

# Cofton Hackett Parish Council

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Annual Parish Assembly 2016

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at 7.30pm

### PRESENT:

#### Councillors:

Cllr Mr K Duncan  
Cllr Mrs J Fay  
Cllr Mrs J Webb  
Cllr Mr R Westbury  
Cllr Ms W Birch

#### Clerk to the Parish Council:

Andrew Billau (AB)

#### Apologies:

Cllr Mr R Deeming (Chair)  
Cllr Ms C Fryer

#### Invited Attendees:

Mr Steve Hinton, Senior Ranger, Lickey Hills Country Park

### 31 Members of the public were present

Agenda Item	Discussion and Decisions	Action
1.	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Cllr Deeming and Cllr Fryer, these were accepted. Cllr Duncan took the chair for the meeting.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Steve Hinton, Senior Ranger, Lickey Hills Country Park</b></p> <p>Mr Hinton explained that he is senior ranger for Northfield Hub and is based at Lickey Hills Country Park. He spoke about his work at Lickey Hills and the current problems affecting the Country Park.</p> <p>Mr Hinton explained that he and his team cover 61 parks within Birmingham, 24 of these with high nature value. Lickey Hills is a local nature reserve within the Country Parks network, the heathland there is unique, Bilberry heathland is found elsewhere only in the Lake District, Cornwall and Scotland. The heathland is disappearing fast and has reduced from 600 acres down to 75 acres due to the effects of man. He explained how the team are working to reverse the effects of this.</p> <p>Mr Hinton spoke about phytophthora ramorum, a disease which is affecting trees in the Lickey Hills and the work which is ongoing to try to eradicate it under the direction of APHA and Defra.</p> <p>Members of the public asked where the disease originated from, Mr Hinton explained that it had originated from Asia in Rhododendrons and into the wild in 2009. He was asked if he thought the battle was being won and replied that he thought at one point it had been eradicated but that it had returned. In response to a question about tree damage during storm Doris, he said that the poplars in Cofton Park are healthy but that 3 trees had fallen during the storm and that 2 further trees had been felled.</p> <p>He was asked why trees which are leaning are not taken away, he responded that if they</p>	

Agenda Item	Discussion and Decisions	Action
	<p>are not diseased or in a dangerous position then the deadwood for woodpeckers and insects.</p> <p>Me Hinton informed everyone that the top car park at Lickey Hills Country Park is now open again.</p> <p>Councillors and members of the public thanked Mr Hinton for his presentation and he then left the meeting.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held May 16<sup>th</sup> 2016</b></p> <p>The minutes of the Parish Assembly dated 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016 were agreed as a correct record, proposed by Cllr Duncan and seconded by Cllr Fay, signed by Chair Cllr Duncan.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Highways and Bridges – Cllr Fay</b></p> <p>Looking back on my notes from last year’s meeting and on some of the items that were brought up. The lamp posts in Cofton Church Lane numbers 6,7 &amp; 8 have now had some major works done as it was found that there was no power at all to all of these three. We instructed Weston Power to put new cabling in and the problems seem to have now been resolved.</p> <p>From that meeting we have now seen our new benches in place, which is a huge improvement to the old ones and also the new planters. Although these were all planted out with bulbs etc, unfortunately some of them have been destroyed and taken so we will be refreshing these shortly.</p> <p>The lamp post that went missing and taken by Persimmon Homes in Oakfield Drive has now been erected and will now be painted to match the others.</p> <p>Finally from these minutes I was talking about the Bilberry Centre on Rose Hill being very dilapidated. Birmingham City, who own the premises did come out a couple of times to attend meetings (a bit of a struggle) and said that the Bilberry Centre now has a full repairing Lease by the Boys Club and it was not their responsibility. However, the Boys Club have now managed to obtain some funding and the painting process is not far off complete although they are just waiting for some further funds to paint the sides of the bulding and the coach house.</p> <p>Moving on, we had a contractor out to the lamp post that was hit by a vehicle and is leaning very badly located in Ashmead Drive, to assess the safety issue. He reported back and informed us that it was quite safe at present. We immediately ordered a new lamp post to be made from the Company in Birmingham who specialise in traditional lamp posts. This is all ready but unfortunately our electrical contractor EON cannot meet the deadline which would have been Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May but we have moved the date now to Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May and we look forward to seeing the end of this situation.</p> <p>Finally, traffic issues are still a major concern, not just on Groveley Lane but on Barnt Green Road, Kendal End and Rose Hill and responsibility rests with the County Council. The problem we have is that the people who manage all of this do not live in the area and do not use the facilities. There are terrible problems with people crossing Barnt Green Road into the Lickey Woods which is almost impossible and the same on the other mentioned roads. We are also concerned about the increased traffic in Cofton Church Lane. The so called crossing at the top of Ten Ashes Lane into the Park is in the wrong place and there are blind spots that make the visual splay extremely dangerous. As far as the present road improvements go in Groveley Lane, we are all left mesmerised by the gates, we are not sure what these are supposed to do, certainly not slow traffic down and we now await the improvements which are due to be completed with white lines painted all over in June. This is not something the Parish Council wanted by any means as it was felt a complete waste of public money but we had no other course of action as we were told quite specifically by the County Council - "it is this or nothing at all, and if left the</p>	

