

**CUSOP PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of an Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on**  
**Tuesday 13th December at 19.00 at Cusop Village Hall**

**Present**

Councillors: Mark Hainge (in the Chair), Julia Whittall, Ian Jardin and David Evans.

**In attendance**

Clerk Helen Tinson – on behalf of HALC (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils);  
Ward Cllr Jennie Hewitt; 9 members of the public.

**1. Consideration to access HALC Clerk Cover for the meeting:**

It was unanimously RESOLVED to access HALC's CiLCA qualified Clerk/RFO Cover for the meeting.

**2. Apologies for absence:** Phil Gilbert (absent no apologies).

**3. Declarations of interest & written dispensation requests:** There were none.

**4. Minutes of Parish Council Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022:**

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022. Minor amendments were proposed and accepted:

**4.1** Page 216 Minute 5.1: Public Participation, Paragraph 5: Amendment add 'The Member refuted the accusation';

**4.2** Page 216 Minute 5.3: Public Participation: Amendment add 'from How the Light Gets In Festival';

**It was RESOLVED:** to approve the draft minutes as amended.

**5. Public Participation:**

**5.1** A member of the public raised concerns at what he considered to be a personal attack on a member of the council at the last meeting. He expressed further disappointment and surprise at the reaction of the Chairman stating council members have the right to the support of the council under these circumstances. He wished to express that the council member has the wholehearted support of the community for her work on traffic calming. The Chairman clarified that Code of Conduct matters are not for council to discuss but for the Monitoring Officer.

**5.2** A member of the public asked if there had been any further update on the progress of the traffic calming projects on Hardwick Road and Newport Street since the last meeting. In response, Ward Cllr Hewitt read a statement from Cllr John Harrington, as noted in Appendix A.

The same member of the public also asked about progress into the 'How the Light Gets In' Festival noise pollution investigation. The meeting was informed that Jacqueline O'Mahoney has not received the report back but is due to attend a

Safety Advisory Group meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> December. Council will request feedback on the report and the meeting and report back in due course.

Parking issues on Newport Street as a result of the Christmas Fair were reported. Visibility was reduced and danger increased whilst crossing the road. Some residents have written to Herefordshire Council to complain and have sent a video to evidence their concerns. It was agreed that extra parking needs to be arranged for all events, both local and in Hay on Wye.

**5.3** A member of the public raised comments on agenda items:

**5.3.1** 7: Play equipment: it was suggested that the PC create a working group with Parish Councillors and Residents to seek feedback and evidence of local views.

**5.3.2** 9: Lengthsman: plans to draw up an annual maintenance plan to put parish maintenance on sound and formal footing was welcomed. It was suggested that local contractors should be asked first.

One member of the public left the meeting.

**6. Financial Reserves Policy:**

Members considered adopting a Financial Reserves Policy. Council finances were considered to be sufficiently transparent and a reserves policy was not felt to be necessary at this time.

**It was RESOLVED:** not to adopt a policy at this time.

**7. Play Field Equipment:**

Members received a report from Cllr Mark Hainge following an assessment of the existing play equipment with the Volunteer Play Inspector. Areas for repairs and general maintenance have been identified and a package of new play equipment reviewed, as had been originally discussed last year and paused pending S106 funding. Three contractors had been approached to tender for the work and quotations had been obtained. It was proposed to seek new quotations to allow a reduced package of equipment to be selected. Members wished to understand the priorities and reasoning behind the proposals; the ages of the children likely to use the play area; considered a working group and whether the Volunteer Support Group could be revived; and whether the area could be made more of a community area as well as a playground. The ongoing work of the volunteer Play Inspector was recognised and appreciated.

**It was RESOLVED:**

**7.1** That maintenance of the existing equipment should be the first priority;

**7.2** The Chairman will liaise with the Play Inspector and ask the contractors to refresh their quotes and then prepare a proposal for consideration at the next council meeting (to include a package of costed maintenance items and new equipment with an explanation of why the items had been selected). Costs would not exceed £9,000 including VAT;

- 7.3** The Chairman will ask the Play Inspector for his view on reviving the Volunteer Support Group and invite him to present the proposals to the next meeting.

Eight members of the public left the meeting.

**8. 2023/2024 Budget and Precept:**

Members considered the draft budget for 2023/2024, as appended to the minutes of the meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> November. It was proposed that this item is deferred to the next meeting once the budgetary requirements to progress the play area improvements have been clarified.

**It was RESOLVED:** to defer the decision to adopt the budget and set the precept to the next meeting. The Clerk/HALC are to inform Herefordshire Council accordingly.

**9. Lengthsman: Annual Maintenance Plan:**

Members were informed that a list of six local contractors has been drawn up and it was agreed that the ideal contractor would be reasonably local to Cusop.

**It was RESOLVED:**

- 9.1** Cllr Whittall will ask the previous Lengthsman if he would accompany her on a tour around the Parish to talk through the tasks that had been regularly carried out to inform the new annual maintenance plan;
- 9.2** Cllr Whittall and Cllr Evans will establish the interest of the shortlisted contractors and report to the next meeting.

**10. Councillors Reports:**

- 10.1** Casual Vacancy: Members were informed that the date for requests for an election has passed and the vacancy can now be co-opted. It was agreed to consider this further at the next meeting;
- 10.2** Clerk Vacancy: No updates received from HALC;
- 10.3** Ash Tree: An Ash tree outside the playing fields on land believed to be owned by Herefordshire Council has been identified with early stages of Ash Dieback. The ex-Clerk had begun an enquiry to establish responsibility which Ward Cllr Hewitt agreed to progress;
- 10.4** There has been no response to quotes for village gateways;
- 10.5** There has been no response to the application for Safer Villages Initiative funding. Ward Cllr Hewitt reported that the first tranche of funding has been allocated;
- 10.6** The Chairman was asked to follow up on the minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting with the ex-Clerk;
- 10.7** The Ward Cllr suggested Council might like to consider a Christmas Tree for the village; and noted that the Leader of the Council had reported on the difficult state of finances in his current letter, available on the HC website.

**11. Clerk's Report:** There was no report.

**12. Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023, 7.00pm, Cusop Village Hall

Meeting closed 8.45pm.

SIGNED ..... DATE .....

APPENDIX A: Statement from Cllr J. Harrington, Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure