

Wigmore Group Parish Council

Minutes of the monthly meeting held on Monday 10 August 2020

Due to Coronavirus restrictions, the meeting was held via Zoom.

Present: Cllrs Nick Davidson (ND) Chairman; Phil Brown (PB); Bryan Casbourne (BC); Alan Dowdy (AD); Jayne Hodgetts (JH); Gwen Fraser (GF); Jan Malcolmson (JM); Rachel Watson (RW)

In attendance: Mortimer Ward Cllr Carole Gandy (CG); Maggie Brown, Clerk; 1 member of the public.

1. **Apologies.** None received.
2. **Declarations of interests and written requests for dispensations. Interests declared:** Cllr Dowdy in item 11 as Treasurer to Leinthall Starkes District Church Committee; Cllrs Casbourne & Watson in items 9.2 & 9.3 as members of Village Hall Committee with dispensation to discuss item 9.1 granted in July 2020. No further requests for dispensations received.
3. **Open Session**
 - 3.1. In addition to her report (see Appendix 2) CG advised there had been no new cases of COVID-19 at Mathon in last few days.
 - 3.2. Resident's views were raised under items 6.1 and 10.
4. **Minutes** of the scheduled meeting 13 July were approved as a true record after one alteration – the title of item 2 added “*Declarations of interest and written requests for dispensations.*”
5. **Finance**
 - 5.1. Noted: payments made between meetings: Direct Debit to Opus Energy £24.44 gross, electricity for streetlights. £1,761 gross to Countrywide Grounds Maintenance for invoices 114960, 117254 & 121511. £166.68 payment to Mr T McLoughlin for grass and footpath maintenance. £108.00 to C P Hill for Inv 69, mowing Village Green and Churchyard in Leinthall Starkes.
 - 5.2. Balances noted. **RESOLVED** to approve payments listed in Appendix 1.

6. Planning

Response to applications to be determined by Herefordshire Council agreed as follows:

6.1. [P201941/F - Planning Permission](#)

Wigmore, Mortimer, Land off A4110 adjacent to Old School Castle Street Wigmore Herefordshire , Land off A4110 adjacent to Old School Castle Street Wigmore Herefordshire , Proposed conversion of existing workshop building 1 X two bed dwelling.

Noted: Resident raised concern on the ecological and social impact of this application, and the possibility that it is deliberately misleading.

RESOLVED To object to the application for the following reasons: The Parish Council is extremely concerned that the location description is misleading; the site is not adjacent to The Old School rather it is on a wooded north-east slope west the Castle, accessed from a track off the A4110. The site is within an area designated as a Local Wildlife Site and is also a designated national Habitat of Principal Importance (Priority Habitat Inventory), and until further information, including ecological reports, is provided, the Parish Council is unable to confirm whether the application contravenes Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) policies WG1 & WG2.

6.2. [P202000/FH - Full Householder](#)

Wigmore, Mortimer, Wigmore Hall Wigmore Leominster Herefordshire HR6 9UL, Wigmore Hall Wigmore Leominster Herefordshire HR6 9UL, Proposed timber shed to the eastern side of the site. ,

RESOLVED The Parish Council cannot support this application until the possibility of more suitable locations has been explored.

- 6.3. [P202001/L - Listed Building Consent](#) Wigmore, Mortimer, Wigmore Hall Wigmore Leominster Herefordshire HR6 9UL, Wigmore Hall Wigmore Leominster Herefordshire HR6 9UL, Proposed timber shed to the eastern side of the site. , Application **WITHDRAWN**.

6.4. [P202273/K - Works to Trees in a Conservation Area](#)

Wigmore, Mortimer, Castle Way Wigmore Leominster Herefordshire HR6 9UD, Castle Way Wigmore Leominster Herefordshire HR6 9UD, Conifer (A) - fell because leaning towards public footpath, causes excessive shading, and has low amenity value. Conifers (B and C) - fell because cause excessive shading and have low amenity value. Silver birch (D) - fell because partly decayed and dying.

RESOLVED The Parish Council supports this application.

6.5. [Planning Re-consultation - 193122](#) –

Land to the North of Bury Court, Ford Street, Wigmore, Herefordshire. Site for the erection of five dwelling houses and new access. Note: Amended documents.

RESOLVED The Parish Council does not object in principle to this application but asks that the following concerns be considered. The removal of the hedge, which is contrary to NDP policies WG1c and WG1f, and the differences between public and private pavements on Ford Street which needs to be resolved.

7. Bury Lane Playing Field

7.1. Noted: Monthly inspection of play equipment. No change from last month.

7.2. **RESOLVED** to request safety inspection for the whole field in September. Clerk to arrange, delegated uplift on expenditure up to £250.

