

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WITHINGTON GROUP OF PARISH COUNCILS
HELD AT WITHINGTON VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY, 25th FEBRUARY 2010**

ITEM 1 - APOLOGIES were accepted from: Tom Nellist, Kevin Hewison, Jackie Bremner, Rachel Leake, Steve Scotcher, Jenny Maund and, PC James

Those present were:

Withington	Rob Soutar (Chairman)	Paul Bainbridge (Vice-Chair)	Alison Bainbridge
	Ann Packman	Lucy Moran	
Westhide	Garth Downes	Jim Callow	
Preston Wynne	Sylvia Fletcher	Simon Dent	
Hereford Council	Cllr David Greenow		
Clerk to the Parish	Geoff Studerus		
Members of the Public	CSO Craig Smith +7		

ITEM 2 - DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest. No Councillors had received any gifts linked to their Parish Council work.

ITEM 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST GROUP PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the last Group Parish meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting. After a small amendment, acceptance of the Minutes was proposed by Jim Callow, seconded by Simon Dent, and carried unanimously.

ITEM 4. LOCAL POLICE REPORT

The Chairman then invited CSO Craig Smith to report on local police matters. CSO Smith then advised the meeting on the latest situation regarding crime in the parishes including theft of red diesel, intimidation, criminal damage, domestic problems, and a firearms incident. He asked that local residents should be encouraged to note suspicious incidents, and advised that he or PC James could be contacted at any time.

ITEM 5. WITHINGTON & DISTRICT NEWS

The Chairman invited Mr Bryan Davies to address the meeting. Mr Davies explained the background to the current situation regarding the financial problems of the Withington News, and that his purpose tonight was to ask the Parish Council for financial aid to avoid the magazine not being produced. He presented and explained 5 financial scenarios ranging from a full colour issue to plain black and white. After discussion, it was agreed that the Parishes should help to maintain the production of the magazine, by both organisation of local donations and financial aid from the Parish Council. The Chairman proposed that the Parish Council undertake to support the production costs of the Withington News, if necessary, up to the level of £2,000 per year (initially from current funds; from April 2011 taken into account when deciding the precept). This was seconded by Paul Bainbridge and carried unanimously.

ITEM 6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING

- a. **Parish Plan.** David Packman was asked to report on progress. He addressed the meeting and asked the Parish Council to accept ownership of the Plan, to present the responses from the questionnaires to Herefordshire Council, and to agree to implement the actions necessary to progress the Parish Plan. In response the Chairman indicated that the

list of Objectives and Actions was too long to be discussed at this meeting, and that they required prioritisation by the Steering Group before the Parish Council could accept them as an Action Plan. Jim Callow reminded the Steering Group that he had requested and not yet received a detailed breakdown of the responses that affected each Parish involved. After discussion it was agreed that a special meeting should be held between the Steering Group and representatives of the Parish Council to discuss prioritisation and progress the Action Plan.

b. **Public Open Space.** The Chairman explained progress to date. The Planning Application for the Agricultural Access had been granted. The purchase of the field was still outstanding, although the Section 106 monies (£63,366.15) had been transferred from Herefordshire Council into the Parish Council bank account. It was hoped that the contract would be signed in early March. Applications for grants for the further development of the site had been submitted to “O2 It’s Your Community” (received £550), “Awards for All” (received £9,391), and Playbuilder (indication that application accepted and up to £40,000 yet to be confirmed). The way forward, after land purchased, was to finalise the scheme design and start work on the basics of the field. The Chairman then asked for approval for payment of the Solicitor’s invoice that had been received prior the meeting: £63,538.63 (Final sum to purchase land, Land Registration and Solicitor’s costs). Proposed by Alison Bainbridge, seconded by Lucy Moran, carried unanimously.

c. **Lengthsman Scheme.** The Clerk updated the meeting on the current situation. Acceptance onto the Scheme with effect from 1 April 2010 had been received from Amey Ltd in principle, but not yet in writing. The next stage was to review those individuals who act as Lengthsman for other parishes and select a Lengthsman to act for Withington Group Parishes, ideally before the new financial year commences. The use of someone wanting to set up as Lengthsman was also discussed, and it was agreed to advertise locally as much as possible. After discussion, Paul Bainbridge proposed that the Clerk (as Lengthsman Administrator) be given powers to appoint as necessary. Seconded by Simon Dent and carried unanimously.

d. **Parish Freighter.** The Clerk reminded the meeting that a Freighter had been booked for 6 March 2010, and that this would be the last, due to Herefordshire Council removing the subsidy for this facility.

e. **Parish Website.** The Clerk confirmed that he had decided to produce a website based on the Joomla program, and demonstrated an example site which met with encouragement from the meeting. It was agreed by the meeting that he should further progress this with a view to going “public” with the site as soon as possible. He informed the meeting that the cost would be as follows - £59.00 per year for the space on the webserver, plus £4.95 per year for the web domain name (www.withingtongroupparishes.co.uk) (total £63.95). **Clerk to research means of making sure that all parishes can be accessed using a search engine.** He again encouraged those present to produce items/articles that could be used on the website.

f. **Adoption of Preston Wynne Telephone Kiosk.** The Clerk advised the meeting that this was proceeding.

