### HIGHLEY PARISH COUNCIL

**The Annual Meeting of Highley Parish Council was held on Tuesday 18th May 2021 at 7pm at the Severn Centre, Highley**

**Present**: Chair :Cllr. D.Tremellen , Cllrs**.**  P.Vinall, , J.Law, ,J.Marshall,. D.Thakrar, T.Quinn, A.Rodgers. P.Heath, J.Rakric,

Clerk: Mrs.E.Preston

Parishioners:1

**00.Parishioners Time**

Cllr.Thakrar took the chair and welcomed everyone to the first meeting of this term of office of the parish council. He welcomed the new Councillors , Cllrs. P.Heath and J.Rakric

**01.Introduction to Council.**

Declaration of Office /Register of interests - signed and returned to Clerk.

All Councillors to briefly introduced themselves to other Councillors .

Clerk informed all Councillors that she had booked them onto a Code of Conduct Training Course which was to be held on Monday 6th September 2021 via Zoom. Councillors Rakic and Marshall said that they were unable to make that date due to holidays, Clerk to try to book them on the 11th of October date,

Fundamentals for Councillors Training – 15th June 1030am to 1pm via Zoom – Cllr.J.Rakic to attend.

**02. Election of Chair**

**Nominations : Cllr.Tremellen*. RESOLVED*** that Councillor Tremellen be elected to the office of chair.

**03.Election of Vice Chair**

Nominations : Councillor P.Vinall and Councillor D.Thakrar.

Councillor Thakrar withdr P.Vinall withdrew his nomination.

***RESOLVED*** that Councillor be elected as Vice Chair.

**04.Election of Committees – See attached information**

**05.Filling of Vacant Seats on Parish Council**

Five applications received for the vacant positions on the Parish Council following the recent Elections.

M.Williams

S.Burke

T.Pinches

N.Waterson

E.Morre

It was R***ESOLVED*** that M.Williams, T.Pinches, E. Moore and N. Waterson be invited to join the Parish Council.

**06 Apologies for absence and reasons for absence**

Apologies received Cllrs. N.Barker – personal Cllr.M.Moore – holidays . ***RESOLVED*** to accept**.**

**07 To confirm the minutes of the meetings dated 5th April 2021**

***RESOLVED*** to accept the minutes as a true and correct record. Chair signed he minutes.

**08. Matters Arising**

CCTV – Tech.Services will be in the village finishing the work on the ANPR System.

Youth Project – Cllr.Vinall gave an update . He said that the Youth Worker would be in the village on Thursday 20th May to speak to the other youth workers and to look at the venue. Also, t visits the Primary School. Cllr.Vinall to also talk to the school on the issue of Litter. Cllr. Rodgers suggested that the Parish Council go into the schools, primary and secondary to talk to the children about the problems of dropping litter.

Churchyard Report sent to all Councillors

Donkey Bridge/Packhorse Bridge - Bridge was severely damaged early 2020 and it was reported to Shropshire Council who have since been emailed and telephoned on many occasions for a progress report on the repair, however, this bridge is just one of 20 such bridges that were damaged at the time. We have been assured that the repair of this is a priority but at this moment there are no funds available to either carry out the structural survey that is required or to repair the damage. We have stressed the importance of this bridge which has been used by many local walkers and horse riders as well as the history of both the bridge and pathways, as soon as we learn anymore, we will send out an update

.B4555 and High Street – Clerk and County Councillor still pursuing the issue of the condition of the roads. Awaiting a reply from Shropshire Council. Clerk has put in a formal complaint against one of the officers siting the fact that he has not answered or acknowledged our emails or concerns over the condition of the roads and the recent resurfacing work that has been carried out. Mr. Steve Davenport from Shropshire Council has been out to look at the roads. He spoke to the clerk to confirm that he agreed with our concern and would try to arrange for the jetting machine to come out to fill potholes along the B455. He would talk to other officers at Shropshire Council to see what could be done about the High Street and New Road Sections. Philip Dunne MP replied that he had driven these roads and could understand our concerns. He had written to Andy Begley at Shropshire Council.

**09.Correspondence** (

Request for potential confirmation of local connection for self-build scheme - Mr.T.Herbert.- Clerk to respond with confirmation of local connection.

SALC Code of Conduct Training – 6th September via Zoom– All Councillors booked onto this course. If you are unable to attend can you please contact the clerk. Cllr.J.Rakic and J.Marshall to attend the October Training Session.

Severn Centre Advisory Board Meeting to be held on 16th June. ***RESOLVED*** that Litter/Dog Fouling, Coaches parking on the Severn Centre near to the Children’s Play Areas plans for how Halo intend to take the Severn Centre forward are added onto the Agenda for this meeting.

Severn Centre P & L Account – sent to all Councillors

**10. Planning**

Reference: 21/01693/FUL (validated: 06/04/2021)

Address: 16 Yew Tree Grove, Woodhill, Highley, WV16 6DG

Proposal: Erection of a two-storey side extension following demolition of single storey to side

Applicant: Mr M Griffiths – ***RESOLVED NO OBJECTION*** provided that there are no objections from neighbouring properties .

