

# Whittington Parish Council

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 7.00pm on Zoom.

**Present:** Cllrs Frank Davis, Gregory Hickman, Keith Stanton, Ian Johnson, Lucy Beaumont, Jill Whitby, Sue Manford.

**Also Present:** Mrs A Jones (Clerk), 4 members of the public.

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - MINUTES

### 1.21 Welcome and apologies

No apologies received.

### 2.21 Confirmation of the Minutes

To approve and authorise the signing of the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 14.05.2019.

Chair gave an update on some of the items covered at the 2019 meeting – Community Speedwatch and the Footpath along Burma Road from the Venue. A Community Speedwatch Group has now been set up and are awaiting training which has been delayed due to Covid restrictions. There has been progress with the implementation of a footpath. This has been included in the Place Plan and it has been confirmed to the Parish Council that funding for this path has been included in the Section 106 agreement. Any shortfall in funds will be covered by CIL.

### 3.21 Parish Council Annual Report

The Clerk read out the Annual Report on behalf of the Council:

On 23rd March 2020, we entered unprecedented times, with the whole of the UK going into a Full National Lockdown. Government measures in response to the crisis meant that the requirement for local authorities to hold public meetings in person with all members present in one place could not be met. In recognition of the problem of holding and attending meetings, and further to the lobbying of NALC and others, the Government included s.78 in the Coronavirus Act 2020. This section gave the Secretary of State the power to make Regulations to make provisions for the holding of remote meetings.

Except for the March meeting and the Annual Parish Meeting, Whittington Parish council carried on with their business, meeting as usual on the 4th Tuesday of the Month. Meetings moved online to Zoom and we all quickly became accustomed to this new remote way of working.

In May, Cllr Jill Whitby stood down as Chair, after a 3-year term and Cllr Frank Davis took on the role, with Cllr Lucy Beaumont being elected as Vice-Chair.

The streetlighting project continued throughout Lockdown. In March 2020, a further 99 lights were converted to LED and in July, a further 34 were converted, along with upgraded brackets. This leaves just 16 lights left to convert, which forms part of the final stage of the project, where columns will also be upgraded. The conversions have saved the parish council around 60% on electricity charges and reduced maintenance costs by around 100%. Annual condition surveys will continue to take place and columns replaced as and when required.

Following the disappointment of the Christmas Lights in 2019, a wonderful contribution from the community meant that new lights could be erected on the tree, on the Three Trees Green – a big thank you to the community for part funding these. This year, the Parish Council added to the display further, by hiring six column mounted bracket lights and these were put around the Church Yard. The feedback on these was excellent so this is something the Parish Council is looking to expand on in 2021.

With the help of West Mercia Police, a Community Speedwatch group has now been formed in Whittington and once training can be carried out, the team will be out and about in the designated spots, recording speed data that will be analysed by the Safer Roads Team.

With further support from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Ambassador Fund, the Parish Council have been able to install two more Vehicle Activated Signs – one in Pen-y-Bryn and another in Babbinswood.

The deteriorating condition of Station Road has continued to be at the forefront of complaints and the news that it has been included in Shropshire Council's Capital Funding Programme for resurfacing in April is welcomed.

In these difficult times, the Parish Council has continued to support the community through grants and donations. The Parish Council continue to support Whittington Youth and in 2020 this was through a Grant to fund the Youth Club and an additional grant to fund a Holiday Club. At the most recent meeting in March, the council approved another grant to help support the 2021 Easter Holiday Club. Donations have also been made to The Brownies, The Community Centre, The Senior Citizen's Hall, The Castle, Friends of Whittington Cemetery and Oswestry Men's Sheds. The Parish Council have also earmarked a £4000 grant to be paid in 2021, to the Castle, to support with the development of a new toilet block. The Castle is a big tourist draw to the area and sadly it has lost so much funding and income due to the pandemic with the cancellation of almost all of its planned events in 2020.

The playground at Fitzgwarine was closed during the first lockdown, but has remained open since. Early 2020, the swing was replaced and more recently an order has been placed to replace the grassmats beneath the 3-point swing. The Council are in the process of collating feedback on the Play Area to find out from its users what improvements they would like to see in 2021.

The development at Castle Keep has brought new residents to the Parish. The Parish Council were asked to offer names for the roads in the development, and these were agreed by Shropshire Council. Cygnet Close and Rowson Road (after local teacher Mrs Jean Rowson) were the first roads to be developed, they will be followed by Molesworth Way and Mellor Meadows, in tribute to Doug Molesworth and Ian Mellor, when Phases 2 and 3 are completed. The new Community Car Park at this end of the Village is a welcomed addition and the Parish Council are currently working to improve the lighting of this area.

As we move into the 2021/22 Financial Year, the Parish Council has lots of projects and plans to be progressing with and these were agreed and recorded in the Parish Council's Project Plan, a copy of which can be found on the website. All the yearend accounts for 2020/21 will also be available on the website shortly.

We are now in the pre-election period which runs up until the elections on 6th May. If anyone is interested in becoming a councillor or would like to find out more, feel free to ask questions in the public forum or ring / email me.

On behalf of us all at the Council, we would like to thank the residents of the Parish for your support over the last 12 months and we look forward to 2021 with renewed optimism that life may soon return to "normal".

Stay safe and please continue to observe the Government restrictions.

The Clerk also presented draft year end financial figures as part of the report, ahead of the Council's year end.

#### 4.21 Annual Reports from Organisations in the Parish

**Reports were received from:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Whittington Brownies
- Friends of Whittington Cemetery
- Senior Citizen's Hall
- Whittington Castle
- The Church
- The Community Centre
- Whittington Youth
- Whittington Together

**RESOLVED** to note all reports and people were thanked for their contribution.

#### 5.21 Parish Matters / Open Forum - electors are invited to ask questions

- No matters were raised.

#### 6.21 Closing remarks by the Chairman

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.

**The meeting was closed by the Chairman 19.52**