

BRINDLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2022 AT THE WHITE HOUSE, MARQUIS DRIVE, BRINDLEY HEATH

PRESENT: Parish Councillors: P. Adams (Chairman)
R. Turville
Mrs S. Pearson
A. Pearson
D. Cotton
Mrs M. A. Turville
M. Sutherland

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs T. Williams (Clerk)
2 members of the public (from item 10)

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

<u>Member</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Type</u>
Councillor Adams	Chetwynd's Charity (item 15b)	Personal

3. POLICE REPORTS

Police officers were not in attendance at the meeting.

PCSO Dale reported in her email (dated 18 October 2022) that she was now covering the whole of Rugeley and not just Etching Hill. She said she was still about, and Councillors were invited to email her with any issues in the Parish.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETINGS

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2022 be approved as a correct record.

The draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 27 September 2022 were noted.

6. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Chairman's Initials

23/2022-23

Notification of External Auditor

It was reported that Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments (SAAA) had notified the Parish Council (email dated 28 November 2022) that Mazars LLP had been appointed as external auditor for the 2022-23 financial year and for the period until 2026-27.

Condolence Letter to King Charles

A letter had been sent to King Charles’ III (dated 12 October 2022) offering the Parish Council’s sincerest condolences on the death of his mother, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

7. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no report.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

a. Items of Post

20s Plenty for Staffordshire Presentations

The Parish Council noted the ‘20s plenty for Staffordshire’ presentation dates (via Zoom) about the benefits of 20mph speed limits in residential areas and other places where people and traffic mix.

Summary illustrative information had been enclosed with the electronic version of the agenda.

Parish Council Membership of CPRE

An email from CPRE Staffordshire (dated 20 November 2022) about parish council membership was noted.

The Council resolved not to join the countryside charity (at a cost of £36 per annum).

Cannock Chase Council’s Plans to Share Services

An email from the Policy & Communications Manager (dated 16 November 2022) was noted advising that Stafford Borough Council and Cannock Chase Council were looking to share services with the aim of saving money and improving services.

A business case will soon go before the Councils’ Cabinets (the following week) saying that the operation of all the local authorities’ services can be shared apart from the housing stock at Cannock Chae and the running of elections. The potential cost savings were estimated to be around £1.2 million.

Warm Spaces

The Parish Council noted that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service was supporting warm space venues commencing from 15 November 2022 at Stafford Fire Station, Gnosall Community Fire station and Rugeley Fire Station.

Cannock Chase Council were pulling together a directory of warm hubs and community food tables and appealed for information on where these were being held in the parishes.

b. Consultations

Chairman’s Initials

Cannock Chase Council’s consultation on Local Validation Checklist Required for Planning

The Parish Council as a consultee of Cannock Chase District Council noted the draft Local Validation Checklist which had been put out for consultation to 11 November 2022.

Councillors had received the information by email when notice of the review had been circulated.

Stafford Borough Council’s Local Plan 2020-2040: Preferred Options Consultation

The Parish Council had been invited to contribute to Stafford Borough Council’s Preferred Options Consultation running from October to December 2022, giving views on draft policies and proposals for new development across the Borough over the next 20 years.

The Preferred Options document included housing and employment land requirements (and how these will be distributed across the Borough through a new settlement hierarchy), proposed development allocations (including Stafford Station Gateway and a new garden community at Meecebrook near Yarnfield), and a range of draft planning policies on topics such as climate change, economic development, housing provision, transport and the environment.

The Parish Council concluded that it wasn’t involved with Stafford Borough, other than on the fringes of Etching Hill.

Councillor Sutherland advised the Council that in respect of the Boundary Review there was no logic to the left side of Bower Lane (heading downward to Wolseley Garden Centre) being in Stafford Borough and the right side in Cannock Chase. The Boundary Commissioner had said that this situation was not up for consideration.

He said that he receives contact from Stafford Borough residents about different issues when he represents Cannock Chase.

It was reported that there may also be issues with the division of the Power Station site in Rugeley.

Councillor Sutherland advised the Council that a County Division Boundary Review was soon commencing, and he anticipated there may only be two County Councillors in Rugeley.

9. PARISH ISSUES – CHASE SIDE

‘Slow Down’ signs on Birches Valley

Following a community event at Birches Valley, PCSO Dale reported that members of the public had expressed concern about speeding traffic along Penkrigde Bank Road and wondered whether ‘slow down’ signs could be installed along the roadside.

Councillor Sutherland advised the Council that he had walked the area with the County’s Strategic Community Infrastructure Manager who considered there to be adequate signs in the location.

Councillor Sutherland said that he had spoken to the Neighbourhood Policing Team Inspector, Inspector Chris Moss, to ask that the Police include the area in their work schedule as they need to be visible.

He also advised the Council that the fading double yellow lines had been reinstated.

Councillor Mrs Pearson advised the Council that the Birches Valley Visitor Centre car park was being converted to a number plate recognition system. The car park was also going to be resurfaced.

Chairman’s Initials

25/2022-23

The Council concluded that it hoped parking on the roadside would lessen as a result of the work.

10. PARISH WARD ISSUES – BRINDLEY VILLAGE

No issues were discussed.

11. CANNOCK CHASE FOREST

a. Cannock Chase AONB

The Parish Council noted an email from the Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer (dated 14 November 2022) advising the parish council it may be eligible to apply for funding to improve the local environment, working in partnership with local farmers and landowners.

The programme is funded by DEFRA and is aimed at one-off projects that have a positive impact on nature wildlife, heritage, public access or tackling climate change (under the themes of climate, nature, people and place). The funding runs to March 2024 and advice is available on making an application. The value of the grant was not stated.

The Chairman advised the Council that he had been seeking funding for a small number of trees for Etching Hill car park but hadn't so far been successful in securing the monies. Councillor Pearson said he would make enquiries with his contacts.

The Council acknowledged that there is sometimes concern about the appropriateness of the planting positions for different species of tree.

b. Call for responsible Cycling on Cannock Chase

Cannock Chase Council and Forestry England has called for responsible cycling on Cannock Chase after the success of the Commonwealth Games. There has been an increase in cyclists riding in the area since the intermediate level Perry's trail was launched in May, forming part of the Games' trail. Perry's trail has joined the Follow the Dog and Money trail and other trails on the Chase.

The Parish Council reiterated its longstanding concerns about erosion on Cannock Chase. On a positive point it concluded that it was good the issue had been acknowledged and was being monitored.

The Chairman informed Councillors that the Police were involved in an organised run that had tracked the main road rather than one of the many off road paths/tracks on Cannock Chase.

c. Ironman Competition

Some time ago County Councillor Mrs Wilson had been asked for information on the County Council's income and expenditure for the Ironman competition as the Parish Council had wanted to see in monetary terms how the competition was beneficial to the County and District.

Councillor Mrs Wilson did not supply accounting information but did refer the matter to the Chief Executive Officer at Ironman in respect of getting answers to the parish council's request for the cycle route to be varied. This would prevent residents of Brindley Heath from inconvenience every year on competition day.

The Clerk advised the Council that she had not repeated the questions to Councillor Mrs Wilson and the Chief Executive Officer, although the Chief Executive Officer had offered to attend a future parish meeting.

Councillor Sutherland reported that the Ironman Competition had impacted all residents, especially in the first year when the competition was not organised well and the clean-up was slow. In subsequent years the event has been well organised with litter gone by 2pm in the afternoon.

12. INVITATION TO MEETINGS/EVENTS

The following upcoming (external) meetings/ invitations were noted:

- Cannock Chase Council Chairman's Civic Christmas Carol Service on Monday 12 December 2022 at St Johns Church, Heath Hayes.

Councillor Sutherland, Councillor Turville and Councillor Mrs Turville confirmed they would be attending the Service. Councillor Pearson and Councillor Mrs Pearson hoped to be there also.

- SPCA AGM on Monday 5 December 2022 at 7pm at Staffordshire Place One.

Details for the SPCA AGM were noted.

13. REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED

- a. To share information on meetings attended

There were no reports.

- b. Hednesford Centennial Lions Club 100th Anniversary of Hednesford War Memorial and Gardens on 9 November 2022

Councillor Turville gave a verbal report on his and Councillor Mrs Turville's attendance at the War Memorial Anniversary event. Councillor Pearson and Councillor Mrs Pearson had also been present.

A fantastic job was done of the initial groundwork by Hednesford Preservation Society, but it needed ongoing maintenance to preserve the area.

- c. The parish representatives to outside bodies confirmed their responsibility and role:

- Slitting Mill Village Hall (M. Sutherland)
Councillor Sutherland confirmed that he was a volunteer and not a trustee.

Parish Council volunteer representatives are able to remain on Slitting Mill Village Hall for an indefinite term or until the Parish Council appoint a new volunteer.

It was confirmed that Councillor Pearson was listed as a trustee on the Charity Commission website and was querying this appointment which he believed dated back to his nomination by Cannock Chase Council.

- Etching Hill Village Hall (D. Cotton)
Councillor Cotton was confirmed as being a trustee.
- Chetwynd Charity (P. Adams)
Councillor Adams was confirmed as being a trustee.
- Charity for the Recreation Ground (P. Adams & D. Cotton)
Councillor Adams and Councillor Cotton were confirmed as being trustees.
- Charity for an Allotment for the Labouring Poor (P. Adams & D. Cotton)

Councillor Adams and Councillor Cotton were confirmed as being trustees.

- Longdon Cotton Alms-houses (P. Adams to 2024)
Councillor Adams was confirmed as being a trustee to 2024.
- Cannock Chase Council's Standards Committee (R. Turville)
Councillor Turville was confirmed as a Parish Council volunteer representative for one year.
- Cannock Chase AONB Conference (A. Pearson & Mrs M. A. Turville)
Councillor Pearson and Councillor Mrs Turville were appointed as parish representatives (volunteers) for a one-year term.

14. COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Councillor Cotton reported on a tree that he had been overseeing the maintenance of, which needed work, but the TPO Officer had wanted a second expensive report when the information/requirements had been covered in the first report.

Councillor Adams advised that the Trustees of the Etching Hill Trust had signed an agreement with Staffordshire Wildlife to assist in gaining a grant from Natural England after the current grant had expired. The agreement was necessary because Natural England had imposed a number of conditions that would otherwise have made the award of grant aid impossible to achieve.

Councillor Cotton reported on a situation where a large settee had been dumped on the Hill and he was able to have it removed for a cost of £20, through Cannock Chase Council rather paying £120, as had been previously quoted. The issues relating to fly tipping and installation of surveillance cameras were also discussed.

15. FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) Financial Position of the Council

A breakdown of income and expenditure for the financial year to date was given in the Clerks Report (dated 24 November 2022). The budget statement showed the current financial position of the Council with reserves totalling £19,071.08.

Resolved: To note the financial position of the Council.

b) Request for Grant Aid

Chetwynd's Charity

The Parish Council considered a letter dated (15 November 2022) from the Clerk to the Trustees, asking for a charity donation towards the work of Chetwynd's Charity. The Charity operates locally in the Rugeley and Brindley Heath area, offering financial assistance to young people who are in further education.

A copy of the Charity's accounts were available at the meeting.

Resolved: To award £100 to the work of Chetwynd's Charity.

c) Parish Notice Board

This item is ongoing while a notice board at a reasonable cost is being sourced.

d) Budget for the year 2023-24

A standstill budget for the financial year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 had been distributed prior to the meeting.

Consideration was given to potential projects for the year, the sums the parish council would need to spend and how it would need to fund the spending (whether from precept, reserves or other sources of income such as grant aid). The Council considered the upcoming elections in 2023 as well as high inflation levels and changes in staff.

Resolved: To approve the draft budgetary figures for the 2023-24 financial year, which would require any differences between income and expenditure to come from reserves.

e) Parish Council Precept for the year 2023-24

The Council noted that Cannock Chase Council had undertaken a calculation of Brindley Heath Parish Council's Tax Base for 2023-24 and would be recommending that it is set at 252.72.

It was noted that if the precept remained at £4,055 for the new year, a Tax Base of 252.72 would generate an annual charge of £16.05 for Band D householders, representing a 0.3% decrease in parish tax.

The Council agreed that it needed to balance escalating costs against a desire to generate only a small Council Tax increase for residents.

Resolved: To set the precept at £4,272 for the financial year 2023-24 (subject to the District Council's approval of the recommended figures) generating a householder charge of £16.90 for a Band D property and representing a parish tax increase of 5%.

f) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Allocation Process – Request for information from Cannock Chase Council

The Parish Council noted an email from Cannock Chase Council asking that a report be published detailing CIL monies received and spent during the year 2021-22.

The Council noted that a five-year term was given for spending monies awarded, although Cannock Chase Council had indicated it would not request repayment in the short term.

g) To authorise cheques for payment

100209	The White House	£30.00	Donation for use of room for parish meeting on 29 November 2022
100209	The White House	£40.00	Donation for electricity supply to defibrillator January to December 2023
100210	Trudy Williams	£1345.50	Salary: April, May, June, July, August, September 2022
100211	Chetwynd's Charity	£100.00	Charity Donation

Resolved: To authorise payment of the cheques listed.

16. ANY OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Chairman's Initials

29/2022-23

Councillor Turville raised the point that more cyclists were on the road wearing dark cloths with no lights, and there were people driving motorised scooters in public places illegally. There are also more mobility scooters on the roads whose owners are not given the due respect they deserve by motorists.

Councillor Turville asked that these points be raised with the Police.

17. SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Council considered a schedule of meeting dates to May 2023.

Resolved: That Council and Planning Committee meetings would be held on the following dates:

31 January 2023

4 April 2023

16 May 2023 (Annual Meeting)

18. Exclusion of the Press and Public

To resolve, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting whilst the next items of business are discussed on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the debate.

19. STAFFING ITEM

The Clerk advised Councillors that she would like to step aside from her role as Parish Clerk and assist in the recruitment of a new Proper Officer.

Resolved: That the Clerk is authorised to make enquiries for an experienced parish clerk to take on the role of Proper Officer, initially on a temporary basis.

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Tuesday 31 January 2023.

The Chairman thanked everyone present for their attendance.

Signed.....

Chairman, Mr P. Adams

Date.....