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## MINUTES OF BROWN EDGE PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021 REMOTELY VIA ZOOM AT 7:00PM

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**Present:** Councillors – Cllr. Turner (Chairman), Cllr. Woodward (Vice Chairman), Cllr. Hargreaves, Cllr. Corbett, Cllr. Turner-Holdcroft, Cllr. Sherratt, Cllr. Wright, Cllr. Felton, Cllr. Owen, Cllr. Porter (SMDC)

Two members of the public were also in attendance.

Minutes recorded by Mrs. D Wheat (Clerk)

The meeting was also broadcast live on Brown Edge Parish Council YouTube channel

- 1. Chairman's Welcome and Announcements:** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Meeting and reminded all present that the meeting is to be broadcast live on YouTube and read the remote meeting protocol. The Chairman reported what a challenging year it has been, but he felt the Council had adapted well to the changes caused by the Pandemic and learning to work remotely for meetings and broadcasting meetings on YouTube. Most recently the Council implemented a policy for the event of the death of a Senior figure and with the recent sad passing of Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh the Council will hold a one-minute silence.

Following this mark of respect to the Duke of Edinburgh, the Chairman read the letter of condolence which has been sent to Her Majesty The Queen from Brown Edge Parish Council.

- 2. Declaration of Interests:** Cllr. Sherratt declared an interest in Planning - Item 35  
The Chairman declared that Cllr. Owen has an interest in the Maintenance Contract Item 9.  
Cllr. Woodward asked if the Councillors should all declare an interest in the Planning Item, as Colleagues of Cllr. Sherratt. The Chairman explained as the meeting unfolds that there will be no need to do this.

- 3. Apologies for Absence:**

Cllr. Lea (SMDC) – family commitment

Cllr. Shufflebotham – work commitment

County Cllr. Flunder – Preparation for County Council Election (*Cllr. Flunder joined the meeting at 8.25pm*).

- 4. Election of the Chairman:** To elect the Chairman for the forthcoming year. A discussion was had about the process of electing Chairman and Cllr. Turner was thanked for doing an excellent job over the last year.

***Cllr. Turner - Nominated by Cllr. Corbett - Seconded by Cllr. Sherratt***

There were no other nominations, so a vote was not needed.

**Chairman to sign the Declaration of Office when the Clerk can meet to do this following the meeting.**

- 5. Election of the Vice Chairman:**

***Cllr. Wright - Nominated by Cllr. Hargreaves – Seconded by Cllr. Corbett***

***Cllr. Felton – Nominated by Cllr. Sherratt – Seconded by Cllr. Woodward***

The Chairman asked if both Nominees were prepared to stand for Vice-Chairman. Cllr Felton said he would be prepared to take an active role to support the Chairman. Cllr. Wright said she would be willing to train to take on the role in the future. Cllr Hargreaves removed his proposal for Cllr. Wright.

***A vote was taken for Cllr. Felton to become Vice-Chairman – All in Favour – Motion Carried***

6. **Attendance Report:** the report was reviewed. *All in Favour – Motion Carried*  
[Appendix-2-Attendance-record-2020-2021.pdf \(browndge-pc.gov.uk\)](https://browndge-pc.gov.uk/Appendix-2-Attendance-record-2020-2021.pdf)
7. **Formation of Working Groups:** To note Working Groups and Committees and their duties.
- a) **Neighbourhood Plan Committee:** The Terms of reference were reviewed. The Council moved to continue with the current Neighbourhood Plan Committee. *All in favour – Motion Carried*  
[Appendix-1-NP-Committee-terms-of-reference.pdf \(browndge-pc.gov.uk\)](https://browndge-pc.gov.uk/Appendix-1-NP-Committee-terms-of-reference.pdf)
- b) **HR and Finance Committee:** The Council currently has a working group for this, so the Chairman proposed that this should be formed as a Committee. Item to be on the next Agenda. *All in Favour – Motion Carried*
8. Duplicated attendance item on the Agenda - move to next item...
9. **Maintenance Contract:** It was noted that the current contract with N&J Tree Services Ltd. is in place for two years starting from May 2020, so there is another year to fulfil. The renewal of the contract will be reviewed in October 2021 for the Village Open Spaces and Cemetery Maintenance.
10. **Employee Salary and Expenses: To note the 2020/2021 NALC/SLCC agreed payrates for part time Clerks.**  
<https://browndge-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Appendix-3-E01-20-national-salary-award-20-21-2.pdf>  
**To note the Clerk and Cemetery Recorder salaries and level of expenses.** Both salaries were reviewed in the Budget and are adjusted from the beginning of the new financial year on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. The Clerk will check with the H.R Committee to check the level pay.
- Cllr. Porter joined the Meeting 7.25pm**
11. **Chairman’s Allowance:**  
A discussion was had about the Chairman claiming expenses and the Chairman stated that he has never done this and does not intend to start to do this now.
12. **Playing Field:**  
To decide on the charges for the hire of the Playing Field. The Council do not currently charge for the use of the Playing Field for Village events. Item to be on next Agenda for further discussion.
13. **Cemetery Fees:**
- a) **Cemetery charges were decided at the Budget and this price list has taken effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.**  
<https://browndge-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Appendix-4-Cemetery-Charges-21.pdf>  
*All in Favour – Motion Carried*
- b) **Bench Policy:**  
The draft Bench Policy was reviewed. The Cemetery Rules were discussed and cross referencing them to the Bench Policy so the rules are the same, for example no additional ornaments on the benches. Memorial wording and approval to maintain appropriateness was discussed. It was resolved to keep the options simple and to give the policy a trial period. The policy can be adjusted if problems arise.  
*Proposed – Cllr. Corbett – Seconded – Cllr. Wright – All in favour - Motion Carried*
14. **Banking Arrangements:**
- a) **Nat West Current Account.** Three signatories to sign a cheque or authorise a payment. The Clerk will apply for online banking and check the rules for authorisation to make banking easier.
- b) **Nat West Reserve Account.** As above
- c) **Leek United Reserve Account.** Three signatories. The Council need to add a new Councillor signatory to this account.  
*Proposed Cllr. Wright – Seconded Cllr Hargreaves – Motion Carried*
15. **Asset Register:** To note the Asset Register dated 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 and to agree the revised means of valuation.  
[Fixed Assets and Long Term Investments \(browndge-pc.gov.uk\)](https://browndge-pc.gov.uk/Fixed-Assets-and-Long-Term-Investments)  
A discussion was had about the different Parish Council assets. The Clerk commented that the Flag Pole now needs to be added to the list.

- 16. Risk Register:** A few small amendments need to be made to bring the risk register draft ready for approval and a section for Covid-19 needs to be added before the first face to face meeting.
- 17. Insurance Cover:** The Insurance policy was reviewed including the cover summary to make sure it is adequate. Covid exemptions were discussed. To agree the payment of the Insurance premium of £1,291.08  
**All in Favour**
- 18. Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ending 31st March 2021.**
- a) Clerks Report:** The Clerk reported that since the last Annual Meeting in May 2019 Brown Edge Parish Council have had four Clerks, so it has been a turbulent time for the administration of the Council. The Clerk thanked Cllr. Wright for helping her to set up Scribe. The Lengthsman's Grant of £400.00 from SMDC is outstanding so the Clerk needs to chase this up. The Statement of Accounts were then presented to the Council with a summary of receipts and Payments and the closing Bank Balances at the end of the Financial Year.
- b) The Annual Internal Audit report** states that on the monthly minutes there is no record of the Utility Bills which are being paid by direct debit. This needs to be recorded each month in future.
- c) Approval of Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement 2020/21).** The Council scrutinised the statements in order and considered each element.  
**Resolved to agree to all columns except no9. which is not applicable. All in favour**  
The Chairman will sign the document in the presence of the Clerk following the meeting.
- d) Approval of Section 2 (Accounting Statements 2020/2021)**  
The figures were reviewed on the Accounting Statement and the Council resolved to approve Section 2.  
**All in Favour**
- e) To confirm that the Clerk is the Responsible Finance Officer for the forthcoming year 2021/2022**  
**All in Favour**
- f) To note, the Reserves and Ringfenced funds** – The budget was reviewed, and the earmarked funds noted and approved.  
**All in Favour**
- g) Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under S. 137 of the Local Government Act 1972** or the general power of competence. The Chairman explained that as the Clerk does not hold the CiLCA Qualification the Council does not have the Power of Competence. It was discussed that the Clerk needs some training on S.137. The Chairman clarified that it is any donations given for example Scouts, Carnival Committee or Well Dressing. Item to be on the next Agenda.
- 19. Financial Regulations:** The Financial Regulations document is still in a draft form but follows a NALC template for best practice. Clerk to adjust any missing data then the document can be approved.  
**All in Favour**
- 20. Appointment of Internal Auditor:** Mr. Chris Neufeld (accountant from Audley) £140.00 fee. **All in favour**
- 21. Budget Details for Financial Year 2021/2022** - The Budget figures were reviewed earlier in item 18f and need now to be added into the Scribe accounting software.
- 22. Standing Orders and Policy review:**
- a) Standing Orders** were recently updated in 2020. If any Councillor wishes to change anything in the Standing Orders, they can ask for the item to be added to an Agenda of a future meeting to be discussed by the Council.
- b) Code of Conduct**
- c) Transparency Code**
- d) Media Policy**
- e) Social Media Policy**
- f) Death of a Senior Figure Policy**  
**All in Favour**

**23. Review of the Council's Subscription to other bodies:**

a)	Staffordshire Parish Councils Association	£325.00
b)	Information Commissioners Office (ICO)	£35.00
The Clerk added two other organisations which the Council subscribe to:		
c)	National Allotment Association	£66.00
d)	SLCC - Local Councils Award Qualification membership	£60.00

**All in Favour**

**24. Complaints Procedure:**

The Chairman stated that the Council does not have a Complaints Policy. This is something the Council needs to put in place. Item for the next Agenda.

**25. Determine the dates and time of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next Annual Meeting of the Council.**

This is set in the Standing Orders. Cllr. Wright suggested changing the start time to 7pm. Item to be on the next Agenda.

**26. Review of the Agenda format for all meetings.**

Cllr. Wright suggested Planning should be brought forward so that these items are discussed earlier in the meetings. Item to be on the next Agenda for discussion.

**27. Parishioners Concerns: None**

**28. Approval of the Minutes of the previous meetings:**

The Minutes were resolved to be a correct record of the Ordinary Meeting held on Wednesday 7th April 2021  
**Proposed - Cllr Hargreaves - Seconded - Cllr. Wright - All in Favour**

**Cllr Flunder joined the meeting at 8.25pm.**

**29. Matters Arising from previous meeting:**

**a) A discussion to improving the embankment at the junctions of Breach Road and High Lane.** Ideas were considered. Road widening was discussed which would be a County issue. It was resolved to ask the County Highways Officer to meet some Councillors onsite to discuss and advise what could be done as it was mentioned that it is privately owned land.

**b) Sandy Lane Junction survey, Hill Top traffic, Breach Road improvement, Springfield Crescent Green damage and speeding working group formation to meet with Staffordshire Safer Road Partnership Officer.**

- The Clerk reported that the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership officer has said she can attend a meeting in the near future. The Council resolved to invite her to a meeting.
- Hill Top will be discussed under correspondence in item 32.
- Springfield Crescent – This green space is maintained by SMDC. Cllr. Porter mentioned planting an Orchard or putting in bollards. The residents have already asked Cllr. Porter if a ballot could be taken of resident's opinions as they do only have limited parking for vehicles surrounding their homes. A discussion was had about whether the Green Space could be changed to allow parking. Accommodating the residents' vehicles needs to be considered. Cllr. Flunder mentioned the Car Parking consultations and that the District Council have been holding Car Park Strategy meetings about car parking issues in the three Towns and also in Rural areas. Any changes will need planning and electric car charging points need to be included in the process. Cllr. Owen suggested a balance where Parking and Green Space are both considered. Cllr. Felton mentioned a survey to find out where there is surplus power as this has big difference to connection costs for charging points. The District Council are looking into EV charging Grants for all Staffs Moorlands Car parks when demand is determined. Clerk to write to Cllr. Porter.

**All in favour**

**c) Footpaths and Bridleway Progress report and grant application.**

The Clerk reported that a working group needs to be arranged to get the data and images prioritizing so prepare for uploading to the SCC footpaths reporting system and to discuss applying for the PROW (Public Rights of Way) Grant. Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May was confirmed at 7.30pm.

**d) High Lane Bus Stop repair progress.**

The Clerk reported progress with the Insurance claim. A report has been requested which the Clerk needs to obtain from Staffordshire Police. A discussion was then had about removal of the damaged shelter. It was suggested to look at prices for Oak shelters as well as a replacement perspex/metal one. Quotations for next Agenda

**e) Community Orchard ideas** – Bank End near to the flagpole was discussed. The Vale, top of Jobs Pool was suggested. The Wildflower meadow was also suggested but a debate was had about the allotments not being a fully accessible Community space. For each site Cllr. Porter is aiming for 15 trees per site – a mixture of fruit and nut trees.

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

**a) Playing Field and Play Equipment** – The Chairman reported that the maintenance contractor has removed a bin which was unsafe in the village by the old paper shop, but a spare bin has been put in place for the covered area on the Playing Field.

The Rospa inspection was done last year, so the maintenance contractor and the Chairman have been up to the playground to check the faults. Some small issues were rectified, but there are still more to be fixed. The Clerk was asked to send out the report to the Council before the next meeting. Contractor to come back to the next meeting with quotations to fix these problems. A report has also come in from a member of the public of a child who has trapped a leg in the fireman’s pole. The Clerk to check with the play equipment company about this equipment to make sure it is age appropriate.

**b) Plans for a Community Event to officially unveil the Clay Statue**

The Council will host this event for the Community on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021. An informal evening for representatives in the community, to thank the volunteers for all their support during the Covid lockdowns and to thank the businesses that have sponsored and done all the work to create the Covid statue. Invitations to be organised. Please notify the Clerk with names to be invited.

**31. Finance & Governance:**

**a) HMRC** – BEPC have overpaid PAYE by £363.64 due to salary Tax Codes – to be reclaimed from future PAYE deductions.

**b) Authorisation of payments** - It was moved to pay the following items:

*Proposed – Cllr. Wright – Seconded –Cllr. Sherratt– Motion Carried*

Mrs D Wheat Clerk Salary & Expenses (April) (phone, zoom, mileage, WHS stationary)	Chq. No. 001011	£612.51
The above includes Microsoft Office Subscription £79.99		
HMRC PAYE (Minus £8.60) Paye Credit Balance carried forward £355.04		£0.00
N & J Tree Services Ltd.	Chq. No. 001012	£781.20
BHIB Insurance	Chq. No. 001013	£1291.08
KM Bradshaw – Neufeld Accountancy	Chq. No. 001014	£140.00

**c) Cemetery Recorder reports (April)** – Mr Bourne. Receipts paid to bank 22<sup>nd</sup> April.

Cemetery receipts	£620.00
Western Power Wayleave	£48.69
Allotment rent (cheque)	£74.00

**d) Allotments Report** (from Mr Tate – Allotment Secretary). All tenants have paid rent by bank transfer except one by cheque. All 21 Plots are taken and 1 Bee Plot. The Clerk has a copy of all the tenancy agreements on file. Some people have swapped plots and there have been a couple of new tenants. If anyone has any queries, please contact Mr and Mrs Tate. The council agreed they have both done a brilliant job of dealing with Covid and

handling the tenancies. The Clerk was asked to send a letter of thanks to the Allotment Committee for all their hard work with the Brown Edge Allotment Society.

### **32. Correspondence:**

**a) Resident complaint – HGV’s using Hill Top** – further problems reported. Letters have been sent to County District and MP Karen Bradley. Cllr. Ralphs has replied from SMDC with a letter of Support which the Clerk read out. The Council discussed asking the Highways Officer to come out to look at the problems. Cllr Porter suggested signage to discourage HGV traffic. A discussion was had with Cllr. Flunder about the limitations of what can be done. It was highlighted that the size and frequency of the HGVs is way too much for the size of the lanes. It is a planning issue that the businesses have been allowed to take these routes. The District Council does need to address this problem as the businesses should be on a restricted licence. Cllr. Porter will enquire to find out more information. Clerk to add to the issues to discuss with County Highways Officer.

**The Chairman then adjourned the meeting at 9.30pm to be continued on the following evening on Zoom.**

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**The Meeting recommenced on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7pm.**

**Present:** Cllr. Turner (Chairman), Cllr. Felton (Vice-Chairman), Cllr. Wright, Cllr. Shufflebotham, Cllr. Turner Holdcroft, Cllr. Hargreaves, Cllr. Corbett, County Cllr. Flunder.

**The Chairman opened the meeting**

**To continue with Item 32a**, the Clerk read out a letter received from the Right Honourable MP. Karen Bradley who has also offered her support on the HGV issue.

