

REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

- The road over the bridge would be closed for 2/3 days the week commencing 5th March for traffic light maintenance. Cllr. Barnes had requested that during this time other maintenance work to the bridge be carried out as well as road marking etc.
- WCC budget had been set – an increase of 4.95% had been agreed
- Fire Station – a review of the Fire Services had been agreed.
Mrs. Keeley, Chairman of the Parish Council advised that members of the Parish Council had attended the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee and had advised County Council that it would do everything possible to keep Bidford Fire Station open. She added that it was one of the best in the county.
- The funds to review the B and C roads had been withdrawn
- The Minerals Development Workshop, which was taking place on Saturday 3rd March, had been moved from Leamington Spa to Bidford Parish Council Meeting room.

REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

- SDC budget had been set – an increase of 3.5% had been agreed.
- A request to install a glass bottle recycling at Broom Tavern had been received and Cllr. Slaughter had discussed this with Robert Weeks, Head of Environment, who advised that it was not District Council policy to collect trade waste. In view of this it was suggested they write and request Grundon's to give them a recycling facility. Cllr. Slaughter noted this item was on the Agenda.
- The recycling facility on the Anglo Saxon car park had been removed. As had been know, there was a Covenant on this land which restricted its use as a car park only. District Council had been served with an order to withdraw the recycling bins and was obliged to comply.

The Chairman then opened the Meeting at 8.10 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. Spiers is still unwell and in hospital.

The Chairman also mentioned a stalwart of the village, Mr. John Wilkes, who often attended Parish Council meetings. Mr. Wilkes had been unwell for some time and had recently died. Members of the Parish Council had attended his funeral at St. Laurence on Friday 23rd February

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

All members of the Council are reminded that in order to comply with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council on 29th April 2002, if any matter arises during the meeting in which they have Declared an Interest which could be prejudicial, they should withdraw from the room and not seek to improperly influence a decision about that matter.

There were none

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 22ND JANUARY 2007

Proposed by Cllr. Gerrard as being accurate and signed by the Chairman.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

a) SDC – Further request re alternative site for recycables/request from Broom

Tavern to have a bottle bank in their car park *This item had already been dealt with under the District Councillors Report. It was agreed the clerk should write to the Broom Tavern and suggest they contact Grundon's*

Request for meeting re contribution to CCTV costs. *It was agreed that she should be invited to come for the Parish Council meeting on Monday 30th April.*

b) WCC – i) Pension Fund – employers contribution remains unchanged

ii) Bidford Rd. Broom – *WCC are currently drawing up the plans which include putting up a “bend” sign as well as “cat’s eyes” to draw attention to the lay of the road.*

iii) Synopsis of Local Government White Paper (circulated)

iv) Maintenance of footway lighting quotation – *Not be available as WCC are having to add the Midsummer Gdns. Street lights. However, the cost per light is £13.50.*

v) Cost of installing lighting by bridge in Broom – *The quote received was £5,411 for Central Networks to bring the electricity over and £881.88 for the installation of the street light. His was considered too much. However, it was suggested that the Parish Council should look at the possibility of having a solar panel instead of having to bring the electricity over – the clerk to look into this and its cost and report back.*

vi) Railings by One Stop – *WCC Safety Inspectors have advised they should not be removed.*

c) WALC – February 2007 newsletter (circulated)

Code of Conduct Consultation (circulated)

Disability Discrimination Act

Calor Gas competition forms – *It was suggested that perhaps Broom could enter and the paperwork was passed on.*

Royal Garden Party 2007 – *It was agreed to propose the Chairman Mrs. Keely and her husband*

d) Communities and Local Government – Revised Model Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members. *A member of the Parish Council and the clerk had attended a meeting were these updates had been discussed.*

e) Audit Commission – proposal to extend the appointment of Clement Keys for

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2006/07 – No objection raised

- f) Local Works – Sustainable Communities Bill – update and further request – *The clerk was instructed to write to John Maples MP requesting his continued support*
- g) CVS – Details of the recent awards granted from the Rural Outreach Funds due to Mrs. Heather Gerrard, Bidford's Village Liaison Officer. *The Chairman congratulated Mrs. Gerrard on the excellent work she carried out for the community.*
- h) CPRE – February newsletter (circulated)
- i) Letter from resident in Wessons Rd. re the single goal post installed on Jubilee Close Play area – *The letter was read out and its contents discussed at length. The contents of the letter made clear that damage to garden fences, entry into gardens to recover balls etc. was taking place before the single goal post was installed. Members stated that it is a play area and that children will play football wherever it is possible to do so. The request from the goal post had come from a resident, letters had been circulated regarding this request, and only 7 people had replied. All this had been taken into account at the Parish Council meeting in October 2006 when this issue was on the Agenda. It was noted that no one had attended this meeting or called the clerk to express their opposition. As to the positioning of the goal post, this had been chosen with care to ensure it would not interfere with the children's play area, which the Parish Council is planning to reinstate – the bench to which the letter refers to is not directly behind the goal post but to one side. The legal topic note on nuisance was brought up – the clerk had sought advice on this – and its contents noted. However, it was again reiterated that the problems predated the installation of the goal post and that there were a growing number of children between the ages of 12-16 for whom the Parish Council had to find activities they would use and enjoy instead of them wondering around the village in large groups intimidating residents and hanging outside One Stop and Budgens. Members also recalled that the possibility of installing a stop ball fence had been discussed, but members found that it would be over imposing on the area and that weeds and litter would grow in the space between the stop ball and the garden fence creating its own problems. It was therefore agreed that, for the moment, the situation should be monitored. The clerk should give out the telephone number of the Anti Social Behaviour officer Kully Takhar, who should be contacted whenever problems arose so that a pattern can be established and then considered.*
- j) Letter from resident in Millers Bank re the stagnant pool by the weir on the River Arrow. It requires clearing due to rubbish and fly tipping. Also proposal to use opportunity to create a wildfowl refuge. – *The clerk has contacted the Environment Agency, who confirm the removal of rubbish is the responsibility of the landowner, in this case the Parish Council. However, they are looking at other aspects and will revert. Regarding the creation of a wildfowl refuge, both the Parish Council and the Environment Agency are in favour and this should be progressed.*
- Also, Willow trees on border to Mill Close are interfering with electric cables and may require pruning – *Due to the nature of this work (the trees are touching the high voltage cables) the work should be carried out by Central Networks, who have been contacted. They have confirmed they will carry out the work, it is free, but the lead period is up to 6 months.*

k) E-on Central Networks – Emergency pack. *A sample had been sent to the clerk and represents an example of what residents should have in their homes in the event of the a power cut:*

- *An analogue telephone*
- *A torch with batteries*
- *A wind up mobile phone charger*
- *A battery operated radio*
- *A foil blanket*
- *A reusable hand warmer*

It was proposed, and agreed that in view of the number of power cuts Bidford has, the clerk should write to E-on Central Networks and ask they supply all residents with such a pack – or at least the old and vulnerable.

l) Letter from SRUT – update on new and permanent dialysis unit, invitation to AGM on 8th March 2007 @ 7.30 and request for new Trustees. – *Noted*

5. AVAILABLE FOR INFORMATION

- a) West Midlands Rural Community
- b) Country Matters

6. BIDFORD FIRE STATION

As instructed, the clerk wrote to Cllrs. Hobbs and Chattaway, as well as Chief Officer William Brown and John Maples MP. Copies of correspondence were sent to County Cllr. Barnes The Parish Council was present at the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting of 5th February in support of Bidford Fire Station and the excellent work they carry out. Copy of the relevant part of draft Minutes are attached to these minutes.

The Parish Council were advised that County Council had agreed to a review of the Fire Services to be presented in October for consideration in the 2008/09 budget. A letter from John Maples confirmed this.

It was proposed, and agreed, that the Parish Council should write to County Council and advise it would like to be actively involved in the review and consultation process. William Brown

7. AWARDS FOR ALL UPDATE

The newly designed website has now been up and running since Christmas and been successful. More and more groups are represented and the information is more easily available. District Council has confirmed that it is compliant with the current regulations. The purchase of the two lap tops is slowly progressing and it is hoped that they will be available in March.

The clerk requested authorization to purchase a further lap top for use by the local community in the event the Parish Council was not successful in its request to obtain a refurbished computer from Community Computers. This was agreed as it would benefit residents who do not have their own computers.

8. ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT

The Archaeological Project Manager (WCC Museum Fields Services) had requested the Parish Council's support of a archeological outreach project. The Historic Environment Record is keen to organise a community landscape which would concentrate in one area of the county and she is suggesting the Bidford area. The project would involve systematically fieldwalking the areas surrounding the village, organised documentary research and the creation of an exhibition by participants. Of particular interest is the early history of the area and whether lack of archaeological finds to the west of the village is due to the fact that no one has looked there. It is hoped the local school and youth club would take an active role.

This request was warmly received by members and obtained the unanimous support of the Parish Council

9. REPORT FROM THE AMENITIES GROUP

- They had met with Bidford Angling Club who advised that they had decided against installing a disabled fishing platform as, having visited one, they found it would be used for other purposes than that it was meant for. They had found a design that would allow the disabled and older members of club to fish but it would require cutting into the bank. They requested authorization from the Council to install a trial peg, which the Council gave subject to permission from the Dudley Trust. The clerk confirmed she had written to them and was awaiting a reply.
- They had also met with residents from Broom to update them on the position of the playing are in Kings Lane. They were most unhappy and yet more delays. However, they acknowledged that the Parish Council was doing everything it could and confirmed they would be writing themselves to District Council expressing their disappointment at the way this matter had been handled.
- Play equipment Inspector's Report – the clerk had given instructions for all the repair work to be carried out. Authority was required for the replacement of swing seat at £77 each, which was proposed and agreed.

10. REPORT FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL SURGERY

This had been very successful with five residents coming to talk to members regarding:

- Positioning of the play equipment on Kings Lane (Broom resident)
- Update on the Friday Furlong Development and the United Carriers building (Resident of Waterloo Road)
- Request for a written “no cycling” sign for the footpath between Bramley Way and Westholme Court (resident of Westholme Court)
- Request for the Minerals Development Framework workshop to be moved to Bidford – the Parish Council agreed to this and was successful in its request.
- Request for a neighbourhood watch scheme to be reinstated. (Marleigh Rd., resident) She was advised of a PACT meeting on Wednesday 28th March when this could be brought up as a suggestion

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16. PLANNING APPLICATION

07/00247/TREE – Leather 102 High St. B50 4AF: G1 conifers reduce height by one third and re-shape crowns. Lift crowns to 1.2-1.5m

Support subject to approval by the arboricultural department

17. QUOTATION FOR CLEARING AND TIDYING IP OF DUGDALE AVENUE

Three quotations had been received and having considered them the Parish Council unanimously agreed to accept the quotation from Limebridge Services Ltd at £945 plus VAT. It was accepted that the work can now not be carried out until later in the year due to environmental and wildlife considerations.

18. ACCOUNTS

Purchases: 17,991.47

Wages 1,845.28

Payments Received:

Room hire 70.50

It was agreed that Cllrs. Hiscocks and Mrs. Keeley sign the cheques.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm

CLERK'S REPORT FEBRUARY 2007

- Go ahead was given for the improved fencing on the Big Meadow, as agreed at the PC meeting of 22nd January 2007. Contractor advised that the price of steel had increased and the angles had cost £100 more. As it has been agreed that the work should go ahead and the increased amount was within the agreed spending limit of the clerk, this was authorized.
- The matting for the play area on the Big Meadow will be installed the week commencing 5th March. Whilst work is going on, the gate will be locked to ensure the equipment is not used during this time.
- Cllr. Gerrard and I attended the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee and put a question to the Council (question attached hereto). They were assured by the Council that a feasibility study would form part of the decision and that consultation would take place. Cllr. Gerrard added that the work carried out by Bidford Fire Station had been proved to be important and essential on a number of occasions and that its closure would be strongly opposed by the Parish Council and the local community. At the budget meeting the next day, it was agreed that an independent review should take place, reporting in October 2007, to be considered for 2008/09 budget.
- Cllr. Gerrard and I also attended a training session on The Local Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities and its impact on Parish and Town Councils. Although interesting, and a good opportunity to network with other councils, it is clear that many issues still need to be developed and others require clarification. It is important to keep an eye on future developments. However, one thing that is clear is that a good working relationship/partnership between County, District and Parish/Town Councils is essential for a good local government that listens to and works with its community.

Examples of County and District Councils giving funds to Parish/Town Councils to help them to improve and offer better services were given and this is something that, perhaps, should be encouraged..

It will also be important to have acquired Quality Status – something this Parish Council is working towards and hopes to achieve within the year – as these councils will have their status recognized by statute in the new Local Government Act.

- Details of local community activities have been sent to District Council, including achievements by our very active Village Liaison Officer.
- Salford Rd. cemetery – having received complaints of mole infestation on the cemetery, I have requested Limebridge Rural Services to try and exterminate them as they are causing damage to the graves.

- Rural Cinema – I attended a meeting organised by District Council to look into the possibility of establishing a rural cinema in the district. The meeting was well attended and I am pleased to advise that a request for funds has already been sent by District Council.

The project is called Moving Pictures and it is hoped it will be working by 1st September 2007. I should like to thank all those residents who completed and returned the form left in the library (and other places). The response was tremendous and positive – in fact I only received two negative replies. As mentioned, I volunteered to be in the steering group so I should be in a position to keep you all well updated.

- A resident from Mill Close, Broom, has advised me that the willow trees separating Mill Close and the POS on Millers Bank are dangerously close to overhead power cables. I had asked for quotations for this work to be carried out but was advised that, especially in the case of two trees, it would be difficult to avoid trees falling on to the cables when being cut. Having assessed this potential risk, and despite there being a 6 months waiting list, I have agreed with Central Networks that they carry out the work safely and it will be free of charge.
- A Police and Community Together meeting will be taking place in the Parish Council Meeting Room on Wednesday 28th March @7.00 pm. This is an opportunity for the local community to meet with the Police and discuss their concerns.