

DILWYN PARISH COUNCIL
Draft Minutes of the Dilwyn Parish Council Meeting
held in the village hall
on
Tuesday 8th March 2022 at 7.30p.m.

PRESENT:

Cllr J Hall (Chair); Cllr J Clarke; Cllr J Booth; Cllr M Thomas; Cllr S Thomas; Cllr P Kyles; Cllr D Stirling-Brown; Cllr C Fellows and Cllr R Fellows (Vice Chairman).

Also present:

Parish Clerk: Lesley Hay. Ward Cllr Michael Jones. Neighbourhood Development Plan representative – Geoff Field. Four members of the public.

The Chairman opened the meeting.

Good evening and thank you for coming this evening. Firstly, I would like to say a big congratulations to Councillor Cole Fellows on the birth of his first child and to Ray on his first grandchild. I would also like to highlight the fantastic work Lesley has done this month; she has worked her socks off this month – thank you, Lesley.

I would ask that all questions are directed through the Chair and only one person to speak at one given time. We have a lot to discuss this evening and the meeting will not be any longer than two hours.

Minutes:

1. Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr J Stirling-Brown; Cllr J Lewis and Cllr I Brown. Lengthsman – Glen White.

2. Declarations of Interest: All Councillors declared an interest in The Crown Public House as the Council is the owner of the said Public House.

Cllr J Hall declared an interest in item 10 – Highways.

Written request for dispensation: The Clerk reminded members that written dispensation had been received from all Councillors in respect of The Crown Public House as the Council corporate is the owner. Without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited by section 31(4) from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of business.

3. Chairman's Report

School Play Park – The quote from Active Garden of £10,503.60 for the new play equipment and installation had been circulated and, by majority, agreed via email as per the last meeting.

Lesley has thanked Sovereign for their quotes.

The donor of the new equipment has been contacted, sent copies of the two quotes for comparison and has confirmed they are happy with the accepted quote.

The quote from Active Garden for repairs to the existing play equipment, which is the Parish Council's responsibility, is £2239.20. This quote was also circulated and again agreed via email as per the last meeting and Cllr J Stirling-Brown has confirmed.

An email has since been received outlining a provisional date for installing the new equipment as 17th–19th May. It is hoped to complete the repairs at the same time, but this is subject to availability of the timbers.

Cllr Kyles raised the question regarding the quality of the materials, as the school insurance policy through Zurich would be liable for any claims. Councillors reported having looked on the Active Garden website – where there were many examples of previous work – and that it appears to be a well-established company with contracts abroad as well as in the UK. It was acknowledged that the equipment would have to meet the very high safety standards associated with this type of play equipment.

Jubilee Celebrations – There is a meeting on 10th March 2022 to discuss events and a proposed programme will be published in the April issue of The Dilwynner.

Loan Repayment – The Chairman confirmed that we have a loan repayment going out in March 2022 for £9331.52. The Crown accounts have been circulated. The PC has spent more money on The Crown during this financial year but this has been due to work that has been required. The coming year will see an increase in expenditure such as replacing the boiler and addressing issues raised by the fire risk inspection, which has highlighted issues that need to be addressed by June 2022.

4. Open Session

(a) Correspondence – re. The Crown Action Plan – circulated.

Thanks were extended to Tim Kyles and Jonny and Madeleine Spinks for their letter and spreadsheet dated 1st March 2022. The letter is regarding The Crown Inn and has been circulated to the Parish Councillors.

The Chairman addressed a few points – in that the council has instructed Martin and Charlie Thomas to repair the doors but, due to a shortage of materials, they have been unable to complete the job.

Other points that were raised – in particular it was suggested that a list of priorities be drawn up with a ‘priority action plan’ to help keep track of ongoing issues. A sample spreadsheet has been created which could be used to itemise all the outstanding jobs at The Crown. See item 5.2.

Resident request – lengthsman to be asked to clear a sign up the Haven Lane. Email from resident: *More than five years ago we asked the Parish Council if they could do something about the condition of the stile opposite Quickssets and if it could be replaced with a gate. Sadly, nothing has been done, walkers risk injuring themselves using the stile or climb the field gate neither of which is acceptable and, an added difficultly, is that there is no room for a larger breed of dog to get under the stile.*

The Clerk confirmed that the developer building the new houses offered to finance and erect two kissing gates either end of this footpath as a goodwill gesture to the village. There have been ongoing discussions – with promises that these would be completed before the end of the development and before the builders left the site – but nothing has happened!

The Clerk confirmed that she has now spoken personally with Mr Williams of JDW – the developer who built the four new houses. Mr Williams said that he has a kissing gate in stock and this will – at some time in the future – be erected at the entrance to the footpath that follows their site off the common road.

However, his site manager has looked at the footpath gate at the other end and, accordingly to him, there is not enough room for a kissing gate. Mr Williams has promised that when they are back on site, they will look again and see if they can make any improvements in height etc., but he is doubtful there is a lot they can do with the space/ground level available.

After discussion, when it was agreed/confirmed that the stile was difficult and the space not wide enough for a kissing gate, the Clerk was asked to liaise with Ray Jenkins for his opinion and the lengthsman to see if he has any suggestions for a quick temporary solution.

The Chairman closed Open Session

Cllr C Fellows joined the meeting.

5. The Crown

5.1 Update on boiler. The Clerk explained that she had tried to obtain quotes for replacing the boiler and had – to date – received only one quote despite contacting at least five local firms.

Peter Stilwell has been very helpful and had kindly produced a comparison sheet so that all contractors would be quoting on a ‘like-for-like’ basis. A paper copy of his suggestions was circulated at the meeting.

After a lengthy discussion during which it was acknowledged that costings would have to be taken into consideration, it was eventually agreed that the Clerk would try to obtain further quotes based on:

1. A like-for-like replacement.
2. A like-for-like replacement boiler, in the same spot, with zoning.
3. A replacement boiler in the area indicated by Peter Stilwell, with zoning (I guess there will be two elements to this – the groundwork and the boiler/plumbing bits).

As Peter Stilwell has managed to obtain a spare thermostat – this has gained the Parish Council some time to enable them to get further quotes and discuss the best financial option.

The Clerk extended a vote of thanks to Peter Stilwell for his recent help and support with this issue.

5.2. Update on ongoing repairs. The Chairman explained that she had a paper copy outlining most of the outstanding jobs that needed attention at The Crown – some small issues – some larger issues – some urgent – some not so urgent.

After discussion, Cllr R Fellows agreed to ask Cllr Ian Brown and to liaise with Tim Kyles in getting the items transferred onto the spreadsheet. It was generally agreed that an ongoing spreadsheet – with issues being removed and added – would help with future accountability.

5.3 Fire safety inspection/Fire risk assessment. The report from the HWFR had been circulated which outlined the actions to address fire safety matters at The Crown as of 2nd March 2022.

The Chairman and Clerk visited The Crown on Saturday. The main issues to be addressed as a matter of urgency are: a fire door to the cellar; a fire door to the stairs; pink plaster board to be installed to cover the ceiling of the entrance to the cellar and the fuse/electric meters to be boxed in with fire-resistant materials. There are areas in the cellar itself that need covering but, on the whole, the cellar is covered in a fire-resistant plaster board.

The Clerk arranged for Steve Jones, the electrician, to visit The Crown on Saturday and he confirmed that he is happy with the electrics and did not consider the fuse boxes/meters need to be moved into a separate room – they just need to be boxed in with a fire-resistant material and with an additional fire alarm sited in the box.

A Fire Risk Assessment was requested by the Fire Officer and Maria is in the process of arranging this. The cost for this inspection to be met by the Parish Council as landlord.

Cllr Martin Thomas offered to visit The Crown and see what is required to address these issues.

The Clerk to ask Graham Dyer if he would like to quote for this job.

It was acknowledged that these issues are of priority as there is to be another inspection in June. The Fire Officer who attended on 2nd March has implied that he could shut down the living accommodation if these issues have not been addressed.

6. Ward Councillor Report –

7. To Approve Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 8th February 2022

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed that these minutes be adopted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

8. Lengthsman/Locality Steward/Footpaths

8.1 Lengthsman work sheet for March – as and when required.

Lengthsman – The Chairman acknowledged that Glen has done a sterling job in and around Dilwyn. We are now coming to the end of the financial year and so the allocated money is coming to an end. We need to ensure we are within budget so all work should go through Lesley so that she can authorise against expenditure.

8.2 Drainage Grant application submitted and receipt acknowledged.

8.3 The Clerk confirmed the Lengthsman 2022–2023 Expression of Interest/Management plans have been submitted and receipt acknowledged.

8.4 Additional grit bins by Tippets Brook in place.

8.5 Lengthsman – The Clerk confirmed that Glen has now completed the training and has been issued with his Street Card. The Clerk is in the process of borrowing a full set of road safety signs from Balfour Beatty. Cllr C Fellows asked where this equipment will be stored and whether it would be better somewhere central to the middle of the village. However, as this equipment is the responsibility of the lengthsman and not the Parish Council, it will be stored in the lengthsman's locked shed.

8.6 Refurbish lamp posts. Further to an email from a resident with regard to the very poor state of the lamp posts throughout Dilwyn – the Clerk explained that she had liaised with Balfour Beatty and had obtained permission for the Parish Council to repaint the lamp posts, with the costs to be met by the Parish Council.

The Clerk asked D C Gardening for a quote – a detailed quote of £2,261.50 + VAT (which we get reimbursed) has been received and circulated.

This quote was discussed at length. It was generally thought that investing this amount of money could not be justified when there are other more pressing issues that need attention.

Cllr J Booth proposed that in the interests of smartening up the appearance of the village, the Parish Council should consider going ahead with this project. However, this proposal was not seconded and so without support – it was agreed not to go ahead with this project.

The Clerk will inform the resident.

8.7 Rights of Way management to be taken 'in house' from 1st April 2022.

8.8 Sollers Notice Board. The Chairman expressed a vote of thanks to Mr Graham Dyer for his help with the Sollers Notice Board for which there was no charge. Cllr S Thomas has delivered a bottle of whisky with a note of thanks.

8.9 It was noted that when the white lining was done in the village, Balfour Beatty's contractors failed to repaint the white lines that indicate the entrance

to Henwood Close. Unfortunately, it is very unlikely that Balfour Beatty would consider bringing the team back to the village for just that one job.

8.10 Cllr C Fellows reminded Councillors that there had previously been discussion with regard to extending the wall around the village green, which he considers a better use of money than the suggested repainting of the lamp posts. This has been discussed in the past and Balfour Beatty have agreed in principle.

The Clerk to liaise with Cllr M Thomas and with the lengthsman with regard to building/extending this wall. The tarmac needed to make good the exposed areas could be purchased from Tarmac (Kington) and collected in small quantities as required.

It was confirmed that whilst the Parish Council owns the village green – the solicitor is currently getting it registered with the Land Registry.

Cllr C Fellows left the meeting.

9. Finance Matters: Invoices have been circulated plus up-to-date financial accounts/bank statements.

9.1 The outstanding invoices for February 2022 – schedule of payments circulated. It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed that these invoices should be paid.

The Clerk confirmed that the annual pay increase for 2021–2022 had been agreed at 1.75% – this is backdated to 1st April 2021. This will be taken into account in the March salary.

DILWYN PARISH COUNCIL Schedule of payments – 28th February 2022

PAYABLE TO	FOR	GROSS AMOUNT £	VAT £	NET AMOUNT £	CHEQUE NO.
Lesley Hay	Clerk's Feb salary	As per contract			Standing order
Lesley Hay	Feb PAYE	£129.00		£129.00	Online
Lesley Hay	Expenses February	£30.00		£30.00	Online
G White	Lengthsman	£660.00		£660.00	Online
Barriers	Two grit bins	£196.54	£32.76	£163.78	Online
R B Plant	Lengthsman training	£354.00	£59.00	£295.00	Online

Current Bank account totals as of March 2022

20373720	£11771.70		
20373733	£11268.51		
20416807	£16180.75		
20444581	£10200.63		
TOTAL	£49421.59	Bond	£9,298.27

10. Highways

Update on speeding issues – Ian Connolly's visit for 12th April 2022 was confirmed. Meeting to start at 7.00p.m.