7.3. Report from Community Field Working Group. No response to Grant Application with Severn Trent received. The Group recommended the 'hump' be allowed to evolve into a wildlife enhancement area; that extraneous debris be removed in the autumn; simple notices explaining its purpose (followed by more informative signage) be put up; and the question of demarcation be considered at a later date.

RESOLVED To accept the Group's recommendations, with up to £200 for autumn works if required, from reserved funds.

8. Signage **RESOLVED** to print and laminate **No Cycling** posters to be located on WQ4 path. Signage for areas identified as wildlife habitats discussed under item 7.3.

9. Village Hall

9.1. **RESOLVED** to terminate the 1997 Agreement between Leominster District Council, Wigmore Group Parish Council, and the Village Hall Committee. Noted: Agreement to terminate is required from Herefordshire Council.

9.2. Noted: draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Village Hall and Wigmore Group Parish Council, replacing the 1997 Agreement will be discussed in September.

9.3. Noted: The Parish Hall Committee will supply proposals for hot water in the Village Hall toilets in September.

10. Wigmore Church Reported by resident: Arrangements have been made for the Church to be cleaned once a week. The possibility that St James' Church be permanently closed for worship is being discussed this week. Noted: WGPC is keen that this local amenity and tourist attraction remains open. **RESOLVED** to write to the Parochial Church Council expressing concerns and advising of a grant which may be available to the PCC from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. [Note: after the meeting it was confirmed that there are no plans to close St James' Church.]

11. Open Churchyards

RESOLVED To implement new process for District Church Committees (Elton and Pipe Aston and Leinthall Starkes) to apply for contributions towards mowing of churchyards. ND and Clerk to draft process for grant applications, to be discussed in September.

12. Mortimer Voices Newsletter

RESOLVED ND to ask Editors to issue a printed newsletter in September, giving clear options for future distribution methods. i.e. email; website; collection from Village Hall or shop, post or hand delivered.

13. Defibrillator

Working Group recommended a further defibrillator not be purchased due to practicalities, and the lack of a suitable location. Offering basic first aid and CPR training for residents to be explored as soon as COVID-19 restrictions allow.

14. Public Realm Maintenance

14.1. Noted: Report from Environmental Issues Working Group. Letter sent to Balfour Beatty (BBLP) and English Heritage about condition of fences on WQ4 and health and safety concerns on closed steps at the Castle keep. The BBLP Locality Steward has offered to contact English Heritage, and to find out

about replacing the fence at the first kissing gate. English Heritage thanks WGPC for reporting its concerns. A site visit has taken place and an interim proposal is to be made to the senior estates manager.

14.2. Noted: Councillors to check whether works completed by Lengthsmen. Agreed that advance notice would be helpful.

15. Streetlights

Noted: No further progress on furthering arrangements for transferring responsibility of 10 streetlights from Wigmore Group Parish Council to Herefordshire Council.

16. Notice Boards

Noted: It was agreed in September 2019 to obtain quotes for various repairs replacement of existing boards. RESOLVED Councillors to advise Clerk of condition of each board, prior to updating Audit of Assets.

17. **Information items, correspondence & training.** Reported: JH, JM & CG met with Simon Hobbs (Herefordshire Council) to discuss traffic calming projects in Elton and Pipe Aston. A report will be provided for the September meeting.

18. Matters for next scheduled meeting: Monday 14 September 2020.

- 18.1. Traffic calming measures in Elton and Pipe Aston.
- 18.2. Memorandum of Understanding between the Village Hall and Wigmore Group Parish Council.
- 18.3. Proposals from Village Hall Committee for hot water in the Village Hall toilets.
- 18.4. Transparent equitable method for considering Grant applications for grass cutting in open churchyards.
- 18.5. Forestry operations in Mortimer Forest.

The meeting closed at 21:55

Signed
Cllr Nick Davidson
Chairman, Wigmore Group Parish Council

14 September 2020

Original copy signed and on file.

Appendix 1

FINANCE

Lloyds Bank Balance at 31/7/2020 **£ 41,209.73**

Ringfenced funds: Bury Lane Community & Playing Field : maintenance fund	£ 4,926.08
Bury Lane Community & Playing Field : development fund	£ 8,675.00
Election Fund	£ 1,809.02
Traffic/Signage	£ 1,536.00
Reserve Fund	£ 7,500.00
General Revenue Reserve	£ 6,327.16
TOTAL ringfenced	£ 30,773.26
Un-ringfenced funds available:	£ 10,436.47

Payments approved. Gross figures.

*Wigmore Village Hall - Inv 2 - Jan to Mar 2020	£ 664.01
**Wigmore Village Hall - Inv 3 - Apr to Jun 2020	£ 210.00
Clerk Payroll - July	£ 376.46
Clerk Expenses – August (including £2.40 VAT)	£ 15.15
Total Payments	£ 1,265.62
Un-ringfenced balance after August Payments:	£ 9,170.85

* Cleaning & maintenance public toilets/carpark £537.76 Use of clerk's cupboard £65, toilet supplies £61.25

** Cleaning & maintenance public toilets/carpark £100.00 Use of clerk's cupboard £65, toilet supplies £45.00

Zoom subscription 2/8-1/9/2020 £14.39; postage 76p

Appendix 2

WIGMORE GROUP PC WARD COUNCILLOR REPORT AUG 2020

No further news on street lighting, as I mentioned previously Bruce Evans was needing to identify some £8000 funding to take these over and would contact me when this had been found.

I have received a call from a resident in Kings Meadow advising that grass in Kings Meadow has been cut by the lengthsman and Balfour Beatty. He was also concerned that unlike Balfour Beatty the lengthsman's operatives were wearing no protective clothing ie goggles, ear protection.

Myself, Jan, Jayne and Simon Hobbs met recently to consider issues of speed and road safety relating to Pipe Aston and Elton. Simon Hobbs had previously visited the area and taken a video of the road trip which he was able to share with us. I am sure Jan and Jayne will report on the meeting.

We now have 145 workers from the farm in Mathon who have tested positive for Covid-19 but the vast majority have now returned to work. To my knowledge known have been hospitalised.

At the time of writing this report 888 people had tested positive for Covid-19 this was a rise between Sat 1st and Wed 5th of 11 cases, 4 of which were at Mathon. Despite this outbreak at Mathon the infection per 100,000 in Herefordshire is 460 cases against an England average of 470.

We had an Emergency Full Council meeting this week when the Administration decided to borrow £4.5 million to help with damage caused by flooding which is not covered by the government grant. I seconded a motion to take the money out of our Resilience Reserves as by borrowing the money we will have to make a revenue saving each year for the next 40 years of £193,000 and this could have a significant impact on delivering services in Herefordshire over the next few years at a time of great uncertainty, this amendment was lost and the money will be borrowed. I am at a loss as to in circumstance we would feel it right to use the Resilience Reserves?

Appendix 3

Information Items for 10 August 2020

Bury Lane Community Field

All-weather Track:

- A response from Severn Trent Water on application for £18,000 grant is expected but has not been received.

Play Equipment:

- Inspected by councillors on 25 July. No change from previous inspection.
- Independent inspection carried out week commencing 22 June. Report expected soon.

Vacancy

There is still a vacancy on the parish council for Leinthall Starkes which can be filled by co-option. If you are interested in becoming a councillor, please contact the parish clerk. clerk@wigmoregrouppc.co.uk

Broadband

An update has been requested from Fastershire, none has been received to date.

Public Realm Maintenance

Balfour Beatty has confirmed that the verges were mown by them in error, due to a failure of internal communications: the list compiled in 2019 of parishes requesting to not mow until late summer was lost due to staff changes.

Planning Updates: No automatic updates received.

Elton

Arrangements made for vegetation to be cut around Elton village signs in August, brought forward from September. Request received for frequency of schedule to be reviewed.

Pipe Aston

Noted that signs need cleaning.

Mortimer Village Website

The site has been transferred from the Parish Council to the Village Hall as agreed.

St James' Church, Wigmore.

The Parish Council is advised that Wigmore Church has not had a Church Committee since January 2019. It is understood that no one from the community has come forward to take on any responsibility for the building. As a pre-condition to opening any church building after the pandemic it needs firstly to be deep cleaned and then cleaned on a weekly basis thereafter as with all other churches this is the responsibility of the respective community. The Parish Council has been told that Wigmore Church cannot be opened until the members of the community take on responsibility for this task.

Queries from residents

1. Could the playing field be rolled next spring? Suggestion noted, to be considered.
2. Overgrown hedge in King's Meadow. Reported to Balfour Beatty 17 July.
3. Lorries accessing Severn Trent works making ruts on playing field grass, avoiding overhanging branches, and hedge.
4. Are funds available to mow Elton & Pipe Aston churchyards? See August agenda.
5. Rabbits on mound in playing field.
6. Could grass round benches and playground equipment be cut?
7. Poor condition of fences on footpath WQ4 reported. Letter to English Heritage & Balfour Beatty sent 29 July.
8. Request for garden refuse collection in Wigmore.
9. Who is responsible for Keep off the grass signs on road verge? Agreed to remove signs.
10. *"Thanks for all your efforts to improve the village. You seem to make things happen and make people listen."*