

## **Hewelsfield and Brockweir Parish Council**

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting held via Zoom on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

**Present:** Cllr. Sinfield, Cllr. Fox, Cllr Brundle, Cllr. Groves-Bond, Cllr. Haythornthwaite, Cllr. Harris  
Cllr. McFarling and eight members of the public.

### **3270 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence. All councillors present.

### **3271 Declaration of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest in items on the agenda.

### **3272 Approve Minutes from Virtual meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020**

The Minutes were approved. Proposed by Cllr. Fox and seconded by Cllr. Groves-Bond.

### **3273 Finance**

The following recurring payments, made since the last meeting, were approved:

Payee	Service
Lynda Skuse	Clerk salary & expenses – May*
AEB Price	Strimming/Litter Picking x Twice
Ace Accounting	Payroll
Henry Bendall	Cutting Verges
Forest Equipment Services	Emptying Dog Foul Bins
HMRC	PAYE

\* Authority to make payments was previously delegated to the Clerk.

### **3274 Continued Delegated Authority to Clerk to Settle Invoices**

Councillors agreed to continue the delegated authority, with payments being confirmed at subsequent meetings. This authority would last until normal meetings are resumed.

### **3275 Approve Financial Statement to the end of October 2020**

The Financial Statement was approved.

### **3276 Confirmation of planning applications received since the last meeting.**

Ten planning applications/considerations had been received since the last meeting and all councillor comments had been communicated to Forest of Dean District Council Planning Department.

### **The Chairman adjourned the meeting for members of the public to raise matters.**

An up date was requested on the current situation regarding upgrading broadband in the parish. Information had been received that there was to be a re-design and a new roll out date in 2022.

**Action:** Clerk to seek and update on the situation.  
Cllr. McFarling to raise with Cllr. Molyneux

Cllr. McFarling confirmed that Covid 19 teams within FODDC were continuing to reach out to the isolated and vulnerable during this pandemic.

There was support from a parishioner for the proposal to erect Christmas lights across Brockweir Bridge. Another was concerned about the proportion of council funds that the project might need, suggesting that perhaps funds would be better spent on a project with more longevity.

Members of the recently formed new committee for the Play Area outlined their immediate plans to remove the old equipment and consult on more durable replacements at an approximate cost of £40K - £50K. Grants would be applied for and there would be a request for funding from the Parish Council. They requested support for a Christmas Tree to be erected on the play area for the benefit of all parishioners at an approximate cost of £200 for a 12ft tree + ancillary equipment and decorations. Permission would be sought from the owners of the land. Children within the parish would be invited to make decorations for the tree. There was an offer of decorations from Cllr. Fox.

**The Chairman reconvened the meeting.**

**3277 To consider a proposal to erect Christmas lights on Brockweir Bridge or other options that may be raised.**

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Brundle for the proposal and for his extensive research into the project. This was endorsed by councillors. The proposal had been shared with a number of parishioners and on social media to gauge response ahead of the meeting. There was a mixed reaction with general agreement that some Christmas Cheer for the parish would be very welcome. The proposed cost of approximately £2,500 (which took account of the necessary H&S issues, good quality lights and a five year warranty) was of concern to some. Comments were also made about the Bridge being at the bottom of the parish and not used by all. A more central Christmas feature was suggested. There was also concern that lights on the bridge could attract more visitors to the village which was not desirable in the current circumstances. Councillors were advised that a previous set of lights, funded by Cllr. Fox, were no longer working. Questions raised about the appropriateness of spending a large sum on lights during the current economic climate and unemployment levels. There were logistical issues to take into account and limited amount of time to put the project into action. The Chairman suggested a vote on either the lights for the bridge or a Christmas tree on the playground and involving local children.

There was one vote for Christmas lights across the Bridge and five votes for the Christmas tree. The Chairman suggested that the lights project could be progressed for another year.

There was a second vote on a budget of up to £500.00 for the Christmas tree project which was unanimously agreed by all councillors.

**3278 To discuss and confirm the Precept for 2021/2022 subject to the tax base confirmation from FODDC**

The Chairman suggested that in the economic climate, and to still be able to support parish projects for the future, the precept should remain unchanged for the next year. This would also address the issue of a potential change in the support received from FODDC for street cleaning which could see a reduction in funding each year which would need to be funded from the Precept. Also, if an election is called the expense for the parish council can be considerable and this needed to be taken into account when deciding the Precept. The Precept was last increased in 2019.

There was a unanimous vote to request the same amount of Precept for 2021/2022 i.e. £9,234.00

**There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed.**

**DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS ARE UNDER REVIEW.**