The Chairman to put a piece in The Dilwynner and the Clerk to inform residents living in Stockingfield.

11. Planning applications:

11.1 Update on five houses on land next to The Great House.

The Clerk confirmed that the extension of the boundary fences has been referred to the Enforcement Officer who is now liaising with the Planning Officer.

Concerns were raised with regard to the open entrance and that it might invite travellers to move onto the land. The Clerk will liaise with the landowner outlining the Councillor's concerns.

11.2 Planning App: 220423 – Upper Haven – single storey extension – no objection.

11.3 Planning App: 220383 – Orchard Cottage – extension.

After discussion – by a majority vote with one abstention – it was decided to submit an objection to this planning application.

Further to Dilwyn Parish Council's meeting held last evening – this application was discussed at length. It was generally agreed that the planned extension is not aesthetically appropriate in a conservation area and that it appears (on paper) to completely overpower the existing black and white cottage. Although there was agreement to an extension in principle – the Parish Councillors would prefer to see a plan more in keeping and more sympathetic with this very old original black and white cottage.

11.4 Planning App: 220448 – Orchard Cottage – large ash tree – no objection.

12. Items for discussion at next meeting

Chairman closed the meeting at 9.05p.m.

Date of the next full Parish Council Meeting – Tuesday 12th April 2022 at 7.30p.m. in the village hall.

Signed: Date:

Ward Councillor Report February 2022

At the Full council meeting on the 28th January two motions were passed one to make the River Wye system a Water Protection Zone. This is to bring bodies together such as the Environment Agency, Local River Authority, Wye and Usk foundation and other representatives to address pollution affecting the River Wye. It is hoped that a common goal can be shared to alert problems and gain funding to tackle this issue. Another motion was also passed to encourage the use of Low Noise Fireworks on Council owned land at displays around the county. Every year we receive many complaints about excessive noise from fireworks and its impact on pets and residents.

At the Council Cabinet meeting on the 31st January the Council earmarked £32 million pounds for spending over the next 12 months. Over £5 million is going into infrastructure projects but nothing exciting into easing the traffic congestion. To encourage bus use even more, a planned expenditure of £300,000 has earmarked for bus shelters.

The Lengthsman Drainage Grant Scheme has been given the go ahead again. £250,000 has been made available for all Parish Council who have signed up to the scheme. Applications have to be submitted by the end of March.

P.R.O.W and T.R.O will be transferred back to Hereford Council from Balfour Beatty following a decision by cabinet. Staff are in the process of TUPE back to the council which hopefully will speed up this work within the county. Within the PROW a lot of support and volunteer work will hopefully come forward from the Parishes for this vital work.

In Herefordshire Covid cases have increased 32% up to the end of January, with Weobley School and surrounding village having very high numbers. Despite this the school has remained open and classes have managed to take place.

At the full council Meeting on the 11th February, it was voted to raise council tax by 2.99%. This is despite several amendments to raise by 0% or just 1%. Money would have been taken out of reserves to allow for a smaller increase. I voted for these amendments as I think any increase in council tax at this point in time was not correct with pressure on house hold incomes with inflation and rising energy bills.

The number of children in care in Herefordshire has risen over the last 12 months. In March 2021 312 children were in care, this has now risen to 345. Although this is disappointing, I am reassured by the Director of Children's services Daryl Freeman comment that no extra numbers have come into the care of the council than normal. It is the low numbers which have left care because they have not reached the age of 18.

Those who have claimed the £15.00 shop local card have until the end of March to spend it and there is an additional £10.00 now available to spend again by March 31st. Also still available is free bus travel on the weekends anywhere within Herefordshire which will carry on up to the end of September.