

**Council Governance**

1. IN ATTENDANCE: - Liz New, Parish Clerk, Cllr Jon Billings, Cllr Geoff Phelps, Cllr Diana Tobin, Cllr Sheila Heath, Cllr Ellen West  
Apologies for absence: None received.  
The Chair reported that Cllr Richard Hibbard had decided to step down as a councillor. The Council resolved to place on record its warm appreciation for Richard's contribution and to wish him well for the future.
2. Declarations of interest and written requests for dispensation - None made.
3. Open Forum

- a. Remembrance Service – the Chair had attended the service in Hope Mansell on behalf of the Council.
- b. In attendance Bill Sparkes, Tim Hardie

4. Minutes of meeting held on: 12 September 2023 – Accepted with minor amendments

5. Correspondence received, Note from Church Warden – to be dealt with under 10

6. Casual Vacancy and update from Personnel Sub-Committee.

The Chair reported that notice of a casual vacancy had been posted previously, and no election had been called during the statutory period, so the Council is free to co-opt a member onto the Council. Tim Hardie introduced himself, giving an overview of his background and reasons for wishing to join the Council, following which the Council agreed unanimously to co-opt Tim as a member. Following Cllr Hibbard's resignation, Herefordshire County Council will be informed and notice of another casual vacancy will be posted soon.

Personnel sub-Committee convened to oversee the recruitment of a new clerk, reported that the job description & application form have been updated. No candidates had yet been identified. Advertisements continue.

**Finance**

7. Review of Council finances & Precept & Insurance & HALC

Annual insurance premium approved at £649,70.

HALC – membership fee for half-year quoted as £323,70. Cllrs will review the benefits of HALC before committing. It was agreed to explore SLCC as a way of giving the (future) clerk access to induction and training materials.

Precept – Needs to be agreed by 31.12.23. Following discussion, it was agreed the Council needs a forward plan to scope proposed future expenditure and make the case for any necessary change in the precept. The current figure will pertain for now. The Council will establish a subcommittee begin scoping a forward plan. Clerk to convene the sub-committee with Cllr Heath & Cllr Hardie as members.

#### Roads, footpaths, rights of way

8. Appointment of Footpath Officer - Cllr Hardie agreed to taken on this role.

9. Culvert/ Grit/ Drainage/ Balfour Beatty Schedule/ Lengthsman work-plan.

Grit bins have been replenished following previous report to Balfour Beatty of the Council's condition survey.

Fly-tipped rubbish had been cleared promptly from Eunice Saunders Way following reporting by the clerk. Clerk to contact lengthsman regarding leaf cleaning programme in New Year.

£250 work for lengthsman yet to be completed. In Hand.

Clerk write to Weston Clerk requesting they to add Bartwood Lane passing-places to their Lengthsman plan.

#### Local amenities

10. a. Request for funding from church warden- Contribution proposed by Cllr Billings of £50. Approved.

b. Litter picking – Thanks to Meri Mayhew, Richard Cook, & G Phelps.

#### Planning

11. a. No new notices published since last meeting.

b. Review of planning policy - Draft updated policy to be prepared & circulated by the Clerk

#### Climate emergency and environment

12. Update on community survey – Cllr Billings presented the headline outputs from the online survey.

23 responses were received, of which 14 shared contact details, indicating interest in further involvement. Preferences expressed for future projects showed clear favourites.

Cllr Billings concluded that, while the response-rate was not huge, there is clearly interest within the parish regarding this issue, and a discussion ensued about next steps.

It was agreed that a separate meeting will be convened in the Spring to plot next steps. Cllr Billings to email the individuals on the list and place an update in Weston News.

#### Policing and crime prevention

13. a. To confirm policing priorities. Priorities confirmed as: road safety, crime prevention and anti-social behaviour.

b. To raise any issues.

Clerk To discuss continuing concern about the View Point with West Mercia Police liaison officer.

#### Communication

14. Forward plan

Update from the meeting to go in Weston News.

**Next meeting**

15. a. To raise matters for next meeting.

Planters by BLE gates.

Planning policy

Update from planning sub-committee

b. To note date of next and future meetings -

Hope Mansell Jan 9th

BLE 12<sup>th</sup> March

Hope Mansell 14<sup>th</sup> May

July 9<sup>th</sup> BLE

Hope Mansell 10<sup>th</sup> September

BLE 12<sup>th</sup> November

Meeting Closed 8:31

*Van Rijk*  
9/11/24