

Minutes from a meeting of Cropthorne Parish Council held on Monday 11th January 2021 at 7pm **Conducted via Zoom**

1. PRESENT:

Chairman B Annis	Vice Chairman S Smythe	Cllr M Rowell	Cllr J King
Cllr R Segar	County Cllr E Eyre	1 member of the public	
Clerk L Yapp			

2. APOLOGIES - Cllr Clive and District Cllr Rowley

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

- Cllr King - Village Hall

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Minutes from previous meetings were approved and signed – proposed Cllr Rowell, seconded Cllr King – all in favour

5. PARISHIONERS QUESTION TIME – No comments were made at this time but interaction during the agenda items for discussion

6. PLANNING/ENFORCEMENTS:

- Kimberleys Field – Parishioner in attendance reported on recent activity at the site over Xmas
- 20/02151 – Evesham Vale Caravan Park – to vary condition 4 to allow private static caravan owners to extend the season – *approved by WDC*
- 20/02133 – Severn Acres, Main Road – 2 x new gypsy plots comprising 1 x static and 1 x touring caravan and 2 x utility blocks + retrospective permission for new day room – *awaiting decision by WDC*
- 20/02439 – Maple Wood, Brook Lane – variation of Condition 2 (16/02510) – *awaiting decision by WDC*
20/02694 – Land at (OS 9944 4479), Brook Lane – application for Permission in Principle for a self-build dwelling – *awaiting decision by WDC*

A point was raised with regard the 'small pockets' of land that could become available within Cropthorne and that there was a possibility that these may be purchased and used for additional traveller sites. Cllr Eyre advised that a Traveller and Travelling Show People consultation would be forthcoming in the future and this would give the Parish Council the opportunity to comment accordingly.

7. VILLAGE HALL – Cllr King reported that she would be shortly moving out of the village and was in the process of handing over to her successor. There was nothing further to report. Cllr Eyre commented that there may be further financial support available, but nothing had been released at the time of the meeting.

8. HIGHWAY MATTERS :

- Smokey Lane Junction – Cllr Annis had been out to speak to the landowner, and it was felt that the spoils could be easily removed with a grab lorry and skip. The landowner was keen to get this resolved as soon as possible. Cllr Eyres reported that an officer from WCC would go out and assess the problem.
- Smokey Lane Speed Limit – the clerk had been contacted by a resident of Smokey Lane who was concerned that the 'no through road' had a limit of 60mph and had contacted WCC direct. An initial email had been sent by the resident to Highways England, who had then referred this to WCC. Cllr Eyre reported that, unfortunately, due to the lack of dwellings this was unlikely to be changed.
- Field Barn Lane Junction with B4084 – Cllr Annis had visited the end resident to see if he would cut back the hedge at the junction as it was restricting visibility when pulling out onto the B4084. Whilst at first the resident advised that he was more than happy to carry this out, he has since back to the parish council and asked for an 'official request / notice ' to come from WCC before he carries out works. Cllr Eyre advised that an officer from WCC would go out and assess the situation fully. Cllr Annis was concerned about any liability should there be an accident at the junction (as

- there has been in the past) – Cllr Eyre advised we just wait until this has been looked at by WCC Highways.
- Flooding Brook Lane – following recent flooding at the bottom of Brook lane, the lengthsman has been out and cleared the debris from the culvert. The landowner died just before Xmas and it was agreed that in the circumstances, and to reduce the risk of further flooding, that we ask the LM to carry out these works. A comment made by resident of Brook lane, was that the culvert on the B4084 (which services the water off Bredon Hill and enlarged after the road collapse / floods in 2007) was possibly too big, and this impacted on the properties at the bottom of Brook Lane. Cllr Eyre asked if a grill in front of the Brook Lane culvert would help, but Cllr Smythe disagreed. The clerk would send 'before and after' photographs of the culvert in Brook Lane with a suggestion that this needs further investigation with WCC
- Footway, Brook Lane - the clerk had received a couple of phone calls / emails and photographs re the footway in Brook Lane, which is gradually being encroached with grass. This was a H & S issue due to the number of children that need to use this route for the school bus. The clerk had asked the LM to attend to this

9. COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT – had been circulated to Cllrs and attached.

10. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR – Cllr Rowley had given apologies and was unable to attend meeting due to a prior commitment

