

Minutes of the Allensmore Parish Council Meeting held on 21st November 2024, at the Allensmore Village Hall, from 7.45pm

In attendance: Cllrs J Evans, T Cramp (in the Chair), J Lawrence, S Williams and C Watkinson plus Mrs A Wright (Clerk), Ward Cllr Richard Thomas and one member of the public (co-opted)

1. Introduction and welcome by the Chair

Cllr Tony Cramp (in the Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

2. Co-option of councillor (2 current vacancies) and acceptance of office

One candidate was present for co-option. Sandy Grenar introduced herself and gave an overview of her experience. Sandy was duly co-opted to the parish council and welcomed as a new councillor. Cllr Sandy Grenar signed her acceptance of office form. The Clerk would advise the Elections Department of the appointment details.

3. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence received.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Open Session

There was a discussion about the local broadband position and supply issues. There was no copper or fibre provision, currently, on the Village Hall side of the A465. Correspondence was in progress and contact was being made regarding broadband being supplied to new developments. There were still existing houses where no adequate broadband was being obtained. There were also issues with the 4G reception. The Chair would liaise with the local builder regarding contact details for potential provision, if details could be obtained. The Chair was also in conversation with "Fastershire". The Ward Cllr was asked to assist with escalation of the shortcomings of the local service to BT Directors. There was a possibility that the matter would be taken further to the Member of Parliament.

6. Brief Verbal Reports:

6.1 West Mercia Police

Bulletins had been circulated when received.

6.2 Ward Councillor:

Ward Cllr Richard Thomas advised that Herefordshire Council was in the process of setting the budget for the next year. Devolution was a hot topic. There was reluctance about a further collaboration with previous parties and some neighbouring councils were already experiencing "serious financial problems". There were questions about an "open relationship with Powys/Monmouthshire and there was resistance from Herefordshire towards moving to a "mayoral" system. Herefordshire is currently a County Council.

Allensmore Parish had applied for, and obtained, a drainage grant and this had been confirmed for £7,600.00. The Ward Cllr advised that the drainage responsibilities would be moving more towards parishes, through the Lengthsman, when the contract with Balfour Beatty was terminated in 2026. The Ward Cllr also advised the meeting that a "shake up was coming" in the Public Rights of Way department as the new system was "not working".

6.3 Balfour Beatty (Locality Steward)

James Howells, the Locality Steward, had circulated his reports. He would be leaving the post imminently.

6.4 Footpath Officer

Cllr Williams advised that he was awaiting some further information. The Chair would resend details to the Footpath Officer. The Public Rights Of Way (PROW) Grant had been approved for the revised submission. There may be possibilities of buying a replacement bridge (Blackhall Lane) and paying for installation but quotes were required. Orders from a bridge supplier would need to be paid for "up front". A query about this would be made and prices etc. would be looked into. There was a "shortage of installation expertise on the ground."

7. To approve Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 19th September 2024.

Resolved: - The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting, held on 19th September 2024, were approved by the Council and signed by the Chair

8. To receive any correspondence and Information Update

The Clerk updated the Meeting regarding correspondence received. This included:

Herefordshire Council

Talk Community bulletins

9. Finance

(9.1) **Resolved:** The following list of payments were approved:

Mrs A Wright (salary paid in accordance with contract)	
Tax due on salary payment (Payable to HMRC only)	£127.00
T Griffiths (Lengthsman) – on hold re completion of asset listing	£372.00
Belmont Country Park Supporters (Donation)	£50.00

The parish council asked for the Lengthsman payment to be held pending completion of the drainage assets report. The correct mapping would be circulated for matching and recording the assets.

A request for funding support from the Belmont Country Park Supporters was considered and a donation of £50.00 towards the upkeep of the park amenity was agreed.

(9.2) **Resolved:** The bank balance was noted at £13141.58. This amount included the ring-fenced amount of £379.00 being the pipe crowd funding project surplus.

(9.3) to consider budget and determine precept request for 2025 – 2026
The budget was reviewed and Cllr Cramp outlined the expenditure budget. The parish council resolved to request a precept for 2025 – 2026 of £6500.00. This represented a position of no change to the previous precept request. The Clerk would submit the request.

10. Planning

There were no new planning applications for consideration of comments.

Cllr Watkinson had sent the regular update on planning for the parish. The parish council would keep an eye out to make sure that comments were recorded on the planning portal in relation to applications. There were new recruits on board in the planning department.

11. Update on parish drainage, pipe work and any flooding issues

The Lengthsman would send the parish council a summary of tasks and reiterate the grant objectives. To complete the drainage inventory.

12. To consider archiving of past Allensmore Parish Council papers

The Chair advised the meeting that a number of parish council and charity organisation minutes and other papers of considerable history, in terms of date, were in the possession of the family of a previous council member. It was agreed that the parish council were happy for the papers to go to the County Archives Department for safekeeping. The current custodian would arrange transportation of the papers to the Archive. Thank you recorded to them for this.

The meeting heard that the Church Porch was now under repair and that the old porch was gone.

13. To review the Lengthsman Contract works, grant and update

Updated at item 11, and previously during the meeting

14. Items for next Agenda

All the usual items would be on the Agenda in January 2025.

15. Date of next Meeting

The next Meeting of the Parish Council was confirmed as 16th January 2025 from 7.45 pm at the Village Hall.

Due to the confidential nature of the business of this agenda item, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (3) it is proposed to put forward a motion to exclude members of the public during discussion of the following agenda item (16 only)

16. To discuss implementation of 1/04/24 pay award (back dated) and increment from 1/04/24 in line with NJC correspondence

The Clerk and Public left the meeting for the discussion of Agenda number 16. The parish council resolved that the NJC Pay Award should be implemented, together with an incremental uplift, with effect from 1/04/24, and the arrears backdated.

The Meeting closed at 8.52 pm

Allensmore Parish Council Meeting

21st November 2024

Signedas a true record by Councillor (Chairman)

Dated: - 16 January 2025

For information about what's going on, local groups and businesses, the Church, some local history and the Parish Council, including minutes of past meetings and dates for future meetings, visit the Allensmore website. www.allensmore.org.uk