

November Minutes

Witham on the Hill Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Witham on the Hill Parish Council (Min 21-04) held on the 1 November 2021 at 7.00 p.m. at St Andrews Parish Hall

Present: **Councillors:** Charles Henriques, Janet Kirkwood, Sue Pennant-Jones, and Paul Smith

Residents: Frances Plummer

Others: Bernard Champness – Clerk, District Cllr Penny Robins

Open Forum

Frances Plummer was present and wanted to address the Council on a few matters which were:

- 1, The paving block by the Stocks had still not been repaired and the one next to it was also in need of repairing. She requested that these matters be reported again
2. The post by the churchyard had been damaged and rather than repairing it, it needed to be removed and disposed of.
3. It was important that there is a sign for the defibrillator erected at the front of the Hall and that this should be done soon to advise people where it was sited. As a matter of interest, the Trustees of the hall would like to purchase fridge magnets to give to every house in Witham which would have the code to the defibrillator on it if they might want to use it. They wanted to know if the Parish Council had any objections to this. She was advised that there was no objection
4. Regarding the planning application on the agenda all she wanted to say was that it was not clear what the material to be used for the canopy would be as if it was plastic this should be objected to.

The meeting was formally opened at 19:07

54 Apologies for absence, acceptance of Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllr Lynne O'Hara (personal) **Resolved:** that the apologies be accepted.

55. Declaration of Interest – To receive Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests, as set out in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 and the nature of those interests relating to any Agenda item

No one declared an interest in any matter that was on the agenda.

56. Minutes of the last meeting held on the 13 September 2021 (21-03)

Resolved: That the minutes of the 13 September 2021 were signed by the Chair as a correct record.

57. Matters to Report

The Clerk was able to report that Cllr O'Hara had been able to advise that South Kesteven District Council had telephoned her regarding trees on the village green.

1. 2 sorbus (ash) trees need replacing near the Bywells area. 2 Rowan trees were recommended as replacement as they are narrow, have edible berries and are good for wildlife.
2. 2 perimeter trees already removed are to be replaced - with an almond and cherry tree.

They will send a map for us to confirm the location we would like them. They suggest not directly in the same spot as the ones removed - possibly behind the play equipment.

The work is to be done early December and I have committed to ensure they are kept watered when necessary

58. To receive a report from the County and District Councillors.

District Councillor Penny Robins said that she had nothing to report but was willing to take questions or requests on any matter whether it was County or District Council. She did say however that there was still no news on the health of Cllr Bod Adams although it appeared that he was sending out emails to Clerks.

Cllr Henriques said that he would like Cllr Robins to try and find out the criteria for allowing us having a 20-mph speed limit in the village. Once we knew that then we could consider having an Open Meeting for the residents to share their views on whether they wanted a 20-mph speed limit or not.

Cllr Robins was also asked if it was the intention of the Council to replace the existing lights with the new LED ones.

Cllr Robins said that she would look into both these matters and report back.

59. Clerks Report and Correspondence received.

The Clerk had circulated in advance notice of the various e-mails received since the last meeting. If anyone wanted to see any e-mails they should let him know and he would send it on.

60. Planning Applications to Approve:

S21/2013 - Erection of canopy to front courtyard to provide covered dining area.

Location: The Six Bells, Main Street. **Response** by 15 November 2021

S21/1980 - Erection of canopy to front courtyard to provide covered dining area.

Location: The Six Bells, Main Street, App Type: Listed Building Consent. **Response** by 15 November 2021

After considering the above applications it was resolved we would object to these applications for the following reasons.

1. A lack of consultation: The proposal has been submitted without consultation with the local community in contradiction to requirement of The National Planning Policy Framework. Policy 12 'Achieving well- designed places' states that 'effective engagement with

communities' is essential (12/124) The planning application document asks if consultation with the community has taken place. The 'No' box is ticked. Policy 12/128 notes that 'Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community'. This is not the case. Further 12/128 states that 'Applicants that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than this that cannot'.

2. Impact upon the local community: The proposal will increase the number of people that the restaurant can cater for thereby increasing the pressure on roadside parking, adding as a result to the inconvenience of local residents and villagers in general in driving along the road and from the noise made by vehicles and customers.
3. Parking outside the front of the Six Bells currently takes up the pedestrian pathway. The visualisation included in the application shows the barrier at the edge of the property pushed to the edge of the property further encouraging parking on the pathway.
4. Heritage impact: The application claims to include a heritage assessment but it is created by the agent acting for the applicant. It is therefore not an objective assessment by an independent heritage consultant as would be expected in connection with a development of a listed building in a conservation area. The assessment submitted is partial and highly selective in taking heritage concerns into account. It notes that the nearby housing does not enhance the conservation area. But this is not an argument for further inappropriate design which this proposal amounts to in detracting from the visual amenity represented by the Six Bells building. The statement submitted fails to take account of the wider conservation area heritage assets which the Six Bells is a significant part adding to the visual amenity created by other buildings in the vicinity such as Pillared Cottage, the Barns, Cottages and Palace Farm, together with the Church. The proposed covered space will detract from the visual amenity of the Six Bells in the conservation area.
5. The proposal begs the question of what further addition will be applied for and by deception create a permanent extension. A covered space would add some further comfort to the courtyard dining amenity, but it will remain an open space. How much longer will it be before an application is submitted to glaze the front wall and add a set of doors making it a large permanent extension without architectural merit in a conservation area against an important heritage asset.

60.1.1 Planning Applications approved:

S21/1745 - Proposal: Reduce spread of 3 neighbouring Ash trees (T3, T4 & T5) back to the boundary at Somersby House Main Street

S21/1742 - Proposal: Remove Maple tree (T1) in front garden to just above ground level Reduce Pissard's Plum (T2) by 2m.at Cedar House 3 Home Farm Lane

S21/1746 - Reduce height of the Ash tree (T6) by 3m and reduce spread by

1.5m to shape crown at Park House 2 Home Farm Lane

S21/1869 - Proposal: Fell spruce at The Holt Bottom Street

61. To receive an update on the reactive sign and to agree payment by instalments

Cllr Henriques reported that he has been speaking to Unipart Dorman regarding the purchase of the reactive sign. They had indicated that if an order was to be placed they required payment in full in advance. He had been in touch with them about this matter and explained it is very unusual that any business should demand full payment before starting to produce the product. Particularly without a long stop delivery date. He would be happy to recommend that the Parish Council

accepts a sensible deposit is put down in advance with the balance payable following delivery. What you are proposing leaves the Parish Council in a very exposed position. He had also suggested that the deposit should be 30% of the total price and that there be a delivery date within 2 weeks of that payment. This matter was still on going but the Council agreed that what Cllr Henriques had suggested was the way forward and they were in agreement to that suggestion.

62. To discuss and agree the purchase of a laptop and to enter an agreement to purchase Office 365 every year

The Clerk had been in touch with a computer company in Bourne for a quote for a laptop and printer. A quote had been received stating that the cost of the laptop was £419.00 and the printer £69.95 making a total of £488.95. The Clerk explained that he had worked with the owner of the shop and was very satisfied with the goods supplied and the support that he was giving but the concern was that he was not VAT registered which would mean we would not be able to claim that back. After discussion it was **resolved** that the Clerk purchase the laptop and printer from the company in Bourne, but this should be done in April 2022. It was also **resolved** that the Clerk purchase Office 365 at a cost of £49.99 plus VAT which was payable annually.

63. To discuss the budget for 2022-23 and agree the Precept for that financial year

The Clerk had prepared a Budget to calculate what we would spend and receive in the financial year 2022-23 and that the Precept request should be. This had been circulated in advance. It was explained that in the calculations he had not taken into account the purchase of the laptop and printer in either this financial year or the next financial year. He also pointed out that at the end of the financial year as it stood in the spreadsheet we would have slightly in excess of £4000.00. We would need a general reserve of £1200 which would represent what we would spend in the first 6 months of the year and would be used in an emergency for example if the Clerk was off ill we would have to continue to pay him as well as a Locum. He advised that we could increase the reserve to the amount we had at the end of the last financial year but suggested that if that was so rather than to increase the Precept by a huge amount we could do so on an annual basis of a period of time. On the spreadsheet it should that the Precept for 2022-23 would be £2823.00. It was **resolved** that we would purchase the laptop, printer and Office 365 in April using our reserves, but we would increase the level of the Precept by £250.00 in that financial year and also in the following financial year. This would increase the Precept to £3073.00 for 2022-23

64. To receive an update on the purchase of a Wreath and Poppies for Remembrance Day

Cllr Henriques reported that he had arranged with Jo Baines to purchase a wreath so that Cllr Smith can lay that on Remembrance Sunday. She had also purchased some poppies that had been placed on lampposts around the village. Thanks, should be recorded to Jo Baines for her help and assistance

65. To discuss a request for a 20 mph speed limit within the village

A resident had requested that the Parish Council give this matter consideration now that Lincolnshire County Council had agreed to a 20-mph speed limit being put in place in villages and towns subject to requests being made by Parish and Town Councils. It should be noted that Cllr Robins would be looking into this matter and trying to ascertain the criteria for applying and getting the go ahead. The Clerk also said that he had written to the Highways Officer asking him this question and other matters raised by the resident.

66. To confirm Expenditure

£73.40 - HMRC (PAYE)

£293.16 – B M Champness (salary for October, November, and December)

£24.99 – Martyn Hyde (paint for village benches)

£1.70 – B M Champness (postage)

[] denotes those payments paid between meetings, which have been approved by the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Parish Council or at a previous meeting but not listed

Payments made by Direct Debit - £

67. Any other business – *Reminder – by law no decision can be made under this item only information exchanged.*

There being no other business the meeting was formally closed at 20.26

68. The date of the next meeting – to be held on **Monday 8th January 2022** at 7.00 p.m. at St Andrew's Parish Hall, Witham on the Hill