

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WITHINGTON GROUP OF PARISH COUNCILS
HELD AT WITHINGTON VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY, 12TH JANUARY 2012**

ITEM 1 - APOLOGIES were accepted from: Cllr Dave Greenow, Tom Nellist, Colin Stone-Fewings, Steve Scotcher, Simon Dent.

Those present were:

Withington	Paul Bainbridge (Chairman)	Rob Soutar	Alison Bainbridge
	Kevin Hewison	Wallace Brown	
Westhide	Jim Callow	Ralph Barber	
Preston Wynne	Sylvia Fletcher		
Clerk to the Parish	Geoff Studerus		
Community-Led Plan	Steve Caine		
Others	PC Neil James	Members of the Public	3

ITEM 2 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST No Councillors declared any interests or gifts linked to their Parish Council work.

ITEM 3 - MINUTES OF THE LAST GROUP PARISH MEETING Minutes of the Group Parish meeting held on 17 November had been previously circulated. The Chair advised the meeting that a decision made during discussion on Item 10b (not to go "into committee") had not been recorded. He recommended that the minutes be accepted, subject to this amendment - carried unanimously. (Subsequently amended by the Clerk and shown in []).

ITEM 4 - PUBLIC QUESTIONS

a. ***Provision of Bus Stop Shelters.*** The Chairman advised the meeting that a member of the public had raised the question of the provision of a bus shelter at the Withies Close bus stop. In discussion this bus stop was identified as being the main pick-up point for travelling into Hereford and attracted a reasonable number of waiting residents. Rob Soutar spoke in support of this request and stated that he was aware of an individual who might be willing to sponsor such a project. PC Neil James identified that the parishes of Sutton St Nicolas and Tarrington were also involved with such procurement and might have helpful information. The Chairman proposed agreement in principle, and held over until more detail could be obtained (by the Clerk), on availability, sources and permissions required, and (by Rob Soutar) possible funding by donation - agreed unanimously.

ITEM 5 - LOCAL POLICE REPORT PC Neil James addressed the meeting but had little to report at this time.

ITEM 6 - MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING

a. ***Use of Community Offenders to Litter Pick.*** Rob Soutar advised the meeting that he had been in contact with the Probation Services (PS). A date for a working party to clear the Coppice was to be agreed, but the PS had also identified that a skip would be required for rubbish collection. Prior to the meeting the Clerk had been asked to research the availability and cost of skips and, as a result, Rob Soutar proposed (seconded by Paul Bainbridge) that an 8-cubic yard skip be hired from Wye Valley Skips at a cost of £170 plus VAT and placed at the Veldo Lane entrance to the coppice. Carried unanimously. The Chairman advised that the permission of the land owners would be required before the skip was delivered. Further discussion identified that the problem of litter on Withington Fields was now taken care of, and that the Probation Services would only be required to clear the coppice.

b. ***Ecohere.*** The Chairman advised the meeting that the Community-Led Plan (CLP) Group had considered whether the benefits of Ecohere would enhance any of the items identified by parishioners in the previous CLP survey, and currently being addressed by the CLP. The consensus was that no enhancement could be expected. During discussion the Parish Council concurred with this opinion, and the Chairman proposed that the Ecohere representatives should be advised that this project was not considered suitable for Withington at this time, and that it should not be pursued further – agreed unanimously. **The Clerk was asked to convey the decision.**

ITEM 7 - PARISH CLERK The Chairman advised the meeting that HALC had been tasked with the advertising of the vacancy and administration of any applicants. The meeting was advised that the use of HALC would cost £200.00 for the administration and £20.00 for the vacancy to be included on the HALC website. Rob Soutar proposed that this cost be approved, seconded by Alison Bainbridge and agreed unanimously. It was intended that the target date for application should be 24th February 2012, and interviews should take place during the week commencing 5th March 2012, with a view to the individual considered suitable being approved by the Council at the March meeting, and a starting date of 1st April 2012. HALC adverts would also be placed on Village notice boards and a notice would also be placed in the next issue of the Withington News.

ITEM 8 - PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY The Chairman advised the meeting that the formal advertising process had now been completed and the vacancy could now be filled by co-option. He asked Parish Councillors to contact anyone they felt may be interested in serving the community and encourage them to apply. Steve Caine was proposed by Rob Soutar and seconded by Kevin Hewison. On being asked if he wished to take up the position, Steve preferred to take time to consider it.

ITEM 9 - COMMUNITY-LED PARISH PLAN The Chairman of the CLP Group had nothing further to report at this time.

- a. ***Neighbourhood Plan Meeting.*** The Meeting was advised that HALC had arranged a Neighbourhood Plan Meeting on 8 February 2012 which the Chairman and Ralph Barber would attend.

ITEM 10 - WITHINGTON FIELDS (WF)

- a. ***Management Committee Report.*** Rob Soutar advised the meeting that a working party was to be held on Saturday 14th January to tidy up and make repairs as necessary. Any help would be most welcome.

He also advised that research into Multi-Unit Games Areas (MUGA) was progressing. 4 quotations had been obtained with the lowest being in the region of £45,000 plus VAT, further research was in hand. He also reported that the Management Committee felt that, in addition to this cost, some lighting was required so that the area could be used during winter evenings – it was envisaged that such lighting would be no brighter than the normal street lighting but that to ensure residents were not inconvenienced some screen planting may be required. Also he recommended that a public “Open” meeting be held to make residents aware of what was being proposed. This was agreed unanimously.

Kevin Hewison advised that a previous intention to consider the provision of changing rooms beside the Village Hall had now been discounted as it raised problems with supervision whilst being used. Consequently this raised the question of an equipment storage facility for the use of the Football Club. Rob Soutar also stated that it was intended that, in line with the results of the Community-Led Plan Survey, to provide a tennis court with the MUGA area, which gave rise to a need for storage for tennis equipment. An extension to the Village Hall was now being considered purely to provide a storage facility. The Chairman recommended that the Village Hall continue to research the provision of an extension so that costings can be taken into consideration when funds are being allocated to the MUGA.

Field in Trust (FIT). The Chairman advised that the status of “Field in Trust” was progressing. As part of this process Angela Lewis, the West Midland Area Manager for FIT, had been to visit the site (with Rob Soutar and the Clerk in attendance) and had been delighted with the project. The next step was for a Deed of Dedication to be raised by FIT for signature by the Parish Council.

- b. ***Sale of Land for Development.*** The Chairman informed the meeting that nothing more had been heard from the Council’s solicitor over the Festive Period, and **the Clerk was asked to hasten this matter.**

ITEM 11 - CORRESPONDENCE (as per Information sheet attached). The Chairman and Clerk explained the detail of several items of correspondence, and the **Clerk undertook to provide Rob Soutar with information received regarding the Safety Inspection of Recreational Sites.** There were no other comments.

ITEM 12 - MATTERS FINANCIAL

- a. ***Balances*** (as per Information sheet attached). There were no comments on the balances provided.

- b. ***Payments to be agreed:***

Clerk’s Salary & Expenses	(£569.67 + £0.00)	£	569.67
Quarterly PAYE		£	213.63
Richard Morgan (Lengthsman – Withies Road signs)	<i>(already paid)</i>	£	55.95
Zurich Insurance (Annual Premium)	<i>(already paid)</i>	£	582.99
Canal Trust (Annual Membership payment)		£	25.00
Website Domain (2-yearly registration fee)		£	11.88

Rob Soutar proposed, seconded by Alison Bainbridge, that these payments be agreed – carried unanimously.

