

Clerk to the Council: **Joy Pegrum**

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LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
FOUNDATION



Coughton Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Coughton Parish Council Wednesday 30th January 2019, at The Old School Nursery, 7pm

Present: **were** Councillors: John Gittins (in the Chair), Lynne Stanton; Maureen McTavish;
Len Carter, Roy Piddington & the Clerk, Joy Pegrum, with 4 members of the public

1) **Public participation (total 10 minutes)**

Questions were asked regarding the damaged Salt Bin in Coughton Lane

2) **To receive apologies for absence – None received**

3) **To receive Disclosure of Interests – None disclosed**

4) **To agree Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 26th November 2018**
– agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman

5) **School Report – none received (item 7B refers)**

6) **District and County Councillor's reports – none received/no attendees**

7) **To receive reports on actions and matters arising from previous minutes**

A **Clerk reported** on the **previous** meeting's minuted actions as follows:

Councillor Surgeries as coffee mornings - no community interest

State of Roads - list of reported report provided to Councillors

Adoption of Ford area - legal advice strongly recommended and cost prohibitive: if not adopted an option remains not to maintain if funds cannot be prioritised for this in the future

Nursery Shed storage - internal battery LED purchase – **carried forward pending base construction**

VASA's request for funding – CPC response sent but no revised application subsequently received back

GDPR Declaration – signed off & filed

CPC Newsletter – Distributed December - very little response

In addition:

Precept – 2019-20 demand sent to SDC on December

Defibrillator Training - the first session booked for 21st Feb with Max Ashley Collins and Alcester First Responders. (*Cllr Piddington agreed to be Council liaison and to manage room set up and refreshment supply*)

Damaged salt bin Coughton Lane (opp. 20) – new bin purchased & when fitted *Clerk will notify Highways who will fill it & top up the others*

David Laband – Sympathy card was sent on behalf of Council to Mrs Laband, and a tribute sent to Link.

Council Office Cover: Clerk will be away from the office 8th Feb – 3rd March; arrangements agreed by Cllr Gittins are in place for cover that will ensure normal access by the public and continuity for Council business.

- B School meeting regarding car park** – Councillor Gittins reported on his meeting with the school's head teacher Mr Walsh. The school is now an 'Academy' but still reliant on WCC funding for school fabric (grounds and buildings) maintenance and development. It is a low priority for the allocation of such funds since conditions are much worse in other parts of the County. Longer term options are still being explored but unlikely to render any solution in the near future. (See Appendix 1 for the full report.) A promised report and consultation from WCCs Caroline Burrows on the Safer Routes to School project has not been forthcoming. Other suggestions for collection & drop off management were put forward but were generally considered unlikely solutions. *ACTION: Clerk to follow up with Ms Burrows & Cllrs Gittins & Stanton to follow up with the school to explore all other suggestions.*
- C Road inspections** – Cllrs Gittins reported that he and Cllrs Carter & Piddington had carried out a thorough survey of erosion in all three Village side roads. A comprehensive location report and plan has been produced sent to Highways with a suggestion that soft verges should be replaced in future. Photographs are also now on file to enable monitoring of repairs or further degeneration. *ACTION: Clerk to follow up with Highways at suitable intervals*
- D Bridge Plaque** - Councillor Gittins explained that this is being produced free of charge and is in hand but completion is still awaited. He also confirmed that it will now include the words '**Railway Bridge**'. *Action: Cllr Gittins will follow up and report on progress to the next meeting*
- E Nursery Storage** – Cllr Gittins reported that an approach has been made in the village. In the short term the shed has been secured to the wall. *ACTION: Cllr Gittins will follow up.*

