

BRINDLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 25 JULY 2023 AT THE WHITE HOUSE, MARQUIS DRIVE, BRINDLEY HEATH

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs T. Williams (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies and reasons for absence were accepted from Councillor Mrs Pearson under S.85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

County Councillor Hewitt also offered his apologies.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

<u>Member</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Type</u>
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No interests given

3. POLICE REPORTS

Local Policing Team representatives had been unable to attend the meeting in person on this occasion but had forwarded a police report (distributed at the meeting) with information on the work of Rugeley Neighbourhood Policing Team for the period 1 to 24 July 2023.

Incidents occurring in Brindley Heath and surrounding areas included: violence against person – 2, missing person – 5, concern for safety – 8, burglary – 3, domestic – 4, family domestic – 1, transport related – 7, suspicious – 6, vehicle crime – 4, blackmail – 1, public order – 1, theft – 4 and harassment/stalking – 1.

The Council considered that vehicle crimes were probably underreported.

The Council acknowledged that the theft of high-performance vehicles can be linked to other more serious crimes and people who own them needed to be careful.

Staffordshire Police are still encouraging the public to sign up to their Smart Alert email-based service where users receive messages in relation to crime in their area, police updates, updates on upcoming Police related meetings/events and crime prevention advice.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETINGS

Resolved: That the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 22 May 2023 be approved as a correct record.

The draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 22 May 2023 were noted.

6. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Clerk checked that a draft email to the Environmental Health Department was representative of the Council’s views on the use of appropriate smokeless fuel, which were confirmed. Timber that is not properly dry will ‘tar up’ the chimney or flue which will then have the potential to catch fire. Kiln dried timber should always be used.

7. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman and the Vice Chairman had no reports under this item.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

a. Items of Post

Recruitment of Community Speed Watch volunteers (Safer Roads Partnership & Rugley Neighbourhood Policing Team)

The Parish Council noted an email from PCSO Chad Carrington of Rugeley Neighbourhood Policing Team (dated 2 June 2023) who is looking to recruit volunteers to join their Community Speed Watch group to help tackle speeding in Rugeley.

Letter from Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture – supporting the delivery of Health and Wellbeing initiatives with Town and Parish Councils

The Parish Council noted a letter from Councillor Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture, supporting the delivery of health and wellbeing initiatives with Town and Parish Councils (dated 31 May 2023).

Introduction from new SPCA Chief Executive & SPCA Health and Wellbeing Officer

The Parish Council noted introductory emails from Robert Pettigrew, Chief Executive (dated 14 July 2023) and Claire Rawlings, Health and Wellbeing Officer (dated 18 July 2023) who had recently been appointed to their roles with Staffordshire Parish Councils’ Association.

Invitation to join CPRE Staffordshire

The Parish Council considered an invitation to take up membership with CPRE Staffordshire in support of the local countryside and to utilise information and resources that membership brings.

The Parish Council did not wish to take up membership on this occasion.

b. Consultations

Staffordshire County Council’s Climate Change Consultation (open to 1 September 2023)

Chairman’s Initials

10/2023-24

The Parish Council noted Staffordshire County Council’s Climate Change Consultation inviting residents, community groups and parish councils to give feedback on what they thought about climate change and the barriers that stop them being greener.

The Parish Council agreed that Councillors should complete the online questionnaire individually.

9. DEFIBRILLATOR

Councillor Cotton confirmed that Rugeley Community First Responders had agreed to take ownership and maintenance responsibility for the public access defibrillator that is wall mounted externally at the White House. The Responders would also take charge of replacing the rusting defibrillator cabinet as soon as they were able to.

The Clerk said that she would suggest a date to Rugeley Community First Responders for the takeover of the equipment (defibrillator and cabinet) and provide information that may be helpful to them.

10. PARISH WARD ISSUES – CHASE SIDE

Forest Fire Risk

The Chairman advised the Council that he had received several enquiries from people asking whether Cannock Chase AONB or Forestry England had provided information on fire precaution measures such as firebreak policy on Cannock Chase. The Council considered that it would also be interesting to know how many fire breaks meet the appropriate standards and what the standards are.

The Council questioned whether some of the firebreaks were wide enough to meet European standards, and many houses in the parish were located close to areas of forest.

Information has been distributed about the use of BBQs and risks to forest areas through retained heat in the ground.

Town Market

The Chairman enquired as to the reason the market had closed in Rugeley and Councillor Peason advised the Council that the market provider had withdrawn its services to the town. Negotiations were underway between Cannock Chase Council and another provider to restore market provision.

Speeding

The Council discussed speeding vehicles which was showing no signs of abating across Cannock Chase. County Councillor Sutherland advised that he had met with representatives of Staffordshire Police and the County Council to discuss this serious issue.

Councillor Pearson advised the Council that Community Speed Watch was unable to operate on roads with speeds of more than 30mph and therefore was unable to support the campaign for the reduction in speed on faster roads.

He said that Community Speed Watch volunteers needed to accurately note the make and model of the vehicle they were monitoring as well as its colour, registration number and speed. If all details had been recorded correctly a letter would be issued to the person driving over the speed limit. A second letter would follow if the motorist was caught speeding again, and on a third occasion a Police Officer would visit. If the details had not been recorded accurately, no further action would be taken. Letters are now also sent to motorists if they are verbally abusive to volunteers.