- c. ***Assets – Laptop write-off.*** The Chairman advised the meeting that the laptop computer purchased 4 years ago had now depreciated to a very low value (£29.81) and proposed that this now be written-off. Rob Soutar seconded this proposal, which was carried unanimously. The Chairman then proposed (seconded by Rob Soutar) that ownership of the laptop be transferred to the departing Clerk, agreed unanimously. (After the meeting the Clerk proposed that it would be more appropriate if he purchased the laptop for the depreciated value (£30.00), this was accepted by the Chairman.)

d. **Review of Financial Standing Orders.** The Chairman advised the meeting that it was felt that figures quoted in the Financial Standing Orders (regarding limits for which tenders/quotations should be obtained) were incompatible and proposed that they be changed to reflect a more realistic situation. During discussion the appropriate figures could not be agreed. Wallace Brown proposed, seconded by Paul Bainbridge, that this item be deferred until **the Chairman had had an opportunity to discuss the matter with HALC.** Agreed unanimously.

ITEM 13 - PLANNING There were no comments on the items listed on the previously circulated Information Sheet. However, Rob Soutar commented on the number of caravans on the site on the Bromyard Road (A465) (between the Cross Keys Inn and the turning to Sutton St Nicholas). He expressed concern that they were exceeding the number of vans for which they had received permission, and asked **the Chairman to review the permission previously granted.**

ITEM 14 - TRAFFIC SPEED MONITORING David Packman was asked for progress on the SID. He advised that it had been in place for one month to monitor traffic (in one direction only – towards the A4103) and had now been removed. The data provided had been compared with that previously obtained and indicated that there had been a significant reduction in the numbers of vehicles exceeding the speed limit. After discussion it was agreed that its use had been worthwhile. David advised that it would be ideal if it could be returned for a second month, but pointing in the reverse direction. To this end, he had ascertained that it would be available again in April and had booked that month in anticipation of the agreement of the Parish Council. This would incur a cost of £100.00 plus VAT – the agreement to this booking and cost was proposed by Rob Soutar, seconded by Kevin Hewison, and carried unanimously. Rob Soutar proposed a vote of thanks to David for his work on this project, agreed unanimously.

ITEM 15 - SUPPORT FOR YOUTH CLUB The Chairman advised that Steve Caine had requested the Parish Council's financial support for the fledgling Youth Club. He asked Steve to comment further. Steve explained that, in his dealings with the attempt to set up a Youth Club, it had become clear that there was an urgent need for adult helpers – without them the Club could not move forward. To obtain the necessary level of expertise it would be necessary for a Youth Worker to be employed at a cost of up to approximately £2,800.00 for the next year (2012/2013). After discussion Rob Soutar proposed that £2,000.00 be committed from March 2012 to pay for a Youth Worker - this was seconded by Wallace Brown and carried unanimously.

ITEM 16 - COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY GRANT The Chairman informed the meeting that the Withington Hall Management Committee had an opportunity to apply for a Community Technology Grant (up to £2,000.00) with which to purchase and install in the Hall a digital projector and screen for the use of the community. He asked Kevin Hewison to comment. Kevin explained that to obtain the Grant the Hall Committee would have to provide 20% of the cost (up to £400.00). The Management Committee were asking the Parish Council to consider helping the Hall pay the 20% on the basis of an equal division of costs. During discussion the Chairman reminded that money had been identified in the 2012/2013 budget for this equipment for the use of the Planning Group. Therefore, as the equipment would also be of benefit to the Parish Council and would produce a saving for the Parish Council, the Chairman proposed that the Hall Management Committee's request be agreed (up to a maximum of £200.00). This was seconded by Sylvia Fletcher, and carried unanimously. Kevin Hewison thanked the meeting on behalf of the Hall Committee, and reminded **the Clerk that a letter confirming the Council's support was needed to accompany the Hall's application.**

