

# LITTLE WOLFORD PARISH MEETING

## Minutes of the General Assembly of 18 October 2017 held in The Wolfords Village Hall

**Present:** Beryl Braithwaite (BB), Gunter Doering (GD), Ralph Doering (RD), David Farman (DF), Jane Revere (JR), Michael Revere (MR), Dave Webb - Executive Director, Stratford-on-Avon District Council (DW).

The meeting opened at 7.35pm.

### 1. Election of Interim Chairman:

Bill Keys having resigned as Chairman of the Parish Meeting, the Chair was taken by DW in his capacity as the sole remaining Parish Trustee. DW welcomed attendees and explained why he was in the Chair. He then called for nominations for someone to take the Chair for the remainder of the meeting. DF indicated that he was prepared to do so, was proposed by BB, seconded by RD, and duly elected. DF then took the Chair.

In order to allow DW to leave the meeting at the earliest opportunity, DF proposed proceeding directly to Item 5 of the Agenda, and this was agreed.

### 5. Future of the Parish Meeting:

DF reminded the meeting of the past problem of persuading anyone to take on the role of Chairman and that, had Bill Keys not stepped forward at the last minute at the Annual Assembly of 25 April 2017, we should have proceeded, as agreed at the Extraordinary Assembly of 21 March 2017, to vote on a resolution to request a Community Governance Review, the preferred outcome of which would be the formation of a Joint Parish Council for Great and Little Wolford. He reminded the meeting of the wording of the resolution that had been agreed with Great Wolford Parish Council, and intimated that he now intended proposing the same resolution unless anyone could come up with a viable alternative solution.

RD stated that he felt it important that the Parish of Little Wolford should retain its autonomy. Despite being a recent arrival, he had registered as a Local Government Elector of the parish and was willing to stand for election to the Chair of the Parish Meeting. DF proposed that RD be so elected, seconded by BB, and this was agreed unanimously. RD was warmly congratulated by all, and invited DF to chair the remainder of the meeting. DW was thanked for attending the meeting; he then left the meeting.

### 2. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies for absence had been received from Gill Cotter, Arran & Melinda O'Dell and Simon Lewis-Beeching. Dr Isabel Shirley and Mrs Chris Cond subsequently offered apologies, having been involved in a road traffic accident en route to the meeting.

### 3. Minutes of the Parish Annual Assembly of 25 April 2017:

Approval of the Draft Minutes of the previous meeting was proposed by JR, seconded by BB, and agreed by all. DF signed the Minutes as a true record of that meeting.

### 4. Matters Arising:

- **Grant to The Wolfords Village Hall:** The Village Hall Trustees have now confirmed that they wish the previously-agreed £500 grant to be towards the cost of replacing the cooker, rather than that of essential building works. DF had sought advice from WALC (the Warwickshire & West Midlands Association of Local Councils) as to whether this grant could be awarded under LGA Section 133 powers, but had been advised that replacing the cooker probably did not constitute maintenance of the building, thus LGA Section 137 powers would be more appropriate. This grant will now be paid to the Village Hall Trustees.
- **Parish Noticeboard:** Since annual expenditure under Section 137 powers is limited (to around £636 in the case of Little Wolford), expenditure on a new parish noticeboard will need to be carried over to

2018/19. DF had ascertained that planning consent is not required, and been advised by Stratford-on-Avon Council (which owns the Village Green) that it is unlikely to withhold permission for installing the new noticeboard on the Green, subject to design approval. It was agreed that, since Colin Ablewhite had offered to manufacture the noticeboard, he should be invited to come up with the design.

#### **6. Chairman's Report:**

As there has been no active Chairman since the last meeting, there was no Chairman's Report. DF had checked planning applications submitted since April, and there had been none of significance.

#### **7. Responsible Financial Officer's Report:**

- **External Auditor's Report:** Unfortunately, the original 2016/17 Return, together with the External Auditor's Report, was unavailable, having been sent to the former Chairman. Fortunately, DF had retained a copy of the Return, and the External Auditors had been able to provide a copy of their Report. Despite some comments relating to internal audit, the External Auditors had approved the 2016/17 Accounts and issued a Notice of Completion of Audit, which had now been published as required.
- **Expenditure incurred under delegated powers:** DF reported expenditure since the last meeting totalling £31.00: £11.00 to renew the Parish Meeting's membership of WALC, and £20.00 for the hire of the Village Hall for the past two meetings.
- **Income:** The second £500 tranche of the 2017/18 Parish Precept had been received, bringing our current bank balance to £1,928.52.
- **Anticipated future expenditure:** Budgeted expenditure of £700 (the £500 grant to the Village Hall Trustees and £200 to Wolford Parochial Church Council towards maintenance of our cemetery) will be incurred before the end of the current accounting year. There is a potential additional liability of £44.15 for the renewal of our website hosting contract (together with some unnecessary optional extras), for which the former Chairman seemingly paid from his personal bank account; DF had agreed to reimburse this expenditure under delegated powers upon receipt of corresponding invoices, which have yet to be provided.
- **Reserves to be carried forward to 2018/19:** DF estimated that we should end the current accounting year with reserves of around £1,184, of which £400 has already been budgeted for the new parish noticeboard.

#### **8. 2018/19 Budget and Parish Precept:**

DF had anticipated that 2018/19 would be our final year as a precepting authority: on this basis, budgeted expenditure for the next accounting year had been expected to be limited to around £700 (£400 for the parish noticeboard, a further £200 towards cemetery maintenance and up to £100 for internet domain renewal, website maintenance, stationery and postage.) He had therefore intended proposing raising no Parish Precept next year, in the expectation that our reserves would pass to a new Joint Parish Council. However, with the election of a new Chairman and the prospect of continued autonomy, he now felt that to start the new accounting period with unallocated reserves of less than £500 would restrict the new Chairman's ability to stamp his mark upon the parish. DF therefore proposed levying a Parish Precept of £500 for 2018/19; this was seconded by MR, and carried unanimously.

#### **9. Issues of particular local importance:** None raised.

#### **10. Matters raised by an Elector of the Parish:** None.

The next meeting will be the 2018/19 Parish Annual Assembly, to be held at a date to be advised in April 2018.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.50pm, followed by refreshments.

*David J Farman  
20 October 2017*