

LITTLE DEWCHURCH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Little Dewchurch Parish Council, held at the Little Dewchurch Village Hall, on Tuesday 10th September 2024 from 7.30 pm No. LDPC/AW/099

Present:

Cllr. Phil Williams (CPW)
Cllr. Florin Tatoi (FT)
Cllr. Jane Lisle (JL)
Cllr. Lisa White (LW)
Cllr. Jo Hawthorne (JH)
Cllr. Roger da Cunha (RDC)

In attendance:

Parish Clerk; Alison Wright (AW) and Ward Cllr; David Davies (DD) plus six members of the public

<u>Item</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>Allocated To</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>
	<p><u>Public Question Time.</u></p> <p>There were comments raised in regard to the Poplar trees which were to be discussed under agenda item number 5.0. A resident who had seen an e mail on the topic, which had been widely circulated, advised that he was not in support of the content of the e mail. He expressed the opinion that there were concerns held about the potential for the Poplar trees to fall in the event of high winds or storms etc.</p> <p>There were also some concerns raised about the planning application 241760, in terms of changes to the outline proposals, concentration of house types and the style of the homes, which would be discussed under the agenda item number 9.0.</p> <p>There was a comment raised regarding the persistent water leaking at Church Lane. Explanations about excessive pressure were given and some householders had pressure limiters fitted in their properties. The water pressure was described as being at "9 bar" in the roadway. This would be queried again with Welsh Water.</p> <p>The Public Question Time closed at 7.40 pm.</p>		
1.0	<p><u>Co-option of councillors</u></p> <p>No candidates for co-option were presented at the meeting.</p>		

2.0	<p><u>Apologies for absence</u> There were no apologies for absence received.</p>		
3.0	<p><u>Declarations of Interest and Dispensations</u> There were declarations of interest recorded from Cllr Hawthorne in matters relating to the playing field Poplar Trees and from Cllr White in relation to planning application 241760.</p>		
4.0	<p><u>To receive, adopt and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 9th July 2024</u> The minutes of the meeting were accepted as a true and correct record the Parish Council Meeting held on the 9th July 2024.</p>		
5.0	<p><u>To discuss the playing field Poplar trees – recent correspondence and way forward</u></p> <p>The parish council had discussed the playing field Poplar trees on previous occasions and had noted that some boughs had fallen onto the playing field.</p> <p>The parish council minutes of March 2024 contain the following extract under item 7.0:-</p> <p><u>“Roads and Footpaths</u></p> <p>7.1) Play Area - update including poplar trees action plan Cllr Tatoi advised that he had cleared away some branches from the poplar trees. He warned that the brambles were taking over in several areas of the playing field. They required cutting back. It was agreed that some of the brambles would need to be cleared before the Egg Hunt on 30 March. Brush cutting would be required. Cllr Tatoi or Hawthorne would meet with the Lengthsman to discuss the requirements. The quotation for the poplar tree works had been circulated to the council members for their consideration. The Action Plan detailed in the quotation was confirmed as to go ahead. The plan would be to confirm this to the contractor and then schedule the works for later in the year. It was agreed that Cllr Lisle would confirm the poplar tree works with the contractor.”</p> <p>The parish council had looked at options to manage the trees, and the idea of cutting them back had been considered, but the ongoing issue of re-sprouting and re-growth of the trees was considered to be “pushing the problem further down the line.” Advice had been taken from the Forestry Commission and they had advised that the trees would re-sprout. The removal of sprouting trees would</p>		

<p>greatly increase the ultimate cost of removal and the trees were already around 50 years old. The Forestry Commission would wish to see a replacement planting program implemented with suitable subject tree and hedging replacements planted, should felling of the Poplars proceed.</p> <p>A resident had requested that an e mail sent on the topic of the trees be read out at the meeting and circulated to councillors. This was done accordingly and the points raised in the e mail were addressed as follows:</p> <p>Point 1) <i>“whether any action is genuinely needed or whether annual, recorded monitoring is sufficient for the time being”</i></p> <p>The answer given was “action regarding the trees had been monitored and the cost of delaying the removal of the trees would only increase. If all of the trees had to be manually felled the cost would be very greatly increased.”</p> <p>Point 2) <i>“if action is needed, should it be height reduction or felling, or felling and leaving stumps for shoots to grow and produce coppiced shrubs, a possibility mooted by *name redacted*”</i></p> <p>The answer given was that “The Forestry Commission (FC) was not in agreement with pruning or height reduction and stated that, if the trees were allowed to re-sprout the new shoots would die within a few years due to the existing diameter of the trunks. Any that didn’t die would form multi-shoots which would grow exponentially and, therefore, the cost to fell at a later date would be greatly increased. Shearing at this size is not an option - two shearing companies inspected and said they're now far too big to be sheared. In order to meet UKFS regulations for sustainable forestry, the FC will require replanting but with something more appropriate - types of replacement trees will be specified by the FC.”</p> <p>Point 3) <i>“what plan should the Parish Council draw up to plant replacement trees to compensate for the loss of the poplars’ contribution to wildlife and to absorption of CO2”</i></p> <p>The answer given was that “a replanting program is under consideration for obligation”.</p> <p>Point 4) <i>“how to ensure that all parishioners are without fail kept informed about major changes that may affect their lives, and consulted when</i></p>		
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appropriate.”

The answer given was “that the parish council do not have to consult on the tree maintenance as they are under a contractual agreement within the lease to maintain the hedgerows. There is no onus for a public survey and the matter was discussed at a parish council meeting open to the public and recorded in the minutes. It was accepted that immediate neighbours should be notified due to the possibility of concern/panic resulting for particular residents” It had been expected by LDPC that a letter from the National Grid notifying all residents adjacent to the Poplar trees of an upcoming “power down due to tree felling works” would be received by those residents three weeks prior to the felling commencing in August 2024. It was commented that such notification had not been received. It would appear the reason they were not notified, as expected, was because, in fact, the power to those properties would not actually have been affected by the requisite power down.

A paragraph expressing concern about land heave had been dismissed in an e mail from Jerry Ross, which had also been circulated:-

Jerry Ross: “One last point – it is suggested that removing the trees may cause heave. This seems highly unlikely. The soils here are generally fine silty loams. They are not highly shrinkable and do not generally cause problems of tree-related subsidence and heave. I don’t know the relative ages of the trees and the nearby houses, but heave can only arise when a soil has already been shrunken due to persistent desiccation. So unless the houses were built on soils that had already been caused to shrink by the long-term presence of the trees (i.e. the trees are much older than the houses, which I doubt) damaging heave could not arise as a result of their removal.”

Water take-up by the trees – comments that the loss of the Poplars had not been substantiated due to there being seasonal variations, “in that the trees do absorb water during the dry season but they do not during the wet season and therefore they serve no benefit where ground water-logging is an issue during the wet season.”

It was noted that the approximate height of the trees had been obtained by the use of a technical measuring device (clinometer) by one of the tree specialists consulted. The tree height and the fact that they will still continue to grow had been corroborated by a second tree specialist.

The parish council, having considered all of the factors and having listened to the comments of the residents present, who were in general agreement of the requirement for action to be taken to remove the trees ahead of any future issues, made the decision that

	<p>the felling of the trees should proceed at the earliest available and suitable opportunity. The co-ordination of the Forestry Commission Felling Licence, appropriate environmental surveys (quotations obtained and specifications checked) and power supply arrangements would all be synchronised to facilitate the removal of the trees in accordance with the terms of the quotation of £5000.00 plus VAT. The vote was unanimous, of those entitled to vote, with the exclusion of Cllr Hawthorne who abstained from the vote due to a declaration of interest. The parish council undertook to keep adjacent residents informed of the process and to try to minimise potential disruption. They would also re-consult on the permission required to access the field with the relevant equipment. Questions about the brash retention in rolls were addressed also. The rolls would be placed along the hedge line and would be anticipated to break down naturally.</p>		
<p>6.0</p>	<p><u>To receive reports from</u> 6.1) Ward Councillor The Ward Councillor had sent his report for September. He had attended a 106 Update Meeting and urged the parish council to make sure that their wish list items for any 106 money be recorded with Yvonne Coleman and Herefordshire Council. The LDPC Chairman had submitted a list of items previously and would check this to see if any reiteration or changes were required. The Ward Cllr advised that he had raised the issue of the Little Dewchurch highways 106 shortfall with the Chief Executive and the Leader of Herefordshire Council. He was asked by LDPC to chase this up. Comments from local residents indicated that speeding was still a concern and options to try to ameliorate this were in need of being chased up by the Ward Cllr again. Future 106 spend in the village could consider things such as rumble strips, road narrowing signage and other appropriate measures. A councillor raised the idea of perhaps emulating other areas where competitions had been held for children to design posters which had then been made into speed awareness signage. The Ward Cllr indicated that he would put this suggestion to the Primary School when visiting the following week. The Ward Cllr advised that the change of government would be leading to changes in the planning process and funding may be withdrawn from areas where it had previously been awarded. A councillor drew attention to the disbanding of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Age Concern due to a reduction in funding support.</p> <p><u>Balfour Beatty</u> Information from the BB Locality Steward had been circulated when received.</p> <p><u>West Mercia Police and Golden Valley Bulletins</u> Newsletters and information circulated when received</p>	<p>CPW</p> <p>DD</p> <p>DD</p> <p>DD</p>	<p>ASAP</p> <p>ASAP</p> <p>ASAP</p> <p>At visit</p>

<p>7.0</p>	<p><u>Finance and policies</u></p> <p>7.1) <u>Confirmation of bank balances</u> The current account balance stood at £11294.42. Actual balance with all outstanding payments made £8169.92. The second precept tranche was due into the bank in late September. RDC left the meeting at 9.00pm.</p> <p>7.2) <u>To agree Invoices for payment (list of proposed payments to be provided)</u> To resolve to accept payments as per listing: Mrs A Wright (salary paid in accordance with contract for Sept) HM Revenue & Customs (Tax due on salary) £84.60 T Griffiths (Lengthsman, dog bins) Total £222.48 Herefordshire Council (Annual Playing Field Rental) £100.00 Mr. R. Simpkins (grass cutting) £605.00 ImpacT Services (web services) £504.00 Andrew Pickup Forestry Limited £420.00 The payments were resolved to be paid unanimously.</p>		
<p>8.0</p>	<p>8.1) Play Area - update The playing field co-ordinator advised that there was no further update. There were some further fallen boughs from the Poplar trees. Mowing was taking place. The previous lengthsman had put some dog waste bags into the dispenser in the dog zone.</p> <p>8.2) Roads and Footpaths A resident had raised an issue regarding visibility as some parts of the area around the village green due to the increasing size of the perimeter hedge. It was agreed that Cllr White would keep an eye on the hedge and any overgrown parts causing potential obstruction when exiting junctions would be kept trimmed back.</p> <p>8.3) Lengthsman – activities and funding The Lengthsman was not present at the meeting. The Lengthsman Co-ordinator advised that she had not heard back from the Lengthsman in response to her requests for urgent road sign clearing and cleaning works etc. The Clerk would give the Co-ordinator a different contact e mail address to see if contact could be made with the Lengthsman with a view to carrying out the required works. The Lengthsman grant funding had been approved by Herefordshire Council.</p>	<p>LW</p> <p>Clerk</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>ASAP</p>

<p>9.0</p>	<p><u>Planning Matters</u> 9.1) To consider response to Planning Applications, as notified, and then determined by Herefordshire Council</p> <p>There was one new application for consideration of comments.</p> <p>This was for:</p> <p>APPLICATION NO & SITE ADDRESS: Planning Consultation - 241760 - Land to the west of Field Fare, Little Dewchurch, Hereford, HR2 6PU DESCRIPTION: Application for approval of reserved matters following outline approval 222666 (Outline planning application with all matters bar access reserved for the erection of approximately fifteen dwellings, including 35% affordable.) APPLICANT(S): Mr Michael Jeff GRID REF: OS 353257, 231924 APPLICATION TYPE: Approval of Reserved Matters</p> <p>It was agreed that this item would be deferred to the October 8th Parish Council Meeting and that the parish council would consider compiling their comments for submission ahead of the deadline on October 22nd. FT left the meeting at 9.31pm.</p>		
<p>10.0</p>	<p>Information Sheet/Correspondence 10.1) To note contents and correspondence Herefordshire Council: Talk Community bulletins</p> <p>Future Little Dewchurch PC - Meeting dates for 2024 - all from 7.30 pm in the Little Dewchurch Village Hall Oct 8th, Nov 12th and no meeting in December</p> <p>10.2) Update on the Little Dewchurch Social Committee and activities Cllr Hawthorne advised that there would be a firework display in the village on Saturday 2nd November. There would not be an actual bonfire this year.</p> <p>There would be more events in the pipeline including a Christmas event to coincide with the tractor run.</p>		
<p>11.0</p>	<p><u>Update on 106 highways matters as raised by council</u> This topic was, again, covered during the Ward Cllr's Report Agenda Item 6.1) Cllr Lisle requested that the Ward Cllr chase for</p>		

	action in the way of road markings to slow traffic and notify of the new bollards presence.	DD	ASAP
12.0	<p><u>Matters for the Agenda of the next Meeting</u></p> <p>Usual items plus: Play area tree removal and replanting update. Planning application 241760.</p>		
13.0	<p><u>Confirmation of date of next Ordinary Parish Council Meeting</u></p> <p>The next Parish Council Meeting would be held on Tuesday 8th October 2024 from 7.30pm in the Village Hall.</p> <p><i>The Meeting closed at 9.40 pm</i></p> <p>Signed:Chair</p> <p>Date.....</p> <p>Website link: https://www.littledewchurch.org.uk/</p>		