ITEM 7. CORRESPONDENCE

An Information Sheet had been circulated – there were no comments from the meeting.

ITEM 8. MATTERS FINANCIAL

a. **Balances.** An Information Sheet had been circulated – there were no comments from the meeting. The Clerk advised that the Withington Fields grant recently received from Awards for All (£9,391) and the money from Herefordshire Council (see Item 6b above) should be added to the balance of the Current Account. The new balance of £80,440.53 will very quickly diminish when the Solicitors invoice (see Item 6b above) is paid.

b. **Payments to be agreed:**

Clerk's Salary & Expenses	(£796.88 + £29.78)	£ 826.66
Zurich Municipal (Insurance)		£ 391.23
Mazars (External Audit)		£ 155.25
Withington Village Hall (Room Hire)		£ 122.00
Carver Jones (Solicitors)		£ 7,000.00

It was proposed by Ann Packman, seconded by Sylvia Fetcher, that these payments be approved, carried unanimously.

c. **Repayment of VAT.** The Clerk advised the meeting that a repayment of VAT amounting to £237.56 had been received from HM Revenue and Customs.

d. **Requests for aid from the Parish Council:** None had been received.

ITEM 9. PLANNING

An Information Sheet had been circulated.

a. **Local Development Framework (LDF).** The Chairman reminded the meeting that Herefordshire Council would hold a meeting in Withington Village Hall on 4 March to explain the Shaping of Herefordshire, along with the Local Travel Plan and the Edgar Street Grid development. Paul Bainbridge explained to the meeting that a Local Development Framework document had been received, and the implications raised by that paper for the Withington Group Parishes. His findings were discussed and agreed by the meeting, and Paul was given the authority to respond to the document on behalf of the Parish Council.

b. **Development by the Whitestone Chapel.** Both the Chairman and Paul Bainbridge outlined the implications of the proposed housing development in between the end of Springfield Road and Whitestone Chapel. They reminded the meeting that this had already been included in the plan for housing and was an outline application at this stage.

c. **Poultry Farm Application.** The Chairman and Paul Bainbridge advised the meeting that an application to extend the building of the Poultry Farm at Thinghill Grange had been received too late to be included in the general Information Sheet. There was no objection to the proposal.

ITEM 10. PACT INFORMATION. Ann Packman identified various items that had been raised at the latest PACT meeting, including:

a. Dog fouling signs were being distributed. The Clerk confirmed that he had not seen anything in writing. Parish Councils are able to apply for Dog Control Area or Dogs Banned Area signs – Withington Fields to take note of this. Parish Councils will have to pay for signs. Drink Free signs also available.

- b. Amey Ltd are willing to replace road signs. The Clerk reminded the meeting that signs within Withington had been discussed with the previous Highways Department over a year ago, with no progress made to date. **Ann will take this up at the next PACT meeting.**
- c. Amey Ltd were to produce a monthly Parish Initiative report for Parish Clerks.
- d. Amey Ltd would also advise Parish Clerks when the road sweeper would be in their parishes.

ITEM 11. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. **Review of the impact of the recent winter weather and the response to it.** The Chairman reported that the Parish had been asked to comment on the impact of Herefordshire Council’s attempt to keep the roads open during the January spell of winter weather. The comments of the meeting were divided depending on where Councillors were living – Withington had fared better than Westhide or Preston Wynne. Various points had already been submitted. A request for Withies Road to be gritted instead of/together with the road past Orchard House/Southbank. A detour by the gritting vehicle to enable the road from the War Memorial to the School to be covered. The need for additional grit boxes in Preston Wynne and Dodmarsh. The Chairman undertook to reply to Herefordshire Council on behalf of the Parish Council.
- b. **“Evening with Amey”.** The Clerk explained that he and Ann Packman had attended an information evening in November, and that they had both been impressed with the new procedures that Amey were intending to use to better manage their responsibilities. Time would tell whether they were able to achieve an improvement. The system of Parish Walks was explained as being “problem specific” – if a problem had not been dealt with sufficiently, the Parish Council could ask for an Amey representative to attend an on-site meeting with Councillors to discuss the way forward.
- c. **Problems with mud on the roads.** Sylvia Fletcher raised the matter of mud being deposited on the roads by vehicles moving from the fields to the road, and asked for guidance on who was responsible for cleaning the roads. The Chairman explained that it was the responsibility of the person who put it there. **The Clerk undertook to provide Sylvia with the legal situation.**
- d. **Rubbish and Recycling System at Christmas.** The Chairman reiterated the problems that were experienced regarding the collection of waste material during a 6-week period covering the Christmas period. He stated that Councillor Greenow had already taken the appropriate Council official to task. Unfortunately it was too late to alter Council plans but, hopefully, this will not happen again.

ITEM 12. DATE FOR NEXT MEETING: Thursday, 13th May 2010.

Reminders:	12 Aug 10
	11 Nov 10
Added date:	25 Feb 11

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.55 pm.

Signed: (13 May 2010)
Chairman