



**Minutes of The Parish Council Meeting of Lower Bullingham Parish Council
Held on Tuesday 5th March 2024 at 7.30pm at Dinedor Village Hall**

Present: Chairman Cllr Nigel Jones, Cllr Darren Smith Vice Chairman, Cllr Neil Barrington, Cllr Barbara Frankham, Cllr Andrew Fisher, Cllr Cat Hornsey Cllr Fiona Barrington , Cllr Gill Bastin & Cllr Adam Smith

In Attendance: Parish Clerk Kath Greenow, Ward Cllr Dave Davies.

1. Apologies None

2. To receive declarations of interest on agenda items and any dispensation requests
None declared

3. To approve & sign the minutes of the Parish Council meeting Tuesday 6th February 2024

It was **RESOLVED:** to approve & sign the minutes of the Parish Council meeting Tuesday 6th February 2024 Cllr Neil Barrington signed the minutes as he had been the acting Chairman at the meeting .

4. Public forum: Members of the public may raise subjects they wish to bring to the attention of the Parish council. (Restricted to 10 minutes)

No members of the public present at the meeting

4.1 Ward Cllrs Report

The ward Cllr had sent his report prior to the meeting which had been circulated to Cllrs
Ward Cllr report

We have had a mild but very wet winter with a big impact on our highways leaving potholes, section failings, vergers badly damaged and ditches pushed in. I welcome the announcement this week for extra highways funding from the government with Herefordshire been awarded over 100 million pound over the next seven years.

This will also help mature the decision this month on the Hereford Bypass strategy which will be discussed by the Cabinet setting out clear plans to reinstate road building to relieve Hereford city. Also the council will introduce a new highway maintenance framework which will mean the council can spend additional highway funding outside of the Balfour contract.

Last month saw the annual finance council meeting where the budget for 2024/25 was discussed. The current Conservative minority administration took over the council last May inheriting significant overspends and an unrealistic budget which left finances in a precarious state with little room to manoeuvre. The challenge was to address the

predicted deficit of some £28.8 million and this has been done by finding over £19.5 million in efficiencies and savings in conjunction with 2.99% rise in council tax and 2% social care precept. While increases in council tax are regrettable a failure to address the issue would have seen us on a dangerous path. You only have to look at Birmingham, where a 10% rise in council tax is proposed this year and next to see what happens when a Council fails to keep control of its finances. The budget also proposes to address the black hole in the Council's medium term financial plan. The challenge will be delivering the budget without overspends and to help with this new spending controls have been introduced which include spending over £500 needs senior sign off approval.

The council also passed motions unanimously on higher council tax charges on second homes and empty homes in the county.

One of the largest pressures on the budget is the cost of care provision. Nationally the number of care homes are decreasing and the cost of care placements are rising. The Council has to ensure there are enough good quality care settings available to meet increasing demands and needs of the local communities of Herefordshire. The Strategic Needs Assessment report highlights the numbers in the older age groups in our County growing disproportionately at a higher rate than average councils, with those aged over 85 rising even more rapidly and set to continue.

The council's annual gross expenditure on commissioned adult care beds during 2022-23 financial year was just over £38 million (short and long stay). The Council is proposing to enter into a block purchase care contract of 15 residential and 15 care home beds for 5 years which will potentially save spot purchasing beds at a higher price and give extra financial security to the identified homes. There will be a maximum spend of £6.82 million and it will need careful management to ensure it is utilised consistently to near capacity.

The budget which includes raising 72 million in council tax was passed by 47 votes for, none against with three abstentions and will now form part of the Council tax bill together with West Mercia Police, Hereford & Worcester Fire Service, and Parish council precepts.

5. Lengthsman

5.1 To receive & consider the lengthsman report.

The lengthsman was not in attendance, and there was no report

5.2 To consider a scheduled of works programme for lengthsman to carry out.

It was **RESOLVED**: that the lengthsman carries out the following for the Parish Council a schedule for - roads Maintenance day to be carried out during March, April, May & June . This will be reviewed at the PC meeting in May.