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED - Change of use from designated public open space to private residential curtilage

LOCATION: - 20 Staley Grove, Highley, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 6FB. – ***RESOLVED NO OBJECTIONS***

Planning Decisions

Reference: 21/01208/TPO (validated: 09/03/2021)

Address: 5 Wilkins Close, Woodhill, Highley, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 6HQ

Proposal: Remove 3No Oak Trees (T1 T2 T3) protected by Bridgnorth District Council (Hazelwells Road, Highley) TPO 1990Ad

Decision: Part Approved Part Refused

Address: Land to The North of Kinlet View, Bridgnorth Road, Highley, Shropshire

Proposal: Prune top section of branches of 1no Oak tree protected by Shropshire Council (Land to the North of Bridgnorth Road, Opposite Kinlet View Villas) TPO 2013

Decision: Refuse

Reference: 21/00749/TPO (validated: 15/02/2021)

Address: 17 Hawthorn Drive, Woodhill, Highley, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 6DF

Proposal: Works to reduce crown of 1No Oak Tree by approx. 1.5-1.8m protected by The Bridgnorth District Council (Hazelwells,

TPO 1978 - Decision: Grant Permission

**12. Annual Parish Meeting**

Official part of the Annual Meeting to take place prior to the next Parish Council meeting at 645pm. A further meeting when a speaker can be invited, and members of the public can attend to be held when all Covid restrictions are lifted.

**13. Shropshire Councillors Report**

What a time! I may have forecast upset at Shirehall but could never have foreseen the extent of the changes we’re going to see around the council chamber at the first full meeting of the new council on the 20th of May.

Even with Peter Nutting’s spectacular exit from Shropshire politics it is too late to stop the administrative changes that effectively see the end of true representative democracy in Shropshire. I genuinely take no pleasure in having predicted that when I was first elected in 2013 and saw what Keith Barrow intent was on doing, he actually spelled it out in a keynote speech to the Conservative Party Conference that year.

It didn’t take long to see what was happening, in fact my first report what was then the ‘Highley Forum’ is worth reproducing here in full…

**IS LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEAD?**

Well, local government as we used to know it, anyway?

Remember? The sort that channelled a collective local voice into the decision-making process of the “local council”, whether parish, district (now defunct) or county, for which now read unitary?

Unitary councils are a form of local government that, whilst claiming to be representative, actually channel decision-making into the hands of a very few individuals who form a 'Cabinet' with authority to make decisions as an executive answerable to no one.

Scrutiny committees do exist, nominally given the 'power' to question the decisions of Cabinet portfolio holders and ostensibly serving a similar function to parliamentary select committees, but in reality with the power only to “recommend” amendments to policy, which the Cabinet member called to account is under no obligation to adopt.

This worries me.

There is no debate. In the same way that the Localism Act gives local communities and their Parish Councils the 'power' only to amend a proposed development 'upwards' (adding to), the Act precludes any objection to get that development either stopped or reduced in size, for example because of fears over its impact on local infrastructure, fears driven by local knowledge. Never mind that local people happen to have more of that local knowledge than anyone else.

This not only worries me, but it also upsets me because a lot of people spent a lot of time gathering, collating and analysing material that went into the Village and Local Plan and the results of all that work are repeatedly being ignored, as are the clearly expressed opinions, backed by clearly defined arguments, of the Parish Council.

This trend is not exclusively manifest in the actions of the unitary council and the organisations it has established to carry out the work that used to be overseen wholly by elected councillors, serving on committees largely comprised of people with local knowledge, but also in the service organisations local people fund through the taxes they pay, but over which they have effectively lost control.

We have a Highways department that can't mend our roads, despite the contract having been allocated to a company that got the contract presumably on the assurance that they'd do a better job than Enterprise, itself taken on because it was considered that a private company could do a better job than the council itself.

We have a Housing company that professes a county-wide commitment to Shropshire and therefore cannot give guarantees that new housing (built against the wishes expressed in the Parish Plan and rejected by the Parish Council) will go exclusively to employed Highley people nor, additionally, to people who won't be further disadvantaged in employment by being placed in a village without any jobs, whose children will be similarly disadvantaged by being condemned to the same fate.

Oh, and a planning department helpless in the face of national planning policies that over-rule local Plans, resulting in a free-for-all by any developer who sees a piece of open countryside as being ripe for building on.

Now, where did I come in?

I think we all know. Written in July 2013, that article describes the first stages of a process that each successive Council Leader since has enthusiastically worked on to the point where communities like Highley would be hard put to resist, take the administration’s move from Shirehall to Pride Hill and the way in which it has simply “been done”. Talk to one of the service directors involved in its planning and implementation and you’ll experience a lot of smiling.

What the hell does “a lot of smiling” mean?

Those of you who have bothered to read my blog articles (currently read by 3,721 people) where the process of closing down and selling off the purpose-built Shirehall in order to save a town centre investment that halved in value within 12 months of its contentious acquisition (which I opposed) – will know that when I submitted a request for the data used to justify Shirehall’s demolition I was sent ALL the data that had earlier been used to justify keeping Shirehall open. Challenged on this, the Service Director responsible for managing the move just smiled.

**06 . Finance:**

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| Npower | Street Lighting | 2016.76 |
| M.E.Preston | Salary | 1014.76 |
| HMRC | Tax & NI | 80.06 |
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Meeting Closed 8.45pm

Signed: Chair ………………………………….. Date: ……………………………………………..