



MINUTES OF BROWN EDGE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 4TH OCTOBER 2023
BROWN EDGE VILLAGE HALL AT 7PM

Present:

Vice-Chairman Cllr. Bedson (Vice Chairman), Cllr. Berrisford, Cllr. Wright, Cllr. Hunt, Cllr. Porter (Parish & District) and Cllr. Oberholster.
Cllr. Jebb (District) and Cllr. Flunder (District & County)

Four members of the public

Minutes recorded by Mrs. D Wheat (Clerk)

1) Chairman's Welcome and Announcements:

Vice-Chairman Cllr. Bedson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2) Apologies for Absence: Chairman Cllr. Felton, Cllr. Hargreaves and Cllr. Woodward

3) Guest Speaker: Mr. Jeff Sim

Manager of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust nature reserves across Staffordshire.

- SWT Charitable objectives – Wildlife and Community Engagement
- A membership funded organisation, contributing to SWT charitable aims.
- 70 members of staff and 400 volunteers
- Staffordshire Moorlands sites include: – Wetley Moor Common Werrington, Ladderedge County Park, Cecily Brook and Hales Hall Pool, Cheadle, Marshes Hill, Brown Edge, Brown End Quarry, Waterhouses, The Roaches, Blackshaw Moor, Knotbury Common, Leek Moor, Rod Wood, Cheddleton, Swine Holes Wood, Ipstones Edge, Harston Wood, Froghall, Brough Park Fields and Black Brook, Leek, Hoftens Cross, Cauldon Lowe, Cotton Dell and Side Farm Meadow, Oakamoor, Weag's Barn, Grindon, Gun Moor, Meerbrook, Thors Wood, Stanton, Biddulph Grange Country Park, Newpool Meadows, Knypersley, Biddulph Valley Way, Hartington Meadows, and Eastern Wood, Hopdale.
- In 2022 a 30-year agreement between SMDC and SWT was resolved so SWT would then manage the sites and to allow access to grants which a Council does not have the power to apply for.
- SMDC Officer, Mr. Mark Preece is now working for SWT and Mr. Will Walklate is the officer focusing on Marshes Hill.
- SWT aim to make the reserves 'wilder' and get more people involved.
- Recruitment of more members and a new group of 'roving' volunteers are being developed.
- Marshes Hill covers roughly an area of 16 acres. It is remnant of the wider moorland and heathland. It is now an island and is classed as 'Common Land'.
- Marshes Hill has some very special wildlife sightings. SWT want local people to help out by keeping an eye on the site. Antisocial behaviour can be reported to the police.
- A Friends group as an organisation is good for eligibility for grant applications to show community involvement.

- Working parties will be needed at different times of the year. The SWT will co-ordinate the times and dates of these sessions so that they can be advertised in the local area.
- All SWT Volunteers are insured by SWT and covered for Health and Safety.
- SWT are currently working on an application for a National Lottery Grant for the Moorlands Reserves.

19.12 Cllr. Oberholster arrived.

Cllr. Porter who was Cabinet member for Climate Change when the transfer of management to the SWT took place, thanked Mr. Sim for attending and giving the presentation to the council and members of the public.

19.14 Cllr. Porter left the meeting.

4) **Parishioners Concerns:**

- a) **War Moors:** A resident continued a discussion about the land know as 'War Moors' which was raised at the September meeting. The first planning application for development was refused. Staffordshire Wildlife Trust objected to the original application. The area was noted as a public open space. It was common land but is now owned privately. The original embankment to the pond it still there.

19.16 Cllr. Porter returned to the meeting.

- a) ***Continued:*** There had been an election and the council had changed when the Planning Application came back to the Planning Committee for 24 houses (originally it was 25 houses) which then got passed by a narrow majority vote. The egress to the highway was changed to the Sytch which has a double S bend coming down a steep bank and is not a good exit point.
- b) **Blocked Gullies:** A resident commented that Highways workmen had put white marks on the road at the Sytch. '*Amendment to Hill Top*' They are going to surface dress the road. For the last three years there has been a flood in that area. The gully needs rodding, or it could be a broken pipe under the road. In winter there is a permanent flood or a frozen block of ice. The problem needs reporting.

5) **PCSO Report: No officers were present.**

6) **County Councillors Report:** Cllr. Keith Flunder reported the following:

- Staffordshire Connect is a website which has been developed to signpost people to get help to solve any issues they may be facing. Please promote this where possible to the community.
- **Audit Committees** are running behind with there scrutiny at both County and District levels.
- **Gigafast:** Fibre broadband is to be made available to every house in the Moorlands. If any poles are spotted being erected, please report to Cllr. Flunder as poles have been reported to be tall and in front of residents' houses in some Parishes. The broadband will be 50% - 70% faster at 1000 Gbts/per second. It will take two to three years to implement the process.
- **The County Community fund** is now open for applications, but the deadline is 31st October. The Clerk will apply on behalf of The Brown Edge Lunch Club.
- **DHP:** A groundwork contractor has been given authorisation to get the Hill Top signage project moving.

7) District Councillor Reports:

a. Cllr. Jebb:

The War Moors application will be complicated because the Planning Permission was never issued. New surveys may need to be done because of the time lapsed. There is a new opportunity to submit evidence. The land needs to be given an open space designation to protect it which can be done through the Neighbourhood Plan process.

b. Cllr. Joe Porter:

- **The Leek to Stoke railway link line** is going ahead. Our local MP Karen Bradley has worked hard on this project. It could be a long time until the work actually starts.
- **The District Plan for Nature** was presented to the Community Panel with 30% allocated for nature recovery (Currently 18%). The District are using SWT for Habitat mapping with sophisticated surveys of green spaces. To view the document see the SMDC website: <https://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/ClimateChange>
- **Brown Edge Allotments:** Cllr. Porter has done a tour of the site. There are some plots of funding available from the District Councillor Community Initiative, and County Community Fund. Recent projects completed at the allotments are the Water Conservation guttering and the education plot at the top of the site.
- **Citizens Advice** are tackling the cost of living crisis, they are training and up-skilling staff. The management have now merged Stoke-on-Trent and the Staffs Moorlands
- **Endon community breakfast club** has opened at Endon Village Hall, completely free and all welcome from Brown Edge also. An important service for vulnerable people. Please pop along. Dates will be published on social media.
- **Knypersley reservoir and Greenway County Park.** Complaints have been received about the overgrown picnic area, wasps' nests, car parking charges. Car Parking charging has worked at Cannock Chase. The decision was made 6 years ago. All the parks will be chargeable. A consultation will come through the Parish Council.
- **Councillor Surgeries** will be held by Cllrs Flunder, Porter and Edwards in different venues throughout the ward. Please see social media for dates and times.

c. Cllr. Flunder:

Service delivery committee have released grants for people to insulate their homes.

Residents not connected to mains gas are very eligible. Grants are also available to improve EPC (Energy Performance Certificate).

8) Declaration of Interests:

Cllr. Bedson – Carnival Committee

Cllr. Porter: Staffs Police civil servant and Carnival Committee

Cllr. Berrisford: Holly Bush, and a pecuniary interest in a quotation for work relating to the lifting and transporting of the Playing Field gates.

Cllr. Hunt: Carnival Committee, Luncheon Club and resident of Bank End adjacent to War Moors

9) Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th Sept 2023 were approved and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

Proposed Cllr. Porter – Seconded Cllr. Wright – Motion Carried

10) Matters Arising from previous meetings:

- a) **Highways issues reported on the App:** Cllr. Bedson reported no response from the Jobs pool overgrown area. A wall has fallen by Rose Cottage adjacent to the new cemetery field: The wall was defined as a County Council owned wall.
- b) **HGV deliveries at the Village supermarket.** A photograph has been taken of a HGV delivering at 1.55pm. Cllr Bedson will arrange to visit the manager with Cllr. Felton
- c) **High Lane Car Park Signage:** Item was moved to the next agenda for Chairmans report.
Propose Cllr Bedson – Seconded Cllr. Wright – Motion Carried
- d) **New Cemetery Field Hedgerow:** The Clerk is awaiting a quotation from the Maintenance contractor. The Clerk has researched landowner responsibilities. Some owners do have border agreements about maintenance with their neighbours. The hedgerows from the woodlands trust could not be stopped, so these will be delivered in early November. They can be stored until an alternate place can be found if the project cannot go ahead in the New Cemetery Field. It was resolved to move the item to the next agenda.
Proposed Cllr. Bedson - Seconded Cllr. Wright – Motion Carried
- e) **Playing Field Gates** (Cllr. Berrisford had declared pecuniary interest in this item)
The gates are prepared and primed in the factory in Crewe, but more time is needed to get correct paint before they are sprayed. When ready, Berrisford & Son are collecting from the factory, transporting back to Brown Edge for the lettering to then be painted gold and then transporting and remounting the gates onto the hinges at the park entrance.
- f) **Playing Field Land Boundary problem:** The Vice Chairman moved the item to 12.
- g) **Rospa report:** Following a complaint from a resident to Cllr. Porter, the Clerk has written to acknowledge the issue and has asked the Maintenance team to remove the bin from the site. Prices are needed for replacement bins. The Clerk has arranged for a Play equipment company to come to look at the site to give suggestions for improvement (date to be confirmed). The Rospa report was circulated and needs to be studied to make a plan of action for any improvements required, so these can be included in the budget for 2024.
- h) **Planning Application information:**
The Clerk read correspondence from the Planning officer who was in charge of the original War Moors application. The application was voted for approval at the committee, but the planning Permission was never issued. If the application is resubmitted it will have to come back to the Planning committee because after 5 years, there will have been changes. Net gain on Biodiversity was discussed and how the water flow to Sytch Well could be protected. It will take years to regrow the full dress of wildflowers. Environment agency grants were discussed and the Green Recovery Challenge fund. The Clerk will find out information about these opportunities and Cllr Jebb will also work on this.

11. Finance & Governance:

a) The Clerk's finance report for September was done at the 13th September meeting (as per the minutes) due to the meeting being slightly later than usual.

b) The Clerk presented the External Audit report from Mazars. Issues were raised by the Auditor.

i. The Clerk had not recorded the receipt of the PWLB loan in 21/22 financial year. The Clerk explained that the loan had been agreed but the funds had not been received in the 21/22 financial year.

ii. The loan interest of £2669 had been deducted from the total borrowings in Box 10 whereas the auditor had clarified that only the capital repayment should be deducted from the total loan amount. Box 10 was therefore £2669 understated. The Clerk will correct the error by restating the correct amount in the 23/24 Annual Governance and Accountability Review.

The Council acknowledged the amendments and improvements needed in 23/24 and ratified the publication of the Certificate of Completion of the Audit

Proposed Cllr. Wright – Secoded Cllr. Porter – Motion Carried

c) Payments to be authorised:

1. Mrs D Wheat Clerk Salary (Sept)	£ 454.80
Phone (Tesco Mobile Top Up)	£ 7.50
Mileage (Sep 2023)	£ 13.50
Total	<u>£475.80</u>
2. Mr J Bourne Cemetery Recorder Salary (Jul-Sep)	£ 567.37
Phone allowance	£ 10.00
Mileage	£ 21.64
Stationary (Ryman Large envelopes for Deeds)	£ 6.99
Total	<u>£ 606.00</u>
3. HMRC PAYE (Clerk and Cem Rec)	<u>£ 124.80</u>
4. N&J Tree Services Ltd. Invoice 6th Maintenance Visit	<u>£ 924.00</u>
5. Mazars Intermediate Audit Fee	<u>£ 756.00</u>
6. Brown Edge Village Hall Oct 22 – Mar 23	£234.00
Parish Meeting	£39.00
Apr 23 – Mar 24 (Full Year)	£294.00
Total	<u>£567.00</u>
<u>Direct Debits</u>	
7. British Gas Playing Field Sep 23	£21.54
8. British Gas Cemetery Sep 23	£13.44
9. Water Plus Cemetery Sep 23	£14.13
Total	<u>£49.11</u>
Total Payments	<u>£3,502.71</u>

The clerk was asked to check the dates of the Village Hall Hire.

d). An Income report for September was received from the Cemetery Recorder:

9th. September 2023. Purchase of Cremated Remains Grave & Interment (@ Double Fees) £ 550 – 00

15th. September 2023. Purchase of Grave & Interment (@ Double Fees) £ 870 – 00

Total **£ 1,420 – 00**

Proposed Cllr. Oberholster – Secoded Cllr. Porter – Payments were Authorised and Receipts noted.

12. Items on Notice

a) Neighbourhood Plan:

Cllr. Berrisford updated the Council on reforming the Neighbourhood Plan Committee. The interested members can then decide on Committee roles. The Committee will be confirmed after the next informal meeting when the draft policies will be reviewed so that the structure reflects the layout of Denstone's draft plan. Electronic copies are needed of all the information where possible. Wednesday – 18th October – 7pm Headmasters House was suggested.

b) Brown Edge Playing Field:

Cllr. Bedson moved to write to the developer of the land adjacent to Brown Edge Playing Field on the site of the old shop, expressing our concerns with the boundary wall encroaching onto Parish Council property. There are cases of Planning enforcement that are not being addressed. Advice has been gathered from a legal source and a letter has been drafted. The Council discussed the drainage on the land to be added. The letter was then approved to be sent. The Clerk to notify Land registry that the boundary is under dispute.

Proposed Cllr Bedson – Seconded Cllr Wright – Motion Carried

13. Reports and Actions: Councillors undertaking business/actions on behalf of the council.

a) Allotment Report: Cllr. Felton had sent a written report to the Council regarding a recent Allotment inspection:

I am happy to say in general that it is very tidy, but I have made the following suggestions:

1. The area next to the stables will be cleared of rubbish, I was advised this will become the area for storing bark chippings.
2. The guttering on the stables needs to be repaired, this again is in hand.
3. I have asked that the IBC water containers are covered in some way that is more sympathetic with the surroundings.

In terms of plots we need to send a general email to all tenants to remind them that any unused areas should be covered to prevent weed growth and that it is their responsibility to repair any fencing. Posts are available from the stables.

We also need to issue a termination notice to one Plot holder as this plot has not had any maintenance or use for a long time.

b) Councillor Training: Cllr. Hunt and Cllr. Oberholster have attended a Training Course with SPCA.

14. Correspondence:

Applications received for the Clerks Role were circulated to the Council. The Clerk to set a date for interviews preferably with the same interview panel of Cllrs. Felton, Wright and Oberholster.

Proposed Cllr. Bedson – Seconded Cllr. Wright – Motion Carried

15. Items for the Attention of other local authorities:

District Council: A signed petition against fireworks has been received from 9 members of the public to ask the Parish Council to limit fireworks on New Years Eve. It was discussed that fireworks in Brown Edge are organised privately and that it is not a public event. Complaints need to be addressed to the District Council about noise. The Parish Council need to respond that the organisers have been made aware of the resident concerns.

Proposed Cllr. Bedson – Seconded Cllr. Wright

16. Matters Pertaining to issues in the Parish for the next Agenda:

- a) **Oak Tree:** The Carnival Committee have requested to plant an Oak tree to commemorate the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III. A location needs to be approved.
- b) **Community Orchard**
- c) **New Cemetery Field Hedge:** Meeting with Lingfield Avenue Residents to be arranged.
- d) **The Breach:** grass verges and parking issues.
- e) **Bank End:** Overgrown docks and weeds. District responsibility
- f) **High Lane:** Parking on pavements causing issues for Pedestrians.

Meeting ended 20.50

Date of the Next Brown Edge Parish Council Meeting:

Wednesday 1st November 2023 at 7pm at Brown Edge Village Hall

I hereby state this is a correct account of the monthly meeting held by Brown Edge Parish Council.		
Signed: (Chair)	Councillor	Date: