

## Minutes of Brown Edge Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020 remotely via Zoom at 7:30pm

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**Present:** Councillors – Cllr. Turner (Chairman), Cllr. Woodward (Vice Chairman), Cllr. Hargreaves, Cllr. Shufflebotham, Cllr. Turner-Holdcroft, Cllr. Owen, Cllr. Corbett, Cllr. Wright, Cllr. Flunder (SCC), Cllr. Lea (SMDC) Cllr. Porter (SMDC) and 7 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. The Chairman thanked the Clerk for her hard work so far.

**2. Apologies for Absence:**

Cllr. Shufflebotham – Work Commitment

**3. Adjournment of Meeting for Public Participation:**

- i. A resident commented that the wording in the 15<sup>th</sup> July Minutes (Item 3 Paragraph 3) should be ‘borrowing’ not purchasing. The Clerk apologised for the misunderstanding. The resident also commented on the Neighbourhood Development Plan draft Terms of Reference (Item 9c). He suggested the draft should go to the existing Neighbourhood Plan Committee for consultation.
- ii. A resident spoke of her support for the Planning Application at Top Pub because the pedestrian access surrounding the Pub will be much safer than it is currently.

**4. District Councillors Report:**

Cllr. Porter – thanked everyone for supporting the volunteer litter pick on 18<sup>th</sup> July at Marshes Hill, Hill Top and Knypersley Pool, also attended by new local PCSO. Laura Peacock. 13 people turned up to help and filled 12 bags of litter. Cllr. Porter wants to set up a community team of volunteers to litter pick regularly and reported that Recycling across the Moorlands has improved from 56% - 56.4%.

A new initiative - Eat Out to Help Out Scheme has been launched to encourage people to go out to eat and support local business – Mon/Tue/Wed – 50% off meals up to £10, also car parking in Staffs Moorlands now has 3 free hours parking to encourage High Street shopping throughout August. Leisure Centres are now reopening.

Cllr. Lea – Apologised as she had currently lost her voice and could not contribute to the District Report.

**5. County Councillor Report:**

Cllr. Flunder gave a report of data from County on the local control of Covid outbreaks in Stone and Burton. All Covid communication will be circulated via the Clerk.

He announced that the new leader of Staffordshire County Council following the retirement of Cllr. Philip Atkins is Cllr. Alan White, and deputy leader is Cllr. Philip White (no relation). Cllr. Flunder has maintained his role on the cabinet.

A new Health Finder App has been launched to make it easier to find services in the health sector. Also proving successful is the Unemployment Triage Service which helps people who are facing redundancy because of Covid in the area, this idea has been echoed by Parliament.

Neighbourhood Planning is moving forward. Cllr Flunder offered to talk to anyone interested about the changes. Cllr. Flunder asked for sponsorship support for a cycle ride which he is participating in along with the High Sherriff for the High Sheriff’s Charity Fund.

The Chairman thanked the District and County Councillors for their reports and to Cllr. Porter for organising the Community litter pick for Brown Edge.

**6. Declaration of Interest:**

Cllr. Owen – Maintenance contract

Cllr. Lea – Member of SMDC Planning Committee

**7. Minutes of Previous Meetings:**

**1<sup>st</sup> July 2020 Full Council Meeting** – Cllr. Flunder asked for the minutes to be amended (Item 5) - Highways are aware of the drainage issue but it is not yet in progress.

**15<sup>th</sup> July 2020 Extra Ordinary Meeting** – Amendment to the wording requested by a resident – (Item 3)- Change “purchase the land” to “borrow the funds”. An amendment was also requested by a resident by email to the Clerk regarding the statement (Item 3, paragraph 3). “no money has been spent” to make a note that “an Architect had previously been instructed by the Council to draw up plans for the Holly Bush Car Park invoiced for £3,817.10 on 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2018” The Chairman stated that the minutes are a record of what was actually said and not what should have been said. He apologised for omitting this information at the meeting. **All in favour to amend as requested. The minutes were then duly approved and signed as a true record.**

**8. Resolutions still being pursued** – Activity Tracker - The Chairman explained the table which will log all the tasks which the Council have agreed to proceed with. This is to prevent less important jobs from slipping off the Agenda in future meetings. The Clerk asked the Council if she could remove the three tasks completed (in red) from the list. **All in favour.**

**9. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings:**

a) **Clay Tribute:** Tina Holdcroft was invited to tell the Council and members of the public about the design. The Galvanised steel construction was discussed and saucers to fix the Clay artwork to have all been donated by local companies. The Maintenance Contractor will construct the base groundworks but will need sufficient time. The Chairman thanked Tina for leading on the creation of a unique feature for the Community.

**Clay Tribute Sculpture to be made of galvanised steel and clay is to be situated in the Memorial Garden. All in favour**

A date was provisionally agreed for the unveiling to coincide with a possible village fete on 5<sup>th</sup> September – scarecrows and a one-way system around village were discussed.

**Date and activities to be discussed with the Carnival Committee.**

b) **Litter Picker role availability** – The vacancy has been published in various places but has received no applications. Young people have complained about being blamed for litter on social media. Cllr. Corbett suggested using the current Covid Support Group Area Supervisors to help co-ordinate a volunteer litter pick team. Rubbish bag collection points were discussed. Cllr. Sherratt and Cllr. Turner-Holdcroft will work with Cllr. Porter to prepare for the next voluntary event.

c) **Neighbourhood Development Plan**

i. A discussion was had to form a formal Committee or to hold working group meetings. A Committee needs to be re-formed each year at the Annual Meeting of the Council. The Parish Council is responsible for the Neighbourhood Plan but the content of the plan will be made up from input from both the Council and the Community. Accountability was discussed. The Neighbourhood Plan Committee should bring proposals from their meetings to the Parish Council to be agreed before policies can be written. Cllr. Flunder said he would be available to give advice when Brown Edge hold their next Neighbourhood Plan meeting.

**To form a Committee was proposed by Cllr. Owen – Seconded Cllr. Wright – All in favour.**

ii. **Draft Terms of Reference** were discussed. Aims of the project and work already completed was considered. Following Parish Council Standing Orders for electing a committee was discussed and also the possibility of the Clerk taking minutes at NDP Committee meetings. Cllr. Lea said that Mr. Beresford (previous NDP Chairman) had already got some documentation in place and had done a lot of hard work on the plan. This should be included within the new Terms of Reference. Cllr. Flunder commented that Checkley P.C. had chosen the formal committee route but had set up a Residents Group to give the Public more say. Item to be on next Agenda.

**Proposed – Cllr. Corbett – Seconded – Cllr. Owen – All in favour.**

- d) **Declaration of Interests Register** – The Clerk thanked the Councillors for updating all their forms. The register is now complete.
- e) **Budget and Financial Control System** – The Clerk thanked Cllr. Wright for setting up the new Scribe accounting software with all the opening balances. Cllr. Wright confirmed that these balances are now reconciled to the end of June with the bank statements. The earmarked budget which was agreed at the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020 is also now entered and will be available to present reports to the Council at future meetings when required.
- f) **Village Archive and Council Document storage** – Previous Clerk - Mr Bourne is currently going through a process of sorting all old documentation and is preserving any documents which are of historic interest or of legal matters and also the financial and minute records of the Council will be preserved. No decision is required regarding storage until the extent of the documentation is known.
- g) **Sandy Lane Flooding** – Road drainage needs to be changed to solve the problem. Cllr. Flunder will consult the Highways officer to check that tasks are considered in priority order of importance following Covid and the resuming of County Highways maintenance work.
- h) **HR Committee** – Cllrs. Wright, Shufflebotham and Hargreaves had a meeting with the Clerk to discuss salary payment frequency and mileage expenses. It was agreed to monthly salary and 45p per mile mileage expenses. A Parish Council Mobile Phone has been purchased and a monthly tariff Pay as You Go set up.
- i) **Bank and Building Society mandates** – The Clerk explained the signing Rules for both the NatWest and the Leek United Accounts. When accepted by the Bank following identification checks, the Clerk can then change the address for statements to be received. ***Brown Edge Parish Council resolved that the Responsible Financial Officer - Denise Wheat to be added as an Authorised Signatory to both accounts in accordance with the Signing Rules already in place in the Banking Mandate.***
- j) **The Holly Bush and Car Park** – Cllr. Turner, Cllr Lea and the Clerk have met with SMDC to ask advice on how to purchase the above premises, maintain the current Tenancy and to consider development of the surrounding land for the benefit of the Community of Brown Edge through the Neighbourhood Plan. SMDC advised the Council to seek Legal Advice from their appointed Solicitor and from the Staffordshire Parish Councils Association. A District Council can lend to a Parish Council that is authorised by the Secretary of State to be allowed to borrow. To apply to the Secretary of State is the next stage. To do this Brown Edge Parish Council must prove the support of residents by undertaking a survey in the community. Because of current Covid restrictions this can only be done by an online or postal survey. The Chairman thanked the Council for responding properly to Press and Social Media speculation surrounding the negotiation. The Council resolved to apply to the Secretary of State to borrow the funds £660.000 (inc. VAT) following a public survey, if the public are in favour to support the project.  
***Proposed - Cllr. Owen - Seconded - Cllr. Lea – All in favour***

## 10. Financial Matters & Governance:

- a) **Authorisation of Payments** - It was moved to pay the following items:

The Information Commissioner Data Protection fee renewal £40.00. The Council resolved to set up a direct debit to receive a £5 discounted fee from the ICO. New annual fee                      £35.00.

Mrs K Bradshaw (C Neufeld) Neufeld Accountancy Services Internal Audit	Chq. No. 000956	£140.00
Cheque written out incorrectly	Chq. No 000957	£0.00
Mr J Bourne Cemetery Recorder Salary £587.09 and Expenses £42.68	Chq. No. 000958	£629.77

Mrs D Wheat Clerk Salary £1213.70 & Expenses £153.38	Chq. No. 000959	£1,367.08
HMRC – PAYE	Chq. No. 000960	£230.80
Staffordshire parish Councils Association – Clerk training	Chq. No. 000961	£50.00

**Proposed – Cllr. Turner – Seconded – Cllr. Owen – All in favour**

- b) Cemetery Recorders report – The Clerk read out the report prepared by Mr Bourne of transactions received.
- c) The Resignation of Cllr. Spooner was acknowledged by the Council. The Council asked for a letter of thanks for her service and contribution to the Community of Brown Edge to be sent. The Clerk has notified the Electoral Services Officer who has actioned the Notice of Vacancy to be published.
- d) It was proposed for a change to the Standing Orders for a record of attendance of Councillors to be kept by the Clerk.

**Proposed – Cllr. Wright – Seconded – Cllr. Lea – All in favour**

**11. Correspondence:**

- a) A letter from a resident about Litter Hot Spots around the Parish. Cllr. Flunder mentioned PPE for litter pickers and emphasised the fire risk problem of abandoned disposable barbeques. Knypersley Pool fishermen have complained about the litter problem. The Daily Mail had publicised the area as a Hidden gem which may be the cause of an increase in visitors to the area. **Clerk to keep Cllr. Porter informed.**
- b) A phone call from a resident asking for support from the council to reduce speed on Endon Road and an online petition which has been submitted to SMDC. A discussion was had about the problem. A VAS sign has been budgeted for. Cllr. Flunder has been in talks with Stoke-on-Trent City Council regarding this and will support the Parish Council if they wish to look into this. **Item to be on next Agenda.**
- c) Letters sent by the Clerk to Hammond Avenue residents to remind them of their responsibility for maintaining the front hedge. The Clerk has received three complaints from residents who said they had cut their hedge and that the letter had caused distress to elderly residents.

Cllr. Flunder apologised but had to leave the meeting at 21.30.

- d) Letters have been sent by the Clerk to farms adjacent to Marshes Hill politely asking them to take care not to damage heath and wildlife when accessing fields via Common land.
- e) Post office and Post Box. The Clerk has contacted Post Office Ltd. And Royal Mail to find out when a new post box will be situated in the village. **The reply was that it is a confidential matter, the Council will be informed when possible.**
- f) Complaint by email about a damaged stile at Little Stonehouse Farm. **Clerk has reported this on the MyStaffs App.**
- g) A resident complained about the overgrowth around the edges of the new Cemetery field. The maintenance contractor has been to sort this problem. A discussion was had regarding the grass having hidden concrete blocks and lumps of steel amongst it, this could be why the farmer has not cut up to the edges. Farmers are also not encouraged to mow in some places to allow for wildlife areas. A grazing agreement and preparing the Cemetery Field land for its future purpose to be on next Agenda. **The resident expressed his thanks by email to the Council for clearing the problem grass.**
- h) Rospa are scheduled to do a safety check on the Play equipment at High Lane Playing Field. **The Clerk will advise when this has been done.**

**12. Matters to be discussed on Notice** – Cllr. Woodward wished to move that the blocked culvert is repaired opposite the Hooping Wall to stop water flowing over the road. Although a County Highways issue, it was discussed that the problem needs fixing before ice forms in the winter. The Maintenance contractor will provide a quote for the work. **The Council agreed that if cost is reasonable the Maintenance Contractor is to go ahead and solve the problem. All in Favour**

**13. Items for the attention of other local authorities:**

- a) Matters for the District Council: None reported
- b) Matters for the County Council: None reported

**14. Planning Applications and Related Issues:**

**DET/2020/0033** - 194 High Lane, Brown Edge, ST6 8BQ. Change of use to incorporate formal Post Office floor space into existing residential house. Following a vote 2 Against/ 5 For/ 1 Abstain. The Council agreed to forward no objection to this application.

**SMD/2020/0379** - The Top Pub, Hill Top, Brown Edge, ST6 8TX. Erection of 3 houses and a bungalow. Access to the residential site through the pub car park to minimise conflict between future residents and customers and maintain and improve the efficiency of the car park.

Cllrs. Woodward and Hargreaves declared that they had both expressed personal opinion before the meeting and so decided to take no part in the discussion. The improved access was discussed. The application being on Green Belt land was discussed and also that the development will infill to the current village boundary. A vote was held 2 Against/ 3 For/ 1 Abstain. It was approved to support the application.

Cllr. Wright asked for the minute to be recorded that she asked why the Chairman did not use the casting vote.

**15. Matters Pertaining to Issues in the Parish for the Next Agenda**

Cllr. Wright asked for meetings to end by 21.30 in future as per Standing Orders. The Chairman said the Meeting should last no longer than 2.5hrs which would be 22.00.

The Council will continue to hold remote meetings unless otherwise advised. In line with Standing Orders these meetings will be the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month.

**Meeting was closed 22.25**

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