

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WITHINGTON GROUP OF PARISH COUNCILS  
HELD AT WITHINGTON VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2011**

The Chairman opened the meeting by introducing Rebecca Semple, a Sustainable Community Development Officer from Community First, who was to address the Parish Council regarding the Ecohere project.

Rebecca explained that Ecohere was a joint project between the Bulmer Foundation and Community First, which would be based on a Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) produced by a Parish Council Steering Group supported by Community First. She stated that the SAP would be an extension of the Community-Led Parish Plan and left examples of such a Plan with the Clerk for later distribution and discussion. After discussion it was stated that, together with the Community-Led Plan and the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan, too many requests upon the public could cause confusion. Consequently the consensus was that, once Councillors and the members of the Community-Led Plan Group had had an opportunity to review the paperwork left by Rebecca, Ecohere should be discussed at the next Parish Council Meeting (January 2012). Rebecca acknowledged the need to take time to review the process, and offered to return to discuss the way forward.

The Chair thanked Rebecca for attending and giving the benefit of her advice.

He then opened the formal Parish Council Meeting.

**ITEM 1 - APOLOGIES** were accepted from: Rob Soutar, Jim Callow, Shelly Ford.

Those present were:

Withington	Paul Bainbridge (Chairman)	Alison Bainbridge	Wallace Brown
	Tom Nellist	Colin Stone-Fewings	Rachel Leake
	Lynne Dodds	Kevin Hewison	Jackie Bremner
Westhild	Steve Scotcher	Ralph Barber	
Preston Wynne	Sylvia Fletcher	Simon Dent	
Clerk to the Parish	Geoff Studerus		
Community-Led Plan	Steve Caine		
Others	PC Neil James	Members of the Public	2

**ITEM 2 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** Colin Stone-Fewings declared an interest in Item 10b. No other 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 15 September had been previously circulated. Acceptance of these Minutes was proposed by Colin Stone-Fewings, seconded by Lynne Dodds, and carried unanimously.

**ITEM 4 – PUBLIC QUESTIONS** There were no questions from members of the public.

**ITEM 5 – LOCAL POLICE REPORT** The Chairman welcomed PC Neil James, who then addressed the meeting on local issues since the last meeting, which included burglary, anti-social behaviour, theft of scrap metal and farm vehicles, and even bicycles being taken in broad daylight. He encouraged the public to be aware of what was happening in their area and to safeguard valuable items. The meeting was reminded of the new telephone number to be used to report “incidents” (not emergencies) – 101.

**ITEM 6 – MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING**

- a. ***Use of Community Offenders to litter pick in Withington.*** The Clerk advised the meeting that there had been no further contact from the Probation Service (PS) and he intended to follow up the initial discussions. (Following the meeting contact was made and agreement was reached that the PS would contact Rob Soutar to progress the work required to be done.

**ITEM 7 – RESIGNATION OF PARISH CLERK** The Chairman referred to the previously circulated decision by the Parish Clerk to resign with effect from the 1st April 2012 (resulting from an intended relocation later in 2012). As a result the Chair was currently in negotiations with HALC as to the procedure to be used for appointing a new Clerk. However, to facilitate the change over there were 2 aspects of the Clerk’s duties that could be undertaken by any member of the Council – Administrator of the Parish Website, and Lengthsman Administrator. Ralph Barber had already agreed to take over the running of the Website. No volunteer was forthcoming to administer the Lengthsman. It was to be hoped that the new Clerk would take on this duty. Kevin Hewison proposed, seconded by Simon Dent, that **an Interview Panel consisting of 3 Parish Councillors (the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Ralph Barber) be given the authority to select and appoint a replacement Clerk** – carried unanimously.

**ITEM 8 – PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY**

The Chairman advised the meeting that he had received a letter of resignation from Jackie Bremner, due to her relocation on change of employment. After acknowledging her efforts with regard to the Cross Keys Flood Group and the Community Led Parish Plan, he thanked her for her service to the community. **The Clerk was asked to make arrangements for the vacancy to be advertised.**

**ITEM 9 – COMMUNITY LED PARISH PLAN (CLP)**

- a. **Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.** Steve Caine reported that there was to be a meeting of the CLP Group at the end of November at which this topic would be discussed. David Packman confirmed that, to date, there had been no interest shown in moving this topic forward.

**ITEM 10 – WITHINGTON FIELDS (WF)**

- a. **Management Advisory Group (MAG) Report.** In Rob Soutar's absence, the Chairman read a previously prepared report to the meeting. In particular, the MAG recommended that a set of permanently-sited goal posts should be purchased for the 9x9 football pitch, at an estimated cost of £850-£900. The Chairman proposed, seconded by Kevin Hewison, that the MAG be authorised to purchase said goal posts to the value of up to £900 (including VAT), carried unanimously.

