

**Draft
HARTLEBURY PARISH COUNCIL**

**A meeting of Hartlebury Parish Council was held at the Parish Hall, Hartlebury
on the 14th January 2020**

Present: Councillors Stephen Bateman, Christopher Day, Tony Miller and Peter Tomlinson

In Attendance: 70 members of the public.

1. Appointment of Chairman for this meeting

In light of there being no Chairman for this meeting, nominations were sought. Tony Miller proposed that Peter Tomlinson be elected Chairman for this meeting. This was seconded by Stephen Bateman and with no further nominations it was agreed that Peter Tomlinson be appointed as Chairman for this meeting.

Upon taking the Chair, Peter Tomlinson gave some background to why it had been necessary to hold this meeting with temporary parish councillors. It was noted that permission had to be sought from the Secretary of State to enable this to happen and that the temporary members would be standing down once new parish councillors had been co-opted later in the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from P/Cllr Sheridan Tranter.

3. Declarations of Interest

None

4. Dispensations

None

5. Report of the Alleged Breach of the Code of Conduct Enquiry

Peter Tomlinson circulated the following statement regarding this item which he then read out

“A member conduct complaint made against P/Cllr Sheridan Tranter was received by the Monitoring Officer at Wychavon District Council on the 15th August 2019. Following consideration of the complaint and submitted evidence, alongside the response of P/Cllr Tranter to the allegation, it was decided by the Member Conduct Committee Chairman, Independent Person and the Monitoring Officer that further investigation of the complaint was, in the circumstances, necessary and appropriate.

The matter was passed to, John Teasdale, Solicitor, for full investigation. During his investigation Mr Teasdale spoke to a total of 9 people which included the complainant and also P/Cllr Tranter. 7 of these people were interviewed. The investigating officer also considered a substantial amount of documentation put forward and relied upon on by both the complainant and P/Cllr Tranter. The investigation took approximately 3 months, but following a full investigation which took into account the comments of those interviewed alongside all documentation provided, Mr Teasdale found on the balance of probabilities that two breaches of the Hartlebury Parish Council Code of Conduct had occurred.”

Peter Tomlinson then explained the process to deal with the report.

However, it was noted that P/Cllr Tranter’s brother had circulated a letter from P/Cllr Tranter advising that he was too ill to attend the meeting and respond to the points raised in the report.

Meesha Patel, Wychavon’s Monitoring Officer, advised that Councillors could consider the report in P/Cllr Tranter’s absence or could adjourn to a later date. Councillors present agreed to consider the report in his absence.

Councillor Christopher Day felt that it was very sad that the situation had arisen, however the report was very comprehensive and he was satisfied with it.

Councillor Tony Miller thanked everyone for attending the meeting and added that it showed how important the parish council was. He added that as a parish councillor there was a code of conduct which had to be adhered to. Any dispute should be voted on and the matter closed. Parish councillors also had a duty of dignity and respect for the clerk, who was essentially an employee of the parish council. He closed by saying that he was disappointed that this matter had arisen but he was pleased with the report.

Councillor Stephen Bateman added that if councillors were happy with the nature and scope of the recommendations that the report should be accepted.

It was unanimously agreed that the report should be accepted and that this should be reported back to the Monitoring Officer who would consider it in light of P/Cllr Tranter’s letter advising that he would not be accepting the recommendations.

6. Adjournment of Meeting to hear from:

1) Members of the Public

The following issues were discussed:

Planning application 19/0686/FUL Cllr Chris Rogers, Wyre Forest District Councillor and Worcestershire County Councillor raised the issue around this proposed site for 5 gypsy plots which contravened the South Worcestershire

Development Plan (SWDP). Concerned residents were asked to stand up and over half of the public present stood up.

Another resident advised that access to the site was dangerous as it was a single track road. She added that there was no mains water or sewerage along that road.

It was noted that some of the concerns such as access were relevant planning reasons to object to the application and it was noted that D/Cllr Stephen Bateman could request that the case be heard by Wychavon's Planning Committee.

Hartlebury Parish Council – a member of the public raised a concern over how Wychavon District Council had dealt with the matter of the parish councillors and clerk resigning. It was acknowledged that the parish council used to be strong and residents hoped it would go back to being this way again. Peter Tomlinson suggested that the new parish councillors took advice from CALC who had been involved from the start.

Outstanding Issues – David Simons explained that he had some practical issues regarding some elements of work e.g. with the car park, that needed signing off. He explained that the contractors were no longer responsible.

P/Cllr Sheridan Tranter – a member of the public asked whether a previous complaint against P/Cllr Tranter had been taken into account. Peter Tomlinson advised that if a councillor “stood down” then any investigation ceased.

School issues – a member of the public advised that there were still concerns about taxis attending the school and blocking the roads. There had been a suggestion of having double yellow lines put down to prevent this

Peter Tomlinson thanked the members of the public that had raised issues and advised that the new parish council would need to get up and running as soon as possible to take these matters on board.

2) County Councillor Peter Tomlinson

Previously circulated so taken as read.

3) District Councillor Stephen Bateman

D/Cllr Stephen Bateman made the following points:-

- 1) Community Recognition Awards – closing date for nominations is 31 January 2020.
- 2) 2020 Community Grants Scheme – applications need to be in by 27 March 2020.
- 3) A Temporary Events Notice review group had been set up to look at how such applications are processed.
- 4) SWDP – call for sites will have a minimal impact for Hartlebury.

5) Boundary change review – this is taking place for Wychavon as a whole and would be looking at ward sizes and numbers of members. Will take effect from the elections in May 2023.

7. Finance – Approval of Payments from October to December 2019

Agreed

8. Co-option of Parish Councillors

Councillor Peter Tomlinson read out the names of those people that had stated they wished to be co-opted onto the parish council:-

- Alan Buck
- Lesley Cleaver
- Sophie Howard
- Tim Ingham
- Laura Meredith
- C J McKenzie-Rowan
- David Rushforth
- Ray Kirby

At this point David Rushforth withdrew his request for co-option and it was noted that neither Sophie Howard nor Laura Meredith were present to sign their declarations of acceptance of office.

Therefore Alan Buck, Lesley Cleaver, Tim Ingham, C J McKenzie-Rowan and Ray Kirby signed their acceptance of office and took their place at the table.

9. Election of Chair of the Parish Council

Tony Miller, seconded by Stephen Bateman, moved and it was unanimously resolved that Ray Kirby be elected as Chair of Hartlebury Parish Council.

There being no further nominations, Ray Kirby was unanimously elected.

10. Election of Vice Chair of the Parish Council

Alan Buck, seconded by Peter Tomlinson, moved and it was unanimously resolved that Tim Ingham be elected as Vice-Chair of Hartlebury Parish Council.

There being no further nominations, Tim Ingham was unanimously elected.

At this point Councillors Christopher Day, Tony Miller and Peter Tomlinson stood down from the Parish Council.

11. Minutes of the Meeting held on the 3 September 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on the 3 September 2019 were approved unanimously.

12. Planning Issues

1) New Applications for Comment

i) New application for 5 gypsy plots – new application was in with a closing date for comments of 30 January. It was proposed that this should be called in to the Planning Committee in light of the strong feelings raised by members of the public earlier in the evening.

ii) 19/02662/FUL – P/Cllr Lesley Cleaver now disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in this application.

iii) 19/02638/HP

In light of the Parish Council having only just been appointed, it was suggested that this item be adjourned in order for parish councillors to consider these applications further.

In relation to the new application for 5 gypsy plots, it was agreed that Stephen Bateman ask planning officers for an extension to allow the parish council to give their comments.

13. Parish Council Budget and Precept 2020/21

It was noted that the Clerk normally gave the background information to this and, in light of there being no Parish Clerk at the moment and, following the suspension of standing orders to ask the Monitoring Officer for advice, it was suggested that the rest of the meeting be adjourned to another date (before the end of January 2020) to be agreed in order for the new parish councillors to receive “training” on the budget and planning items in order for them to make a fully-informed decision.

The meeting was adjourned at 20:53pm