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WORTH MATRAVERS PARISH COUNCIL
Representing Harmans Cross and Worth Matravers
Annual Parish Meeting 11 May 2021.

PRESENT

Vice Chairman, Cllr Ian Bugler, Cllr Melville , Cllr Vosper Cllr Woolford,

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 7 April 2020 were accepted as a true record by all Cllrs who had been present

REPORT OF THE MEETING CHAIRMAN

2020-21 has been a very difficult year for the administration of the Worth Matravers Parish Council affairs. The social, environmental, personal and physical impact of the Covid 19 emergency and the varying and changing government requirements for personal lockdown, social distancing or accessibility have proved very challenging. Public attendance, participation, and discussion of Council affairs have been at times a significant problem to resolve satisfactorily. Special arrangements for additional Delegated Authority to the Clerk in consultation with Cllrs and the Chairman and Vice Chairman were put in place in March 2020.

Whenever permitted by changing government regulations Council Meetings were held in public at the spacious Harmans Cross village hall where social distancing is practicable. During the 2020-21 Municipal year five Council meetings were actually held in public in this hall. This was in excess of the minimum legislative requirements. The remaining meetings were held monthly as per the published Agendas and dates. Delegated Authority decisions were subsequently made with all Councillors formally consulted within a formal Decision Matrix system.

The Parish Council met virtually or actually under these arrangements each month in 2020-21 (excluding January 2020) with six Councillors in place. The one vacancy arose to be filled following the resignation for work availability reasons of one local Councillor. A replacement was agreed but regrettably at the last instance they recently decided not to continue their application so a further applicant would be welcome.

The PC supported donations to the Corfe Castle pre-school facility as many local children from the HX area in this parish attend. A donation was also made to the Dubber to help fund their advertising income shortfall created by CV19.

Councillors continue to be actively involved in a voluntary capacity to contribute as locally informed eyes and ears whilst directly supporting the financial management of the (when open) car parks and assisting with local minor maintenance matters. The new Dorset Council absorbing District and County roles has, not least due to Covid 19, not yet fully bedded down satisfactorily in terms of consultation and communication. The workload has been busy and varied. We have considered local planning and tree work applications to Dorset council the new Local Planning Authority. 34 Planning applications and other Tree Work Applications came to the Parish Council and were commented on in 2020-21. The PC's views on behalf of residents were represented by the Clerk in writing to the Public Inquiry on a new 2020 application for a fare toll increase by the Bournemouth-Swanage motor road & Ferry Company. This inquiry was held by virtual means, using Microsoft Teams software. This application for a substantial fare increase, refused at the previous Inquiry, has just been approved by the Government Minister. Dorset Council and other bodies consulted the Parish on a range of other issues. We responded to the Government Consultation on changes to planning policy, regulations and to the current planning system and to the e Government White Paper August 2020 Planning for the future. We have also noted how the proposal for a National Park covering Dorset alone is still being considered .We continued to oppose the Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group developments to close hospitals and beds providing facilities for Purbeck. The Purbeck Local Plan with the major additional Housing Sites proposal continues to be controversial. The PC continues to support the work of the Pan Purbeck Action Group in their work challenging the proposed and very high housing targets being proposed for this Purbeck Local Plan.

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Cllrs worked on minor repairs and the PC contractors cut back hedges and cleared and cut and patched roadside verges throughout the parish. The CCTV system at the Worth car park was maintained and DC are being funded on maintaining the speed indicator system on the A351 through Harmans Cross. The Outline proposal for Worth village playground improvements was accepted and is moving towards detailed implementation in 2021. The PC supported a volunteer proposal for a trial 5 metre wildflower strip in Church fields Worth and this is in progress.

The long running saga of waiting restriction upgrading and maintenance in Worth village is hopefully moving to a conclusion. Substantial work on the Worth Village Centre patched up road surface down from the Square and Compass is hopefully complete and successfully preventing the previous puddling and deterioration. The Waiting Restriction upgrade is finally at a conclusion stage after nearly ten years since the original application. Maintenance funding from the PC of a more comprehensive centre lining proposal is at the subsequent PC meeting for decision.