11. PROGRESS REPORTS:

- Lengthsman - The clerk reported that following latest instruction from WCC, the LM was now to revert back to the Covid Risk Assessment. The LM had been made aware of this
- New Home Bonus – The clerk is almost at the stage to submit the application to WDC for the NHB funds. There had been several questions put to the clerk (which had been forwarded to Corran Dean and answered). The replies had been reported back to the parish council and those that raised the questions, and nothing further has been asked for. The clerk is just waiting for Corran Dean to confirm the total project cost, and the cost of this part. This is the last bit of information required. The application will be considered by WDC in March
- Community Infrastructure Levy Fund – The clerk reported that there was approximately 3 years left to spend this fund. Cllr Eyre suggested the purchase of planters as a traffic calming option. Cllr Annis suggested improvements to the footway by the church wall, and would take some photographs to be sent to Cllr Eyre. Cllr Eyre reported that she was still waiting on passing bays for Field Barn Lane.
- Speeding – Community Speed Watch –the clerk is still waiting to hear from the CSW team and would chase this up. Cllr Eyre reported that the 30mph in Neigh Lane cannot be extended but she is investigating whether the footway can be extended
- Bollards Lower Croft – Nothing further to report
- War Memorial – Nothing further to report

12. FINANCE

(a) Payments made since the last meeting/for authorisation

1037	Lengthsman September	156.00
1038	Lengthsman October	144.00
1039	Poppy Appeal Donation	50.00
1040	Sheppey Works	8338.80
SO	Clerks Expenses	16.22
SO	Clerks Salary	343.80
1041	Clerks PAYE	14.20
1042	Lengthsman November	144.00
SO	Clerks Salary	344.00
SO	Clerks Expenses	16.22
1043	Dog Waste Bin Emptying	90.97

Current account balances:

(incl. unrepresented cheques) £ 28,073.39 (Incl. s106 Monies)

Deposit account: £5,022.20

(b) Budget / Precept request 2021/22 – the clerk had presented a draft to Cllrs proposing an increase by 6.7%, very slightly less than last years. The Clerk had also asked Cllrs to consider an increase in the hours worked, from 28 per month to 30 per month, due to the ever-increasing workload. Cllrs Annis & Segar both commented that historically, the parish council had made no increase at all in the precept, or purposely kept it very low. A proposal was made to (i) increase the clerks hours (which would take effect from April 2021) to 30 per month, and (ii) to accept the draft budget, proposed Cllr Segar, seconded Cllr Annis – all in favour

(c) CIL Statement – the clerk reported that she had completed and returned the CIL Statement as requested by WDC

13. CORONAVIRUS UPDATE – Covered in Cllr Eyres report attached

14. COMMUNITY FIBRE PARTNERSHIP – Cllr Segar reported that he had received interest from 103 properties. However, it appears that Open reach have also included Bricklehampton and Charlton (including Heathworks on the B4084) which will have a massive impact of the % or properties that have signed up and affect the grants available. Cllr Segar is in communication with the Open Reach/ WCC and Cllr Eyre said she would look into the reasoning why the villages should be 'grouped'. Thanks were paid to Cllr Segar for getting this scheme off the ground

16. REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE / DONATION - Cllr Annis had laid the wreath at the Memorial on behalf of the parish council

15. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS / FUTURE DISCUSSION:

- The clerk had been contacted by a resident of Middle Lane, asking what was going to happen to area of garden which had seemingly been left in an untidy state – It was reported that due to poor weather work had stopped, but there was a skip due to go out imminently

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 1st February 2021 at 7pm

Crothorne - Cllr ELIZABETH EYRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT January 2021

County Issues

WCC Finance - As part of a plan to narrow the £26.5m gap in its budget, Worcestershire County Council is looking to increase the Council Tax in Worcestershire. The draft Budget is in the public domain. We are proposing an increase in spending on Highways – to £7.2m for footways, from £12m to £20m on roads, and four footway gangs will become ten or twelve, three paver machines will increase to four, an extra 2.5m is proposed for gully cleaning. Active Travel and Congestion reduction are key themes, as are reducing our Carbon footprint through our LED street lighting programme and other initiatives. Extra funding is proposed for Children’s Social Care.

Covid – as of 5 January 2021

Communications: WDC is ramping up its communications on social media, and signs are being printed to put around our parks and public spaces urging people to stay apart and limit the time they spend outdoors. The separately attached poster explains the rules.

I will be on social media and am sending posters to you with a request for you put up locally; including a Covid-19 advice leaflet. WDC will be using supermarkets to get the bulk of them out and ask our voluntary sector, town and parish councillors to support us with this.

