

DILWYN PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Lesley Hay

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Dilwyn Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 12th March starting at 7.30pm

The Clerk welcomed those present to the March Parish Council Meeting.

MINUTES

Present: Cllr J Hall; Cllr P Preston; Cllr J Clarke; Cllr R Fellows (Vice Chairman); Cllr M Griffiths; Cllr E Jordan; Cllr J Stokes; Cllr J Stirling-Brown and Cllr M Thomas.

Also present: Parish Clerk: Lesley Hay; Ward Councillor N Mason; one member of the public.

1. To receive apologies for absence: Cllr J Lewis; Cllr A Towler; D Stirling-Brown; PC Emma Turberfield (email report received) and Rowan Adams (Dilwyn Tree Warden).

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

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 business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of business.

2.1 Exclusion of members of the public and press: To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Item 7.4 will be discussed in closed session.

3. The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 13th February 2024. It was agreed that these were a true record and it was unanimously voted by the Councillors in attendance that they be adopted and signed by the Chairman.

4. Ward Councillor Nick Mason. The Ward Councillor gave a short report bringing Councillors up to date with finance, controls on the issuing of future contracts, supporting children's services, the 4.99% increase in Council Tax for 2024–2025, additional finance that may be available to set aside for road repairs following cancellation of HS2, and planned refurbishment of the railway station. These issues will be covered in more detail in the Leader's newsletter which is due to be circulated soon.

When asked, the Ward Councillor reassured Councillors that having followed guidelines previously set out to improve children's services within Herefordshire, the Council is totally

committed to fully supporting the excellent staff now in place and offering the very best standard of care to the children in their care.

A Councillor asked if the Ward Councillor would look into the plans to make the area in front of the railway station a transport hub. At present the area is a mess and very unwelcoming for those leaving the train and arriving in Hereford. The front of the building is totally hidden and it was suggested that lorries etc. be re-sited away from the front of the lovely Victorian building.

4.1 Open Session

Public participation: Residents are invited to give their views and raise questions to the Parish Council on issues on this agenda or raise issues for future consideration at the discretion of the Chairman.

4.1.1 Rowan Adams (Dilwyn Tree Warden) had circulated a list of possible dates to visit the community orchard at Colwall. Item to be deferred until the Tree Warden has followed up about possible sites in Dilwyn for planting a community orchard and has brought these proposals to a future Parish Council meeting.

4.1.2 Free portrait of King Charles III – it was agreed that the Clerk would register for a free portrait, possibly for display in the village hall.

4.1.3 Cllr E Jordan informed those present that she has resigned as Weobley's Tree Warden. However, she had re-registered as Assistant Tree Warden for Dilwyn and will be liaising with Tree Warden Rowan Adams.

4.1.4 The lengthsman explained that he has removed the chains surrounding the village triangle for repair.

4.1.5. Councillors extended a vote of thanks to Glen White and Ray Jenkins who had donated and planted the bulbs around the centre of the village. These are now beginning to bloom and are much admired.

4.1.6. Several cracks have been noted in the structure of the underpass. The Clerk was asked to liaise with the Locality Steward.

4.2 With no further business, the Chairman closed the Open Session.

Cllr J Stirling-Brown joined the meeting.

5 Finance: Schedule of payment sheet for February (circulated).

5.1 It was unanimously agreed to pay the outstanding invoices for February.

6. Highways/Footpaths and Environmental Matters:

6.1 Following a site visit, a quote for additional drainage work along Common Road and photographs had been circulated. After discussion, it was agreed to postpone any further work along Common Road. It was reported that Trig Meadow Brook (behind the pumping

station) had previously been dredged regularly by the Environment Agency, but that work had not been carried out for several years. It was agreed that the Clerk should contact the Environment Agency with a view to getting the brook dredged to see if that improves the ongoing flooding issues. Item to remain on the agenda.

6.2 Flooding issue on the A4112 at the entrance to the village from the Leominster direction. The lengthsman reported a blocked drain/ditch in the coppice alongside the A4112 which could be contributing to the flooding issue on the road. The Clerk was asked to contact the land agent to ascertain ownership. In the meantime, the lengthsman and Locality Steward will meet to look at the problem and consider if work on the ditch could improve the situation.

6.3. Email circulated regarding road conditions – Luntley Court. The Clerk confirmed that she had again reported the issues raised in a recent email. The Clerk also confirmed that she was continuing to arrange a site meeting with the Ward Councillor, Locality Steward, PC Chairman and residents in order to try and put some pressure on Balfour Beatty/Herefordshire Council.

6.4. The Clerk reported that Balfour Beatty had recently been seen repairing some pot holes in Haven Lane and Watery Lane. However, both roads remain in a terrible condition. The Clerk reported that she has again spoken with the Locality Steward, who reassured her that he regularly visits Luntley Court/Tibhall Lane, Watery Lane, Haven Lane and Common Road on his monthly inspection and has repeatedly reported all outstanding issues.

6.5 Footpaths – DW20. The Clerk confirmed that she had recently received an email from a resident to inform the Parish Council that the resident had recently tabled a motion with Herefordshire Council regarding the continued closure of DW20. The response from Herefordshire Council was as follows:

"Thank you for your question. The path in question is Public Right of Way DW20 and is closed due to a need to replace an existing 10m bridge. Bridges of this size do need to be installed by competent and capable contractors and so are not suitable to local delivery.

In line with all our work for maintaining assets on the network we do operate a prioritisation process, with the structure on DW20 currently ranking 42 on our list. That said, it is our intention to make significant progress in terms of the replacements that currently sit on our programme, and have allocated funding to deliver this.

This council does recognise the importance of the Rights of Way network, both in terms of active travel and the impact that the network has on the visitor economy. We have therefore allocated some £450k of additional funding for works this year and aim to focus this spend on the reopening of closed parts of the network. We will work with local groups to empower them to undertake work as well as the more formal supply chain for large bridge replacements and the like. By adopting this approach, we will be able to ensure that the funding is spent to best effect.

I have asked that every effort is made to reopen DW20 as soon as possible for the benefit of all."

Footpath DW21. The Clerk confirmed that she had again spoken with the PRow Officer to point out that it has been nearly two years since this bridge had been reported and closed.

Crispin Abel (PRoW Officer) confirmed that the repairs are logged on the list for actioning but was unable to confirm when this may happen due to financial constraints etc.

The Clerk confirmed that reinstating DW19 had been requested previously. As there has been no apparent action following this request, the Clerk received a second request from a resident to follow up on this. The Clerk confirmed that she has again reported this and spoken directly to the PRoW Officer who has promised to go and walk the footpath. No further information to date.

7. The Crown

7.1 Update for painting the outside of The Crown. The Clerk confirmed that she has attempted to obtain the required three quotes but, despite contractors visiting the premises, they have failed to provide quotes. It was, however, noted that the two quotes received were not 'like for like'. It was therefore agreed to ask Neil Powell if he would like to re-quote – Cllr P Preston to liaise with Mr Powell.

The Clerk confirmed that she has now been informed that The Friends of the Crown will contribute £650 towards the cost of the materials from funds donated from Miss Gwyneth Owen's plant stall (Councillors must acknowledge that this sum may need to be topped up) and also £3100 towards the cost of labour. The Parish Councillors recorded a grateful vote of thanks to The Friends of the Crown for this generous offer and the Clerk will liaise once a quote has been accepted.

7.2 Renewal of Insurance Policy. A Pre-Renewal Quote Questionnaire has been received. It was agreed that there are no major changes to the policy, but the Clerk was asked to liaise with the insurance company with regard to the new boiler being installed and the outbuilding now housing a large fridge. The Clerk to report back to the Council.

7.3. Further to the above insurance renewal item, the Clerk was asked to liaise with The Crown's tenant to confirm that the chimneys have been swept and to request a copy of an up-to-date fire certificate for the files. The Clerk confirmed that she had made a request for the new boiler be serviced but needs to confirm that this has been carried out.

7.4 To discuss the renewal of The Crown Inn tenancy agreement. The Clerk reminded Councillors that Judith Haines from Lloyds Cooper has now retired but the firm has a new partner, Loretta Aston. The Chairman agreed to arrange a convenient date to meet with the tenants to discuss the terms of the new tenancy. However, it was agreed that prior to liaising with solicitors, the Parish Council should seek advice from firms specialising in Contracts/Tenancy Leases etc. Cllr P Preston will make enquiries regarding suitable local firms and report back. Other issues to be discussed in closed session.

7.5 The Clerk explained that she had been approached with regard to the ruling not to allow dogs in The Crown. The Clerk reminded Councillors, that – following the purchase of The Crown by the Parish Council - issues of health and safety associated with the preparation and eating of food and the limited amount of space had been raised.

It was agreed, at that time, whether dogs should or should not be allowed in The Crown should be a decision made by the village and a paper vote was organised. This resulted, by a large majority, in that dogs should not be allowed in The Crown.

After discussion, it was unanimously agreed that ruling should remain in place.

8. Planning – none received to date.

9. Update on Police matters – emailed report: *“There has thankfully only been one incident reported to the police since your last meeting. This was a report of a theft whereby an Amazon parcel was left on the doorstep by the delivery driver and stolen by persons unknown. This appears to be an isolated incident as we have not had any further reports of a similar nature.”*

10. To raise issues for the next meeting of the Parish Council (no discussion).

10.1 Donation towards the community toilet.

11. Date of the next Parish Council meeting – Tuesday 9th April 2024 – 7.30pm.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30pm.

Signed:

Date: