3 mph. Advice from the Traffic Management Advisor is that due to the topography of the B4362 through the village, particularly in regards to the length of sight lines for vehicles, many suggested traffic calming schemes (such as lane narrowing) would not be permitted in the village, and with the volume of tractors and HGVs travelling through the village, speed humps would cause a huge noise nuisance to those living near the B4362. The Parish Council operates the Speed Indicator Device which moves between 3 locations in the village and regularly asks the police to conduct speed enforcement. Permission has been given for the operation of a Community Speed watch scheme (led by the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator) now that sufficient volunteers have stepped forward and once lockdown has been lifted, this scheme can be started in the village. Results from the investigation into the fatal accident in the village have not yet been released, but the Parish Council will continue to do everything within its power to promote the safety of pedestrians and road users in the village.
- 13. Items for the next agenda:** No items were raised.
- 14. Date of next meetings:** 29th June 2020, 27th July 2020