

Cofton Hackett Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Annual Parish Assembly 2022

Wednesday 18th May 2022 at 7.30pm

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Cllr Mr R Westbury (Chair)

Cllr Mr J Slack

Cllr Mr M Pattison

Cllr Mrs J Fay

Cllr Mr R Deeming

Clerk to the Parish Council:

Andrew Billau (AB)

Agenda Item	Discussion and Decisions	Action
1.	<p>Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held April 27th, 2021</p> <p>The minutes of the Parish Assembly dated 27th April 2021 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.</p>	
2.	<p>Chairman's Report – Cllr Westbury</p> <p>Welcome everybody to our Annual Parish Assembly. It is three years since we were able to hold this meeting face-to-face, so it is good to see you all in person. Much has happened in the last 12 months and I would like to thank all of my fellow Councillors for their hard work during this time. I also want to thank our clerk Andrew Billau who has worked diligently and has also attained a Certificate in Local Council Administration. This has enabled the Council to adopt the General Power of Competence which gives us more flexibility in what we can do for the local community.</p> <p>Our two village halls have survived the various lockdowns and Covid restrictions thanks to grants received from the Government's Retail and Leisure support scheme and both are now fully operational again. They are also financially secure.</p> <p>I would like to highlight three major achievements from the Parish Council's work over the last year. These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We were able to use our Neighbourhood Development Plan to object to St Modwen's proposals to build 5-storey apartments on the East Works Phase 2 site next to Cofton Village Hall. St Modwen submitted revised plans for more traditional family housing which were passed by Bromsgrove District Council. As a result, 109 new dwellings are now being constructed which will result in more new residents for our Parish.2. We worked with District and County Councillors to persuade National Express to alter the termination points for their X20 service which had required drivers to park on Groveley Lane, often with their engines running, outside residential housing. They have now agreed to use the laybys on Groveley Lane which had been specifically provided for this purpose.3. Many residents had expressed concern about the condition of the Bilberry Centre on Rose Hill after it was vacated by the Birmingham City Council Youth Service. The Centre became a target for vandalism and graffiti. Again, working with District and County Councillor colleagues we were able to persuade BCC to install motion detection equipment, to board	

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	<p>up the windows and to remove the graffiti. The future of the Centre is not yet clear, but the Parish Council has expressed its desire to see the external appearance of the Centre retained as it is an iconic building in Cofton Hackett.</p> <p>Thanks again to all of our Councillors for their continuing hard work on your behalf. I look forward to continuing to work with them for the coming year.</p>	
3.	<p>Highways and Environment – Cllr Pattison</p> <p><u>Open Spaces</u></p> <p>The Parish Council has responsibility for two allotment spaces and a play area on the Myhill Field. The play area is inspected monthly by councillors and also annually by ROSPA. The inspections have shown no serious faults with the play equipment. A new rocking horse and a see-saw have been added to the play equipment at Myhill Field, funded by section 106 money.</p> <p>The brick wall on the southern boundary of the play area was subject to graffiti last year, so the Council commissioned a youth group from the National Citizens Service to paint a mural on the wall, since when there has been no problem with graffiti.</p> <p>Boundary hedges are regularly maintained, litter cleared, and the grass cut.</p> <p>The Council is also in negotiation with St Modwen to provide access to the Old Sewage Works Allotment site from Shadow Close. At the moment, solicitors acting on behalf of the Parish Council and St Modwen are agreeing the details of the access route which will be just wide enough to take a person and a wheelbarrow through, with secure fences on either side and a locked gate at each end. It is good that the plans can be finalised soon so that work can begin on preparing the footpath.</p> <p>The council has undertaken tree pruning on both allotment sites and removed one tree which was proving problematic to allotment holders. It has been proposed that two new trees be planted on the site.</p> <p>Our thanks to Michael Harrington for helping to keep the allotment site mown. Until the access path is provided the Parish Council lengthsman is unable to do this.</p> <p>On the Myhill Allotments a new metal gate has been installed nearer to the end of the entrance lane than the old gate. This should help improve security on the site.</p> <p>Repairs to streetlamps in the village continue to be a regular necessity, particularly given the age of many of the streetlamps. Where possible the council has undertaken to preserve the look of the streetlamps, but new LED bulbs are being installed to reduce the rising energy costs and to provide more effective and safer lighting.</p> <p>As always, grit bins are checked each autumn, before the winter sets in, and, where necessary, fresh supplies of grit are ordered from Bromsgrove District Council. A contingency supply is also now held by the council for use in emergencies.</p> <p>Rural footpaths in the area are monitored by Steve Bach, the parish paths warden, who volunteers his services to ensure the paths remain free from obstruction. Occasionally Councillors assist Steve in this task and the Council would like to thank him for his work.</p> <p><u>Planning</u></p> <p>The Parish Council was involved in the successful local challenge to St Modwen's proposed 5 storey apartment block along Groveley Lane facing the Cofton Park. This would have been an eyesore and more appropriate to Longbridge town centre than Cofton Hackett. Instead of the</p>	

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	apartment block, 109 new properties were approved on phase 3 of the new estate which were more in keeping with the local environment and certainly more akin to the houses in the rest of the estate. Approval has also been given to small extensions to properties in Fairey Street, but many of the charges made to houses on the new estate have so far fallen within permitted development and have therefore not required planning approval.																							
4.	<p>Finance and General Purposes – Cllr Slack</p> <p>The Finance and General Purposes Subcommittee is responsible for the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update of the Financial Regulations and ensuring they are observed • Overseeing the Financial Administration of the Council • Making recommendations on precept requirements • Monitoring performance against budget and making recommendations where action is necessary • Review all insurance • Review internal and external audit reports and arrange to implement recommendations • Develop, maintain, and monitor the policy on reserves <p><u>General Purposes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Council’s information technology resources, including computing hardware and software and telephones • Develop and recommend to Council policies relating to the areas of the committee’s responsibility • Oversee Parish Council’s Assets <p><u>State of Finances</u></p> <p>Coming into the last financial year (beginning in April 2020) we had approximately £128,000 in the bank (£50k of which is s106 money).</p> <p><u>Expenditure 2020-21</u></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">G&A</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£17645</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">Communication</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,050</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">Highways</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£10,016</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">Open spaces</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£12,687</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">Community grants</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£320</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">Asset Maintenance</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£761</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£42,480</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>Income 2020-21</u></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">Precept</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£49,059</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">Rents</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£9,080</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">Worcs CC</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,800</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 40px;">Miscellaneous</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£0</td> </tr> </table>	G&A	£17645	Communication	£1,050	Highways	£10,016	Open spaces	£12,687	Community grants	£320	Asset Maintenance	£761	Total	£42,480	Precept	£49,059	Rents	£9,080	Worcs CC	£1,800	Miscellaneous	£0	
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	<p style="text-align: right;">s-106 £0</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Total £59,939</p> <p>Coming into this financial year (the beginning of April 2022) we had approximately £143,000 in the bank accounts. Our precept income this year, i.e., is £51,830 and we receive this in 2 tranches from Bromsgrove District Council. Our projected expenditure for this financial year is approximately £52,000 plus an additional contribution to our reserves of £11,000.</p> <p><u>Earmarked Reserves</u></p> <p>At the year-end we are hoping that our earmarked reserves will be £68,000 and our general reserves £41,000. Our s-106 grant of approximately £50,000 is currently earmarked for open spaces projects.</p> <p><u>General Purposes</u></p> <p>New Village Hall</p> <p>The Cofton Village Hall is now up and running and leased to the Charity, Cofton Village Hall, who manage the building.</p> <p>Mission Hall</p> <p>We are currently evaluating the work needed to be undertaken to ensure the stability of the ground at the back and the side of the Mission Hall. The long-term future of the Mission Hall is also under consideration.</p>	
5.	<p>Planning – Clerk</p> <p>During the previous 12 months the Parish Council has considered and commented on 22 planning applications, Most applications are for minor works such as extensions but Councillors always view plans, consult with neighbours and ensure comments are posted on the Bromsgrove Planning Portal. The Council objected to 4 applications, 2 of which were withdrawn and 1 which was refused, the fourth is awaiting a decision.</p>	