- b. **Sale of Land for Development.** Having declared an interest, Colin Stone-Fewings left the room. The Chairman advised the meeting that a purchase offer had been received. He confirmed that the amount offered was a good one and, in his opinion, was as good as could be expected – although, because the value of the offer was considered to be confidential at this stage, he preferred to keep such information in confidence. He then asked if any Councillor wished to go into committee to discuss the detail of the offer – no one wanted to go into committee. After further discussion, the Chairman proposed that the Parish Council give the Chairman and Vice-Chairman the authority to accept the offer (subject to contract), agree details of sale and sign contracts. This was seconded by Kevin Hewison, and agreed unanimously. Colin Stone-Fewings rejoined the meeting.

The Chairman also made the meeting aware that, to mark Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee, application to record WF as a "Queen Elizabeth II Field in Trust (FIT)" had now been made and that confirmation of this status had been received. FIT permanently safeguards outdoor recreational spaces in perpetuity via a Deed of Dedication.

**ITEM 11 – CORRESPONDENCE** There were no questions relating to the previously circulated list of correspondence.

As a result of correspondence regarding the celebrations for the Diamond Jubilee, the Chairman made the meeting aware that the lighting of beacons across the country was planned, and that the registration of a beacon was required – the Clerk held the appropriate application form. After discussion, it was suggested that the "Withington Weekend" Group may wish to consider organising a community project (for which grants are available), and that the Thingehill area was perhaps the only reasonable place for a beacon – **this was to be checked by Jackie Bremner.** It was also suggested that the Withington Fields Management Group should consider approaching the Woodland Trust with a view to planting trees on the Field as a means of marking the Jubilee.

**ITEM 12 – MATTERS FINANCIAL**

- a. **Balances.** Details of current balances for the Parish Bank Accounts had been circulated and were accepted by the meeting.

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

Clerk's Salary & Expenses	(£569.67 + £39.08)	£	608.75
Herefordshire County Council (Election)	(already paid)	£	186.16
Mazars (External Audit)	(already paid)	£	480.00
Zurich Insurance (In-Year increase)	(already paid)	£	83.29
Quarterly PAYE	(already paid)	£	213.63
Countrywide Ground Services (Aug 11)	(already paid)	£	193.20
Countrywide Ground Services (Sep 11)	(already paid)	£	193.20
Countrywide Ground Services (Oct 11)	(already paid)	£	193.20

Acceptance of these figures was proposed by Kevin Hewison, seconded by Alison Bainbridge, and carried unanimously.

c. **Payments already agreed and paid:**

Sign of the Times (Withies Road)	£ 201.12
Plastic Omnium (Litter Bins)	£ 216.00
RMB Hydroseeding (Withington Fields)	£ 1,110.00
Easylawn Topsoil (Withington Fields)	£ 360.00
P Bainbridge (Refund of S106 Agreement Fee)	£ 200.00

d. **Receipts since last meeting:**

Precept	£ 7,500.00
HMRC - VAT Refund	£ 9,904.89
HMRC - VAT Refund	£ 2,073.57

e. **Budget and Precept for Fiscal Year 2012/2013.** The Budget for 2012/2013 had been previously circulated and, after discussion, acceptance was proposed by Tom Nellist, seconded by Lynne Dodds and carried unanimously.

f. **Parish Council Insurance.** The Clerk made the meeting aware that the Parish Council insurers (Zurich Municipal) had been contacted earlier in the year in order to review the Parish Insurance in the light of the increased risk with Withington Fields. This had resulted in an increase in annual premium (as shown in the budget for 2012/2013). However, Zurich Municipal had also extended an offer of a "long term" agreement of 3 or 5 years to the Council. The acceptance of such an agreement would mean that premiums would be maintained at a lower level for whichever period was selected – the longer the period the lower the premium. After discussion, Kevin Hewison proposed that the Clerk be given authority to arrange a long term agreement for 5 years, seconded by Colin Stone-Fewings and carried unanimously.

The Clerk also advised the meeting that the Policy also gave cover to the volunteers who organised the Withington Football Club, together with the Parish Councillors and other Volunteers working on behalf of the Parish Council.

g. **Application for Grant – Herefordshire CAB.** The Chairman made the meeting aware that an request for financial aid had been received from Herefordshire Citizens Advice Bureau. After discussion, the Chairman proposed that £100.00 be donated, seconded by Sylvia Fletcher and carried unanimously.

**ITEM 13 – PLANNING** There were no questions relating to the previously circulated list of planning applications.

a. **Planning Policy Document (HALC).** The Chairman reminded the meeting that HALC had produced a recommended Policy Document for Parish Council outlining the process for review of Planning Applications (previously circulated). After discussion, he proposed that this document now be formally adopted and included in the Parish Council's Standing Orders. This was seconded by Colin Stone-Fewings and carried unanimously.

b. **Membership of Planning Group.** The Chairman advised the meeting that, because this Group had experienced difficulty in forming a quorum, he proposed that an addition member should be added. Simon Dent volunteered to be included in the Group Membership.

c. **Neighbourhood Plans (NP).** The Chairman referred to the correspondence previously circulated which outlined the NP process and, after discussion, suggested that the NP should be looked at in detail when the Community Led Plan is reviewed in 12-18 months time. Steve Scotcher asked if it was considered safe to delay for that time. The Chairman identified that, although exceptions to the UDP are made, this is gradually being replaced by the LDF (which is due to start in 2013). HALC's recommendation was that Parishes should wait for more detail. This was supported by Cllr Dave Greenow, and accepted unanimously by the meeting.

**ITEM 14 – CONSULTATIONS**

a. **LDF Core Strategy.** The Chairman informed the meeting that he had reviewed the papers and considered that, at this, time there was no need for any comment from the Parish Council. However, he reminded the meeting that individual comments from members could still be made.

**ITEM 15 – TRAFFIC SPEED MONITORING** The Chairman advised the meeting that the position for the SID had been agreed and that it was expected to be in place in December.

He also advised that Amey had been approached regarding the need for traffic calming measures in the Withies Road area stretching from Withies Close to Springfield Road. After discussion, it was agreed Amey should be advised that such measures should also cover the public access point from Withies Road through the hedge – **the Clerk to progress.**

**ITEM 16 – NOMINATION ONTO SOUTH AREA MEETINGS AND HEREFORDSHIRE ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.**

The Chairman explained that he had been elected as the Parish Council's representative on the HALC Executive Committee and at South Area Meetings (SAM). He outlined several HALC-generated issues that had been raised at the SAM meeting – ie People Proof Budgets (this required preparation for future budgets to begin as early as June, and allows for the involvement of parishioners at public meetings in deciding the budget – to be put into effect for 2012/2013), and Local Government Boundaries. The Clerk made the meeting aware that the access codes for the HALC Website are available for the use of Parish Councillors.

**ITEM 17 – BROADBAND CHAMPION** The Chairman advised the meeting that Simon Dent had taken up the position of Broadband Champion on behalf of the Parish Council. Simon encouraged the meeting to complete and return the questionnaire that was been circulated to all homes by Herefordshire Council, and to attend the meeting to be held in Withington Village Hall on 2 December. He was made aware that Westhild had not received any questionnaires, although these could be completed on-line. Kevin Hewison raised the point that Withington PCC had already contacted AllPay with a view to St Peter's Church spire being used as a base for a broadband transmitter/receiver. The Chairman asked Simon to report on progress at the next meeting.

**ITEM 18 – WINTER WEATHER** Simon Dent advised the meeting that agreement had been reached to position 10 x 1 tonne bags of salt/grit at Preston Wynne for distribution around the Parish for the use of parishioners. It is hoped that Preston Wynne would be the main supply point with some bags being positioned with Rachel Leake, Paul Hawkins and Tim Hinton.

**ITEM 19 – WITHINGTON SIGNS**

- a. **Lock Road.** In Rachel Leake's absence the Chairman proposed that this item be delayed until the next meeting.
- b. **Withies Close Sign – Defacement.** The Chairman advised the meeting that subsequent more detailed inspection of the "Traffic Calming" sign at the entrance to Withies Close determined that the letters had been peeled away from the backing plate, and proposed that the Clerk should arrange for the sign to be replaced. The Clerk informed the meeting that Amey had already been approached for a quotation and had confirmed that a sign (which was digitally printed to avoid the removal of lettering) would cost £53.48. The Chairman proposed that this sum be approved and that the Clerk should make arrangements for a replacement sign to be provided. Seconded by Kevin Hewison and carried unanimously.

**ITEM 20 – REPORT ON MEETINGS ATTENDED**

- a. **Locality Working (20 September).** The Chairman advised the meeting that he and the Clerk had attended and that the issues raised had already been covered under previous items.
- b. **Key Briefings for Chair and Clerk (28 September).** The Chairman advised the meeting that he and the Clerk had attended and that the issues raised had already been covered under previous items.

**ITEM 21 – THE STALLANGE – TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS** Lynne Dodds advised the meeting that recently a high vehicle had turned off the A465 into The Stallange and cut through the telephone cables. This was not the first time that this had happened, with the result that houses and business were left without telephone or broadband communications. She asked if it was possible to arrange for some warning signs to be erected in the entrance to The Stallange from the A465, to advise of the restrictions of height, width and possibly weight. **The Clerk was asked to put this to Amey and report back at the next meeting.**

On an information basis, Cllr Dave Greenow asked that people be encouraged to engage with Herefordshire Council through the media of the Hereford Times. Also that he would be chairing a Rural Affairs Committee which was being set up in January 2012.

**ITEM 22 – DATE FOR NEXT MEETING:** Thursday, 12th January 2012 (7.30 pm start)

Future dates:	15th March 2012	(7.30 pm start)
	17th May 2012	(7.00 pm start)
	12th July 2012	(7.30 pm start)
	20th September 2012	(7.30 pm start)
<b>Added Date:</b>	<b>15th November 2012</b>	<b>(7.30 pm start)</b>

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.44 pm.

..... (Chairman) 12 January 2012