

BRINDLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 17 APRIL 2012 AT THE WHITE HOUSE, MARQUIS DRIVE, BRINDLEY HEATH 7.30PM

PRESENT: Parish Councillors: P. Adams (Chairman)
D. Cotton
A. Pearson

IN ATTENDANCE: County and District Councillor J. Bernard
Mrs. T. Williams

1. APOLOGIES:

Apologies were received and accepted from J. Wilkes, R. Turville, Mrs. A. Turville and K. Baker.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 March 2012 were approved as a true record.

3. PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES FROM LAST MEETING

a) Environmental/wildlife habitat and plant enquiries to Cemex

Cllor Adams reported that he had experienced difficulty contacting both the Site Manager and Shaun Denny of Cemex. Cllor Bernard said that he would be seeing the Manager at an AONB meeting on Wednesday (the 18th) and would make enquiries on the Chairman's behalf about the wildlife habitat and involvement of West Midlands Bird Club.

b) Staffordshire Place Tour

The Marketing & Communications Officer (Julie Waddicor) has confirmed that the latest time that tours can be arranged on weekday evenings is 6.00pm (they take one hour and the building closes at 7.00pm). Tours are also available on Saturday mornings.

The Clerk will put arrangements for a group tour on hold at the present time as no members have expressed an interest in attending.

c) Hednesford Raceway – List of Events

The website:

http://www.spedeworth.co.uk/incarace/fixtures.php?pageNum_RSfixtures=0&totalRows_RSfixtures=71

contains a fixtures list of events for 2012. It was noted by the Chairman that there is a three day event scheduled later in the year and the Clerk was asked to enquire whether this arrangement was in compliance with the terms and conditions of the licence.

It was reported that an area of Hednesford Hills is going to be taken into the AONB as lowland heath for the purpose of grazing cattle. Also St Peters Church, Church Hill, want to be able to extend their burial ground.

No further information has been received about the revision of SSSI's and pathways from Natural England.

d) Other matters

None

4. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported that Police Officers from Cannock Chase District LPT (D. Rollo and Chief Inspector Carlton Ratcliffe) have requested a meeting to discuss a number of issues on Cannock Chase, including anti-social activity on car parks. It is anticipated that the problem car parks may be closed off at night.

It was suggested that the subject of poaching be raised and also the issue of fires on the Chase.

It was considered that the loss of the Rural Policing Team may have contributed to the increase in anti social/criminal activities.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

a) Incoming and Outgoing Correspondence

All incoming and outgoing correspondence was noted from the Clerks Report.

b) Items of Particular Interest/Items Requiring a Response

The following items of post were considered:

- New SPCA Chief Executive – Debbie Wakefield has taken on the post from 1 April 2012. Viv Evans has taken on the role of Finance Officer and Richard Ellison will continue dealing with the training side of the service.
- Governance of Policing – A letter from Damon Taylor, Chief executive of Staffordshire Police Authority was noted. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act received Royal Assent last September and the main consequence is that Police Authorities will be abolished and replaced by directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC).
- Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Waste Core Strategy Public Examination – The Planning Inspectorate has appointed Melvyn Middleton to examine the soundness of the Development Plan Document and examination hearing sessions will be held from 24 to 27 April 2012 with a round up session on 16 May 2012.
- Cannock Chase Council’s Youth Endeavour Award 2012 – The Council is appealing for young person’s between the ages of 11 and 18 to be nominated for this award if they have made an outstanding contribution to their community, school or organisation; or have bravely battled illness or disability. No nominations.
- Community Council of Staffordshire – Invitation to become a member. No action.
- ‘President’ steam narrow boat – Canal side stop off dates during its journey to Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant.
- SPCA Edited Update on the Code of Conduct.

c) Notice of Consultations

Stafford Borough Local Development Framework – Responses are invited to three draft supplementary planning documents from March to May 2012. These are: Reuse of Rural Buildings, Urban design and Shop-fronts and Advertisements.

No decision was taken to make a collective response but individual comments can be submitted up to 12 noon on 9 May 2012.

Resolved: All items of correspondence and consultations were noted.

6. **PLANNING**

a) Planning Comments Referred to the District Council

CH/12/0098 J.S. Holford Farm Group, West Cannock Farm, Cotswold Road, Hednesford – Barn extension

A letter to the District Council dated 23 March 2012 confirmed ‘no objections’ to the proposed development.

Resolved: To confirm the observations made by the Parish Council’s Planning Committee on the above proposed development.

(More recently concerns have been highlighted about how the barn might be used and the possibility of an increase in vehicular movement in Cotswold Road (particularly heavy vehicles)).

b) New Planning Applications Received

None received.

c) Planning Decisions made by the District Council

CH/12/0033 Land off Shooting Butts Road, Rugeley – Manege

Planning permission awarded on 21 March 2012

d) Resurfacing and Removal of Trees at Birches Valley Visitor Centre

The Clerk reported that she had spoken to the Development Control Manager (Mr. Aqbal) to inform him that although his email dated 26 June 2011 containing the findings of his investigation had been noted, the Council remained concerned that the car park had been extended and that trees and undergrowth had been removed to accommodate an increase in surface area (by an estimated one third).

Mr. Aqbal said that changes may have taken place to the surface area (laying gravel on muddy areas) but he has to judge whether the changes constitute ‘development’ requiring planning permission. This is a very difficult issue to prove when there is no clear evidence on site; and in the absence of an in depth knowledge of the car park prior to the work. He has thus concluded, after also listening to the Forestry Commission’s account of the work done, that the resurfacing works do not require planning permission. As far as the trees are concerned, the Forestry Commission have the power to fell without securing permissions from the local authority first.

The Parish Council believe that there should be a statutory responsibility to maintain the visual amenity of the surrounding area, and removal of trees along the boundary of the Visitor Centre (adjacent to Penkrudge Bank Road) should not be undertaken without due regard to this important planning consideration.

Resolved: To monitor (keep an eye on) any future work activity taking place at the Site.

e) Planning Training Courses

A report was given on the SPCA Planning Training Course held on 7 March 2012 attended by Cllor R. Turville and Trudy Williams, and the CPRE/NALC Neighbourhood Planning Training Course on 20 March 2012, attended by Cllor Pearson and Trudy Williams.

It was commented that the local planning documents cover a 20 year time period and changes/updates in design and construction may not be permitted if the details are not specified in the plan. It was also commented that the Parish Council (through either the consultation process during the updating of the local plan or through development of a neighbourhood plan) could have a strong influence over future building design and construction. For example, the District Council prefer that stables are constructed from

brick, and the Parish Council may have an opportunity to influence a policy change to the use of wood cladding.

Resolved: The information was noted.

7. COMMUNITY PATHS INITIATIVE

The location of public pathways and bridleways were noted from a copy of the Definitive Map recently supplied by the County Council. It was agreed that making a bid through the Community Paths Initiative would be difficult to achieve without sufficient volunteers to assist in undertaking the work (or adequate funds to enable a financial contribution).

Resolved: To note the location of the pathways within the Parish.
(No decision was taken to prepare for a bid in 2013).

8. PROPOSED FOOTBRIDGE AT MOORS GORSE LEVEL CROSSING

Plans and information obtained from Network Rail and the County Council on the layout and design of the footbridge was noted. Councillor Bernard reported that a planning application would be submitted to the District Council over the next week or so.

Comments were made by members about the need for cyclists to use bells to warn walkers of their approach. Also, it was noted that Cemex are donating a supply of aggregate for the purpose of repairing trails around the Chase.

Resolved: To note the details of the footbridge proposal and await receipt of the planning consultation.

9. KINGSLEY WOOD ROAD

a) Updates on firearms and anti social activity – The Chairman reported that, following consultation with Councillor Cotton it had been decided not to write to the local press to raise awareness of the firearms issue at the present time. He advised that it would be more appropriate to continue monitoring activity on the site.

Resolved: To monitor future activity on the site.

b) Tree canopy cover across the highway – The Highways Community Liaison Officer (Mark Keeling) has received contact from some residents who have highlighted a concern about very large trees overhanging the highway by a considerable amount. The residents would like to see the trees cut back from the road.

Mark Keeling wishes to consult the community through the Parish Council to attempt to gauge local opinion on the visual amenity of the trees, in terms of whether canopy cover is desired and valued or whether residents would be in favour of the overhanging branches being cut back from the road.

There was no consensus of opinion on the trees or conclusion drawn on a preferred course of action. Councillors agreed that the trees were overhanging the road substantially but this does not directly affect everyone in the community. From a visual amenity point of view there was no preferences stated as to whether the canopy cover should stay or go.

Resolved: To make no preference about whether tree canopy cover should be retained or removed. It was agreed that Councillor Bernard speak to Mark Keeling about the matter when he next meets with him.

10. RUGELEY RECYCLING CENTRE

An email has been sent to County Councillor Mark Winnington, Cabinet member for Environment and Assets (14 March 2012) asking for details of the work being undertaken at Rugeley Recycling Centre and a

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breakdown of the associated costs. A copy of the email has also been sent to recycling@staffordshire.gov.uk (3 April 2012). There had been no response to either request.

Resolved: To postpone the item to the next agenda when it is hoped the requested information will be available.

11. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Chairman reported that he had still not been able to make contact with Cllor Baker to ask whether he is in a position to return to the Council. He proposed the item be postponed to the next agenda.

Resolved: To approve Councillor Baker's leave of absence to 29 May 2012, when the item will be discussed again.

12. INVITATIONS TO MEETINGS

The forthcoming meetings were noted:

- a) CHAPS Dedication Service on 28 April 2012
- b) AONB Annual Parish Councils' Meeting on 14 May 2012 at Pye Green Community Centre.

Resolved: To note the forthcoming meetings and to confirm with Cannock Chase AONB Team that Cllor Pearson would be representing the Parish Council at the Parish Councils' Meeting on 14 May 2012.

13. REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED

- a) Standards Board Meeting on 17 April 2012 – This meeting was cancelled and will be held on 30 April 2012.
- b) Community Forums (Rugeley on 21 March 2012 and Hednesford on 26 March 2012) – Cllor Pearson reported that he had raised a question about Policing and whether private staff would be employed to take over policing duties. It was confirmed that 30 Officers were being lost from the Staffordshire force but assurances were given that no front line posts would go.

PCSO's are being awarded new powers including the power of arrest (similar to Special Police Officers).

14. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Councillor Bernard provided information and advice on agenda items as they occurred.

15. FINANCE

- a) Update on Financial Position of the Council

The opening balance at the start of the new financial year is £2880.20. The first instalment of the precept (£1950) has been received and a small VAT reclaim has also been received from HMRC. The funds held at 17 April 2012 are £4859.37.

The Co-op Bank account has successfully been closed and the final account balance of £3.83 has been transferred to the HSBC account by cheque.

Resolved: To note the financial position of the Council.

- b) To Approve the End of Year Accounts for Financial year 2011/12

All Parish Council members had each been provided with a copy of the Cash Book, Bank Reconciliation, Analysis Sheet, Statement of Variances and Budget prior to the meeting. All financial transactions through the year are documented in these records.

Resolved: To approve the Parish Council accounts for the financial year 2011/12.

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c) Section 1 (Accounting Statements) and Section 2 (Annual Governance Statement) of the Annual Return for the year end 31 March 2012

Resolved: The Accounting Statements and Annual Governance Statement contained in Sections 1 & 2 of the Annual Return for the year end 31 March 2012 were approved by the Council and signed by the Chairman.

d) Cheques for Payment

100005 (HSBC)	The White House	£25.00	Room hire for meeting on 6 March 2012 *Year 2011/12
100006 (HSBC)	Trudy Williams	£7.79	Stationery £2.60, Postage £1.09, Training (car park charge) £4.10 *Year 2011/12
100007 (HSBC)	SPCA	£246.22	Annual Subscription for 2012/13
100008 (HSBC)	The White House	£25.00	Room hire for meeting on 17 April 2012
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>£304.01</u>	

Resolved: To authorise payment of the cheques listed above which includes continued membership of Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association through 2012/13.

16. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Resolved: To confirm the booking for Emma Beaman-Green to give a presentation on the work of the Cannock Chase AONB at the Annual Parish Meeting on 29 May 2012.

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

- a) The Clerk informed members that local Town and Parish Clerks had been invited to attend a meeting with the Chief Executive at Cannock Chase Council (date to be arranged).
- b) A resident has expressed concern about a fence which has been erected on private land in Stafford Brook Road. No planning permission has been sought even though the fence exceeds one metre in height and is adjacent to the highway. Councillor Bernard reported that Councillor Geoff Martin had enquired about this matter and the Highways Department had consulted solicitors for advice.
- c) Land for sale on the corner of Stafford Brook & Penkrige Bank Road. The Clerk was asked to enquire about the permissions/rules governing the siting and use of touring caravans on private land, and whether they are permitted for extended stays.

18. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The Annual Parish Meeting, Annual General Meeting and Ordinary Meeting will be held on Tuesday 29 May 2012 at The White House, Marquis Drive, Brindley Heath.

The start time for the Annual Parish Meeting (which is the first of the three meetings) will be 7.00pm. The other meetings will follow on afterwards. The Annual General Meeting will start at approximately 7.45pm.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 9.30pm

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Signed.....
Chairman, Mr. P. Adams

Date.....

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