

BISHOPSTONE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
held on Wednesday 26th March 2025 at 7.00p.m.
in Stretton Sugwas Village Hall
Web site address: bishopstonegroupipc-herefordshire.co.uk

PRESENT: Cllr S. Crump (Chairman) Cllr M Holmes; Cllr H Birch; Cllr C Draper; Cllr. R Morgan; Cllr. L Handscomb and Cllr D Hadley.

ALSO PRESENT:

Mrs Lesley Hay (Parish Clerk); Ward Cllr David Hitchiner. One member of the public.

Chairman welcomed those present to the March meeting.

1. Apologies for absence. Cllr S Keefe; Cllr C Taylor and Cllr A Russell.

2. To receive declarations of interest or written requests for dispensations. None declared.

3. To approve and sign the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 8th January 2025 (circulated). 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. Chairman's Report

As requested, I wrote a thank you letter to Lewis Goldwater to thank him for his invaluable contributions to our Parish Council during his service as Cllr.

I attended the first Herefordshire Flood Group online meeting which was held via Teams. It was very well attended, and it was good to see that this massive problem is now being discussed at length and hopefully we will all soon see some action! The second online meeting was held last evening which, due to school commitments, I was unable to attend but Cllr Taylor will provide a synopsis of the meeting for our records.

There is a lot going on within our group with repairs, discussions, nature and planning. Many thanks to everyone who has played a part in these and for getting the wheels in motion to get things done. Thank you as always to Lesley for her hard work and it is lovely to see her back on the team!

4.1 Future Co-option of Parish Councillors. Following the resignation of Cllr John Macklin and Cllr. Lewis Goldwater the Clerk confirmed that, as the required time scale advertising the vacant posts had now been met with no call for an election declared, the Parish Council are now in a position to co-opt a Parish Councillor representing Bishopstone and Mansell Gamage.

The Clerk confirmed that a resident from Mansell Gamage had shown interest in becoming a Parish Councillor representing Mansell Gamage and she had emailed information with an invitation to attend a meeting.

Lewis Goldwater has very kindly offered to continue with the litter picking within the Mansell Gamage area and the Clerk was able to confirm that he would be covered by the Parish Council's insurance as a volunteer.

5. Ward Councillor David Hitchiner's Report

I will begin again by mentioning two issues of county wide importance.

Planning reforms:

As I have explained previously the Government has set mandatory housing targets for councils across England. Targets are no longer advisory, and this level of growth must be accommodated. The new target figure is 27,260 homes over a twenty-year plan period compared to the previous 16,100.

A new Local Plan must show a way that this number can be delivered. Failure to do so will result in rejection of the plan and possible intervention by Central Govt.

A new Plan is to be developed with the same consultation process as before so you will have the opportunity to input on where housing should be located. If Hereford takes 10,000 the County could achieve this figure, but the consultation process needs to be completed and building this number of houses shown to be achievable. 10,000 in one block seems to be a minimum figure which will release additional government infrastructure funding.

There have been two briefings for Parish Councillors on this subject. I hope that some of you have been able to attend.

Devolution:

Less progress on this than might have been expected.

There are difficulties in the way.

First Shropshire Council and Worcestershire Council have each had to go cap in hand to Central Government due to their financial difficulties. £26.9m and £33.6m respectively.

Second for Worcestershire and Gloucestershire they must each go through a reorganisation absorbing District Councils. They will not be easy. But until this has happened in my view devolution will not take place locally.

Local Parish Matters:

Stoney St Planning Application

The inspector decided that the proceedings had not been served properly so was not able to make determination on all the issues. Written reasons were provided at the end of last week. The council are considering how to respond.

Flooding on Bridge Sollers Road - being dealt with this week.

Drainage

Byford - Church Road dealt with.

Meeting taking place about Mansell Gamage – see item 7.

I visited Shetton Barns a few weeks ago and am in communication with the drainage people at BBLP.

Yazor Brook - some work carried out at the Flood Alleviation Scheme in Credenhill.

Planning - 242840 Land At Bishon Farm, Bishopstone, Herefordshire, HR4 7JE Proposed erection of 8 No. dwellings, creation of a community orchard, a private orchard, and associated access, drainage, and landscaping works.

Cllr Charlie Taylor and I had a meeting with the planning officer to express your and our concerns. He is not very happy with the current layout. He is in the process of developing the scheme including new accesses, pedestrian pathways, parking and reducing the degree of separation of the dwellings. Our protestations were listened to but given little hope.

Council Meetings

I continue as Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee but am no longer on the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee as the I4H have decided to give more exposure to our newer members.

Since I was last with you there have been two Council meetings the principal items being the Budget and the setting of Council Tax each of which have been approved.

As explained previously the Capital Budget proposes going ahead with the Southern Link Road at a cost of £40m. In the absence of any Government Funding the Council proposes borrowing £35m to do this. This is subject to a business case being prepared to be approved by Council. The Outline Strategic Business Case submitted with the Budget stated that the project is intended “to reduce traffic in the city”.

At the most recent Council meeting the report from the Leader pointed out that the SLR would have an impact on traffic within South Wye and did not make any reference to traffic in the city. This is closer to the truth. Residents must get to appreciate that they get little in terms of reduced traffic from the first £40m. The rest of the Bypass will be affected by the 10,000 new homes which are hardly likely to make the situation any better.

Supporters of the Bypass (of whom there are many) cannot rely on any improvement of traffic flow to support this project. Having promised a Western Bypass at the last election Conservatives and LDs, this seems to be what will happen.

For residents of Bishopstone the SLR will have no impact.

Miscellaneous

The Council has won an important appeal against some of the wording in the County's Waste Policy Document. The NFU objected to some of its terms, whereas the Council considered that these terms were necessary to improve the state of the Wye. This is groundbreaking and of national significance.

The Leader produces a newsletter after most Council meetings so probably 5 times a year. If you would like to have a copy, please let me know. It contains a lot more information about what is happening in the Council - I will send to the Clerk for distribution.

Parish Summit. Next Parish Summit will take place on Tuesday, 8th April 2025, from 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm at Plough Lane Offices. Invitation to attend and agenda to follow.

5.1 Open Session

5.1.1 Parish Summit will take place on Tuesday, 8th April 2025, from 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm at Plough Lane Offices. Invitation to attend and agenda to follow.

5.1.2 The second Herefordshire Flood Group meeting was held online via Teams on Tuesday, March 25th - 6:30 - 7:30pm. Information and link had been circulated. The Clerk will forward any follow up information recorded at this meeting.

5.2 Close Open session

6. Finance: Schedule of payment sheet (circulated).

6.1 6.1 It was unanimously agreed to pay the outstanding invoices for February and March (circulated).

6.2 The Clerk confirmed she will request the VAT reimbursement at the end of the financial end.

6.3 The Clerk confirmed that the external auditor forms had arrived. Before the next meeting the Clerk will be finalising the end of year accounts; liaising with the internal auditor and will bring the completed accounts to the May meeting for adoption and signature.

6.4 The Clerk confirmed that the Parish Council's Three-Year Insurance Policy had now finished. Zurich are in the process of drawing up a revised policy – considering assets owned by the Parish Council – and will send through a draft quote. The Clerk will circulate this prior to discussion at the May meeting - the renewal date is the 1st June 2025.

7. Highways and Environmental Matters:

7.1 Update on Bishon Lane issues. Cllr Taylor is in regular contact with the Locality Steward regarding extreme potholes causing a dangerous road surface for vehicles and pedestrians. The Locality Steward has agreed that the Bishon Lane should be totally flattened – this has been logged as a job but with no time scale. The Clerk confirmed that she had requested information as to where this job is currently on the waiting list – but had not received a reply.

Whilst it is acknowledged that all jetting work is now carried out by Herefordshire Council Contractors, the Clerk confirmed that she has again written to Herefordshire Council, Ed Bradford, asking if the lengthsman could, on this occasion, go ahead and do the jetting

work at previously quoted. Unfortunately, there has been no acknowledgement of this request.

7.2 Update on Byford drainage works – these have now been completed by the lengthman and the Clerk confirmed she had sent in an invoice against the purchase order for reimbursement via the Drainage Grant Funding Scheme.