8) **Village Reports**

- A **Transport and traffic report** – Cllr Gittins summarised his letter of deep concern regarding the routing of traffic from the Redditch Gateway development (see Appendix). This has been circulated to neighbouring parish Councils; WCC & SDC officials and councillors and Nadim Zahawi MP. Responses are awaited. Promised feedback from steering group members Studley Cllrs Beaman, Rickhards and Wright has not yet been forthcoming. **Action: Cllr Gittins will collate and report back on responses to his letter and the Clerk will follow up with Studley’s Clerk.**
 - B **Ford Report** – Councillor Carter reported that the meeting with Mr Walker of RSTS had gone ahead but that the work is not really appropriate to his operation. Mr Walker has advised that a regime of initial ‘flail cutting’ and regular follow up cuts would be better than chemical weed control. **ACTION Cllr Carter will follow up with others on his contractor list to arrange for this work to be undertaken.**
 - C **Flood group** – reported that no current projects or funding is available and that WCC have adopted a policy of repairing rather than improving flood defences, effectively treating rather than preventing floods. Drains are currently clear and effective.
 - D **Community group** – Coughton Court’s winter get together was earlier than usual and not so well attended. The ‘Festive Feet’ walk was well supported by around 40 residents (and dogs!) – organiser thanks were expressed to the Throckmorton for refreshments provided. The next cemetery tidy up is planned for 13/14th April & the Village Fete date has been set by the Court for 13th July.
- 9) **Planning:** New Planning Notices & decisions (as listed on the CPC website) since last full meeting were noted and considered with further decisions made as follows:
- 3 Birmingham Road** – Listed Building repairs supported.
 - Coughton Lodge Farm** – no objections raised to either application.
 - Redditch Gateway** - application to move footpaths & remove hedges is a concern to Councillors, but it was resolved not to object provided that the regulations flagged by the County Council Rights of Way Department were attended to and that other environmental/habitat regulations were also followed if appropriate. **Clerk to post application comments to this effect.**
- 10) **Finance & Accounts**
- A RFO’s Financial Statement & Schedule Of Authorised Payments made to date were presented and accepted (see Appendix)
 - B Quarterly budget review was presented and accepted (see Appendix). Payment of budgeted donations to support The Link parish magazine and cemetery maintenance were authorised. **ACTION: RFO to effect payments to PCC**

11) **Governance**

- A **Motion to discontinue Council Surgeries due to lack of interest from residents** was discussed, but the decision from September's meeting to review this provision at the May AGM was upheld.
- B **Motion to agree a new date for MAY's AGM & meeting, due to the election schedule:** the regulations controlling this were explained by the Clerk and **22nd of May at 6.30pm** was set as the date for the AGM, **immediately followed at 7pm by the regular meeting.**
- C **Motion to increase the expenditure previously agreed at September's meeting for the Community Appreciation Award** – it was agreed unanimously that this should be doubled to enable 2 awards to be made this year, at a maximum **total cost of £220**
- D **Motion to consider nominations & agree recipients for Community Appreciation Award** - nominations were considered and a decision made to recognise the extensive voluntary work of local couple Karen Gazey and Denis Hackett, along with long serving Councillor and community stalwart Cllr Maureen McTavish, who will be resigning from the Council in advance of the elections in May. These awards will be made at the Parish Assembly meeting in March. **ACTION: Clerk to purchase the agreed items for awards.**
- E **Motion to agree the method to be used for inter-meeting discussion & information:** discussion favoured continuation of the present web based system but this was not unanimous. A range of compromises will be tried for review at the next meeting. **ACTION: Clerk to notify Councillors by email when a new post goes on the website.**

12) **Correspondence**

- A **A resident's letter** (previously circulated), expressed ongoing concerns over the number of vehicles parking for extended periods in the Lanes with engines running to power heaters. A number of solution suggestions were included. **Action: Cllrs Gittins and Stanton will take this forward to their intended meeting with Mr Walsh and report back.**
- B **A Broadband update** was received by Cllr Gittins: fibre optic connection is now available in the village & residents should contact their provider for details of connection charges: BT customers may not be charged.

13) **Any Other Business**

- A **The Parish Assembly** was confirmed for 7.30pm March 25th, immediately following the ordinary meeting which will be shortened to cover only essential business and begin at 6.30. The format will be similar to last year.
- B **A training session on 'Chairing Meetings'** was attended by Cllr Piddington, who reported finding it interesting and worthwhile. He further flagged other resources available from training provider WALC.

14) **Date of next meeting – was confirmed as 25th March at 6.30pm.**

Appendix 1

Notes of discussion with Adam Walsh on 15 Jan 2019

We had limited time available for this meeting but were able to discuss the more pressing points. Regardless of a car park being available in the foreseeable future, it was acknowledged that all options for mitigating the effects of school traffic had been exhausted. Warwickshire's walk to school initiative could not be introduced as it would still involve mixing pupils and traffic along the lane(s), and the option of using Coughton Court would not be taken up by school parents because of the distance involved. Reducing the level of parking around the school would increase the extent of parking elsewhere.

Warks CC had indicated well over 18 months ago that the seven figure sum for access onto the A435, effectively removed any likelihood of a car park. (The figure had been quoted by Carolyn Burroughs) The possibility of a car park being provided by Thomas White had disappeared, if only for the fact that leasing costs could not be afforded by the school. The state of the school fabric, alone, and the need to ensure its full establishment prevented a car park development under the current funding arrangements.