Amenities - village upkeep Maintenance schedule. To be carried out between April - June (every six weeks) then from June onwards until September every 4 weeks . If when carrying out work other road , drainage etc issues are found that need attending to and are not part of the Roads Maint or Amenities work the lengthsman will inform the PC.

There were issues with blocked ditches at Ridgehill & Redbrook (C1261) towards the Dinedor turn which needed attending to, and the Clerk would ask the lengthsman look into and provide a quote.

6. Parish Footpaths

6.1 To consider appointment of volunteer footpaths officer for Lower Bullingham – withy brook area of the parish No footpath officer appointed.

6.2 To consider Parish Footpaths work required in the parish.

No footpaths work identified. The clerk was asked to obtain laminated A3 footpaths maps for the new Cllrs

7.Highways.

7.1 To consider road issues for reporting to Balfour Beatty.

New road issues to report to Balfour Beatty - Previously repaired potholes at Ridgehill have reopened and need attending to again. SLOW road marking requested along the C1261 at the Junction of Ridgehill & toward Redbrook still hasn't been carried out by Balfour Beatty despite numerous requests

7.2 To consider contacting The Environment Agency regarding complaints concerning commercial waste dumped on land near Watery Lane.

It was **RESOLVED**: that the Clerk reports the matter to the Environment Agency.

8. Consultations

8.1 To consider responding to HFDC consultation on licensing of sex establishments – Statement of licensing policy

It was **RESOLVED**: not to comment on the consultation.

9. Finance

9.1 To note the finance report, bank reconciliation report and budget report as at 29/02/2024

The finance report and bank reconciliation report was considered and noted as £54157.04 as at 29/02/2024

9.2 To approve payment of Clerks salary for March 2024 & paye due

It was **RESOLVED**: to pay the Clerks salary for February when due & the PAYE due of £

9.3 To consider the following invoices for payment:

It was **RESOLVED**: to pay the following invoices due for payment

A4 Office products invoice 275136 £16.99+vat

Terry Griffiths Contracts Roads - Routine Maintenance TCG 2595 £440.00+vat

10. Planning

10.1 To consider commenting on: Planning Re -Consultation 240030 Unit 11c Thorn Business Park Rotherwas Hereford.

Description: Continued use of unit 11 c as a veteran and community fitness rehabilitation and training centre. - use classes E (c) (d) and (e) Retrospective

It was **RESOLVED**: to support the application

10.2 To consider commenting on: Planning Consultation 240343 The Park Hereford, Herefordshire

Description: 1. Reduce poplar trees by 2-4 meters back to previous pruning points to keep them Maintained. Ariel dismantle and fell leaning poplar to ground level. Tree is heavily over the river and is situated on the bank that floods often and therefore is very soft. We want to reduce any risk of it falling into the river and therefore potentially causing large issues down stream. This will also give the remaining poplars more space

It was **RESOLVED**: to support the application

At this point in the meeting Cllr Cat Hornsey declared a Non Disclosable Pecuniary interest in on agenda item 9.3 as she was a trustee of Saxon Hall

10.3 To consider commenting on: Planning Consultation 240283 Saxon Hall Putson Community Centre, Hoarwithy road Hereford HR2 6HE

Description: Change of use from F2 to Ee for proposed dentist surgery for part of Saxon Hall

- 10.4 To consider further planning applications due for comment.
It was **RESOLVED**: to support the application.

11. Correspondence

- 11.1 To note correspondence received since last meeting, which has been sent to Cllrs.
All Correspondence sent to Cllrs prior to the meeting was noted

West Mercia Police – Towns & Villages project
Watery Lane Lower Bullingham – Road Closure
Herefordshire street works report 26/02/2024

**12. Matters raised for consideration for placing on the next meeting’s agenda.
(No discussion)**

- 13. To note date of next Parish Council Meeting as Tuesday 2nd April 2024 7.30pm
at Dinedor Village Hall**

Signed
Lower Bullingham Parish Council Chairman

Dated.....