

Meeting Minutes of the Parish Council held on Wednesday 1st July 2020 remotely via Zoom at 7:30pm

Attendees: Councillors – Cllr. Turner (Chair), Cllr. Woodward (Vice Chair), Cllr. Hargreaves, Cllr. Shufflebotham, Cllr. Owen, Cllr. Wright, Cllr. Flunder (SCC), Cllr. Lea (SMDC) Cllr. Porter (SMDC) and 2 members of the public. Minutes recorded by Mrs. D Wheat (Clerk)

1. Chairman’s Welcome and Announcements:

Cllr. Turner welcomed everyone to the Zoom meeting.

2. Apologies:

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|------------------------|-------------------|
| Cllr. Turner-Holdcroft | Unwell |
| Cllr. Spooner | Family Commitment |
| Cllr. Corbett | Work Commitment |
| Cllr. Sherratt | Unwell |

3. Parishioners Opportunity:

None of the attending members of the public had anything to put to the council.

4. District Councillors Report:

Cllr. Porter – reported that SMDC have now successfully held a virtual Cabinet meeting and a Planning meeting. The frontline services have been maintained. The Environmental Officer has been busy visiting premises in the Moorlands to help make sure they are safe before re-opening. The District have received 129 applications for business help. 27 Homeless people have been found accommodation. Litter has become a problem over the last month. Several reports of litter in Endon, Knypersley Pool and Marshes Hill have been reported. Reports of wild swimming and inflatables on Knypersley Pool have also been reported which is very dangerous as there are under water pumps causing undercurrents. Karen Bradley MP. is keen to come along and help support a Community Litter pick event. Cllr. Porter will set a date for the event. A new PCSO for the area has been appointed – PCSO Laura Peacock.

Cllr. Lea – several reports have come in about Marshes Hill and Hough Hill. Complaints have been raised about a tractor churning up the Heathland. On a positive note there are 100 miniature ornamental bushes ready to plant in the village which Cllr. Lea has been nurturing.

5. County Councillors Report:

Cllr. Flunder gave a Corona report briefing with reference to the email which has been circulated to the Council. If there is a necessity for a local lockdown in the Staffordshire Moorlands, Cllr. Mark Deaville will be organising the process. A new Grant is available to Community Groups through the Community Foundation. Also still available is the Co-op Funeral Care Hardship Fund. More Covid-19 funding is also available as the County want to keep up the essential support in the Community. Leek Library will open on 20th July and Biddulph Library on 27th July. NHS Dental services are also opening gradually. Highways are starting a job on the drains from New Lane to Old Lane and pothole reports are being fixed. A member of the public would like to start a traffic calming group for Brown Edge and Norton Green. Details have been given to the Clerk to make contact. Minister of State Care - Helen Whiteley has been contacted by Bill cash MP about 1st Responders lack of training. They know Staffordshire County Council want something done. Previous complaint from Willfield Road – The contractor has accepted responsibility and the wall has been repaired.

The Chairman thanked the District and County Councillors for their reports.

6. Declaration of Interest:

Cllr. Owen – Maintenance contract

7. Minutes of Previous Meetings:

- 6th June 2020 Full Council Meeting** – Agreed - **Proposed: Cllr. Woodward – Second Cllr. Wright – Motion Carried**
17th June 2020 Extra Ordinary Meeting – Agreed - **Proposed: Cllr Owen – Second Cllr. Wright – Motion Carried**
24th June 2020 Confidential Meeting – Agreed - **Proposed: Cllr. Owen – Second Cllr. Wright – Motion Carried**

8. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings:

