

STATEMENT FROM PARISH HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Parish Hall management committee (Hall) maintains and runs the Parish Hall for the residents of the parish. The Parish Hall is a registered charity with no external funding, we rely on our bookings. Clearly, the use of the car park is necessary to support our future events.

The Parish Council (Council) own and are responsible for the maintenance of the car park and surrounds. They receive a 'precept' of £25,000 p/a to spend on our parish.

Traditionally these two organisations work along side each other and the Project was a joint venture.

In 2018 the external improvements, including the car park, were inspected, approved and signed off with the Council then being responsible for maintenance. The surface of the car park is Breedon gravel; the same material is used by the national trust.

The car park performed perfectly well for 14 months, then during heavy rain and heavy use in Dec 2019 (election day) a few minor ruts and wheel-marks occurred. These turned into small potholes during further rain and without any correct attention.

In January 2020 previous councillors and former contract administrator tried to engage with and alert the new council to the maintenance and repair issues.

These were ignored and the potholes became larger. In August 2020, after many attempts by Hall to have the repairs fixed, the Council voted unanimously at a full council meeting to repair them within two weeks.

On Sept 7th the Council placed concrete blocks at the entrance and exit to close the car park. This was not agreed by the Hall, whose visitors would be most affected. No repairs were carried out.

The Council then claimed the car park was generally defective and would need a full inspection. The Hall organised a Breedon Gravel specialist to meet with the two parties and produce a report. The Council did not accept these findings

Without any Hall involvement the Council obtained alternative reports, but have not made the results available and did not invite them to the site visit.

The Council have a duty of care, in law, to repair and maintain the car park notwithstanding any dispute they have with other parties. As a condition of planning permission, the car park should be available at all times.

The Hall recently invited Wychavon District council's chief engineer to inspect the car park along with the head of Worcestershire Highways dept and Wychavon planning enforcement officer. All have declared the car park 'fit for use'

In December the Hall were approached by the community development assistant at Wychavon who had been identifying possible Covid testing venues. The hall was deemed appropriate, but the car park needed to be open.

The Hall repeated the request for the concrete blocks to be removed, yet again this was refused.

The Council have declared the ex contract administrator and the landscape architect are at fault and asked that they cover the full cost of any rectification works. These uninformed and unsupported accusations have not yet led to a particularised case against these parties. Both, however, have written extensively to the Council explaining the solution is a few simple repairs and regular maintenance. It is the responsibility of the Council now, who have ample funds with which to do this.

Wychavon DC Planning Authority have little choice, but to issue an enforcement notice. This is where we are.