

Yarkhill Parish Council

MINUTES OF

YARKHILL PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

Held at Yarkhill Village Hall on Tuesday 10th May 2022 at 7.30pm

Present: Councillor Jeff Hughes (Chr), Councillor Tom Misselbrook (V Chr), Councillor Chrissie Dobson, Councillor Ian Carr, Councillor Sarah Daw, Councillor Matthew Kirby, Ward Councillor Jonathan Lester and Clerk Sallyanne Lees.

There were 5 members of the public in attendance.

1. Councillor Jeff Hughes was re-elected as Chairman, proposed by Councillor Tom Misselbrook and seconded by Councillor Chrissie Dobson.
Councillor Tom Misselbrook was re-elected as Vice Chairman, proposed by Councillor Jeff Hughes and seconded by Councillor Chrissie Dobson.
2. Councillors Ian Carr, Chrissie Dobson and Sarah Daw agreed to continue as Councillors. Sallyanne Lees confirmed she was happy to continue as Footpaths and Pond Officer and with no objection in his absence, Peter O'Neill was assumed to continue in his role as Tree Warden. Councillor Matthew Kirby has moved out of the Parish and therefore is unable to continue as a Parish Councillor and the post will be advertised through the proper channels. Councillor Jeff Hughes thanked him for his hard work and enthusiasm throughout his term.
3. Acceptance of Councillors and Officers was approved.
4. Apologies were received from Harvey Clay
5. There were no declarations of interest or written requests for dispensations
6. The minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2022 were signed and approved.
7. **Open Session**
 - 7.1 Ward Councillor Jonathan Lester made his report. He and several other Councillors on the Scrutiny Committee spent 3.5 hours asking questions of the Interim Assistant Director responsible for Planning Services and the New Director of Planning & Regulatory Services. Ward Councillor Jonathan Lester suggested the reintroduction of a Planning Surgery, a scheme by which you used to be able to go to your local town and book a meeting with a member of the planning team, although he suggested in this modern age of technology that such meetings could be via Zoom or similar. Currently getting information about the progress of planning applications is a long winded and arduous task with excuses ranging from COVID to phosphate issues to staff shortages; there have undoubtedly been issues but there does need to be a better focus on customer service and communications. Around 20 recommendations have been put forward for consideration and Ward Councillor Jonathan Lester will report back to us accordingly. On 31st March there was a Cabinet Meeting and the whole agenda can be viewed on the Herefordshire Council website. The main topic for Ward Councillor Jonathan Lester was that, despite the fact that £41 million was budgeted for Children's Services, because there are some significant challenges in dealing with cases where the council has been found wanting, they have come up with a recovery plan; back in 2018 Ward Councillor Jonathan Lester raised the budget by some £2 million + to £23 million to run Children's Services, this year it is £41

million. When the Council was hit with an improvement notice last year they spent £5 million extra on coping with the fallout of that recovery plan. At the meeting on 31st March they said they need another £11 million from reserves and to increase the annual base budget by another £4.5 million, so there are significant increases in the amount of money that will be spent in Children's Services to address the problems that the Council are facing. Within Herefordshire there are around 370 children in care and away from their families, when children on care plans and on the edge of care are added, the total number is around 1300 children. Another point raised at the meeting on 31st March was how this Council is performing and one statistic which deserved a round of applause was that they have hit a target and only 1% of waste now goes to Landfill. In the middle of April the Council AGM will take place and, as with local Councils, Officers will be elected. There will also be a change to the Scrutiny system. With regard to Planning issues, Ward Councillor Jonathan Lester informed us that the open enforcement cases within Yarkill, namely the Newtown Inn, the mobile home on the land owned by Mr Mannion and his partner and the commercial building at Ivy Cottage are all progressing and he suggested that the Clerk ask the Planning Department for updates as and when they occur rather than contacting them before every Parish Meeting. In the meantime, Mr Mannion and his partner were prosecuted and received a small fine. Their solicitor intimated that they would be moving into one of the houses they have planning permission for; however in the meantime the planning permission lapsed and the new application has been refused. The Newtown Inn is an ongoing problem and we will just have to await updates of any developments. The commercial building is still awaiting the appeal hearing and we will be advised of the outcome as soon as it is decided. There is currently an ongoing consultation as to whether the public should be charged for using the Council Tip. Those against the plan say that it is unfair because Council Tax should include use of this facility. We will be updated but it is unlikely that charges will be applied.

7.2 The Chairman made his Annual Report. Councillor Jeff Hughes said that it was obvious that Herefordshire Council are operating under ever increasing financial restraints which has impacted on some of our planned improvements, particularly with regard to the proposed road safety scheme on the A4103 between the Wharf and Newtown Crossroads. This work is currently on hold. He also thanked Sallyanne for all the effort she had put into getting the scheme in place. It is clear there will be more and more financial burden placed on Parish Councils. Councillor Jeff Hughes thanked Ward Councillor Jonathan Lester for his updates on planning enforcement matters. The Parish Council has continued to operate efficiently despite COVID and he thanked all the Parish Councillors and the Clerk for their efforts during a difficult period. Councillor Tom Misselbrook thanked Councillor Jeff Hughes for his excellent powers of research with regard to planning and other parish matters.

7.3 The Footpath & Pond Officer informed the meeting that there is the possibility of two ancient bridleways (PROW) being reinstated. The routes are not totally clear at this stage but one starts directly opposite the Monkhide turning on the A4103 and runs up past the school and ultimately joins up with the bridle ways on Shucknall hill, via the canal. The other is within the village itself and runs over Showle Court land. This would be wonderful for walker and horse riders as it gives safe access from Monkhide to the other side of the main road without having to walk or ride on the main road. Further information to follow as and when it emerges. Again COVID has delayed progress thus far. It was also confirmed that all existing PROW were registered when required. A member of the public pointed out that there are two PROWs from Monkhide to the A4103 and both are in a state of disrepair and at some points almost impassable. The path that runs through Garford Farm is in places very

narrow and as a Bridle Way should be 2m wide. The Bridle Way that runs from Peter Ball's yard up to the Newtown Crossroads is very overgrown at the Crossroads end. The path at that point is not the responsibility of a land owner and the Clerk will ask the Lengthsman to clear the undergrowth.

7.4 The Tree Warden was not at the meeting.

8. With regard to Planning and Enforcement Councillor Jeff Hughes told the meeting that there had been two planning refusals since the last meeting; one being the application for three houses at Newtown Cross by the Mannions; the other being the commercial building at Ivy Cottage which has now gone to appeal. The Agent has submitted their final statement and the outcome of the Appeal will be notified to the Parish Council as and when it is decided. The final planning matter is the traveller's site beside the Newtown Inn at Newtown Crossroads; the original planning application made in 2020 was for a day room and permission for 3 more residential caravan plots. Drainage was the main point of contention at that time and although the permission was not refused as such, Herefordshire Council decided not to take the application forward. The plans have now been revised and the request for three further plots has been removed; they are asking permission for the day room and a reconfiguration of the land. There appears to be no reason why we shouldn't support the application.
9. The accounts for 2021/2022 were discussed and approved and will be submitted according to the regulations laid down.
10. The Clerk has applied for the Drainage Grant and the Lengthsman provided a breakdown of jobs he considered necessary to maintain our drainage systems. His main concern is the clearing and restoration of the drainage line by Showle Court. We applied for a substantial amount but have been granted £4,339 but as in previous years this may increase. Obviously drainage is important in our Parish and so, if necessary, Parish Funds can be utilised to complete the work.
11. With regard to the Herefordshire Local Plan Consultation Councillor Jeff Hughes explained that the Local Plan is under review and this defines the framework of the County and also includes the provision of housing across the County. Public Consultation started in April. It will be another two years until that plan is approved and adopted. The new plan will supersede Neighbourhood Development Plans and so the worry was that the Neighbourhood Plan may have to be completed reworked, but in fact it should result in just relevant areas being updated.
12. Councillor Jeff Hughes said that the Parish Clerk had been pushing hard for traffic and safety improvement measures in Newtown and we have several discussion and suggestions and a plan was put together. Unfortunately, because of Council spending restrictions the plans have been temporarily suspended, It had been suggested that we put together a traffic improvement plan to cover the whole Parish but such plan would have no power and so we could spend weeks working on it only to have it ignored. We will await news about the suspended safety measures and report back as soon as we receive any updates. We were recently asked to bid for a small amount of funding to enable Balfour Beatty to carry out safety measures on C roads and Councillor Jeff Hughes received several ideas from Parishioners; as a result of that we submitted a spreadsheet with about five safety project suggestions. These are now all in the melting pot and we await the outcome.
13. Questions From The Floor. Councillor Sarah Daw explained that Harvey Clay wanted to turn the shed for the proposed Milk Vending machine by the village hall by 90 deg. This involved an amendment to the planning application but because it is a non-material amendment it should be a very quick decision. It is hoped the machine will be up and running during July. She also updated the meeting on the progress of the plans for the Parish Jubilee celebrations and all is in hand. The Parish Council

have agreed to donate £500 towards costs. It was also confirmed that Jubilee mugs would be purchased for children in the Parish aged 16 and under. Although at the previous meeting the Jubilee organisers asked for suggestions for a jubilee gift, no ideas were forthcoming and so, taking into account the time limitations, the decision was taken by Sarah and Sallyanne to go ahead with the mugs. The Clerk agreed to print leaflets for the Jubilee committee to distribute in order to ascertain the possible number of persons hoping to attend. This will help with catering requirements etc. The Parish Clerk informed the meeting that Peter Ball had proposed that he purchase a bench to commemorate the Jubilee and place it on the Monkhide Green. This was agreed to be a lovely idea but it was suggested that as the green was owned by Highways he would need to gain permission from them to erect a bench.

Close Open Session

14. Payments were approved as follows:

13.1 Autela Group £ 52.20

15 Items for the next agenda including description why this should be added to said agenda to be received by the Parish Clerk no later than 28th June 2022

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 12th July 2022