- a) **Clay Tribute:** The Chairman reported that there has been an incredible response and many local children have got involved. The school have also responded very positively to the request but at the time there were very few Children in attendance. The Chairman asked for help inviting other village groups to get involved with the unveiling event. Cllr. Lea volunteered.
- b) **Village Archives** – The Chairman told the Council of a storage area within the Village Hall which is ideal. Some more work is needed to get the space ready, but it will be ideal for the Old Archive and accessible when needed.
- c) **Website:** Overall review of the website to be done in the coming months.
- d) **Litter Picker role availability** – The vacancy has been published on social media, but a search has removed it, for being a job advert. The role has also been published in the Parish News. Cllr. Hargreaves will post on the Brown Edgers page. Cllr. Woodward suggested putting the vacancy on the noticeboards.
- e) **Marshes Hill – misuse and access issues** – The Clerk reported that she had contacted the Countryside Officer at SMDC, who has replied, he will do an inspection of the site and also look at the signage. Cllr. Porter asked to be copied into this correspondence. The Chairman has received some photographs of the problem areas from a resident. A discussion was had about the access problems and the causes of the damage to the heathland. It was decided to send a polite letter to the farms involved to ask for them to use an alternative access to protect Marshes Hill from further erosion.
Proposed – Cllr. Woodward – Second Cllr. Owen – Motion Carried
Cllr. Flunder added to the discussion by clarifying the role of the Ranger and that they are currently fully stretched and limited in resources with the wildfire problems. A program has been released by Staffordshire Fire and Rescue – Don't Blame the Flame and he reminded the Council that public footpaths are maintained by County, currently they have no spare signs in stock. The Parish may need to look for funding to buy some new ones.
- f) **Cemetery Field Tenancy Agreement** - The Clerk has found information on the various agreements that can be put in place for Agricultural Tenancy or Grazing Licences. A document will need to be drawn up by a solicitor as it is a legal agreement. A licence would mean the farmer did not have exclusive rights to the land, but this would give the Council access rights to maintain the boundary fence and gates which have been causing local resident's problems when overgrown. A discussion was had regarding getting this document prepared. The Council wish to maintain good relations with the farmer. Cllr. Shufflebotham suggested contacting DEFRA for advice as the Council may need a Holding Ref. No. Clerk will contact DEFRA for more information. It was proposed that the maintenance Contractor should go in and sort out the overgrown area when he repairs the gate post.
Proposed – Cllr. Turner – Seconded – Cllr. Hargreaves – Motion Carried

9. Resolutions still being pursued:

- a) **Shared Area on BEPC website** - The Chairman explained that the shared area for general Council information has now been created so that Councillors can log in and access documents which they need which have been filed by the Clerk under subject headings, instead of receiving unnecessary emails.

10. Reports and Actions of Parish Councillors undertaking business/actions on behalf of the Council.

- a) **HR Committee** - The Clerk requested a Personnel meeting to clarify terms for PAYE. Cllr. Hargreaves, Cllr. Shufflebotham and Cllr. Wright will hold a virtual meeting with the Clerk on Tuesday 7th June at 7pm.

Cllr. Porter left the meeting at 8.30pm for another meeting appointment.

- b) **Neighbourhood Plan** – The Chairman proposed a motion that in August to form the Neighbourhood Plan Committee and to publish Terms of Reference.

11. Financial Matters & Governance:

- a) To declare Bank Balance (see table below)

The Accounts are currently with Internal Auditor. Budget and Earmarked reserves were discussed. Cllr. Wright offered to help the Clerk to set up Scribe Accounting Software with all the correct starting balances. The Clerk advised that she needed the Internal Audit to be returned to be able to complete this task.

| | | Bank | Chq. No. | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|----------|----------|
| 1 st May 2020 | Balance b/ forward | £22,124.96 | | |
| | Received 19.05.2020 | £738.29 | | |
| Total Payments (May) | Withdrawn | £7,426.42 | | |
| | Nat West Statement | | | Page 199 |
| 1st June 2020 | Bank Balance | £15,436.83 | | |
| Uncleared Cheques at 01.06.2020 | None | - | | |
| Current Account Available | | £15,436.83 | | |

- b) Authorisation of payments

| Payee | Goods/Services | Sub-Total | VAT | Chq no | Total |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|--------|----------------|
| Mrs D Wheat | Clerk Expenses Stamps x6 1 st , x6 2 nd , x4 large letter Viking UK Stationary – Paper, Files, Acetate pockets, receipt book, mouse INK | £16.00 £88.99 £68.32 | £17.80 £13.66 | 000995 | £204.77 |

- c) Nat West Mandate – A letter of Authorisation has been sent to Nat West, but the Clerk has not received any correspondence from the bank yet.
- d) Staffordshire County Council Covid-19 Emergency Grant application. The Clerk applied and Cllr. Flunder was pleased to be able to allocate £350.00 from the fund to the Brown Edge Covid-19 Response project.
- e) Cemetery Recorders report – The Clerk read out the report and a letter from a resident applying to purchase a Cemetery Bench. It was proposed for the Clerk to reply to say, no benches at present but the application will be reviewed again in December when the Council review the Cemetery Rules.
Proposed – Cllr. Turner – Seconded – Cllr Owen – Motion Carried
- f) Declaration of Interests – Update. A discussion was had around declaration of interests and the Clerk will send any outstanding forms out to the relevant Councillors to complete.

- g) Policy review – Financial Regulations and Risk Assessment. The Clerk prepared draft copies of both documents for the Council to review before the August meeting when the Annual Governance Report will be presented to the Council for Authorisation

12. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/2020. The Internal Audit has not yet been returned so this item will be carried to the August Meeting.

13. Correspondence:

- a) A letter from Mr. Mason – Litter Picker was read to the Council regarding PAYE. The Chairman explained that the Council acted in the correct way, and it was the publication in the Parish News that has upset Mr Mason. The Chairman will publish an apology in the next issue.
- b) A Letter from a resident regarding overgrown vegetation being a nuisance on the Cemetery Field. It was decided in the previous item 8.f) that this problem is the responsibility of the Parish Council and the Maintenance Contractor will investigate what needs to be done.

14. Items on Notice – (Please see note 15c and 15d).

15. Other Matters to be discussed:

- a) Website Accessibility Statement –The Clerk reported to the Council of the new Accessibility legislation for Websites. The Chairman has trialled the free Microsoft software to check the Councils website and only a few minor problems were identified. The Clerk will prepare an Accessibility Statement which needs to be published by 23rd September 2020 on the website with a list of tasks to work towards.
- b) Streaming/recording of Council meetings – Clerk reported that the law on recording meetings has not changed with the introduction of remote meetings.
- c) Hammond Avenue, Sytch Road – Residential garden bushes overgrown over public footway – The Clerk had received an initial complaint from a resident and then a further complaint with photographic evidence, both submitted from Councillors. The Clerk apologised as this should have been an Item on Notice. The hedge has now been cut by either County or District Contractors. Cllr. Woodward proposed that a polite reminder to the residents of their responsibilities in the future, should be sent by the Clerk.

Proposed – Cllr. Woodward – Seconded – Cllr. Turner – Motion Carried

- d) The Hooping Wall, Hough Hill – (Item should also have been on notice) Vegetation overgrown and unsightly – report by Cllr. Woodward.
- A discussion was had about maintaining this area. Although a District responsibility, due to the Covid-19 response it is likely that it will be not a high priority. Maintenance contractor congratulated for the excellent job of cleaning the Well at Sytch. Decision made to ask Maintenance Contractor to clear the vegetation.
- Proposed – Cllr. Owen – Seconded Cllr. Turner – Motion Carried***
- Cllr. Wright said that she had cleared the Sandy Lane Well, so congratulations also went to Cllr Wright for her initiative.

16. Items for the attention of other local authorities:

- a) Matters for the District Council:
- b) Matters for the County Council:

17. Planning Applications and Related Issues: No applications received this month.

18. Matters Pertaining to Issues in the Parish for the Next Agenda

New items raised by Councillors will be carried forward to the Agenda of the next meeting:

Cllr. Shufflebotham mentioned water coming from the Rocks

Cllr. Hargreaves – Signage needs to be checked all around the Village.

Cllr. Shufflebotham – Broken Sile near to Holdcroft’s Farm. This has been reported to County.

19. Confidential Item:

Motion to exclude Press and Public as detailed in SCHEDULE 12A of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972

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

Update from the Chairman on the progress of Commercial negotiations. Cllr. Flunder asked for it to be minuted that although he is not allowed to vote, he would help in a working group.

The Council will continue to hold remote meetings unless otherwise advised. In line with Standing Orders these meetings will be the 1st Wednesday of the month. The Chairman apologised that there had been a lot of items to discuss and thanked councillors for keeping within 2.5hrs, specified in the Standing Orders.

Meeting was closed 21.40

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