ITEM 17 - WINTER WEATHER In Simon's absence, the Clerk explained that there had been further developments in the provision of a salt/grit supply for the parishes to use on a self-help basis. Research in insurance aspects had shown that the self-help system was fraught with difficulties – i.e. the need to (a) formally train those who might spread the salt, (b) provide protective clothing, (c) formulate a "spread plan", (d) keep to the plan and (e) keep records of spreading. In the light of this it was intended to "extend" the already provided County Council system of grit bins, by placing appropriate extra containers at vulnerable points (previously identified) on non-gritted roads in Preston Wynne and Westhild, and ask the storage volunteers to refill these containers as and when necessary. After discussion the meeting decided that the purchase of suitable bins (at a cost of up to £1,000.00) was not viable at this time, and **asked the Clerk to request Simon to research the local farming community to see if suitable containers were available.** The Clerk was also asked to approach Amey to obtain their reaction to the placing of extra bins beside the road.

ITEM 18 - WITHINGTON SIGNS

- a. **Lock Road.** As Rachel Leake was not present, this item was deferred until the next meeting.
- b. **Withies Close.** The Chairman advised the meeting that the defacement of the Withies Close sign had previously been thought to have been caused by vandals painting over the letters. It was now known that the lettering had been peeled away. A second sign had been provided by Amey which was expected to be vandal-proof – within a few days this was again defaced by peeling away the lettering. Amey had apologised for the incorrect construction of the sign and had removed it with the intention of replacing it with a vandal-proof sign. They had also undertaken to withhold any invoice until the Parish were satisfied with the end product.

ITEM 19 - PROVISION OF REPLACEMENT FLAG(S) The Chairman reported that the Parish Union Jack had been flown for some six months and had now become frayed and was in need of replacement. Research by the Clerk had identified that Union Jacks were available on the internet for as little as £6.00 per flag. The Chairman stated that favourable comment had been received about the flagpole and the flying of the Union Jack, and recommended that it was time to hold a stock of flags so that replacement could be carried out as and when necessary with little delay. He proposed that the Clerk be authorised to purchase 5 Union Jacks, at a cost of up to £30.00 plus VAT. This was seconded by Rob Soutar and carried unanimously.

ITEM 20 - THE STALLANGE – HEIGHT/WIDTH RESTRICTION The Clerk reported that Amey had been asked to comment on this problem but that no reply had yet been received.

A member of the public was given permission by the Chairman to raise three points.

He made the meeting aware that the West Lydiatt telephone line was still lying draped over the hedge along the western side of Withington Fields. It was left in this state for some time by British Telecon Open Reach (BTOR) following the repair of a fault, and was the constant cause of communication failure when the hedge was cut. He was reminded that in April/May 2011 the Parish Council had investigated and previously tried to engage BTOR in discussions about this, but BTOR had refused to discuss the matter as the Parish Council did not have a telephone account. They did, however, offer to send out a surveyor if the Parish Council were prepared to pay for the privilege. As the problem was caused by BT in the first place, the Council declined the offer. On 4th May 2011 the Clerk delivered a note to all West Lydiatt residents advised them of the situation and stating that they should make a group complaint to BTOR as the Parish Council was unable to progress this further. However, the member of the public was advised that BT engineers had been on site recently.

He next asked if more could be done to ensure that residents walking their dogs could clear up after them. He was advised that this was a matter for the education of the public. Sufficient receptacles had been provided and notices had also been displayed.

He then asked if the remaining trunk of the central oak tree could be taken down and replaced with more quickly growing trees. Rob Soutar explained that tree planting was planned and that this would be taken into account.

ITEM 21 - DATE FOR NEXT MEETING The Chairman asked that the following dates be changed – 15th March to 8th March, and 12th July to 5th July. There were no objections.

Thursday, 8th March 2012 (7.30 pm start)

Future dates:	17th May 2012	(7.00 pm start)
	5 th July 2012	(7.30 pm start)
	20th September 2012	(7.30 pm start)
	15th November 2012	(7.30 pm start)
Added Date:	17th January 2013	(7.30 pm start)

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting was closed at 9.07 pm.

..... (Chairman) 8 March 2012