

BRINDLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD ON TUESDAY 3 DECEMBER 2013
AT THE WHITE HOUSE, MARQUIS DRIVE, BRINDLEY HEATH
7.30PM**

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs T. Williams (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

None

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2013 were approved as a true record.

4. PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES FROM LAST MINUTES

Covered in agenda

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported on another shooting incident, this time occurring on the morning of 27 November 2013 on land off Kingsley Wood Road. A trespasser (unknown to the landowners) was heard firing a high velocity rifle and a bullet passed immediately behind nearby stables where a lady was attending to her horse. This caused great shock and fear. Another resident living nearby also heard shots and both ladies reported the matter to the Police. It is alleged that the Police advised that they had given permission for the person to shoot on the land. No visits have been made to the residents by officers investigating the incident.

The landowners had not known anything about the shooting that had taken place on their land, and the Forestry Commission and County Council confirmed that they had no knowledge of legitimate shooting activity taking place in the area.

The Parish Council continue to be very concerned about incidents involving the use of guns within such close proximity of both homes and the general public who are outdoors enjoying Cannock Chase. There was very strong views amongst Members that the Police should act immediately to incidents involving shooting and guns.

Chairman's Initials

An email querying the responsive action taken by the Police was sent to Chief Inspector, Carlton Ratcliffe on 29 November 2013. He advised that Inspector Paul Cooke had been asked to take up the issue.

The Clerk was asked to contact the Police again to ask that Officers visit the residents who heard the firing of the rifle, and apologise to them for not visiting earlier.

The Chairman also provided a report on the latest incidences of riding off-road motorbikes in Kingsley Wood Road. On Sunday 24 November 2013 at 1pm a man was riding a scrambler motorbike up and down the road at speed with no helmet on. The Police were informed, but by the time they had arrived some four hours later the culprit had gone. These bikers also regularly use land off Kingsley Wood Road belonging to Cemex Quarry.

The week before on 17 November 2013, a white van had been seen parked up with a motorbike in the back and the Police were informed. Police Officer Paul Bradbury advised that he had made a number of attempts to contact the owner of the vehicle, but no conclusion has been provided on the outcome of the investigation.

Regular patrols are needed along Kingsley Wood Road on Sundays from noon until dark to put a stop to these anti-social and illegal activities. Patrols have been promised by the Police but no increased Police presence has been noted.

Members of the Parish Council expressed concern about low staffing levels at Rugeley Police Station and believe that two or three officers (depending on staff absences) are insufficient to cover a town the size of Rugeley. There is also concern that the Police are not using the telephone voice mail lines to pick up messages.

It was agreed that a Police Officer would be invited to the next meeting of the Parish Council so that questions could be asked about the action taken with the incidents discussed, and concerns raised about the limited policing resources at Rugeley Police Station.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

Incoming and Outgoing

All incoming and outgoing correspondence was noted from the Clerks Report with the additional items of:

- Superfast Broadband in Staffordshire – Newsletter 2 (September 2013) and Broadband Champions event on 22 November 2013.
Resolved: Information noted
- Letter dated 27 November from Simon Tagg, Cabinet Support Member for Transport & Connected County, Staffordshire County Council – In March 2013 Staffordshire County Council launched a new road works web tool to make information on current and planned road works freely accessible to members of the public. This is called ELGIN and has been developed to include a new ‘road closures and diversions’ layer where current and planned road closures across the County are displayed. The County team are currently considering how the site can be used to support delivery of Superfast Staffordshire, highway events and provide greater linkages with neighbouring authorities and the Highway Agency.

A ‘How To’ guide has been produced which offers tips on how to view various map layers on the website and how to create Alerts which are bespoke to a user’s need.

Resolved: Information noted

- Email dated 3 December 2013 from Margaret Price of 211 Wolverhampton Road, Cannock – Mrs Price has asked that a letter concerning the proposed demolition of the Ivy House, Wolverhampton Road, Cannock is brought to the attention of parish councillors. She is advising that the building is all that remains of the Victorian workhouses in the area and demolishing it would result in erasing two hundred years of Staffordshire’s social history.

The email and enclosed letter was forwarded directly to all members on electronic mail.

Resolved: The details of the campaign were noted.

- Producers of the television programme ‘Secret Dealers’ are inviting residents of Staffordshire to take part in their show and asked that word is passed on to anyone who might be interested.

Resolved: Information noted

7. PLANNING

a) Planning Comments Referred to the District Council

CH/13/0294 Wolsley Park House, Stafford Brook Road – Erection of livery stables *amended plans

A letter stating the following observations was forwarded to the District Council on 8 November 2013:

Thank you for consulting the Parish Council on the amended plans for the above planning application.

I may confirm that members of the Planning Committee wish to restate the same objections as those submitted for the original plans. The Council object to the proposed development because the location is too dangerous for the siting of a large stables establishment. It also considers that the development will have a detrimental effect on the environment.

Observations made by the Planning Committee are:

- 1. The proposed building is too close to the road and is of an unacceptable mass. It would appear as a large industrial building in the AONB.*
- 2. There are concerns about the danger it would cause on Stafford Brook Road. The situation is already critical with horses emerging from the stables on the opposite side of the road.*
- 3. There are already some six stables along Stafford Brook Road with a very large establishment across the road.*
- 4. The proposal would do nothing for the local economy and would degrade the appearance of the area and present no specific circumstances to justify its creation.*
- 5. This is not an application for a farmer wanting to diversify but an opportunistic gamble by the landowner to develop the site.*
- 6. It does not accord with the Local Plan in that it will have a significant impact on the landscape character of the AONB and is anything but sensitive.*
- 7. There is no proven demand for further stabling in the area and even if there were, it would not be appropriate in this location.*

The Parish Council would like to see this case heard by Planning Control Committee.

Resolved: To confirm the observations made by the Parish Council's Planning Committee in its letter dated 8 November 2013.

CH/13/0397 Larkholme, Shooting Butts Road, Rugeley – Removal of Condition 9 of planning permission CH/88/673 to allow unfettered occupation of Larkholme as a dwelling house

A letter stating the following observations was forwarded to the District Council on 2 December 2013:

This Council is most concerned to receive this cynical planning application in respect of Larkholme.

We are especially concerned that we set out in great detail the motives behind the application when first submitted and yet it was still passed. This was only relieved by the imposition of condition 9 on CH/88/673.

The applicant's agent has simply set out all the points made by Brindley Heath Parish Council against CH/88/673 as reasons for removal of condition 9. It was never intended that a living be made from horse events, nor was any effort made so to do in the past years. Planning Officers have, or should have on file, many letters of complaint from this Council as to non-compliance with the conditions set out. Indeed in the first period of years in occupation of this manor house there were far more instances of motorcycles scrambling across the fields than horses.

Please note the following observations:

- 1. The applicant's notes on planning policy (item 2) seem to argue that the house is now redundant and should be subject to re-use. It is neither derelict nor redundant and therefore none of the planning policies would apply.*
- 2. Under item 3.0 is set out Condition 9 and the reasoning for imposing this on the application. It continues to stand as an entirely valid condition. However the applicant is now putting forward the argument that the equestrian centre was never viable from the outset. This seems more than a little strange since it was major in the original application that this was a very viable concern for which a dwelling was absolutely essential. Brindley Heath Parish Council argued at the time that there was no way that this enterprise could ever be viable.*

The applicant has now further added to his own demise by deliberately selling off 2 – 7 hectares of the original holding.

- 3. By far the greatest of the original objections was that the building was far too large for purpose since it was simply a dwelling for a manager.*

The applicant at his own risk continued to seek to build a mansion house fully aware that it would be conditioned by the Council for equestrian use only. This was a cynical attempt to obtain a very large dwelling within the Green Belt, and then, at a time to be decided in the future, to simply seek to have the Condition 9 removed.

He now states that it is doubtful that anyone could sustain the dwelling and outbuildings on income from an equestrian enterprise is so true.

- 4. The applicant is now also putting forward the argument that since he has been in breach of the condition for more than ten years he may now apply for a lawful Development Certificate. However this is not a valid claim since horse events have taken place within the past ten years, even if they were held at a loss.*

Chairman's Initials

In effect, the applicant is telling Cannock Chase Council that because they have not taken proceedings against him for breach of Condition 9, he may now, in any event, seek to sell his house free from any conditions.

He is putting forward the argument that Larkholme is now no better than a vacant building in the Green Belt which would of course increase his profit on the sale by at least 100%.

The house was built at the applicant's risk. He was aware before he commenced building such a large dwelling that it was inappropriate for a manager's house on a site for equestrian activities which would and could not make any profit. He chose to build such a house as a grand mansion in the Green Belt and then simply have any restrictions removed at a later date.

The applicant is also implying that the equestrian buildings are now redundant and as such should be available for redevelopment – for example for housing.

In conclusion, we would urge that Members reject this application and indeed take proceedings against the applicant for breach of Condition 9, to which he has made admission.

Resolved: To confirm the observations made by the Parish Council's Planning Committee in its letter dated 2 December 2013.

CH/13/0390 61 Brindley Heath Road, Hednesford – New vehicular access onto Brindley Heath Road

A letter stating no objections was forwarded to the District Council on 2 December 2013. The Parish Council asked that the Highways Department be satisfied that the new access is acceptable from a road safety point of view.

Resolved: To confirm the observation made by the Parish Council's Planning Committee in its letter dated 2 December 2013.

b) New Planning Applications Received

Comments on the newest two applications (above) were submitted on 2 December 2013

c) Planning Decisions Made by Cannock Chase Council

No decisions received

8. PARISH ISSUES

The Chairman asked that local grit bins are checked to ensure they are full for the winter period and that a refill is requested after use. The County Highways Department have apparently got a plentiful supply of rock salt this year.

The Freedom of the Parish Issue and joint purchase of a scroll with other Parish Councils is ongoing.

Resolved: To note the information.

9. INVITATIONS TO MEETINGS/EVENTS

The following meetings were noted:

- Rugeley & Brereton Community Forum on 9 December 2013 (at 7pm in the Council Chamber at Rugeley Town Council)

Chairman's Initials

- Hednesford Community Forum on 11 December 2013 (at 7pm at the Museum of Cannock Chase)

10. REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED

Cllor Pearson was unable to attend the AONB Parish Councils' Meeting on 25 November 2013.

Cllor Adams reported on the meetings he had attended at Etching Hill Restoration Charity and Longdon Cotton Alms-houses.

11. COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Cllor Pearson reported that Network Rail would be undertaking work on local railway bridges in the near future to accommodate electrification of the lines. The bridge at Walkers Rise will have one road lane at a time closed (for two days) and the Station Road Bridge will be completely closed for three months (opening again in April 2014).

12. FINANCE

a) Financial Position of the Council

A breakdown of income and expenditure for the financial year to date was provided (Clerks Report - 3 December 2013).

The HSBC account balance at 2 November 2013 is £5731.16. This bank statement does not show payments authorised at the last meeting. Actual balance is £5189.32 at 3 December 2013.

An updated signatories list has been submitted to HSBC in Cannock. Cllor Bishop will supply proof of identity (in the form of a passport or driving licence and a utility bill) directly to the Bank.

Resolved: To note the financial position of the Council.

b) Charity Donation

Members considered the content of a letter dated 10 November 2013 received from Carl Bennett, Clerk to the Trustees of Chetwynd's Charity. He is asking the Council to give consideration to making a charitable donation.

Cllor Adams declared a personal Interest as he is a trustee of the charity.

It was proposed by Cllor Pearson, seconded by Cllor R. Turville and agreed that a donation of £50 be made to Chetwynd's Charity, which provides financial support to students with their educational studies.

Resolved: To award a charity Donation of £50 to Chetwynd's Charity.
(Power: S.137 Local Government Act 1972)

c) Budgetary Considerations and Setting of the Precept for Financial Year 2014-15

Cannock Chase Council has undertaken an initial calculation of Brindley Heath Parish Council's Tax Base for 2014-15 and will be recommending that it is set at 215.14. The District Council will be passing on Council Tax Support Grant to parish councils within its district and in Brindley Heath Parish, the element of the precept that will be met by Government Grant is £651.

The Tax Base for the new financial year will be slightly higher than the current year, and a precept of £3900 will, as a result, cost parishioners' slightly less. The Parish Tax/householder charge (for a band D property) has been £15.29 during 2013-14 and will be £15.10 for 2014-15 (subject to approval of the figures by Council). This would represent a parish tax reduction of 1.24%.

Chairman's Initials

Extracts from SPCA Weekly Bulletin's on the matter of local council precepts and the Local Council Tax Support Scheme were circulated to Members along with a letter (dated 20 November 2013) from Councillor Ken Browse, Chairman of the National Association of Local Councils.

It was noted that not all billing authorities are forwarding on the portion of Council Tax Support Grant that is intended by Government to be passed on to parish and town councils.

Resolved: To set the precept at £3900 for the financial year 2014-15 subject to District Council approval of the recommended figures. The proposed expenditure figures in the new budget will be finalised and confirmed at the next meeting.

d) Cheques for Payment

100039		£00.00	Spoilt cheque
100040	Chetwynd's Charity	£50.00	Charity Donation
100041	The White House	£25.00	Room hire for meeting on 3 December 2013
	TOTAL	£75.00	

Resolved: To authorise payment of the cheques listed.

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

Community Infrastructure Levy – requested by Cllor Pearson

14. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Tuesday 21 January 2014 at The White House, Marquis Drive, Brindley Heath. The start time will be slightly earlier at 7.00pm if a Police representative agrees to attend. This will be confirmed.

The Chairman thanked all present for their attendance and wished everyone a merry Christmas.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Signed.....

Chairman, Mr. P. Adams

Date.....

Chairman's Initials