

## SOUTH LENCHES ANNUAL PARISH MEETING.

<b>Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 9th April 2019 at 7.00 pm in Church Lench Village Hall, Church Lench.</b>
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<b>Present:</b>	Cllr. Mr. Shore (Chair of the Parish Council), Mrs. N. Holland (Clerk), Dist. Cllr. Mr. Wilkinson; Ms. Cresswell Neighbourhood Watch and Lenches Club; Jonathan Hazelwood Tree Warden, Church Lench First School and Lenches Sports & Recreation Club; Mrs Seabourne, Secretary Village Hall Committee; Ian Jackson, Chair of Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and 4 parishioners.
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1.	<b>Welcome</b> , apologies received from County Cllr. Mr. Hopkins, Dist. Cllr. Mrs. Steel, Celia Hall (VHC); Mrs Roberts (Lenches Social Club).
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2.	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018. Resolved</b> that the minutes were of a correct record, duly signed by the Chairman.
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3.	<b>Matters arising from minutes - nil.</b>
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4.	<p><b>Report from Chairman of the Parish Council:</b></p> <p>There have been two changes in the Councillor membership since the last Annual Parish Meeting. We have to bid farewell to Jon Fetcher a Councillor who was instrumental in kicking off the original Parish Plan and provided much needed IT assistance. We also say farewell to Ian Jackson who couldn't stand at the elections as he has left the Parish. Ian was the mainstay in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and has worked tirelessly to bring it to the stage he will describe later. Losing two experienced Councillors meant we would be down to three, which would have left us barely quorate. However I'm pleased to welcome 2 new Councillors, Liz Harwood and Christopher Seabourne. We still have two vacancies and now the elections are over we are able to co-opt people onto the Council a much easier process than elections.</p> <p><u>Projects for the year include:</u></p> <p><u>Planning.</u></p> <p>The South Worcestershire Development Plan is now in its fifth year and the number of applications for planning has reduced considerably particularly in relation to new builds. There have been some 30 planning applications the majority are minor changes. Some dwelling has been approved and will be created by converting redundant agricultural buildings and holiday lets. This adds significantly to the number of houses with very little disturbance.</p> <p><b><u>New Homes Bonus</u></b></p> <p>In the past we have enjoyed substantial grants following new developments within the Parish. Sadly this has finished and the fund is now held by Wychavon District Council who will consider applications for mainly larger projects particularly those benefiting young people.</p> <p><b><u>Parish Assets</u></b></p> <p>The principle asset is the playground. Because of the age, various elements it was in need of renewing/refurbishment. A recent ROSPA inspection highlighted a few minor problems which will be addressed during the year. Unfortunately damage was caused to the swings which required their removal for safety reason the damage was extensive costing several thousand pounds to replace. A claim was made to the Insurance Company and payment received. The damage was such that it was almost certainly deliberate.</p> <p><b><u>Neighbourhood Plan</u></b></p>
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	<p>The plan continues at a pace thanks to Ian Jackson the Steering Group and a number of volunteers. The Parish Council wish to express their appreciation for the hard work carried out by all those involved.</p> <p><b>Speeding</b> continues to attract complaints and speed monitoring is being sought in Low Road to assess the problem to determine the appropriate response. We have now purchased a second Vehicle Activate Sign situated in Low Road monitoring vehicles entering the village. The VAS is more sophisticated than our older one and as well as showing vehicle speed it will provide data which could be used to support any application for Community Speed Watch to where appropriate enforcement.</p> <p>Thanks to the Parish Lengthsman and Jonathan Hazelwood, Tree Warden for their work within the Parish. The Parish Paths Warden has resigned from post.</p> <p><b>Grants awarded:</b> Lenches Social Club, Village Hall internal work, Lenches WW1 Souvenir Commemorative booklet, NHB BT Kiosk.</p>
5.	<p><b>Neighbourhood Plan:</b> In previous years I have started by saying that good progress has been made. However, this year I am pleased to be able to say that <b>excellent</b> progress has been made. It is not uncommon for neighbourhood plans to take up to 5 years to reach fruition and the time scale depends on many factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● the size and complexity of the Parish</li><li>● the need to incorporate numerous development possibilities</li><li>● the strength and skills mix of the steering group and</li><li>● the time demands made on usually one or two leading voluntary members.</li></ul> <p>You may recall that after being snowed off in February last year we organised a detailed communications exercise with a major presentation for the community in the village hall in May. This provided detailed draft proposals and research material with supporting photographs and maps of proposed local green spaces and valued landscapes for public scrutiny and feedback. Refreshments were available all day.</p> <p>Despite a Royal wedding and a cup final we had a really good turnout of 118 people and over 50 written comments. Members of my steering group were present to answer questions and take verbal feedback. A very successful exercise demonstrating the amount of interest there was in our work.</p> <p>Building on that feedback quite a lot of revisions and refinements were made in the following months to the proposals and the maps and additional photographs taken.</p> <p>During the summer months our consultants were engaged to revisit and refine the sites chosen for local green spaces and important views on several occasions until we were confident that we had got them right.</p> <p>Not only have we identified a number of important country views and sites which we want to protect and preserve as local green spaces, but we have redrawn the line of the Development boundary running down the middle of Low Road and this now falls behind the rear of the existing houses to the west of Low Road.</p> <p>In common with the majority community opinion survey and in line with the South Worcestershire Development Plan no recommendations are being made for additional development sites in the parish.</p> <p>Refinements continued into 2019 in the course of writing and building the main plan document and the character assessment, mostly on my own but with significant help from members of the steering group.</p> <p>I am pleased to be able to confirm that the main plan document has been written and the first complete draft is now with our consultants APS. The essential accompanying character assessment has also been completed.</p> <p>Relevant supporting documentation has now been loaded onto the Parish Council website by</p>

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	<p>the Clerk and is being removed from the Lenches website. The Main Plan will not be loaded until it is ready for public consultation, which may be some time yet.</p> <p>I have to say that this process has been enormously time consuming with on average several days a week of my own time being devoted to it for well over a year.</p> <p>There is still more to do to complete the collation of evidence we need to produce, but the end is in sight at last. Hopefully I will soon be able to hand the project back to the Parish Council for the final stages to be completed during 2019.</p>
6.	<p><b>Dist. Cllr. Mr. Wilkinson reported:</b> No increase in Council Tax for the District.</p> <p>a) Two main areas of focus this year: Droitwich, Pershore and Evesham town centres who are all suffering from viability, especially the High Streets.</p> <p>b) Concerns over rural economy that don't seem to get a fair share of funding i.e. broadband.</p> <p>c) <u>New Homes Bonus Scheme and S106</u> have been revamped to form a £3million Community Legacy Grant Scheme i.e. substantial and lasting project.</p> <p>d) <u>Planning</u> - if no 5 year land supply then the District Council remains vulnerable to developers. The Council has the methodology in place to determine how many new houses are required in the Villages.</p>
7.	<p><b>Neighbourhood Watch Co-Ordinator report:</b></p> <p>New signs are being placed around the Villages.</p> <p>Contact list updated in line with the new GDPR regulations.</p> <p>Now have a Facebook page - 470 active followers, 800 - 2500 viewers.</p> <p>Offer available to purchase outdoor camera for approximately £80.</p> <p>Raising awareness of rural crime.</p>
8.	<p><b>Police report:</b> PC Carter has now moved to Hereford, new Officer in place PC Warren Edmunds who is currently making rounds in all the Parish areas.</p> <p>Safer Roads Neighbourhood Watch Team runs out of Droitwich and Response Units from Evesham.</p> <p>Reports go through a 101 or 999 call then distributed to Officers i.e. Evesham Response then onto Droitwich Safer Roads Neighbourhood Watch Team.</p> <p>PCSO was asked a number of questions in regard to feedback from incidents in the Villages, which had not been highlighted in his report, and that members of the public had received no follow up. PCSO would look back at the incident logs and reports and inform the Parish Council of his findings.</p>
9.	<p><b>Village Hall:</b> Secretary gave the following report:</p> <p>Many events held i.e. Shindig, Remembrance Day Lunch, and Big Breakfast etc. The Committee has to address issues with Teenage Parties being held in the Hall.</p> <p>Repairs carried out to plumbing, kitchen.</p> <p>Were considering adopting a local charity but this has been paused for a couple of years.</p> <p>The Parish Council has provided a grant for the new fire exit - building regulations have been approved, work will progress during school holidays.</p>
10.	<p><b>Lenches Social Club:</b> Grant gratefully received from the Parish Council to refurbish the toilets. Waiting on delivery of the vanity units, mirrors etc.</p>
11.	<p><b>School, Tree Warden and Lenches Sports &amp; Recreation Club reports.</b></p> <p><u>School:</u> Church Lench CE VC First School has 77 children currently on roll. Our capacity is 90 with a PAN of 15. There are certain year groups which are over-subscribed. Our last OFSTED report in 2012 judged the school as outstanding and in 2017 the Church SIAMS inspection also judged the school as outstanding.</p> <p>Currently our financial situation is stable and we hope this will remain for the future. We have no plans to join a multi academy trust at present. We have plans this year to spend</p>

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some of our budget on developing our outdoor Early Years provision and spiritual garden (pond area).

We have three full time teaching staff including myself and two part time teachers. We also employ seven teaching assistants; two of whom are full time. We have a very effective team who work collaboratively and strategically to ensure the very best for all our children. We also have an office manager, assistant administrator, site manager and three lunch time supervisors.

We have an effective and supportive governing body with 3 new governors recently appointed. We also have an active parent committee who plan and host events to raise money for resources and experiences for the children. Our annual school summer fete is our largest fundraising event in the calendar. With the help of our parent committee we are hoping to purchase a fixed piece of playground equipment very soon to replace our old well-loved pirate ship!

We work in close partnership with the Lenches Pre-School and St Egwin's Middle School to ensure smooth transitions for Reception and Year 6 pupils. We also liaise closely with other nurseries/ pre-school settings and middle schools.

We have an excellent relationship with All Saints Church and Reverend Canon Richard Thorniley visits the school and children regularly. Every two weeks our 'Open the Book' team visit the children to perform short plays based on Biblical stories. We also hold Easter and Christmas services in the church for parents and community members.

### Tree Warden:

1. Flowering cherries at back of Croft have been pruned

2. Mountain Ash at the corner of Main Street and Low Road is in poor condition and will need to be removed later this year. It could be replaced with two smaller flowering trees in the Autumn.

3. The Lenches Sports Club will plant trees on the steep bank alongside the footpath. Brambles have been cut back in Yates orchard and two new trees planted

4. The trees alongside the footpath from Evesham Road to the end of the Tuer need some work. Fallen trees removed and scrub cleared. Responsibility for this area is being clarified as it borders the school boundary.

5. Ash Die Back. ADB is present in the parish and will have an increasing impact on the local environment. Current evidence is that at least 85% of our ash trees will die over the next 5 - 10 years. Home and land owners who have ash trees on their properties will have to plan for their removal if they become infected. This will be particularly important where those trees border roads or footpaths. Professional advice should be sought before any action is taken and as the disease is progressive there is time to decide on the best option for each location. Within the conservation area of the parish planning permission is needed even to remove diseased trees. There is no restriction on the disposal of branches or firewood.

Mature ash trees do provide homes for birds, bats and insects many of which are protected from disturbance. In some situation removing the branches while leaving the trunk can remove the risk of falling limbs whilst retaining the wildlife benefits. Where possible tree that have been removed should be replaced with ones that enhance the character of the villages and benefit wildlife. More details are available from a number of websites including the Forestry Commission and Woodland Trust.

### Lenches Sports and Recreation Club LSRC.

The LSRC has enjoyed another successful year.

The infilling of the playing field extension was completed and the area leveled and seeded. Despite the very dry summer the grass has established well and it is hoped that it will be playable for the 2019/20 football season.

Work continues to maintain the facilities with further improvements including boundary

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	<p>fencing, tree planting and a machinery store and work shop planned.</p> <p>The LSRC in conjunction with the tennis club installed artificial grass surfaces on the two tennis courts and the multi-use games area MUGA.</p> <p>The facilities are used for cricket, football, tennis and netball on a regular basis while the Yates community orchard is used for beekeeping and for Forest School lessons by both the Pre and 1<sup>st</sup> schools. The Boules court is available free of charge and the installation of the refurbished phone box as a book exchange should be completed by early May.</p> <p>Finance</p> <p>The LSRC is financially sound. Income from users covers day to day running expenses and fundraising events are used to rebuild the clubs capital reserves. The club is very grateful to the community for supporting these events.</p> <p>We are currently building a new website <a href="https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/TheLenchesSportsClub">https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/TheLenchesSportsClub</a> which should help the club promote its facilities and increase rental income from the muga.</p> <p>The club is hoping to benefit from money allocated from new housing developments within the area to further improve its facilities.</p>
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**Matters raised by parishioners: Nil.**

**Meeting closed at 8.15 pm.**