Worcestershire’s infection rates are at the highest we have ever seen. In the past seven days alone, the County has 1,888 positive Covid-19 cases, which is more than all positive cases seen during May, June, July, August and September 2020 combined

Hospitals As well as an increase in the community, we have a number of Covid-positive in-patients in our hospitals. This is causing significant pressures on our local services. There have been no new Coronavirus-related deaths in hospitals in Worcestershire.

Vaccination From 4 January GP-led Primary Care Networks (PCNs) across Worcestershire will now have started running Covid-19 vaccine clinics for their eligible patients. PCNs are groups of general practices working more closely together, meaning that patients may be invited to receive the vaccine from a location that is different to their registered practice but one that will still be nearby to where they live. Patients are reminded that the NHS will contact people in priority groups when it is their turn to receive the vaccine, and they should not contact their GP practice directly asking for an appointment.

Care home vaccinations: PCNs across Herefordshire and Worcestershire have also now started to vaccinate local care home residents and staff, who are being prioritised with people aged 80 and above as part of this first phase of the vaccination programme.

Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine the NHS started the rollout of the new Oxford AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine in some parts of the country. The first Oxford AstraZeneca vaccinations are being delivered at a small number of hospitals for the first few days for surveillance purposes, as is standard practice before we expect to receive supplies in Worcestershire. The new Oxford vaccine is easier to transport and store than the Pfizer jab, which has to be kept at minus 70 degrees until shortly before it is used, which will make it easier to deliver in settings such as care homes.

Community: Use of village and community halls: The guidance on village and community halls has been updated. While most must close, there are a small number of activities that can still be used in a Covid-19 Secure way; this includes hosting blood donation sessions, polling stations, etc. WDC is sharing guidance with parish and town councils to pass on to relevant contacts where they do not directly operate the hall, but please feel free to circulate as well.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities>

People in need of help

If people need help accessing food or other essentials, please ask them to contact **Here2Help** service is available to anyone who needs support or is clinically extremely vulnerable (shielding). If you have no-one to turn to for help, our service can respond and provide help such as collecting medicines and getting shopping. You can reach the service online; <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help> They will then direct them to support locally.

During the first Lockdown, we sadly saw an increase in incidents of domestic violence. It is important to stress that fleeing domestic abuse is a reason to be outside your home in law. Our housing team can offer support and signpost people to the right help if they need it. There is also advice at www.wychavon.gov.uk/support

Libraries will remain open from 5 January to provide access to computers and the internet for people who cannot get online at home. The mobile library service will be suspended, and study desks will be unavailable until further notice. Customers will be able to return books into drop boxes at library entrances. Return dates for all existing loans will be extended until 28 February 2021, and no fines or reservation fees will be applied. Revised opening hours may be implemented at some libraries see [local library online](#) or by calling the customer contact centre on 01905 822722

A free 'Reserve and Collect' service will replace browsing and borrowing.

All computer sessions will be reduced to 50-minute slots and must be booked in advance.

Online services continue to grow. The Digital Library Hub is home to a growing collection of e-books, e audiobooks and e-magazines and a wide range of online resources. It also provides 24/7 access to a range of library services, events and activities. Current online library activities include Digital Book Groups, Storytimes, Bounce & Rhyme sessions, Lego Challenges, Coding Clubs, Wacky Wednesday family learning, Business and Employability Webinars, exclusive Poetry Performances, Virtual Language Cafes and Connect Bubbles; launched in November 2020 provides a safe way for Worcestershire residents to connect with other people online over a shared interest or activity. Library Digital Champion volunteers are providing 1:1 support with 'Introduction to Zoom' sessions. Connect bubbles and 'Introduction to Zoom' sessions can be booked via the Libraries Eventbrite page (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/worcestershire-libraries-18603259594>)

Library membership is free, and it is quick and easy to sign up for digital membership online ([https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20313/join the library](https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20313/join_the_library))

Worcestershire Libraries www.worcestershire.gov.uk/Libraries

Business - A new campaign, 'New Year, New Start, New Opportunities', to support start-up businesses and entrepreneurs has been launched by Enterprising Worcestershire.

Business support- The Chancellor has announced one-off top-up grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses worth up to £9,000 per property to help enterprises to through to the spring. Another £594 million is being made available to councils to support businesses that do not qualify for the grants but might be affected by the restrictions (businesses in the hospitality supply chain, for example). This is on top of any existing funding businesses were receiving during the tiering system. There are now several support schemes operating, and we are trying to make sense of the guidance as fast as possible so that we can start getting these payments out to businesses. The furlough scheme has also been extended to April 2021, and the 100% government-backed loans have been extended until March 2021. Our town centre recovery

officers are working with businesses on a new campaign to encourage people to support local traders from their own home's safety.

Education - Worcestershire County Council has welcomed the latest increase in funding for schools from central government. The County Council has received an expansion of the **financing for Worcestershire's schools** from Central Government. Over the last two years, funding policy has seen over £300 million allocated from Central Government to support the County's schools. The Council has seen a significant increase in the Schools Block Dedicated Schools Grant, which has risen from £314.6m in 2018-19 to £369.5m for 2021-22.

The local formula will continue in Worcestershire, as required, to include the DfE's statutory Minimum Funding Levels, which are increasing in 2021-22 to £4,180 from £3,750 for primary and to £5,415 from £5,000 for secondary.

Following the recent news that Catherine Driscoll will be leaving Worcestershire to become the new Director of Children's Services at Dudley, **Tina Russell** has been appointed Interim Chief Executive of Worcestershire Children First and Interim Director of Children's Services initially for nine months, after following all appropriate governance arrangements. Tina is currently Director of Social Care & Safeguarding and has delivered significant Children's Social Care improvements since joining us four years ago. The recruitment process to appoint a permanent replacement for Catherine will begin in Summer 2021.

Transport- The Governance of West of Midlands Rail Ltd has changed to strengthen its position. The West Midlands Mayor was appointed as non-voting Chairman of West of Midlands Rail Ltd. The options were do nothing, Mayor as an observer, Mayor as non-voting director, voting director and voting chair.

Environment - 16,500 LED lanterns have now been installed across Worcestershire, marking the completion of the Council's **LED street light replacement project**. The quality of the white lighting produced by the LED luminaires provides a more controlled standard of illumination and minimal light pollution. Besides, the conversions to LED lights will result in a

significant and welcome reduction in the County's energy consumption. As part of the project, the Council has also replaced 750 concrete columns. Street lighting upgrades also continue to be delivered as part of the Council's Major Infrastructure Projects. Lighting improvements have already been made across many schemes, including Southern Link Road Phase 4, and Pinvin Crossroads with more to follow as other schemes progress. Besides, lighting improvements have also been made at several locations where new zebra installations are being introduced.

Highways: New Highways arrangements during Lockdown Following the Government's announcement of another national lockdown, WCC has been obliged to take the decision not to hold meetings with members of the public or Members themselves. The Liaison Engineers will continue to hold virtual meetings with members, so that face to face discussions can continue via Teams, and they will still carry out site visits alone to look at my issues and will, of course, report back to me. This is yet another challenge for us all, which I hope will not impact on our ability to deliver highway services for residents. These measures are in place until mid-February, in line with Government advice, when WCC will review the situation.

Parish Lengthsman scheme. WCC are now in a much better position for this latest Lockdown, and we are *not* proposing to fully suspend this again. WCC will write to Parishes is to encourage them to revisit their earlier risk assessments with their Lengthsman to ensure that they have taken into account any change in circumstances and turn to WCC if they need more support.

Gullies - The Council cleared nearly 60,000 gullies in 2020 - over half of all the County's gullies! Keeping the gullies clear is an essential part of highways maintenance and ensures that the overall drainage system will not become blocked. It also helps to reduce the likelihood of flooding and helps surface water drain away quicker.

Winter maintenance teams were particularly active over the Christmas and New Year period, and wintry weather is set to continue so the teams will remain on high alert.

Weather and drainage: The vast majority of road closures associated with flooding have now reopened, and flood defences and pumps have either been removed or are in the process of being so – nevertheless, with groundwater tables at a high level, teams will remain in close contact with Environment Agency partners. The combination of wet and wintry weather looks set to present challenges that officers and contractors are ready to meet.

Local Issues

Minerals Local Plan Examination in Public later in year

Passing bays Field Barn Lane – condition and lack of – still no date to improve more than done already - in discussion BB

Smokey Lane

- hard standing for those waiting for bus –parish chairman negotiating – parish gang when given permission.
- Smokey Lane access issue. Owner going to clear, Highways to see what else is needed.
- Request again for lower speed limits

More work to be done on speeding in village – capacity full currently re wires on road and visits.

Neigh Lane area footway for safety. Can't extend 30mph, footway request not on list yet. BB Clerk sending Cllr Eyre log of accidents in last 3 years

Flooding brook Lane recent (October) request to check drains /gullies - BB raised work orders to jet gullies. The vast majority are clear and working.(6h October)

Broadband – ensuring Cllr Seager is fully supported by contact details and information