Agenda Item	Discussion and Decisions	Action
	<p>money will just be sifted away on admin charges from Worcester". So we now wait in anticipation.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Environment – Cllr Birch</b></p> <p>Cllr Birch spoke about the under 8s play area at the Myhill field. A working party involving Cllrs Birch and Westbury and a group of local residents has been formed to agree on replacement play equipment. The aim is to provide equipment suitable for the under 8s and not to encourage teenagers onto the play area.</p> <p>She spoke about the replacement of dog bins with ordinary litter bins which will also accept dog waste.</p> <p>On Rose Hill there is a lot of water draining from the fields and the pavement there needs clearing.</p> <p>Members of the public mentioned that a meeting with residents had been promised to look at Myhill field proposals. Cllr Westbury said that there had been no decision made yet and that residents would be consulted once a costed proposal had been drawn up. There will be a working party meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> May.</p> <p>Following some discussion Cllr Duncan gave a brief history of the Myhill field play area. He also mentioned that some work had been undertaken on repairs to the fencing and the gate into the allotments.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Finance – Cllr Webb</b></p> <p>bguviibibibikbibkibkib</p> <p>The past year has been a little frustrating. All the monies were in place for several projects which we were hoping to carry out. For one reason or another although plans had been made we were prevented from carrying them out. This year the monies are still in place and we will be re-visiting these projects and hopefully complete them.</p> <p>The children's play area known as the Myhill field is one we consider the highest priority, we intend to install extra under eight equipment and revamp some of the existing equipment. For anyone not familiar with the play area it is an ideal safe spot for your local children to play supervised by an adult. Every year the play area is inspected and any repairs or suggestions carried out. We will be asking parents on their thoughts while taking into account the adjoining neighbours' concerns.</p> <p>The second project is to replace the scaffold poles along the edge of Groveley Lane, which despite having painted regularly, still look like scaffold poles. We had hoped to have low fencing similar to around the park, but again, although Cofton Hackett Parish Council will pay for it, we have been unable to obtain permission.</p> <p>The work carried out on Rose Hill island I'm sure all would consider a great success. New seats around the Parish are a much needed improvement in the area, these were part paid for by the new homes bonus scheme.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Planning – Cllr Duncan</b></p> <p>A number of planning applications have been considered by the Parish Council this year most of which have been extensions to the rear of dwellings. However, the two most important applications have been to do with the site of East Works.</p> <p>The first was a detailed plan for the south end of the site for 185 houses plus an open space towards Cofton Church Lane with a curved footpath leading on to Cofton Church Lane. There will be a mix of housing to include approximately 35% affordable. St Modwen</p>	

Agenda Item	Discussion and Decisions	Action
	<p>have also included a circular walk which will include the Stocken bridleway and the pond area at the foot of the dam. As a Parish Council we felt that this would be acceptable but I did write to the case officer suggesting that as the new estate built by Persimmon Homes seems to be a target for thieves with houses being too easy to enter, that an improvement to home security should be part of the conditions for permission.</p> <p>The second was a detailed application for the new village hall with outline for 150 homes including 35% affordable all on the north end of the site. We are pleased that St Modwen have listened to us and located the village hall at the entrance to East Works Drive where there would be space for extra car parking in the layby on Groveley Lane on the park side.</p> <p>Both these applications were heard by Bromsgrove District Council Planning Committee in April. It was recommended by the officers for the applications to be granted but the elected members could not agree on various aspects, largely on the 106 development monies and their distribution. Some had been proposed to go to Birmingham but the members felt it should be spent in our locality. They agreed to defer the decision until the May meeting.</p> <p>I decided to attend the May meeting and speak in favour of both applications as did Rob Fieldson, particularly in favour of the Village Hall. There were a number of people from St Modwen including the replacement for Mike Murray who sadly for us left St Modwen a few weeks ago. The MD of St Modwen Homes was also there. Claire Fryer, one of our Parish Council members also spoke but as a resident expressing concerns about the traffic speed and volume in and out of the new estate.</p> <p>The members hardly considered the applications but concentrated almost entirely on the 106 development monies, how much and the distribution. Having spoken for our allotted 6 minutes we could not speak again or interrupt the committee meeting. I was so disgusted with the ineffective way the meeting took place I am in the process of writing to the head of Planning and the leader of BDC. It was badly presented by the case officer and badly conducted by the members. The only person who spoke sense was the legal lady who advised the members that they had gone passed the 13 weeks for determination but the members decided to ignore her advice and voted to defer the decision again until the June meeting when the hope is they will decide where the monies are to be distributed.</p> <p>St Modwen were pretty annoyed, thinking about appealing but realise this might delay things further.</p> <p>Once the application is permitted work can commence on our new village hall. We have spent some time with an Architect supplied from St Modwen looking at various village halls and Community facilities and come up with a scheme which will be an asset to the area.</p> <p>Members of the public suggested that as Cofton Hackett already has a village hall the money could be used for something else.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Communications – Cllr Westbury</b></p> <p>The Council has three main channels of communication with residents. These are:</p> <p><b>Cofton News</b> - The Cofton News newsletter is distributed to every household in the Parish four times a year. We hope you like the new format which we introduced this year to make it more informative and less wordy. I would like to thank our clerk Andrew who does the layout for Cofton News and makes sure that all of the items fit in. I would also like to thank all of the volunteers who deliver the newsletter to your door four times a year.</p> <p><b>Website</b> - With more young people moving into the Parish on the new developments,</p>	

Agenda Item	Discussion and Decisions	Action
	<p>we recognise that the website is their preferred method of receiving up-to-date information on Parish matters. Over the last year we have made sure that the website is current and that it contains more information on events and activities in the area. It is also a good way for residents to publicise their own activities or businesses so if you would like to take advantage of this please contact our clerk Andrew.</p> <p><b>Facebook</b> - we now have our own Facebook page where the Council and residents can post comments or items of interest on activities in the Parish. The page is called Cofton Hackett Community and if you insert this in your Facebook search engine you will be able to see the page and become a "friend". This is already proving to be a popular addition to our communications channels and I would like to thank Cllr Claire Fryer for setting this up for us and administering the site.</p> <p><b>Surgeries</b> - Last year we said we would be trialling a monthly surgery at the village hall for residents to have face to face meetings with our clerk and Councillors. This trial has taken place but did not prove to be a particularly popular initiative so we shall not be continuing with it. If residents would like to have a meeting with our clerk or with a particular Councillor then this can easily be arranged by contacting Andrew. Also residents are always welcome to attend meetings of The Parish Council which are held at The Village Hall on the third Monday of the month beginning at 7.30pm.</p> <p><b>Shindig/Live and Local</b> - We continued with the Lickey Hills Community Theatre which was set up to take advantage of the wide variety of live entertainment events provided by Live and Local. In March we put on a concert by Kel Elliott which was a very enjoyable event but was not that well supported by Parishioners. Our next event is on May 27 when we shall be putting on an evening of delta blues music with accomplished guitarist Martin Harley. This will be held at St Andrews Parish Centre in Barnt Green and is proving to be a much more popular show. Some tickets are still available and anyone interested in attending should contact me. In view of the low attendances at our first three events we have decided to take a year's break from the Live and Local programme but hope to continue once the new Cofton Hackett Village Hall is available to us.</p> <p><b>Neighbourhood Plan</b> - as you know we have joined together with Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council to produce a Neighbourhood Plan which will help help shape the development and construction of Cofton Hackett while minimising the destruction of those historic and other elements which are seen to add value to living in this community. We have held a number of joint meetings, we have carried out some character assessment work of the Parish and have held a consultation workshop to share our initial issues and options with residents. We have also appointed a consultant to help us with the production of the Plan and have secured a grant to cover the costs associated with this so that the exercise will be of minimal cost to the Parishes. We are now at the stage where we have produced our first draft plan and this will be available for viewing and comment at a series of Consultation Workshops to be held on Saturday 24 June. The Cofton Hackett workshop will be held here in the village hall between 1.00 and 3.00pm and all residents are invited to attend. There will be an opportunity to discuss the plan with councillors and to complete a questionnaire. Both the draft plan and questionnaire will also be available on the Cofton Hackett PC website. Closing date for comments on the draft plan is July 14. We will then move towards production of the final draft plan which will be submitted to a planning inspector for approval. The finished Plan will be put to a referendum of all residents in the Parishes and if passed, will be sent to Bromsgrove District Council's Planning Department as a binding legal document.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Questions from the Public</b></p> <p>Mr Colin Jones from Ashmead Rise suggested that the traffic island by the Post Office</p>	

Agenda Item	Discussion and Decisions	Action
	<p>should be extended to help slow traffic on Groveley Lane together with installation of other mini islands. Cllr Fay replied that these suggestions had already been made to WCC and had been rejected as too expensive. Cllr Duncan explained how the traffic calming scheme had been put to 2 public meetings with residents opposed to speed cushions and that a further consultation to residents had resulted in a very low response. He explained that once the traffic calming measures had been completed there will be an opportunity to re-measure the speed of traffic.</p> <p>Mr and Mrs Green from Ashmead Drive asked why the path had been moved, Cllr Duncan said he was unsure and that this need to be reviewed.</p> <p>Mr Ray Conwell?? from Ashmead Rise enquired about mobile speed cameras, Cllr Duncan responded that this has been suggested by the Parish Council but it appears there is no safe place for the mobile camera to be situated.</p> <p>It was suggested that the bushes on the Rose Hill Island be cut down to improve traffic visibility, Councillors felt that they should be left as they are as it encourages traffic to slow to negotiate the island.</p> <p>Mr Mike Powell from Kendal End asked about the number of houses planned for the new development, Cllr Duncan said that the original proposal was for up to 750 but is now at 605, Bromsgrove District Council have a target of 7,000 houses by 2023 and will need to find this shortfall from elsewhere.</p> <p>It was asked whether the new cabling being installed by Virgin will reach Ashmead Drive, it was confirmed that this will cover the whole area.</p> <p>Ms Mary Robertson said that she had been dismayed to find that the grass banks along the Stocken had been cut back spoiling the natural growth there and asked who was responsible. Cllr Duncan said this was probably the Canal and River Trust.</p> <p>Mr Roger Pepper remarked that the Parish Assembly had not been advertised on the website, PC members said that a leaflet had been posted through everyone's door and it had been advertised on Facebook but accepted it should have also been on the website.</p> <p>Mr and Mrs Pattison explained that they are second owners of a property on the new development and don't have a copy of the deeds, it is unclear who is responsible for the border adjacent to their house and the poor drainage. Communications with St Modwen have proved to be difficult. Councillors provided some suggested contacts.</p> <p>Mr Roger Pepper suggested that at future public meetings some sort of microphone should be used as it was difficult to hear some of the Councillors.</p> <p>Finally, Mr Roger Pepper expressed his thanks for the work that the Parish Council members do on behalf of the Cofton Hackett community.</p>	
9.	<p>Cllr Duncan thanked members of the public for attending.</p> <p><b>The meeting ended at 9.20pm.</b></p>	