Based on the projected pupil populations and the understanding that other schools have very limited scope for expansion, Coughton School has not given up seeking other options for funding. This may include the Community Infrastructure Levy.

This then led onto the concerns, raised by the Parish Council, in connection with the Eastern Gateway Development. Bearing in mind that "the village" had not been consulted over traffic management, it was no surprise that the school was unaware of this development and its implications. The proposed "Recommended Route" for HGVs with no recognition or alleviation of its impact on Coughton was discussed. The emphasis on HGVs seemed to avoid the likely larger growth of commuter traffic. It was agreed that I would draft a joint letter to Warks CC, with copies to relevant agencies, expressing our joint fears over the effect that future traffic would bring.

John Gittins

Appendix 2 - 3rd Quarterly Budget Review

Expense Type	Budget 2018-2019	July Review	Oct Review	Dec Review To Date	Notes & Rationale to 2018/19 Budget when set	Review: 1st Qtr to July 2018	Review: 2nd Qtr to Oct 2018	Review: 3rd Qtr to Dec 2018
OPERATIONAL COSTS								
Clerk salary	3,644	723	2,023	3283	Allows for annual increment to NJC point 16 - £9.20 p.hr (rounded) for 2018/19	Includes £22.50 under payment from Feb 2018	Slightly up	Slightly up
Telephone/Travelling/Office Costs	300	33	58	85	Includes travel necessitated by training commitments	Training travel expenses		
Insurance	300	149	149	149	Expected increase due to new insurance co. + increased asset cover & ins tax	New provider - below projection		
ICO Fee - (Data Protection)	35	35	35	35	ICO registration is a legal requirement but was not on last year's budget	Annual fee paid		
Internal Audit	40	50	50	50		Higher increase than expected		
External Audit	0	0	0	0	We SHOULD be exempt for 2018 but this	Exempt from external Audit		
Printing	0	0	0	10	see admin printing under Stationery/Postage below and office expenses			
Village Event	150	0	0	0	Parish Assembly			
Village Maintenance	450	11	211	211	Ford ongoing costs: weed control and SDC Litter collection; path repair	signage Repair (re-assigned to capital expense)	Ford maintenance	
Stationery / Postage	10	0	0		1 x toner + 1x ream paper + postage			

WCC - School Hire	95	0	0	0	Allows for poss rate rise	Nursery FOC but may incur some costs		
Election	0	0	0	0	None planned: any unexpected election cost will be met from reserves			
Website/Internet	55	0	0	0	Allows for poss rate rise			
Total	5,079	1001	2525	3823	To be met from precept with shortfall from reserves			
OTHER COSTS								
Clerk/Councillor Training & Resources	1,080	115	115	130	Inc Cilca certification for Clerk & training for new councillor			
S137 grants & expenses	1,332	12	163	463	Comm. services & grants - capped @176 * 7.57 7.86 max spend £1383	plan fee for defibrillator installation	Defibrillator accessories + CAW Grant	Defibrillator installation
Capital expense	1,500	240	296	556	Seats & recreation etc. + upgrade of Village gates & speed signs	Replacement litter bin	Meeting Chairs & table	Nursery Storage shed for chairs etc
Build to reserves	0	0	0	0	Sufficient reserves are in hand			
Total	3,912	367	574	1149				
SUBS & DONATIONS								
WALC membership	100	104	104	104	Allows for a possible increase	+ small increase		
Link magazine	100	0	0	0				
Churchyard Maintenance	230	0	0	0				
Total	430	104	104	104				
Total Expenditure	£9,421	£1,472	£3,203	£5,076				

INCOME								
Village Plan sales	0	0	0	0				
Precept	4,500	2,250	4,500	4,500		1st precept payment received	2nd precept payment received	
VAT Reclaim	210	439	439	439	Includes payment received for 2017-18	Repayment of VAT on 2017/18 expenditure		
Village Community Fund	0	0	0	0				
Transparency fund	0	0	0	0				
Total Income	4,710	2,689	4,939	4,939				
Balance	-4,711	1,216	1,735	-137	This is a deliberate negative balance planned to reduce reserves to a more appropriate level.			
Projection								
End of 2017/18 reserve balance	10,800	10,800	10,800	10,800				
2018/19 expense & disposal bal to date	-4,711	1,216	1,735	-137	Full review not possible until end of year			
50% of precept for contingencies retained in reserve	-2,250	-2,250	-2,250	-2,250				
Remaining reserve for reduction 2019-2021	3,839	9,766	10,285	8,413	Following risk assessment, a reduction of reserves over 3 years via S137 community services, grants and donations is planned			

Appendix 3



To:

Warwickshire County Council:

- Monica Foggarty
- Izzy Seccombe

Stratford District Council

- Tony Jefferson

CC Nadim Zahawi; Mike Gittus; Clive Rickhards & Neighbouring Councils

(via email)

Joy Pegrum

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23rd January 2019

RE: Redditch Eastern Gateway Development, its proposed route for southern access to and from the development and the manner in which compliance for the route would be managed.

We are writing on behalf of the many who reside and work in the villages along the stretch of the A435 between Studley and Alcester and the children, parents and staff who attend Coughton C of E Primary School.

To summarise briefly, the proposed route in question would be from the proposed development at the bottom of Gorcott Hill towards Redditch, through the Oakenshaw and Crabbs Cross roundabouts, continuing along the Slough in Studley and then re-joining the A435 at the Sernal Ash junction.

The serious impact on this section of the Highway network cannot be underestimated. There has been no assurance from the Highways Authority nor the developers on how the effects of increased traffic through the villages will be mitigated. Despite the tortuous route around Redditch and Studley the additional traffic will regroup with the existing traffic flow at Sernal Ash and then channel back onto the A435. There has been no active consultation with residents or businesses that will be affected by the development nor any presentation on the proposals for managing the traffic that will result.

From local knowledge and understanding of the proposed route it is obvious to all that the two most dangerous road junctions in the area are at Sernal Ash and the Crabbs Cross roundabout. Routing the southern access through both of these junctions is certain to be disastrous without some major improvements or re-routing.

Coughton (like its neighbour, Kings Coughton) is a village that is increasingly split by the A435. Traffic levels of all types are increasing annually – car numbers alone have increased by over 15% since 2001, and last year's Routing Survey commissioned by the County Council ⁹

shows that the A435 between Alcester and Studley (i.e. through Coughton) carries the second highest level of all road vehicles in the southern section of the study area. Furthermore, across the whole of the study area, the only two sections of road taking higher levels of traffic are both dual carriageways.

The recent vehicle study suggested that the increased levels of HGVs would be minimal but it was clearly high enough to justify special consideration for the Mappleborough Green section of the A435. Despite finding this 'minimal level' hard to accept, HGVs are not the only traffic likely to increase on this route. Significant increases of business and commuter traffic for a development of this significance appear to have been ignored, and did not figure anywhere in the study.

The lack of any attention to our plight is even more unacceptable when considering that a public enquiry back in 2003 identified that a bypass for the route would relieve "dangerous, damaging and unhealthy conditions" for residents and motorists.

In the absence of any form of bypass we cannot accept a preferred route that supports southern access along the existing A435. There should be an infrastructure in place that would facilitate efficient access to and from the development utilising the motorway system to minimise impact on surrounding communities. Furthermore, this should include suitable and enforceable deterrents to all heavy vehicles between Kings Coughton and Studley.

The Eastern Gateway development is not the only contributor to future traffic growth. The Arden Industrial Estate and the Allimore Lane developments in Alcester will put even greater strain on the highway network.

For more than ten years Coughton has been pushing for traffic improvements to deal with the increasing traffic flows. In that time a speed assessment was carried out that resulted in 30 mph limits on the side lanes in the village. Nothing else. The case for a reduced speed limit on the A435 and an enforced alternative route is now stronger than ever.

Coughton lies in the middle of this length of the A435. It is home to 150 residents, a very active agricultural economy, as well as the highly popular Coughton Court, owned by the National Trust. It has a centre that lies on a crossroad junction with the A435, fronted by thirteen listed buildings at the narrowest point of the main highway. It has a popular and successful school that attracts pupils from the surrounding areas of Alcester and Studley. The road layout demands access to and from the school that is dependent on use of the A435. A range of alternative options for dealing with the school traffic issues have been considered but cannot be achieved within available resources. The school (and nearby nursery) generate levels of traffic that impact on the three junctions with the A435 at peak times of the day. This becomes particularly acute when traffic flows are affected by factors such as traffic accidents, road works, and diversions on the motorway network. Many school children are required to cross the A435 at the peak times and there are many reports of near misses at the pelican crossing on which the children depend. Despite the efforts of the 'Safer Routes to School Initiative', a large number of vulnerable people are in the firing line of increasing levels of traffic. There have been many accidents along this stretch of the highway. Some of these have been very serious, and one month ago, there was a fatality.

We fully support development that is sustainable, but will not accept that our community, our environment, and our local economy are not only ignored but must then suffer as a consequence.

We insist that serious consideration is given to this matter at the earliest opportunity and look forward to receiving your response.