The village halls at Worth and at Harmans Cross were regrettably closed down under UK Government CV19 requirements for controlling community events and activities. The WM fete and the HX Field day were not held in 2020. We have therefore continued to support through donations the work of the Corfe castle Pre school and the provision of Xmas trees near both village halls.. The PC supports and thanks the voluntary litter picking organisation 'Purbeck Litter free'.

The requirements from CV19 have meant that some virtual Zoom meetings are held and these have not proved very satisfactory for the involvement of this PC. It is hoped real in person meetings will shortly be resumed. These include meetings of the Dorset (Purbeck District) Area Parish and Town Council meetings and regular informal liaison meetings with five East Purbeck Parish and Town Councils.

Once again due to a lot of hard work from Parish Councillors collecting and banking donations from the car parks we are able for the tenth year in a row to set a £NIL precept for 2020-21 being the sole parish or town councils out of 24 in Purbeck to do.

I would like to thank my vice Chairman Cllr Bugler who is standing in for me at this meeting, as I am away for this reconfigured date, Cllr Melville, and Cllr Mrs Spencer- Duncan, Cllrs Mrs Vosper, and Cllr Woolford on the Parish Council for 2020-2024.

I am pleased that with the support of the Clerk I have been able to fulfil the role of Chairman ably assisted by Cllr Bugler as my Vice Chairman.

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RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICERS REPORT.

The financial affairs of the Parish Council continue to be in sound order. Revenue expenditure was within the original budget estimate. Unfortunately the major National COVID 19 Health Crisis occurred impacting on income after 20 March 2020. This is affected all income from the car parks during 2020/21. The Worth car park previously often full including its extension area was in April/May 2020 virtually empty with less than 5 cars in it. The Harmans Cross car park with the almost total closure of the adjacent Village Hall has had a 90% drop in usage and annual income. In view of the CV 19 impact the PC agreed to relieve the Swanage Railway Company of its rental for the spaces their four local employees use. In the first three months of 2021 income at the main Worth village car park was down by over 80%. On a rolling 12 month period for 2020-21 income from car park donations reduced by some £11000.

. The central tower located multiple CCTV provision and agreed management strategy for Worth Car Park has been successful albeit that damage to the central islands barrier was not covered by the existing mast cameras. An agreement was made for £12000 with a mobile mast and 5 G supplier for a 10 year contract to erect a secure enclosure for their mast in the WMCP. This work with electricity and other requirements has been recently completed and payment received of this sum.. Regrettably their service connection by SSE has severed the CCTV camera mast and this will have to be rectified by that company asap in 2021. An additional camera wall mounted on the toilet block now temporarily covers the central car park area.

PC contract prices as retendered were for a three year period to 2020. In view of the Covid situation these were extended by one year with a new three +year contract to be let in the Autumn of 2021 for 2022-25. The Insurance Company quote was for three years to 2022 and no claims were made. Grass cutting and hedge trimming costs have been met on budget. The very mild winter weather meant that little salt was used from the two grit bins supplied by the PC on Haycrafts Lane.

The Annual External and local Audits for 2019-20 were submitted without any external requests for access to the accounts. The results of the audit were published as required by statute. The External and Internal Auditors raised no issues. The Council reviewed its Risk Assessments, its Financial and Internal Controls, its Reserves and its renewed its term bond with C & C Bank for 2 years to 2022.

The Council's Bank Statement has been formally 'Reconciled' against the 2020-21 Budgets, the Santander current account total, and the Cash Book records each month.

I am pleased to report that with the significant reserves accumulated over recent years CV19 did not give a problem in meeting existing PC financial and maintenance commitments in 2020-21.

The PC has a sound financial income basis for 2021/22 now that lockdown is ending.

The PC formally considered these Reserves, in excess of one year's revenue expenditure, and its future annual income and expenditure in setting its budget for 2021/22. The PC decided that again and for over ten years in a row to set the annual council tax precept at a rate of £NIL. Worth Matravers is once again the sole Parish Council in Purbeck or Dorset County generally to set a £Nil rate precept.

Roger Khanna

Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer

Members of the public raised a number of 2020-21 items for general discussion including the proposed provision of new play equipment and the stone design of the entrance on to the play area in WM . This latter had been replaced at the request of the PC both as part of historic infrastructure and as an impediment to the dogs previously regularly frequenting and fouling the play area. The PC meeting on 1 June would decide the PC order for new play equipment in Worth village .

Roger Khanna

Clerk

14/05/2021