

MINUTES of a meeting of Wellington Heath Parish Council held on 26th February 2013 in The Peter Garnett Room, Memorial Hall commencing at 7.30pm.

Present – Cllrs. R. Hurley (in the Chair – RH) P. Adams (PA) J. Jones (JJ) and V. Leeds (VL).

In attendance – The Clerk, County Cllrs A. Johnson and C. Attwood and Marcus Low.

An apology for inability to attend the meeting had been received and approved from W. Hill.

Minutes – The Minutes of the meeting held on 29th January 2013 were taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Declarations of Interest – None received.

Co-option of New Councillor – Marcus Low signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the present of the Clerk and joined the meeting .

County Councillor Report – Cllr. Johnson advised that Amey were reported to be unhappy with the budget for repairs for unclassified roads. He also reported that there was a cabinet meeting the next day to sign off the draft Core Strategy and the consultation period starting in March. Herefordshire Council has to supply 5,300 houses over the next 20 years and this new core strategy sets out the draft plans. The core strategy will form a principal document in the Local Plan (previously known as the Local Development Framework). Also to be signed off at the cabinet meeting was a consultation period starting in June to consider the proposals for a community infrastructure levy which would be a further requirement on future developments (in addition to Section 106 agreements) which was proposed to be set at £140 per square metre. He said that a proportion of this levy may be allocated to Parish Councils (25% was mentioned). This could have a major impact on parish council precepts in the future.

When queried about pot-holes Councillors were assured that these had not been forgotten and that there were particular issues under Health & Safety but would look into whether some of the Lengthsman funds could be used by the Parish Council to repair some of the larger potholes.

Progress Reports –

The Farmers Arms – RH advised that the meeting held last week had been attended by about 70 local residents and that only 60 replies had been received to the Parish Council Questionnaire. He confirmed the property had been registered as a community asset and that approximately two thirds of the people attending the meeting voted that a bid should be put in for the property before the closing date of 16th March 2013 thus enabling the Council to use the statutory period up to the end of July to make a formal offer for the property.

The Chairman explained at length the financial implications of a purchase which would likely involve a loan from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb). He further explained that the PWLB do not take a charge on the property but take a charge on the revenue of the Parish Council. This could have serious implications for the precept in the event the pub failed or was vacant for prolonged period when rent was not being received and if the sale proceeds did not cover the borrowing. If the loan has to be repaid from parish council funds a doubling or tripling of the precept would be required. This would trigger a referendum.

If the Council decided not to bid, the owners Enterprise Inns would then be free to dispose of the property as they sought fit. A great deal of work was required before making the bid including the production of a business plan and obtaining borrowing approval from the Secretary of State through HALC. A formal professional valuation would also be required at a cost of around £1,000. which may have to be sourced from Parish Council reserves.

RESOLVED – On a proposal by JJ seconded by CL and carried it was agreed the Parish Council advise Enterprise through Herefordshire Council that they were proposing to put in a bid for the property, which would in effect take it off the market until the end of July to enable the Parish Council to obtain all the necessary consents and fundings before finalising their offer.

1. **Pool Piece** – JJ advised bid for funding being processed but this may result in a delay of a couple of months before it was known if the bid had been successful.

Cluster Group - PA advised nothing further to Report and next meeting taking place in March.

2. **Parish Plan update** – The Chairman advised that at a meeting on 6th February volunteers had been divided up into subject areas as per the original Parish Plan including roads, transport and footpaths, planning and development and other issues and that the groups were now working on a Questionnaire which would be finalised at a meeting on the 20th March before printing and circulation in the Parish.

3. **Lengthsman** – The Clerk confirmed receipt of the final half share of the Lengthsman funds amounting to £472.50 which should if at all possible either be used or earmarked for expenditure before the 31st March 2013. Some projects were discussed and the Chairman urged Councillors to report back to him with their suggestions at their earliest convenience.

Items for consideration

- (a) **Date for Parish Meeting** agreed for 9th May 2013 and Councillors were urged to consider a speaker and bring their suggestions forward at the next Parish Council meeting.
- (b) **Hand pushed gritting facility** – The Chairman advised that this would be considered under the Parish Plan Questionnaire.
- (c) **Registration for central funding website** – PA reported on the difficulties experienced in completing this Questionnaire on line, which if successful, would result in the Parish Council being notified of any funding particulars and other information which may prove very beneficial to the Council. RH agreed to fill in the form on the www.fundingcentral.org.uk website and report back in due course.

Financial Matters – The only item for payment was the PAYE to the Inland Revenue which was approved for payment on a proposal by VL seconded by JJ and carried and a cheque signed accordingly for £48.20. A second cheque for this amount was also signed in case it was necessary to make the final payment before the next meeting of the Parish Council on 26th March 2013.

Reports – **Memorial Hall** – JJ advised that the ramp/path has been done and that the pub nights were proving popular which now included darts and table tennis. The ballroom dancing was also proving popular and she advised that the Hall would soon undergo the regular spring clean.

February 2013/06

Correspondence received –

- Letter – Hereford CAB requesting donation.
- Letter- Boundary Commission that Parliamentary constituency boundary review has been postponed until 2018.
- Letter – Herefordshire Council advising on proposed sale of The Farmers Arms and that the PCs asset has been registered.
- Letter – Dr. Edmondson-Jones advising against proposed acquisition of The Farmers Arms.
- Advice that the balance funds for the Lengthsman has been credited to our Account.
- Herefordshire Council – P3 Annual Return.

Literature received – File handed to Chairman including background/update on finances from Cllr. T. Johnson and Education and Infrastructure Report from Graham Powell and Andy Atkinson.

Items for Agenda for March meeting– The Farmers Arms, Cluster Group, Parish Plan, Pool Piece, central funding, Parish meeting and general update on other outstanding issues.

Next meeting to take place on Tuesday 26th March 2013.

R. Hurley

26th March 2013

Signed.....Chairman

Dated.....