

## COLWALL PARISH COUNCIL

**The minutes of the meeting of Colwall Parish Council held in the Jean Simon Room Colwall Village Hall, Mill Lane, Colwall at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2017.**

**Present:** Councillors: Beard, Burston, Butler, Carless (Vice-Chairman), Daniels, Haynes, James, Kendrick, Rees, Stock, one member of the public and the Clerk.

### **1. Welcome and Apologies:**

The Vice- Chairman welcomed those present.

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Allen, Cottam, Taylor, Trafford-Roberts.

### **2. Declarations of Interests:**

The Chairman reminded Vice- Councillors of the need to declare any Interests in items on the agenda.

None were declared.

### **3. Minutes:**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Parish Council held on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

### **4. Co-option**

Upon receipt of an application for the current vacancy, IT WAS RESOLVED that Simon Bridges be co-opted onto Colwall Parish Council.

### **5. Progress Report –**

#### **i) Colwall Library**

##### **Introduction**

In May 2016 the Parish Council undertook a survey that identified a variety of issues in relation to the development of library services. The main themes were

- Overwhelming support for keeping the Library as it is or improving in other ways
- That there was little use of the Millennium Room or understanding of its reason for being.

As a result the Parish Council formed a group to look at the future of the Library with the following remit:

- That the Parish Council formally review the governance of the library
- That a specification for the delivery of library services be developed for discussion and negotiation with Herefordshire (or if necessary other library providers)
- That the future use of the Millennium Room be reviewed
- That consideration be given for the development of a variety of local services that can be focused on or delivered from the library building
- That a volunteer strategy be considered

### **Discussions with Millennium Room Trustees (Governance and future use of the Millennium room)**

At the Millennium Room AGM In December 2016 the Parish Council Working Party met with the Millennium Room Trustees.

A discussion took place on whether it was thought desirable to merge the Millennium Room Trust and the Walwyn Meadow Charity. To take this forward a working party was formed consisting of Paul Butler, Wendy Cottam and Phil Kendrick from the Parish Council (representing the Walwyn Meadow Charity) and Susan Bond, Neil Bowring and John Harradence from the Millennium Room Trust to consider the detail behind a possible merger. The group examined the constitution and other documents relating to both charities, the Charity Commission guidance for mergers and the current management of the Millennium Room and library. The group has produced a proposed way forward with two alternative options.

It is then proposed that a period of collaborative working is developed using the amenities committee (already acting as the working group of the Walwyn Meadow Charity) as the focus on the library in future, offering representation from the volunteers to enable more connection to what is actually happening from the volunteers perspective. The Millennium Room Trust are due to consider proposals for merger or closure of the trust at their next meeting (December 2017)

Advice received from the Clerk has been that a merger would be an unnecessary and costly process to achieve a clearer governance model and that the millennium room trust closing would achieve the same end.

### **Progress with Herefordshire council (local service development)**

Running in parallel to this has been a series of meetings with Herefordshire Library services. This has achieved several positive outcomes. The relationship with Herefordshire library services is much closer, the delivery of some small but useful services from the library is in place (eg MHC car park passes will be available from the library for the 2018 season, improved wi-fi inside and outside the building with further plans to improve this as a “blueprint” for rural library development, free poo bags currently available) along with agreed changes to Saturday opening hours in 2018/19, agreement to display a range of MHT leaflets as a precursor to a wider tourist information display and a plan to increase the volunteer numbers with better regular support.

The current partnership document is in need of review and will form a memorandum of understanding will be developed between the Parish Council and Herefordshire Library services to ensure local planning is paramount in library services development, rather than corporate Herefordshire policies leading how our library serves this community. Herefordshire Council are currently running a soft market testing exercise in relation to library services. Essentially this is a precursor to potential outsourcing. This exercise ends in January 2018.

Whilst it is unlikely that private providers will come forward (current services have been run down so much that there are little assets to strip and little profit to be made) but should someone come forward then Colwall would have to consider its position. It appears that Herefordshire councillors have yet to realise that they haven't autonomy

over this given the existing mixed economy that is providing library service funding across the county.

### **Volunteers (volunteer strategy)**

The current group of volunteers continue to do a fantastic job. They now need to be joined by more volunteers to achieve two things. Firstly to spread the load, the rota means they are doing an average of one and a half days a month, more with cover for each other and it is quite restricting on their time.

Secondly, there is a desire from the community for increased opening hours (survey) particularly to reduce the three day closure (Saturday to Wednesday) this will require a further 8-10 volunteers to open another day, and relieve the original group to offer a more flexible rota.

Operationally, Herefordshire have been asked to make several small changes based on volunteer feedback to improve efficiency and local working practices.

Volunteers are due to be consulted on the training programme they received to see how it could be improved for the next cadre.

### **Conclusion**

Progress continues to be made on all fronts. It is by necessity slow as the partnership elements require a lot of time and effort to try to get the ducks in a row. However, on current predictions, local services should show demonstrable improvement in 2018, with additional opening, amended opening, access to Malvern Hills Conservators car park tickets and more volunteers. If the governance can be streamlined with the consequent efficiencies then that will add further value.

### **6. Financial Matters.**

i) Colwall Parish Council considered the Income and Expenditure for November 2017, as per the list circulated at the meeting.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the payments should be authorised.

ii) IT WAS RESOLVED that the 2018/19 budget be accepted.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Clerk apply for the Precept as proposed in the Budget at £79,734.00.

### **7. Training/Regulation update.**

Councillors had received a copy of the presentation. Councillor Butler gave a high level overview of the presentation.

### **8. Correspondence for Processing**

i) Email from Parishioner regarding the consultation for proposed alterations to the traffic flow in Church Street, Malvern. Councillor Stock provided a summary of the proposed

IT WAS RESOLVED that Councillor Stock respond on behalf of Colwall Parish Council strongly objecting to the proposed.

### **9. Correspondence for Information.**

None.

**10. Reports of Committees.**

i) **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the reports from the Planning & Development Committee meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> October and the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2017 were received, approved and adopted.

ii) **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the report from the Finance & General Purpose Committee meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017 was received, approved and adopted.

**11. Representatives on Outside Bodies.**

To receive reports from Councillors who have represented Council at meetings since the last Full Council meeting.

i) Village Hall Management Committee meeting – Councillor James had attended a meeting and reported that the car park will be relined but not be resurfaced following the works for the “sharing” with the new school.

The review of the Constitution and the number of Trustees is on-going.

ii) Malvern Hills Trust – Councillor Rees had attended a committee meeting where it was advised the “Consultation on the future governance of the Malvern Hills Conservators/Trust” would be launched early 2018.

iii) Councillors Beard and Haynes had attended a meeting of the Trustees of Colwall Charities for the distribution of grants.

iv) Councillor Kendrick had attended the public meeting (as an Parishioner not as a representative of Colwall Parish Council) regarding the recent “Village Survey” organised by Colwall Community Church and St James’s Church, to which there were 134 responses.

Outputs focused on 3 aspects – Use of the Silver Street building(s), St James’s Church - potential changes to the internal layout and helping “The vulnerable members of the Parish”.

**12. Date of next meeting:**

To confirm the date of the next Full Council meeting, this will be held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at the Jean Simon Room of Colwall Village Hall  
The Vice-Chairman closed the meeting at 8.22pm.

**Signed:** ..... **Date:** .....