Councillor Pearson advised the Council that cars were still speeding along the Rugeley Road despite the reduction in the speed limit from 60 to 40mph between the 30mph section and Cannock Chase Enterprise Centre.

11. PARISH WARD ISSUES – BRINDLEY VILLAGE

No issues were raised for discussion.

12. CANNOCK CHASE FOREST

a. Cannock Chase AONB Review 2022-23

The Parish Council noted the Annual Review 22-23 providing a summary of last year’s achievements of the AONB Partnership and breadth of work in delivering the Cannock Chase AONB’s purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of Cannock Chase.

The Chairman suggested the same feedback was produced year on year, but the Unit doesn’t clearly set out what has been done and follow up actions. As an example, on the ground where the cattle are grazing the regrowth of Silver Birch is about 8ft high (as the cattle are not eating it), and needs cutting back manually.

b. Forest Concerts

The Chairman asked whether the Environmental Health Department would provide the readings for the afternoons and evenings of the concert days as these should have been recorded. He said the readings would probably have been over 70 decibels and that staff should have been on site to monitor the noise levels. He said the whole set was played through, so he rang Bristol (as no local number was given) who said they’d get in touch with the Cannock Forest Centre and the volume was lowered.

The point was made that the marshalling could have been organised better as it wasn’t clear which roads were closed and what route traffic needed to follow.

Councillors reported that some attendees had fed back that communication was poor on the night that it rained, and the concert was cancelled.

c. To consider the issue of speeding vehicles across Cannock Chase

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

13. HEDNESFORD RACEWAY

The Parish Council had previously discussed the issue of noise from Hednesford Raceway when the wind was blowing in the direction of Brindley Heath and queried how many events could be held at the venue each year. The Council noted a summary document of the Hednesford Raceway Code of Practice 2012 and the Incarace website which included information about the events held at the venue.

The Chairman suggested making an enquiry to Cannock Chase Council about the installation of trees to act as a noise buffer, which was a suggestion that was made several years ago when the Chairman and Councillor Cotton had attended a meeting with the Race Director and representatives of Cannock Chase Council.

14. INVITATION TO MEETINGS/EVENTS

The Council noted the following upcoming (external) meeting invitations:

- Hednesford Summer Festival on Saturday 12 August 2023
- CPRE Annual General Meeting on 31 August 2023 at Ingestre Church
- Chase Pride on Saturday 2 September 2023

15. REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED

- a. To share information on meetings attended:

The Parish Council noted that the Standards Committee Meeting on 12 June 2023 had been cancelled.

- b. The parish representatives to outside bodies gave reports on the meetings they had attended:

Slitting Mill Village Hall (M. Sutherland)

Councillor Sutherland advised the Council that no meeting had taken place.

Etching Hill Village Hall (D. Cotton)

Councillor Cotton advised the Council that the Village Hall meet every eight weeks, and everything was running along smoothly.

Chetwynd Charity (P. Adams)

Councillor Adams advised the Council that he had discussed with the treasurer whether the Charity should be disbanded due to an insufficient number of applications from students for financial support with their studies.

He said the trustees of the Charity would need to investigate what will happen to the available funds.

Charity for the Recreation Ground (P. Adams & D. Cotton)

Councillor Adams and Councillor Cotton reported that the charity was in discussion with Cannock Chase Council about payment for the lease of half of the recreation ground. This is a recurring commitment the District Council is obliged to fulfil until 2030.

Charity for an Allotment for the Labouring Poor (P. Adams & D. Cotton)

No report was given.

Longdon Cotton Alms-houses (P. Adams to 2024)

Councillor Adams advised the Council that the alms-houses were fully occupied with a new tenant having taken up residence. The Charity's bank balance was said to be healthy.

Cannock Chase Council's Standards Committee (R. Turville)

No meetings of the Standards Committee had taken place. The suggestion was made that a briefing session would be valuable to new and existing Committee members.

Cannock Chase AONB Conference (A. Pearson & Mrs M. A. Turville)

Councillor Pearson and Councillor Mrs Turville had attended and reported on the Annual Conference earlier in the year.

16. COUNCILLOR REPORTS

No Councillor reports were given.

17. 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 25 July 2023). The budget statement showed the current financial position of the Council with reserves totalling £17,527.19.

Chairman's Initials

13/2023-24

Resolved: To note the financial position of the Council.

b) Purchase of a laptop

The Council considered in principle the purchase of a mid-range laptop and software including security software for use by the Parish Clerk for Council work.

Resolved: That the purchase of a mid-range laptop and software be approved by the Council.

c) Noticeboard Update

This item continues to be ongoing. The difficulty in obtaining quotations at reasonable cost was discussed.

d) To authorise cheques for payment

Resolved: To approve following cheque payments:

100220	Trudy Williams	£50.00	Reimbursement for donation (made through Pay Pal) to Target Ovarian Cancer Charity (in lieu of payment to Rob Mincher for internal auditing services 2022-23)
100221	The White House	£30.00	Donation for use of room for parish meeting on 25 July 2023
100222	Support Staffordshire	£25.00	Subscription for annual membership

Resolved: To authorise payment of the cheques listed.

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

The Chairman asked that Colwich Parish Council be contacted to enable arrangements to be made for several minute books dating back to 1898 to be returned to the parish.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Tuesday 26 September 2023.

Signed.....

Chairman, Mr. P. Adams

Date.....

Chairman's Initials

14/2023-24