

Witham on the Hill Parish Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Witham on the Hill Parish Council (Min
20-05)11th January 2021 at 7.00 p.m. held remotely by video link

Present: **Councillors:** Charles Henriques (Chair), Janet Kirkwood, Sue Pennant-Jones, Lynne O'Hara
Others: Bernard Champness – Clerk, Cllr Bob Adams, LCC.
Residents: Frances Plummer.

	Open Forum
i)	Frances Plummer wanted to know if the Parish Council was going to take up the offer of free trees, supplied by the Woodland Trust as she was intending to apply for some to plant in the Churchyard. Cllr Lynne O'Hara responded that she had looked into the matter, but the minimum order needed to be between 30/105 saplings. The spring collection had now closed but we could place an order for the Autumn. The choice was either hedge or copse and we would need to accurately confirm where they would be planted at the time of application. Following discussion, it was felt that as there was only limited space for additional planting it was not something the Parish Council could take up but Frances Plummer suggested she would be happy to place the information in the Three Towers magazine so anyone interested could perhaps take up the offer.
ii)	Frances Plummer raised the issue of overgrowth around the Bywells, in particular overhanging willow and laurel encroaching on the footpath. Cllr Henriques said that he would see to it this was trimmed back in due course.
iii)	The mole activity on the Green was discussed and it was agreed to consider what steps could be taken to prevent this from happening.
	The meeting was formally opened at 19.18
67.	Apologies for absence, acceptance of Apologies
67.1	No apologies were received as all Councillors were present. The Clerk confirmed that he had placed an advertisement in the noticeboard advising that Andrew Greenwood had resigned from the Council and that parishioners had until the 20 th January 2021 to request an election, after which the Council could co-opt at the March meeting.
68.	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
68.1	No one declared an interest in any matter that was on the agenda.
69.	Minutes of the last meeting held on the 9th November 2020 (20-04)
69.1	Resolved: That the minutes of the 9 th November 2020 would be signed by the Chair as a correct record as soon as conveniently possible.
70.	Matters to Report
70.1	The Clerk was able to report that the old website had now been closed and a new site opened with the help of Lincolnshire County Council. He had been able to transfer data from the old site onto the new site, but so far he had been unable to upload all earlier minutes and agendas.

		The new procedures were difficult to understand despite the 2.5 hour video tutorial supplied and as it appears other clerks have experienced similar difficulties LCC are preparing better guidance notes and in the meantime have offered to upload the data for us. It was agreed that the offer should be taken up. Cllr Pennant Jones agreed to make sure the new web address was advertised in the Three Towers magazine.
	70.2	Cllr O'Hara confirmed that the new seats for the roundabout on the Green were ready and SKDC would be getting in touch prior to installation. It was hoped that we would have an opportunity to paint the seats before they were fitted. Further access improvements to the Tower Slide are to be discussed at a site visit to be arranged in due course with SKDC/contractors.
	70.3	Cllr Kirkwood said that a resident had complained to her that there was still flooding occurring by Black Dog Cottages which was causing a problem. Cllr Henriques said that he was surprised to hear this complaint as he had not noticed any flooding recently and understood the road sweeper had been to clear the gullies and drains recently. The Clerk pointed out that if flooding persisted at this site then a photograph should be taken and then reported on Fix My Street.
71.	To receive a report from the County Councillor.	
	71.1	Cllr Bob Adams gave the following report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He was able to report that a Conservative candidate had been selected for the Bye Election but he did have a date for it yet. • Because of the pandemic most of the Officers and staff at both the District and County Council were still working from home. • Both Councils had been able to sort out their budgets for 2021-22 but because of the pandemic the County Council were likely to have quite a large deficit at the end of this financial year. He understood that the County were looking for a 5% increase and SKDC at a 1.99% increase in levies. He also said that the Police were looking for a substantial increase in their funding. • He had received the annual report from the Road Safety Partnership, which he would send to the Clerk for circulation. • He was asked if there was any update on the outstanding white lining work to be undertaken on the approach to the A6121 crossroads from Toft. He said that so far as he was aware this work was still in the pipeline and would probably be done after the start of the new financial year. Once he had any further information he would inform the Clerk.
72.	Clerks Report and Correspondence received. -	
	72.1	The Clerk had circulated a list of e-mails/correspondence. There were no questions.
73.	Planning applications:	
	73.1	At the time that the agenda was posted there were no relevant planning applications to report.
	73.2	The following planning applications have been approved. S20/1898 - Pine (T6) and Bay (T7) - remove to ground level at Witham Hall Preparatory School Main Street S20/1929 - Works to trees detailed in Tree Report at Witham Hall Preparatory School Main Street

73.3	S20/2054 Proposal: New permanent field shelter at the rear of Palace Farm, Main Street, Witham On the Hill, Lincolnshire, Decision/Date REFUSED 17th December 2020
74.	To receive an update on the A6121 crossroads
74.1	There was nothing further to add to what had already been reported by Cllr Adams.
75.	To receive a report on the Stocks and Bywells.
75.1	<p>Cllr O'Hara explained that she had been in touch with Historic England who confirmed the Stocks is a Grade II Listed structure and as such it has statutory protection. There was evidence that the Stocks were purchased by the Rural District Council in 1948, but this was dissolved in 1973. SKDC's position is that they disclaim current ownership/responsibility for maintenance and have suggested ownership reverted to the Parish Council. However, no evidence is available to support this, even though the Land Registry entry for the Green does not include the Stocks/Bywells.</p> <p>Cllr O'Hara said that if we could provide evidence that SKDC had carried out any maintenance since 1973 it would support our claim that ownership had passed to them. It was therefore agreed, the Clerk will deliver the old minute books to Cllr Lynne O'Hara who would, with the help of Cllrs Janet Kirkwood and Sue Pennant-Jones, research the records for any references which might clarify the present position.</p> <p>Cllr Pennant Jones said that she was concerned that the volume of water from springs close to the Bywells might cause damage to the walls of the trench. It was agreed that we would look into this matter once responsibility/ownership had been established.</p>
76.	To consider whether or not to purchase a defibrillator for the village and to receive an update on grants available.
76.1	<p>Cllr Lynne O'Hara explained that the British Heart Foundation was no longer giving grants due to the pandemic. She had also investigated the help available from 'London Hearts' but this was conditional on purchasing the equipment through them and even with a £200 grant/discount, the cost was still higher than the supplier suggested by the Clerk, Wel Medical who had recently provided Thurlby PC with their defibrillator.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the Village Hall Trustees were happy with the proposed location for a defibrillator being placed on the outside wall to the left of the entrance. It would need to be reaffirmed that Listed Building consent would not be required but this was unlikely to present any difficulties.</p> <p>It was resolved that the PC would purchase a defibrillator from Wel Medical at a cost of £1,235 plus VAT. The Clerk was to confirm that the cost had not increased since October 2020. Upon clarification of the Listed Building consent issue the equipment would then be ordered by the Clerk.</p>
77.	To receive an update on the purchase of a speed gun and associated equipment and/or 2 reactive signs to be placed at each end of the village.
77.1	Cllr Charles Henriques reported that he had been in touch with the Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership who were broadly in favour of reactive speed signs as a deterrent to speeding, subject to necessary site inspection. Each device would not cost more than £2,500. The model proposed can also collect speed data. The cost of the initial site survey (£40.00) will also include 6 passive speed signs. An application form is required to be completed with details of where the

	<p>signs will be located, after which an inspection will be arranged.</p> <p>It was agreed that only one reactive speed sign would be required initially, it's location to be changed periodically from either end of the village. It was also felt that this was a more cost-effective way forward, than the purchase of a speed gun to carry out periodic speed surveys.</p> <p>Cllr Henriques said that he would be willing to move the signs from and to the chosen sites and download the data. It was resolved that one reactive sign would be purchased and the cost of that would be included in the budget calculations to be discussed at Item 79</p>
78. To receive an update regarding the replacement of an Internal Auditor	
78.1	The Clerk explained that the person suggested at the last meeting, had been approached and declined the post. However, David Thornburn who has recently agreed to fulfil this role for Thurlby PC, would be happy to do this for Witham on the Hill Parish Council as well. It was agreed that the Clerk should request client references, after which we would be happy to appoint him at the next meeting. His remuneration to be discussed and perhaps on the basis of a fixed fee.
79. To discuss and approve the budget for 2021-22 and to set the Precept for that year.	
79.1	The Clerk had prepared a first draft of the budget, which had been circulated in advance. He had then prepared a second draft which included the cost of a reactive speed sign or signs and a defibrillator. He asked the Councillors to look at the second draft only. The Chair then went through each item for clarification by the Clerk if necessary. The Clerk explained that in the draft a sum of £1,235 had been included for the defibrillator, but this was increased to £1,500 to include the cost of installation. A sum of £4,000 had been included for two reactive speed signs and as it had been agreed we only needed one, this sum was reduced to £2,600 to include the survey fee of £40. The VAT element was then reduced to £820. So anticipated expenditure for the forthcoming year will amount to £7,508. Since the Council has sufficient funds in reserve to cover the extraordinary costs of the defibrillator/speed signage and a unanimous desire was expressed that any increase in the annual precept should be kept to a minimum, it was resolved that the Precept for 20/2021, be set at £2,075.00 an increase of 3% on the previous year.
80.	<p>To confirm Expenditure – £1.30 – B M Champness (2 second class stamps) [] 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 - £</p>
80.1	Resolved that the payment be approved. The Clerk explained that he would wait until March for this payment to be made with his salary
81.	Any other business – <i>Reminder – by law no decision can be made under this item only information exchanged.</i>
81.1	There being no other business the meeting was formally closed at 20.34
82.	The date of the next meeting to be held on Monday 8th March 2021 at 7.00 p.m. by video conference (Zoom) unless it was possible by then to convene at St Andrew's Parish Hall, Witham on the Hill.