#### **b) Correspondence regarding a Talking Bench idea for the village.**

- i. A “Talking Bench” was discussed. It is a National project – a place for people to sit and talk to others. To encourage people who may need some piece and quiet to think, if feeling lonely to meet people or to seek help if feeling overwhelmed. It was decided it would need to be in a place with good view to reduce the risk of it being stolen. Various locations in the village were discussed as possibilities. It was resolved to ask Cllr. Porter for more information and to come back to a future meeting with locations so a decision can be made.
- ii) Mr and Mrs Turner have also submitted a formal request for a memorial bench previously, which needs to be decided upon so that a site can be offered to them.

#### **c) Resident Request for permission to use the Playing Field for a Fundraising Event for Brown Edge F.C.**

Cllr. Hargreaves declared an interest as member of the Football Club.

The Clerk read out the request from Tina Holdcroft to ask for permission to use the Playing Field on Sunday 19th September 2021. A fundraising “Bake Off” using the marquee kindly offered by the Carnival Committee. Insurance was discussed and the Covid roadmap of what will be allowed by that date. The Council agreed it will be a great event for the Village. Clerk to write to Mrs. Holdcroft to give to go ahead.

**All in Favour**

#### **d) Correspondence regarding Marshes Hill access for Horse Riders.**

The Clerk read a letter from a resident who currently rides horses over Marshes Hill. There was a discussion about the old bridleway and rights of access. It would be a District decision about access for horses as they manage Marshes Hill and it is a nature reserve. Marshes Hill is in the process of becoming managed by The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. The Council discussed that this is a wider issue as there really is no other safe space for horse-riding. This will tie in with the research that Cllr. Felton has been doing on Green Corridors for cycling with the SMDC working groups. The police should be informed if PROW users suffer verbal abuse from people in the future. Cllr. Flunder mentioned how complex it is as Landowners have to be involved.

Extract from the letter” I myself have ridden across there for over 40 years. When Hobbs House down the road was a riding school in the 1980's, there was probably more horse riders than walkers using it.

9 years ago, a sign appeared out of the blue blocking horses access over Marshes Hill. This was promptly checked with Brian Smith, the then BHS bridleways officer who deemed the sign unlawful and riders were told to ignore it. We have lost a lot of off road riding over the years due to paths being downgraded or gates installed to stop motorbikes which then impacts on horse riders. We have only recently obtained access again to Chatterley Whitfield after years of being blocked by a gate off Tongue Lane to stop motorbikes. Only successful due to the efforts of local riders in providing user evidence forms, but this injustice took years to right.

It is an uphill battle to stay safe and enjoy our hobby so remarks from our resident really frustrate especially when walkers have thousands of miles in any direction to access compared to us.

I just want to make you aware that anti horse comments worry us. Often, due to ignorance, people wonder why we ride on the roads, believing we can open any farmers gate and just ride in there. This is of course, not true and would be trespassing. We have a right to ride on the road as scary as it is. It would be my dream to have access to closer off road riding but for now the 5 minute stroll over Marshes will do so please support our right to and not bow to this bully. I think it's wrong that one type of user have more rights over another. Why can't we respect each other and share our open spaces?”

**33. Items on Notice: No matters on notice.**

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

- a) **Matters for the District Council:** No items brought forward
- b) **Matters for the County Council:** No items brought forward

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

**SMD/2021/0268** - Avemont, Willfield Lane, Brown Edge – Proposed conversion of existing garage to form Annex and extension to main dwelling to form a sitting room.

**Proposed Cllr Corbett - Seconded Cllr. Wright – No objection**

**SMD/2020/0425** - Talgarth, New Lane, Brown Edge - Appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. The information supplied from SMDC is incorrect so there is nothing to discuss.

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

- a) Rats have been reported in the area around Sytch Well. This has already been reported to SMDC pest control.
- b) A homeless man keeps arriving in Brown Edge. How can the Council help him? The Chairman reported that the police are aware. He does have accommodation elsewhere. Cllr. Turner-Holdcroft will look into the best way to report this situation so we have a procedure to follow to help.

**37. Meeting is closed by the Chairman**

**Meeting Ends 19.55pm**

**Next meeting of Brown Edge Parish Council – Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 at Brown Edge Village Hall – 7.30pm**

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

**Signed: (Chair)**

**Councillor**

**Date:**