

Cofton Hackett Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Annual Parish Assembly 2016

Monday 16th May 2016 at 7.30pm

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Cllr Mr R Deeming (Chair)
Cllr Mr K Duncan
Cllr Mrs J Fay

Clerk to the Parish Council:

Andrew Billau (AB)

Apologies:

Cllr Mr J McQuaid
Cllr Mrs J Webb
Cllr Mr R Westbury

9 Members of the public were present

Agenda Item	Discussion and Decisions	Action
1.	Apologies Apologies were received from Cllr McQuaid, Cllr Webb and Councillor Westbury, these were accepted.	
2.	Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held April 27th 2015 The minutes of the Parish Assembly dated 27 st April 2015 were agreed as a correct record, proposed by Cllr Duncan and seconded by Cllr Fay, signed by Chair Cllr Deeming.	
3.	Highways and Bridges – Cllr Fay Over the last 12 months, the speeding of traffic remains a major concern. The responsibility for this rests with Worcestershire County Council. The Council was approached by community speedwatch in conjunction with the police to see if we wanted to join their scheme. This involved drawing up a list of volunteers who were willing to be trained to check speeds with a hand held gun. This was put into place but to date we are still waiting our turn. The scheme started in Hereford and Worcester proving quite popular and despite repeated requests we are still in the same position. I spoke recently to speedwatch and to the police stating that we felt our need was greater being situated on the edge of Birmingham, surrounded now by major building works and the close proximity of the motorway. There have been some problems with street lighting in Cofton Church Lane, number 10 lamppost sited at the bottom of the church steps required some major replacement works, this is being dealt with this week. Also, lampposts 6, 7 and 9 after further investigation have had new cabling fitted. I understand that there is no power to the lights and we have now asked Worcestershire County Council to urgently investigate this and are awaiting a reply. Earlier on we did clear part of the Worcestershire Pathway at the bottom of Cofton Church Lane as it was impossible for walkers to pass through and I understand a very good job was done.	

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	<p>Lickey Coppice had a problem with an overgrown hedge that almost blocked the road, we can only think that it was reported to Bromsgrove or Worcester who sent out a contractor to cut it. It was left in a terrible state and we immediately engaged a local specialist tree company to do the job properly and whilst doing that removed 4 dead trees, I think the residents were all very pleased with the result.</p> <p>A similar situation occurred at the Myhill field, we instructed the same tree surgeons to finish all the hedges to a satisfactory state there. We are looking now at the Myhill field to make sure the grass is cut every two weeks and also updating some of the old play equipment.</p> <p>We are trying to generally improve the area and have ordered some really nice benches to replace the old ones. Two benches have been placed on Rose Hill as the benches there literally fell down. Also two benches are to be placed at the junction of Ten Ashes Lane and Groveley Lane and the other on Kendal End Road. The remaining bench we have put on the Stocken to replace one of the old ones and hopefully the other old benches there will be replaced soon. We also intend doing some work on the Stocken as it is full of potholes.</p> <p>We are in the process of ordering some planters to be placed at the entrances to the village, they will be the same style and design as those in Barnt Green but with a Cofton Hackett logo.</p> <p>The lamppost that was missing in Oakfield Drive has been made by a company in Wolverhampton and Persimmon homes have paid for this, we were insistent this had to be a traditional style. The lamp head is now in place but not working and I am chasing the contractor from Persimmon to get this rectified immediately.</p> <p>Various potholes have been reported to County but our roads and pavements like many other places are in a terrible state due to lack of funds at Worcestershire County Council.</p> <p>The Rednal Island at last has had some major work done as it was growing completely out of control.</p> <p>Finally, I have been speaking with Birmingham City Council who are the landlords of the Bilberry Centre on Rose Hill. It is in a poor state of repair and bringing down the appearance of the area, they did come out and inspect it. They said that Bilberry do have a plan of action but I said if it could just be painted it would be a huge improvement.</p>	
4.	<p>Environment – Cllr McQuaid, report presented by Cllr Deeming</p> <p>My sincere apologies for not being at the meeting tonight but I have work commitments.</p> <p>Volunteer litter pickers - There has been no response from any of the residents of Cofton Hackett to become volunteer litter pickers, so this has been put on hold for the moment.</p> <p>Myhill play area – I spent 3 days cutting back the grass to the full width of the entrance on both sides of the gate. The moles were humanely removed from the site in February / March, there were 3 moles causing the mounds in the area. On inspection a few days ago I notice that there are a few new mounds which have appeared.</p> <p>Memorial Garden – I spent 3 days clearing this area, planted a few flowers and put down a few slabs in front of the plaque.</p>	

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5.	<p>Finance – Cllr Webb, report presented by Cllr Deeming</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>	
6.	<p>Communications – Cllr Westbury, report presented by Cllr Duncan</p> <p>Cofton News - The Cofton News newsletter will continue to be distributed to every household in the Parish four times a year. We shall be looking at the format this year with a view to making it more informative and less wordy. We are always looking for volunteers to help deliver the newsletter so if you can assist please contact Cllr Roger Westbury or the Clerk</p> <p>Website - With more young people moving into the Parish on the new developments, we recognise that the website is their preferred method of receiving up-to-date information on Parish matters. We shall ensure 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 Billau.</p> <p>Surgeries - Sometimes residents need a face to face meeting with a Councillor or the Parish Council clerk. Later this year we shall be trialling a monthly surgery at the village hall so please check the website or newsletter for dates and times. Residents are 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>Shindig/Live and Local - We have set up the Lickey Hills Community Theatre to take advantage of the wide variety of live entertainment events provided by Live and Local. Over the last seven months we have put on excellent performances by The Remi Harris Gypsy Jazz Trio and the Kepow Theatre Company. We have again signed up with Live and Local and are planning to put on performances at The Trinity Centre, Old Birmingham Road on Saturday November 12 and either Saturday March 18 or April 29. Check the newsletter, website and local press for details of artists and dates.</p>	
7.	<p>Planning – Cllr Duncan</p> <p>Planning - We have received only 11 Planning Applications this year. The most significant was from St Modwen Homes for the build of 41 dwellings to the south of the Bilberry Grange development. The work has now started which has also included the completion of the small park with the River Arrow running through and the installation of some play</p>	

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	<p>equipment for the children.</p> <p>Phase one is now complete with about 250 homes occupied. Most of the roads have been surfaced although East Works Drive will be used for the construction traffic for future phases.</p> <p>New Village Hall - We have a small group who have been meeting to discuss the specification of the proposed new village hall. St Modwen have appointed an architect who has joined us on a couple of occasions to look at some of the local halls where we can pick out the things we should consider for inclusion and those we should not. He has supplied us with alternative drawings which show an interior very close to what we had been discussing and an exterior which would be in keeping with the designs on the new development.</p> <p>Recently we had a meeting with St Modwen to establish the location of this new hall and were privy to some of the plans which are to be submitted to BDC shortly which will cover the rest of the site of what was East Works. These will be just outline plans for both north and south of the existing development but a detailed plan for the new village hall. We were hoping for occupation in the Spring of 2017 but this will be delayed somewhat due to this new proposal.</p> <p>As soon as there is something positive to show we will organise a public meeting with drawing proposals so everyone can have some input. Meanwhile we are looking for volunteers to come and join our small group to help progress this project and to help form the management committee which will be required to run this new hall. If you are interested please myself, Roger Westbury or the Clerk. Our telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are included in Cofton News and on the website.</p> <p>Old Sewerage Works - We were hoping we might have access to the area and be able to lay out new allotments, particularly for those residents of Bilberry Grange, mainly from Shadow Close. However as the surrounding area is owned by St Modwen and they have yet to decide what to do with the pond and whether there will be some form of access within the current fencing, we will have to be patient. I can only apologise to those who have been expecting to have an allotment soon, I am afraid they will have to wait. We will continue to press St Modwen for progress.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plan - The purpose of our neighbourhood plan is to allow residents of Cofton Hackett to 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. Developments in our community are controlled by planning regulations. Through the Localism Act of 2012 the Government has encouraged all local communities to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, this is a statutory and binding document which through consultation represents the views and concerns of all residents and will influence the future of the area for years to come.</p> <p>We have joined together with Lickey & Blackwell Parish and have held a number of meetings, sent out a questionnaire to residents and businesses and started on some environmental mapping looking at areas in detail and noting buildings of interest. We have also enlisted the help of a professional company to help in project managing this exercise which will end in a referendum held locally before submission to BDC etc. We are about to apply for a grant towards all this work as it will be at nil cost to the Parish. We have appealed for help from residents through Cofton News so if there is anyone who would like to get involved with this important work please contact myself, Roger Westbury or the Clerk.</p> <p>Fusion Festival 2015 - The last Fusion Festival took place over three days starting on the Friday which caused all sorts of parking problems during the evening. I spoke to the</p>	

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	<p>traffic management person who agreed they had underestimated the numbers arriving after the street marshals had been sent away. Saturday and Sunday were better. There was a lot of damage in the Park and the path across from Groveley Lane to the village was particularly bad. This has been well repaired to where the damage ended and I am assured by Birmingham Parks department that they hope to have funds to complete the path during this year.</p> <p>As you may know the Fusion Festival has been moved to Liverpool this year.</p>	
8.	<p>Worcestershire County Council – County Councillor Peter McDonald</p> <p>Councillor McDonald spoke about further budget cuts with another £27m cut this year, spend is now only £320m. The County Council is unable to raise sufficient funding via the Council Tax. Libraries are being further cut as is early intervention for children. Homecare is facing problems leading to Homecare companies no longer able to provide an effective service. The county is worst in the UK with 15 minutes or less being spent per visit whilst the recommendation is 30 minutes.</p> <p>The bus serving Waseley School has been put back on. A speed activator has been agreed for Barnt Green Road. The traffic calming study for Groveley Lane has been completed and there will be no controlled crossing, the number of people crossing at that point and the traffic flow does not meet the criteria for a controlled crossing. Instead there will be gating at each end and markings to help slow traffic.</p> <p>It was identified last November that the majority of schools in Worcestershire still have asbestos present and a plan of action has been requested.</p> <p>Councillors enquired about the sum of £70k lodged by St Modwen for traffic calming measures and heard that this is ring-fenced but that it may not cover the whole cost. Councillors and members of the public discussed speed bumps and residents unwilling to have them installed near their houses. Councillor McDonald noted that the Accident Studies Group which used to provide an effective service is no longer in place.</p>	
9.	<p>Questions from the Public</p> <p>Mrs Hawley asked about the number 47 bus terminus, there is more room for this further down towards the end of the road.</p> <p>Cllr Fay responded that there is no real news on this issue at the moment, there have been meetings with National Express and the Parish Council have written to them, we await a response.</p>	
10.	<p>Cllr Deeming thanked members of the public and Councillor McDonald for attending.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 8.30pm.</p>	