Cllr Holmes explained that recently Balfour Beatty had undertaken work on the Byford's Church Lane U90011 from the back entrances of Byford House and Byford Court down to its junction with Green lane U90012 - where water had been bubbling up through the carriageway causing continuous damage. Cllr Holmes confirmed that she had spoken regularly with work team, who had kept her up to date on the search for the sources which they thought were likely to be springs. They made sure they captured and piped where needed and installed inspection covers. As it had been necessary to dig in so many places, they had to get the road resurfaced and the road is now dry, smooth and safe.

Cllr Homes asked the Clerk to write to Herefordshire Council and BBL to pass sincere thanks from Lower Byford for all their hard work and effort.

7.3 Cllr Holmes explained that two areas in Byford would benefit from jetting - Church Lane the U90011 and the junction with Green Lane the U90012. The Clerk will register a request with Herefordshire Council for their Contractors to arrange to undertake this work – unfortunately, the Parish Council can no longer use their lengthman for this work.

7.4 An email was received and circulated from the resident from Woodside Cottage explaining the recent problems with flooding. D C Gardening attended the same day – and after discussion with the residents it was agreed to arrange a meeting with Sir Harry Cottrell. The meeting took place on Monday 24th March 2025. D C Gardening is now preparing quotes for work to be carried out – once these quotes are available – the Clerk will circulate and will prepare an application to request funding via the Drainage Grant Scheme.

7.5 Update on combination gate (Bristol gate) for Bishopstone – this gate has been collected by D C Gardening and is now stored in his yard. Payment for this gate is now managed internally by the Stephen Organ - PROW Volunteer Development Office. D C Gardening have sent in a quote for fixing the gate - and this will be offset against the lengthman grant funding. A date to erect this gate has not yet been agreed as the PC are not sure that the landowner has been consulted (as agreed at the last meeting). Clerk to check if Cllr Taylor has spoken with the landowner – if not, the Chairman offered to visit and discuss the proposed gate replacement.

7.6 Update on Lengthsman grant funding 2024-2025 – purchase order in place. The Clerk confirmed she will be making a claim for the £2,628 at the end of the financial year.

7.7 The Clerk confirmed that she has a purchase order for the outstanding drainage works to revisit ditches and grips along the C1097, C1098, U90013, U90011, U90010, U73205, The cost for these works would be **£3,150.00 + VAT** and includes labour charge x3 men, traffic management (Stop/Go boards) and use of digger/diesel – purchase order in place. Date and time to be agreed with D C Gardening.

8. Planning:

8.1 Application No: 243144 – Land adjacent to Wyeseide Cottage – outline application – self build dwellinghouse. (circulated). This application was briefly discussed but, as it is an outline application, it was agreed to wait until a formal application is received before making any official comment.

8.2 Update on Application No: 242840 Land At Bishon Farm, Bishopstone, Herefordshire, HR4 7JE Proposed erection of 8 No. dwellings, creation of a community orchard, a private orchard, and associated access, drainage, and landscaping works.

See Ward Councillor's Report.

There was discussion on this application and the Ward Councillor explained that the planning office is not happy with the proposed layout of the houses and has asked for this to be revisited. As this means there will now be an amendment to the original planning application, it was agreed to wait until the amended application is received before making any further additional comment.

8.3 Planning Consultation - 250688 - Bishopstone House, Bishopstone, Hereford, Herefordshire

DESCRIPTION: Proposed demolition of the existing northwest annex and construction of a single-storey extension with terrace. After discussion – no objection.

9. Nature Recovery Mapping in Herefordshire

Herefordshire Council has published a draft map identifying areas throughout the county that are a priority for nature recovery. This is part of the national Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and aims to address the need for existing wildlife sites to be bigger, better, and more joined up. This strategy is at a very early stage, and local knowledge and involvement will be essential to making it successful.

Cllr S Keefe had confirmed (by email) that she had signed up to attend the Nature Recovery Mapping in Herefordshire, taking place on Wednesday, January 22, 2025. Unfortunately, no update available as Cllr Keefe was unable to attend the Parish Council meeting. Item to remain on the agenda.

10. Police Report – no report available. The Clerk confirmed that she had recently been asked by the Hereford Rural North Safer Neighbourhood Team to confirm the dates of the Parish Council meeting for the remainder of the year – this is in line with the Community Charter.

11. Items for the Next Agenda (no discussion).

12. Date of the Next Parish Council Meeting: Wednesday 14th May 2024 which will be the Annual Parish Meeting followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00p.m.

Signed:

Date: