

Minutes of Brown Edge Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd February 2021 remotely via Zoom at 7:30pm

Present: Councillors – Cllr. Turner (Chairman), Cllr. Woodward (Vice Chairman), Cllr. Turner-Holdcroft, Cllr. Shufflebotham, Cllr. Corbett, Cllr. Sherratt, Cllr. Wright, Cllr. Felton, District Cllr. Porter (SMDC) and County Cllr. Flunder (SCC)

Two members of the public were also in attendance.

Minutes recorded by Mrs. D Wheat (Clerk)

- 1. Chairman's Welcome and Announcements:** The Chairman opened the meeting and reminded all present that the meeting is to be broadcast live on YouTube.

- 2. Apologies for Absence:**

Cllr. Hargreaves – Family commitment

Cllr. Lea (SMDC) – Unwell

Cllr. Owen – Work commitment

Cllr. Turner-Holdcroft (is currently present but having internet issues)

The Chairman asked the Clerk to speak to Cllr. Lea to ask if she needs dispensation to be agreed by the Council.

- 3. Members of the Public - Concerns to be raised:**

- a. Hill Top HGV issues** - A resident mentioned HGV transport using the road past Hill Top. A waggon has knocked his wall down twice. It has been reported to the company and the manager was not aware that the trucks were using this route. The resident asked if the Council had had any progress. A discussion was had about the routes that the waggons are taking. S-O-T City Council have put up 'No HGV' signage at Knypersley.

The waggons fill the road completely and they damage trees and hedges as the road is so tight. Erosion at the side of the roads was mentioned and it was acknowledged that this is a big problem which must be dealt with.

- b. Street Signage** - A resident mentioned the street sign on Leonard Drive is damaged and in need of repair. The item to be listed and reported by the Clerk to SMDC.

- 4. District Councillors Report:** Cllr. Porter thanked Cllr. Sherratt and the Brown Edge Litter Picking Army for keeping up the momentum of this initiative in the village. The network now has approximately 30 volunteers. SMDC are doing a social media program of posts on mental health and wellbeing awareness to exercise locally and to live healthily during lockdown. A Climate Change action plan is soon to be published in Spring. Cllr. Porter spoke at the SMDC Parish Assembly to representatives from the Parishes and Towns of the Moorlands to encourage a partnership approach. If anyone has any locations for a community Orchard there is a project which is ongoing to provide public space in the Parishes to grow and harvest fruit for the community to access. There has been an update to the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan incorporating wildlife corridors and green transport ideas. The local policing team have been asked to keep an eye on Marshes Hill and Knypersley Reservoir. There has been a 10% drop in crime over the Moorlands. Staffordshire Police are promoting a Public Consultation of their services – please promote on Social Media. Covid testing was discussed and how it has been done very professionally. Business Grants are still available from SMDC so please spread the word for people to apply.

- 5. County Councillor Report:**

- a) COVID** Cllr. Funder thanked the Clerk for sending out the Covid information to the Council regularly. The Kingston Centre in Stafford has now opened, and they are handling high volumes of vaccinations. The Vaccination Centre at Biddulph is open Thursdays and Saturdays. Testing for people who go to work is now stationed at Biddulph and Brough Park Leisure Centre, both locations now offering longer opening times

(please check with venue for exact times). Other Covid related services available are a Family Hub Winter Assistance Grant for food and supplies, Dignity Care Awards, Benefits help, a Suicide awareness campaign by Stoke City Football Club, Foster Caring, grants to improve homes and Doing Our Bit grants. The Libraries are also offering many services across the county especially in health and wellbeing services.

- b) **Highways** – The Councillor drop-in session went well on Saturday 16th January, which was an open session for the public to talk in more detail about their problems directly with Councillors. Cllr Flunder requested a working group to try to move forward on the various projects that have been identified for Brown Edge including Sandy Lane Junction, The HGV trucks over Hill Top, Fiddlers Bank, Chapel Lane and Speeding on High Lane.
- c) **Grants** - The Climate Change Grant deadline for applications has been extended to 26th February if Brown Edge want to apply. The District Councillor Community Initiative fund has been discussed to possibly roll over into the following financial year if applications have not all been received on time due to community groups being closed. Central Government have sent out a letter to thank everyone from Matt Hancock and it sets out what the Government are planning to do over the next few months.
- d) **Community Awards** - The Lord Lieutenant has requested applications for people to be recognised for national recognition for community work during the Covid period through applications for national awards. Cllr. Flunder thanked Cllr. Turner-Holdcroft for her initiative with the school 'Hugs in a Box' to promote care in the Community and the project has been discussed at County to possibly promote the idea over the whole County. Cllr. Sherratt commented that receiving one of these, from the schoolchildren had made her day. Phase 1 is working well; Phase 2 has some safeguarding issues which need to be overcome due to lockdown restrictions. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Porter and Cllr. Flunder for their reports. He also mentioned that three bouquets have been offered to the Council to present in the Community, but this item missed the Agenda so he just wanted the donation to be noted that it will be discussed by the Council at the next meeting.

6. Declaration of Interest:

Cllr. Woodward declared a pecuniary interest in the Tender for the Cemetery Wall repair.

The Chairman declared on behalf of Cllr. Owen, a declaration of interest in the Maintenance Contract as he may join the meeting late.

7. Minutes of Previous Meetings:

The Council duly approved that the minutes of **6th January 2021 Ordinary Full Council Meeting** to be a correct record. **Proposed – Cllr. Wright – Seconded – Cllr. Turner Holdcroft – Motion Carried**

The minutes will be signed as a true record and passed to the Clerk following the meeting.

8. Matters Arising from Previous Meeting:

- a) A Cemetery Working Group meeting was held on Saturday 16th January at 9am. Cllr. Owen, Cllr. Turner and the Clerk attended. Tree Maintenance, Land Drainage, Wall Maintenance, Car Park resurfacing and Notice Board Replacement were discussed. The Clerk reported on Biddulph Town Bench Policy which is a good example on managing Benches. The various Cemeteries were discussed in the Staffordshire Moorlands and the price comparisons. The Cemetery rules will be reviewed at the Annual meeting in May. The grave number markings were discussed and ways to make these neater with a stencil. Scribe Cemetery software was discussed - the current method of Cemetery recording was preferred, due to the cost of the software but should be reviewed in the future as technology demands remote cemetery searches and digital data storage. The Chairman asked for the Bench policy to be on the next Agenda. The Chairman will contact the head of the Primary School to discuss having the adjoining Cemetery hedges cut. This will need to be scheduled around the season for nesting birds. The New Cemetery planning application was then discussed. It was suggested by the Chairman that if the maintenance team can dig a test plot in the lower part of the

current Cemetery, if the land can be drained there may still be a further 5 to 10 years of space left until the Cemetery is full.

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

- b) **Junction of Sytch and Brownhills Road** – flower tubs report. It was discovered that Cllr. Lea had already got some ideas for this area. She will now liaise with Cllr. Felton and Cllr. Woodward. The Council discussed to progress this project via Cllr Woodward, Cllr Felton and Cllr Lea to be reported back at the next meeting.

Proposed - Cllr. Corbett – Seconded - Cllr. Sherratt – Motion Carried

9. **Resolutions being pursued:** Activity Tracker – Flooding on Sandy Lane has now been alleviated, but the gullies do seem to have silted up again. Cllr. Flunder reported that this is Severn Trent responsibility, but some blocked gullies are County Highways responsibility. Reporting to the County via the App is particularly important as this gets the item onto the County list.

10. Reports and Actions from Parish Councillors:

- a) **Notice Board** – The Chairman has asked a local man to look at the original notice board to see if it can be repaired. It will need two new legs as these are rotten. The Clerk reported that a local company Pope Engineering Services has offered to make a wrought iron frame and legs free of charge, similar to the one at Clay Lake.

Proposed – Cllr. Corbett – Seconded - Cllr. Wright – Motion Carried

- b) **Footpath and Bridleway report** – Cllr. Felton presented a brief report of his research. He showed images of all the stiles, posts and problem areas and also showed the maps of routes which have been studied in detail. Cycle links via the Bridleways were discussed. A decision is needed to hold a working group to discuss each item in more detail. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Felton for all his hard work and stated that this project will be a beacon for the future as green transport and exercise becomes more important in community activity, post Covid. Reporting signs was discussed. Cllr. Porter also thanked Cllr. Felton for helping with the wider project of the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan. He said how useful the local knowledge on the ground is from a Parish perspective.

- c) **Sytch Well** – Report by Cllr. Woodward on the good work done cleaning and clearing the Well and the steps by the Maintenance team. Extending the steps was discussed. Cllr. Woodward suggested asking Phil Berrisford, local contractor to provide a budget quotation so the Council have an estimate. The project can then be included in the budget forecast plan for 2022/2023. A work specification can then be drawn up and submitted for a formal tender process.

- d) **Marshes Hill** – Damage from off road vehicles. A member of the public has reported to the Clerk, a Land Rover going up and down the land. Any future sightings can be reported directly to the Staffordshire Police Facebook page and if they have officers in the area, they will come out promptly. Bollards were discussed and the responsibility of the County or District for this. Quad bikes were then discussed – four have been seen and have been seen leaving the village. Motor Cross/ Scrambler bikes have also been seen. Cllr. Porter spoke about the environmental impact of the damage. Cllr. Corbett reported the consequences that could occur if an accident happened if a quad bike flips onto the road at the bottom with fatal consequences. Setting up a ‘Friends of Marshes Hill Group’ was mentioned following lockdown. Cllr. Corbett asked for a temporary fix - could some plastic barriers be put across? Cllr. Sherratt mentioned that it is a public footpath, and so cannot be blocked. The Chairman asked if Cllr. Porter could take this problem forward with the District Council as it is a County Park issue.

- e) **Neighbourhood Plan update:** The Clerk reported that a working group meeting with Hannah Barter of Urban Vision has been arranged to refresh progress so far and to review the schedule of the plan which was originally proposed. Finance also needs to be checked so that a new application by the NP Committee for the Grant can be applied for in April when the fund reopens.

11. Financial Matters & Governance:

- a) **Nat West – Business Banking Switch** – The banks offering the switch are Metro and the Co-op Bank. A discussion was had about the proposal to switch banks. Cllr. Wright mentioned the advantage of internet banking and that the Council would then be able to see bank reconciliation each month. It was resolved to apply to the Co-operative Bank as they have branches in Leek, Hanley and Newcastle.
Proposed – Cllr Woodward – Secoded Cllr. Wright – Motion Carried
- b) **Tender for the Repair for the Cemetery Wall** – The opportunity was advertised in the Parish News and on Social Media. The Clerk thanked Cllr. Turner-Holdcroft for designing the poster. One tender has been received. The Clerk read out the Tender for £160.00 to repair the wall including materials and removal of debris from Mr. Phil Woodward Gardening and Maintenance (Cllr. Woodward). The Council resolved to have the work done.
Proposed- Cllr. Corbett – Secoded – Cllr. Sherratt – Motion Carried

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

Mrs D Wheat Clerk Salary & Expenses (Dec)	Chq. No. 000993	£461.39
Cheque incorrectly written	Chq. No 000994	cancelled
HMRC PAYE	Chq. No. 000995	£59.00
SMDC Charge for Parish Election (2 nd Instalment)	Chq. No. 000996	£818.77

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

- c) **The Cemetery Report** – Mr Bourne has sent his monthly report. The Clerk highlighted the receipt of the Grazing fee of £175.00.

12. Correspondence:

- a) **Post Office Ltd. and The Royal Mail.** The Clerk has written to both companies to try to find out about the removal of the Village post box and to request information on when it will be replaced. No response has been received to date.
- b) **Request for a Memorial Bench** – A family have requested to have a Memorial Bench if possible, on Hill Top by the Chapel overlooking the view of the village. The Chairman will do a survey on the area of Chapel Lane to look at the possibility and report back to the Council. Item to be on the next Agenda as a Bench Report and the introduction of a Brown Edge Bench Policy.
- c) **Speeding Complaint on High Lane** – A complaint and request for help has been received from a member of the public. A discussion was had about the speed of traffic on High Lane and the frequency of accidents. The petition in 2020 was discussed and the lack of public participation. Speed surveys were discussed. Cllr. Flunder asked for local information to inform the Highways team of the need for traffic calming. Painted speed repeaters were discussed on the road surface, larger signs on the entrance to the speed zones or Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) could be installed. Cllr. Flunder suggested all Highways issues are discussed in more detail at the Highways working group so a plan can be formulated to tackle the issues. Cllr. Wright volunteered to be on this working group. A date of Saturday 20th February was agreed for the Highways meeting at 10am followed by the Councillor Drop-in session at 11am.
- d) **Chapel Lane Potholes and Poor Street lighting.** The Clerk presented images of Top Chapel Lane which have been sent by email by a resident to complain about the potholes and poor streetlighting. Cllr.



Flunder asked the Clerk to report onto the Highways maintenance system. Street lighting may be a different issue if the road is not classified as a main A road or B Road.

- e) **Advertising Banner on the Railings in the Village** – The railings are the responsibility of the County Council or the Police. The railings are designed so that drivers and pedestrians can see through them. Banners should not be attached as they restrict view.

13. Items on Notice: None

14. Items for the attention of other local authorities:

- a) Matters for the District Council: already discussed
b) Matters for the County Council: already discussed
Cllr. Flunder left the meeting 9.35pm

15. Planning Applications and Related Issues:

SMD/2021/0013 –8 The Green, Brown Edge – Proposed extension to rear to extend bedrooms and form new en-suite. **Decision - No objection**

SMD/2020/0699 - Cllr Woodward declared an interest as a friend of the applicant.

Burnfields Farm, Hill Top, Brown Edge – demolition of existing building at rear of existing barns and extension to form dining/sitting room with kitchenette. **Decision – No objection**

16. Matters Pertaining to Issues in the Parish for the Next Agenda:

- a) **Cllr. Felton has contacted the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders** to get someone to present to the Council about an Electric Vehicle Recharging Hub for the village. It was suggested that this could be included in a Neighbourhood Plan meeting or it could be a separate meeting to present to anyone who would be interested in this project. The Chairman asked if there would be any expenses incurred. The Clerk to arrange a meeting with Cllr. Felton.

Cllr. Porter announced a new 20-million-pound investment from the Government for local councils to plan for electrical charging points.

- b) **Cllr. Corbett mentioned Clewlow bank.** It was decided this would be included in the Highways meeting on Saturday 20th February.

- c) **Cllr. Porter mentioned Social Media and a Code of Conduct.** He is concerned with some hateful and damaging content on the Village Social Media. He asked for some responsibility on the moderation. The Chairman said this is not Parish Council business and should be discussed with the Brown Edger's Administrators. Cllr. Hargreaves was praised for providing a medium for people to be able to have free speech. The Clerk asked a question about posting items to BEPC Social Media and gaining authorisation from the Council. The Chairman responded that the Social Media policy may need to be amended at the Annual meeting.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting. **Meeting was closed 21.45**

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.





I hereby state this is a correct account of the monthly meeting held by Brown Edge Parish Council.

Signed: (Chair)

Councillor

Date: