



PIXLEY & DISTRICT ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

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Minutes of the Annual Joint Parishes Meeting held on Wednesday 24th May 2017

Present

Mrs L Clothier (Parish Council Chairman), K Bray, Mrs J Cowell, K Davies, D Hewitt, I Pritchard, S Swaithe, Mrs M Thwaites, E Thompson and M Tristram
Three Crosses Ward Councillor Jonathan Lester
Janet Chester – Parish Clerk

1. **Welcome** - Councillor Clothier welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **Apologies for Absence** – Pelham Hawker, Allen Mawby and Mike Skittery
3. **To Consider Approval of the minutes of the previous annual parish meeting held on Monday 23rd May 2016 (previously circulated)**

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record and duly signed by the Chairman.

4. Annual Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council

“Annual Report for Pixley and District Parish Council May 24th 2017

It has been an interesting year with more than normal communications from our Parish Council (P C) with Herefordshire Council (H C) and strategic planners via meetings, emails, letters, phone calls. A meeting also took place with our MP Bill Wiggin at his surgery in Leominster. The subject that has taken up a lot of the PC time is the travellers site that is being assessed for development for 7 pitches at the Pickling Plant adjacent to the A438 after HC call for travellers sites in 2016.

Travellers Site.

In this review of the year, I will outline where we are at with the issue of the Travellers Site in part to inform our two new councillors who will be co-opted at the PC meeting to follow. A working group has been formed to gather information to present to the PC for scrutiny. HC has identified a shortfall of pitches in the county of 16 pitches in this first phase based on a report commissioned for them by a company called Arc 4 in 2015. Andrew Wynn a Pixley resident, has scrutinized this large report. He has identified a number of mis-calculations and assumptions that Arc 4 have supplied in their document. His arguments are persuasive and if correct, potentially present a serious problem for HC. We wait in anticipation to hear what HC have to say in response. His full report has been given to Jonathan Lester our ward councillor. A short summary of Andrew Wynns report is as follows:

“This short review notes that Arc4 have identified a shortfall of 19 pitches in the period 2014/15 – 2018/19 and observes that not only do the calculations not reflect the current definition of Traveller, but the calculations could themselves be overstating the shortfall by up to 63.”

HC have reduced the 19 to 16 pitches requirement for this phase as there has been some accommodation of pitches in the County.

The PC would very much like to thank Andrew Wynn for his diligence and support.

The Department for Communities and Local Government Planning policy for travellers sites states that local planning authorities should in producing their Local Plan:

- “Relate the number of pitches or plots to the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population size and density”
- “protect local amenity and environment”
- “ensure that travellers sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally”

The PC voted to reject the proposal for a 7 pitch travellers site at the pickling plant on the following grounds as stated in a letter to HC in September 2016.

1. 7 pitches would dominate and be disproportionate in relation to the 4 residential properties at Trumpet.
2. The Pickling plant is “away” from nearest settlements

3. The site is contaminated ground being a former pickling plant where hop poles were creosoted. The owner has had an enforcement noticed served to prevent him further dumping asbestos.
4. Adjacent to the pickling plant is a Special Wildlife Site, Whitfield Coppice and a developing tourist holiday caravan park. High walls and fences would be in breach of Local Planning policy H.
5. There is a business and tourist community at Trumpet with its public house, tea rooms and art centre and caravan park. HC say is keen to promote both tourism and business.
6. A previous application in 2005 at this location was refused due to highway safety, access and poor visibility. The situation has not altered. A 50 mph speed limit was in place at that time.

The PC is also concerned about the power of the local authority to enforce any restrictions placed on the site ie. any increase in the number of pitches allocated and the quality of provision of amenities for travellers on this site due to a possibility of an absentee landlord. This will be a private travellers site not under HC jurisdiction.

In February representatives of the PC met with strategic planners Angela Newey and Kevin Singleton at a travellers site drop in session. Notes of this meeting have been circulated and make depressing reading. Unsatisfactory answers to councillors questions further informed them that this application at the pickling plant appeared to be a "done deal" as HC are under some pressure by Central Government to make provision for more pitches based on scrutiny of need which to HC has based on the Arc 4 report. Since then a further development has occurred in that the owner of the adjacent caravan park has submitted an application for 9 pitches for travellers on his caravan site. The time line for development of these plans are as follows:

Technical assessment ...ongoing.

Council approval of submission documentSummer 2017

Pre-submission publication...Autumn 2017

Public examination/ secretary of state representative and later

Adoption.....winter 2017

Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The Steering Group for the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) appointed David Nicholson as consultant. Funding was applied for and granted. A questionnaire was written and circulated to all parishioners. There was a 62% return of questionnaires. David Nicholson says that this has been a very good response rate.

We will hold an open meeting for parishioners to attend as part of the next stage of progressing the NDP and hear the results of David Nicholson's findings of the questionnaire responses. This will take place on June 21st.at the WI Hall Munsley.

Many thanks to Janet Chester for organising vast amounts of extra admin and printing associated with this important project for the parish.

Parish Lengthsman.

We had a change of parish lengthsman this year, appointing George Day who is well known by the local farming community. He has already carried out remedial ditch and drainage work in the parishes of Aylton and Pixley and is planning to make good at the end of August part of the LM8 public footpath which is flooded for many months of the year. New gates are on order from BB for the Herefordshire Way public footpath but as yet they have not been delivered. We have successfully spent our P3 and lengthsman budgets for the year.

Defibrillator.

A successful application for a defibrillator has been made and is to be sited at The Trumpet Garage where employees have already attended a first aid course. The PC plan to hold its own first aid courses for parishioner to attend where resuscitation and use of defibrillator will be taught. This is very good news as more people are coming to this area around Trumpet with growing businesses like The Nest and Newent Plant Centre. Unfortunately with growing footfall so the likelihood of unforeseen events could happen. It is very encouraging prospect in educating the public in first aid as one never knows when there could be cause to use it.

Ashperton Bridge.

There are ongoing major concerns regarding Ashperton bridge which is to be replaced in 2018/19. Network Rail are planning to replace "like for like" in other words to keep the present configuration of the bridge. The PC have raised concerns over this and feel it is a short-sighted approach. This is a once in a life time opportunity to put in place, a bridge that reflects the demands of traffic in the 21st century. Local residents report that an accident happens on average once a month. Network Rail say that they will make the bridge safe by forming hard crash barriers extending alongside the road. The PC has pointed out that instead of a car being forced into the hedge line when faced with a large container lorry in the centre of the road, a car will be forced back into the centre of the road by these crash barriers so colliding with the oncoming traffic. This means that the accidents that do occur could be potentially more serious and result in loss of life. It is a good opportunity for the bridge to be re-sited alongside adjacent land owned by Network rail and re-configured so as to be straight. This of course will entail greater expense for Network rail. As yet we have had no communication from Councillor Rhone who is Minister for Highways. It was the PC who informed Councillor Rhone of Network Rails plans, and not Network Rail themselves.

Planning Appeals.

Haygrove successfully won their appeal to increase polytunnel coverage on land adjacent to the A438 on the slopes above the 80 meter mark. The PC had objected to this planning application. HC had also objected but a representative for the Secretary of State found in Haygroves favour.

We said goodbye to Wendy Cox who resigned as Vice Chairman for the PC. We are sorry to see her go but send her very best wishes for the future and thank her for the time she has spent on the PC. But we welcome two new members onto the Parish Council, Ian Pritchard and Mark Tristram.

7. Update on Proposed Neighbourhood Plan Development

After public consultation the Parish Council have undertaken a joint Neighbourhood Development Plan for the parishes of Aylton, Little Marcle, Munsley and Pixley. A questionnaire was sent to all residents in March 2017 with the responses currently undergoing analysis, the results of which will be presented at a public meeting on 21st June at Munsley WI Hall.

8. Financial Report from the Parish Council

The clerk advised that figures had been internally audited by Mrs Paula Badham and were subject to the annual external audit.

Opening balances as at 1st April 2016 – current account £4383.50. Reserve account £2808.99
Income £8337.95 Expenditure £8886.06 plus unrepresented cheques £2269.33
Closing balances as at 31st March 2017 – current account £6103.30. Reserve account £2810.41.
The annual budget for 2017/18 has been set at £7400 and the precept raised to £6500 which has been requested and accepted.

9. Open Forum

No matters raised.

There being no further business the chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.55pm

Signed..... Dated.....
Chairman

