

**Minutes of Berkswich Parish Council Meeting held on
Tuesday 6 September 2022 at 7.30 pm at Walton (Berkswich) Village Hall**

Present: Cllr Sue Francis (Chairman), Cllr Graham Kilford, Cllr Tim Luker, Cllr Caroline Pearson, Cllr Ben Rowell, Cllr Alan Taylor and Cllr Margaret Crossland

In attendance: Cllr Andy Cooper from Stafford Borough Council and Mrs Sue Fullwood as Clerk

Cllr Francis welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Public questions – none.

22/086 To note apologies for absence – Apologies were accepted from Cllr Malcolm Millichap (Vice Chairman) and Cllr Ann Millichap as they were unwell.

22/087 To record Declarations of Interest regarding items on the agenda – none.

22/088 To approve minutes of the Council meeting held on 7 June 2022 – Resolved: agreed as a true record.

22/089 Update on matters arising which are not agenda items

22/068 – The Clerk had made enquiries about having the Chairman’s badge of office valued. A local jewelers had said they would be unable to value it and suggested asking Fattorini, the company it was purchased from to give a valuation. Fattorini said that they would not be able to value the badge and to add 3% increase to the purchase price for each year since it was made.

22/090 Councillor Vacancy – a member of the public from Milford had been asked if they would co-opt onto the Council and had been interested, but then decided not to go ahead. Discussions took place around ways to attract interested parties, particularly from the Milford area. It was commented that people from Milford tended not to raise issues or attend meetings and suggested that the Parish Council leave notes in the Milford Information Hut for locals to complete if they wished to. **Action: Clerk** to draft notes for agreement. **Resolved:** advert to be placed on the website and noticeboards. **Action: Clerk**

22/091 Survey of Trees in School Lane – Discussions took place regarding whether a survey was necessary, if the survey could be postponed for another financial year or if the trees could be felled. A motion was proposed to go ahead with the survey – 5 councillors voted to go ahead and 2 abstained. **Resolved:** survey to go ahead. **Action: Clerk**

22/092 Queen’s Platinum Jubilee

- i Review of reopening 17 July** – The event had been a success and Cllr Francis thanked the Clerk for organising it. Cllr Pearson felt that it had raised the profile of the Parish Council and noted that there had not been any vandalism so far. Members of the public had suggested that it would be good to make it an annual event.

The RoSPA report for the play equipment at Hollybush Playing Fields had been received and there was minimal work to be done. TGM to be asked to look at the bearings on the roundabout and to reglue the wetpour. **Action: Clerk**

- ii **Plant a Tree for the Jubilee** – Cllr Taylor was looking out for a suitable sturdy English oak tree, but had not found one yet. He was also researching a deer-proof guard for the tree when it had been planted.

22/093 Clean Air Campaign – Cllr Luker now had contacts at Walton High School, but was waiting to contact them until the school year was well underway. Cllr Rowell would ask the Executive Head of the Trust what had already been done.

22/094 Fencing at Milford – Cllr Kilford felt that the fencing near the pools was deteriorating and becoming more dangerous. **Resolved:** Clerk to contact the landowner to offer support in any way we can. **Action: Clerk**

22/095 Policy/Procedure Review

- i. Disciplinary Policy
- ii. Grievance Policy
- iii. Health and Safety Policy
- iv. Equality and Diversity Policy
- v. Training and Development Policy

Cllr Taylor felt that some policies were not focussed on the Parish Council enough - Cllr Francis agreed to suggest amendments. **Action: Cllr Francis**

22/096 Financial Matters

- i. **To approve Bank Reconciliation and expenditure for June, July and August 2022 – Resolved:** Unanimously approved.

Bank Reconciliation as at 30 June 2022

Receipts			
Company	Description	Amount	Date Received
HMRC	VAT Reclaim 21-22	£2,724.28	01/06/2022
Total Receipts		£2,724.28	

Payments						
Paid to	Description	Invoice date	Cheque #	Gross Incl. VAT	VAT	Net
TGM	Grounds Maintenance May 22	29/05/2022	682	£1,254.00	£209.00	£1,045.00
Mrs Caroline Pearson	Expenses June 22 - flowers	16/06/2022	683	£42.99	£8.60	£34.39
Mrs Sue Francis	Expenses June 22 - Prosecco for Afternoon Tea	04/06/2022	684	£56.00	£11.20	£44.80
Berkswich Women's Institute	Prepare Village Hall and serving at Jubilee event	04/06/2022	685	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00
Natasha Wylie (T's Face Painting)	Face Painting 17.7.22	08/06/2022	686	£130.00	£0.00	£130.00
Walton (Berkswich Village Hall)	Village Hall use 7.6.22	26/06/2022	687	£30.00	£0.00	£30.00
HMRC	Empes and Emper NI payments May 22	30/06/2022	688	£140.99	£0.00	£140.99
Staffs Pension Fund	Empes and Emper Pension payments May 22	30/06/2022	689	£400.15	£0.00	£400.15
Mrs Susan Fullwood	Salary & expenses May 22	30/06/2022	690	£1,230.58	£0.00	£1,230.58
Total Payments				£3,384.71	£228.80	£3,155.91

Cashbook

Opening Balance at 01.06.2022	24,276.01
Add:	
Receipts 01.06.2022 to 30.06.2022	2,724.28
Less	
Payments 01.06.2022 to 30.06.2022	3,384.71
Cashbook Balance at 30.06.2022	23,615.58

Current Account

Bank statement Balance at 01.06.2022	26,926.06
Less payments made	3,904.05

Less: Unpresented Cheques	Chq No	Amount
	683	£42.99
	684	£56.00
	685	£100.00
	686	£130.00
	687	£30.00
	688	£140.99
	689	£400.15
	690	£1,230.58

	2,130.71
Add: Receipts	2,724.28
Add: Unpresented Receipts	0.00
C/A balance carried forward 30.06.2022	25,746.29
Available funds in C/A	£23,615.58

Bank Reconciliation as at 31 July 2022

Receipts			
Company	Description	Amount	Date Received
Staffs County Council	Grass Cutting 2022/23	£2,206.00	06/07/2022
Various residents - see paying in book	Jubilee Tea ticket sales	£442.50	07/07/2022
Hampshire Trust Bank	Transfer from short term investment account	£36,000.00	26/07/2022
Total Receipts		£38,648.50	

Payments						
Paid to	Description	Invoice date	Cheque #	Gross Incl. VAT	VAT	Net
TGM	Grounds Maintenance June 22	30/06/2022	691	£2,168.10	£361.35	£1,806.75
Staffs Pension Fund	LGPS empee & emper contributions July 22	29/07/2022	693	£289.00	£0.00	£289.00
HMRC	NI empee & emper contributions July 22	29/07/2022	694	£25.77	£0.00	£25.77
Mrs Susan Fullwood	Clerk's expenses inc newsletters, ink & mobile	29/07/2022	695	£139.49	£2.92	£136.57
Mrs Susan Fullwood	Clerk's salary	29/07/2022	696	£904.13	£0.00	£904.13
				£3,526.49	£364.27	£3,162.22

Cashbook

Opening Balance at 01.07.2022	23,615.58
Add:	
Receipts 01.07.2022 to 31.07.2022	38,648.50
Less	
Payments 01.07.2022 to 31.07.2022	3,526.49
Cashbook Balance at 31.07.2022	58,737.59

Current Account

Bank statement Balance at 01.07.2022	25,746.29
Less payments made	3,441.67

Less: Unpresented Cheques	Chq No	Amount	
	684	£56.00	
	685	£100.00	
	686	£130.00	
	687	£30.00	
	688	£140.99	
	689	£400.15	
	693	£289.00	
	694	£25.77	
	695	£139.49	
	696	£904.13	
			2,215.53
Add: Receipts			38,648.50
Add: Unpresented Receipts			0.00
C/A balance carried forward 31.07.2022			60,953.12
Available funds in C/A			£58,737.59

Bank Reconciliation as at 31 August 2022

Receipts			
Company	Description	Amount	Date Received
Total Receipts		£0.00	

Payments						
Paid to	Description	Invoice date	Cheque #	Gross Incl. VAT	VAT	Net
TGM	Grounds Maintenance July 2022	01/08/2022	697	£1,402.20	£233.70	£1,168.50
DM Payroll Services	Payroll Apr-Sept 22	20/07/2022	698	£60.00	£0.00	£60.00
KOMPAN Ltd	New play equipment at Holly Bush Playing Fields	19/07/2022	699	£35,226.82	£5,871.13	£29,355.69
Walton (Berkswich) Village Hall	Room hire August 22	26/08/2022	700	£30.00	£0.00	£30.00
Mazars LLP	External Audit 21/22	22/08/2022	701	£240.00	£40.00	£200.00
Mrs Sue Fullwood	Salary & expenses Aug 22	09/07/1902	702	£921.62	£0.00	£921.62
Staffordshire Pension Fund	LGPS Contributions Empee & Emper Aug 22	31/08/2022	703	£289.00	£0.00	£289.00
HMRC	NI Emper Contributions Aug 22	05/09/2022	704	£25.77	£0.00	£25.77
Total Payments				£38,195.41	£6,144.83	£32,050.58

Cashbook	
Opening Balance at 01.08.2022	58,737.59
Add:	
Receipts 01.08.2022 to 31.08.2022	0.00
Less	
Payments 01.08.2022 to 31.08.2022	38,195.41
Cashbook Balance at 31.08.2022	20,542.18

Current Account	
Bank statement Balance at 01.08.2022	60,953.12
Less payments made	2,029.53

Less: Unpresented Cheques	Chq No	Amount	
	684	£56.00	
	685	£100.00	
	687	£30.00	
	697	£1,402.20	
	698	£60.00	
	699	£35,226.82	
	700	£30.00	
	701	£240.00	
	702	£921.62	
	703	£289.00	
	704	£25.77	
			38,381.41

Add: Unpresented Receipts	0.00
C/A balance carried forward 31.08.2022	58,923.59
Available funds in C/A	£20,542.18

- ii. **To approve budget report for June, July and August 2022 – Resolved:**
Unanimously approved.

Budget Report June 2022

RECEIPTS	Total	Budget	Outturn
Precept	14,269	25,523	-11,255
Council tax support grant	0	1,231	-1,231
SBC (Concurrent Function Allowance)	0	1,507	-1,507
SCC Minor Highways Agreement	2,888	1,500	1,388
VAT refund	2,724	5,000	-2,276
Interest Stafford Railway BS A/c	0	185	-185
Interest Teachers A/c	0	125	-125
Interest Hampshire Trust	0	85	-85
Misc. Receipts (e.g. wayleave payments)	44	50	-6
Total income	£ 19,925	£ 35,206	-£ 15,281

PAYMENTS	Total	Budget	Outturn
Staff costs	4,221	14,700	10,479
Office costs	3,153	4,082	929
Maintenance costs	2,325	14,300	11,975
Additional maintenance	-	2,300	2,300
Play Area	10	21,100	21,090
Capital purchases	-	-	-
Community support	852	4,500	3,648
Projects	-	33,200	33,200
Total Expenditure	£ 10,561	£ 94,182	£ 83,621

Budget Report July 2022

RECEIPTS	Total	Budget	Outturn
Precept	14,269	25,523	-11,255
Council tax support grant	0	1,231	-1,231
SBC (Concurrent Function Allowance)	0	1,507	-1,507
SCC Minor Highways Agreement	5,094	1,500	3,594
VAT refund	2,724	5,000	-2,276
Interest Stafford Railway BS A/c	0	185	-185
Interest Teachers A/c	0	125	-125
Interest Hampshire Trust	0	85	-85
Misc. Receipts (e.g. wayleave payments)	36,487	50	36,437
Total income	£ 58,573	£ 35,206	£ 23,368

PAYMENTS	Total	Budget	Outturn
Staff costs	5,414	14,700	9,286
Office costs	3,193	4,082	889
Maintenance costs	4,493	14,300	9,807
Additional maintenance	-	2,300	2,300
Play Area	10	21,100	21,090
Capital purchases	-	-	-
Community support	974	4,500	3,526
Projects	-	33,200	33,200
Total Expenditure	£ 14,085	£ 94,182	£ 80,097

Budget Report August 2022

RECEIPTS	Total	Budget	Outturn
Precept	14,269	25,523	-11,255
Council tax support grant	0	1,231	-1,231
SBC (Concurrent Function Allowance)	0	1,507	-1,507
SCC Minor Highways Agreement	5,094	1,500	3,594
VAT refund	2,724	5,000	-2,276
Interest Stafford Railway BS A/c	0	185	-185
Interest Teachers A/c	0	125	-125
Interest Hampshire Trust	0	85	-85
Misc. Receipts (e.g. wayleave payments)	36,487	50	36,437
Total income	£ 58,573	£ 35,206	£ 23,368

PAYMENTS	Total	Budget	Outturn
Staff costs	6,607	14,700	8,093
Office costs	3,509	4,082	573
Maintenance costs	5,662	14,300	8,638
Additional maintenance	-	2,300	2,300
Play Area	29,366	21,100	- 8,266
Capital purchases	-	-	-
Community support	974	4,500	3,526
Projects	-	33,200	33,200
Total Expenditure	£ 46,118	£ 94,182	£ 48,064

iii. To agree new signatory for Hampshire Trust Account

Cllr Luker was proposed to be the new signatory. **Resolved:** Unanimously approved. Clerk to complete paperwork. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr Kilford floated the idea of setting up the Village Hall as a 'warm bank' over winter due to high energy prices. Councillors felt that comfortable seats would be required. Council would consider a proposal if it was something the Village Hall Management Committee wanted to do, but the budget was very tight.

22/097 Planning

- i. **Consultation from SBC** - The Council had not received any planning applications for consultation over the Summer but had started to receive them again in September for applications on the weekly list in June. Cllr Cooper said he had raised it at a planning meeting and had been informed that there had been staffing issues but that consultations would be sent out as soon as applications were validated.

22/36347/TCA 19 The Village - Cllr Taylor asked if the Council wanted to comment on an application to fell the large conical tree behind The Pound. It was felt it was best to leave this to the planning department.

21/33764/COU 190b Main Road – change of use from agricultural land to domestic. The appeal from the owners to the Planning Inspectorate had been upheld and planning permission had been granted. The Council were in agreement that they did not want agricultural land to be changed to domestic use within the parish and would object to future change of use applications.

22/098 Reports from other meetings

i Finance Group

- a. **Reduction in number of meetings** – the Finance group had discussed reducing the number of Parish Council meetings held annually, perhaps to 6, in order to reduce room hire costs. Cllr Rowell said that the Council would need to make sure that Standing Orders were fit for purpose so that invoices could continue to be paid in a timely way. Cllr Francis asked councillors to consider if they wished to reduce the number of meetings, for example not having a December meeting.
- b. **Newsletters** – Cllr Rowell had suggested publishing the newsletter on the Council website and emailing a link to local people. The Clerk would set up a new email address for the newsletter and ask people to subscribe to the newsletters by contacting that address – people would also be able to unsubscribe the same way. Hard copies could still be produced for people who required them, but this would reduce printing and delivery charges considerably. It was suggested that one newsletter per year could be in hard copy.
- c. **Budgetary issues** – Cllr Rowell confirmed that the Council would need to ask ratepayers for a larger increase this year due to the rate of inflation – the increase would be less than or equal to the inflation rate at the end of the year. The Finance Group were actively looking for areas to save money, for example there would not be money for grants in the 2023/24 budget.

ii Establishment of Staffing Committee

It was felt that Cllr M Millichap should not be in the committee so that he could chair appeals committee meetings if required. **Resolved:** Cllr Francis, Cllr Rowell and Cllr Luker agreed to be on the committee. The Clerk to set up arrangements for an appraisal.

- iii **TVCG on 15 September** – Cllr Francis volunteered to attend as Cllr Taylor and the Clerk would be unavailable.

- iv **Environment Group** – the two volunteers had had a walk-through Walton Coppice with Cllr Luker and had put together a plan – they would be helping to

plant the hedge, clearing some of groups of trees which were planted close together to allow the remainder to flourish and planting a variety of different trees to encourage biodiversity. Consideration was being given to planting native bluebells and putting up bird, bat and owl boxes. A walk around the Holdiford Road area of Milford was suggested and all Council members would be welcome to attend. Cllr Francis thanked Cllr Luker and Cllr Taylor for all their work in this area.

- v. **Village Hall Council of Management** – There had been a problem with vandalism at the Hall so they had agreed to put in CCTV so that they could prove when damage had occurred. A new boiler had been fitted in the kitchen. Further requests had been made to clear the Parish Council's cupboard and the Clerk would suggest a couple of dates for people to meet and go through the contents of the cupboard. **Action: Clerk**

22/099 Agenda items for the next meeting

The next Berkswich Parish Meeting would take place on Tuesday 4 October 2022 at 7.30 pm at Walton (Berkswich) Village Hall. Agenda items agreed were: reduction in the number of meetings; newsletters; fencing at Milford; telephone box; plant a tree for the Jubilee; planning for next year; preliminary budget figures for 23/24; clean air campaign; Survey report for School Lane Trees; tree growing near to The Crescent.

Exclusion of the Public - The Chair moved: that the public be excluded from the meeting for the item of business below which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of Local Government Act 1972.

- 22/100 Clerk's Study Time – Resolved:** It was agreed that the Clerk should be paid for her study time for her CiLCA qualification as it was a requirement of the role, up to a maximum of the number of recommended study hours for the course.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.00 pm.