

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

Present: Cllr Sue Francis (Chairman), Cllr Malcolm Millichap (Vice Chairman), Cllr Ann Millichap, Cllr Tim Luker, Cllr Graham Kilford, Cllr Caroline Pearson, Cllr Ben Rowell and Cllr Margaret Crossland.

In attendance: 6 members of the public and Mrs Sue Fullwood as Clerk

1 Public session

Cllr Francis welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Stafford Borough Local Plan 2020-2040

A lady from Milford had strong views that the Parish Council should object to the Stafford Borough Local Plan 2020-2040, in particular the settlement boundary around Milford. She had met with a planning consultant who thought that Milford and Brocton risk being inundated with planning applications now that they were included within the settlement boundary. From a planning point of view, it would be far easier for a developer to say that an area was right next to the boundary and get permission that way.

Cllr Francis read from Cllr Taylor's email on the subject. Cllr Taylor felt that imposing a Residential Development Boundary was not intended to encourage new development but to put a defined and unambiguous limit to its geographical extent providing clarity for residents and developers alike. The boundaries of the RDBs at Milford and Brocton were tightly drawn around the existing settlements meaning the only opportunities for new building were on infill plots or as redevelopment of previously used land - there was no realistic scope for large scale new development and none at all for expansion of the settlement. The Parish Council have objected to planning applications where appropriate and will continue to do so. Cllr Francis confirmed that the lady's comments had been noted.

Kitlings Lane

A gentleman had taken legal advice about parking outside his property on Kitlings Lane and they had suggested contacting the Parish Council. Cllr M Millichap responded that he understood the problem, but there was little the Parish Council could do as they are not an enforcing agency. Fr Graham had been approached about the possibility of using the car park for St Thomas' Church, but the car park was now locked due to antisocial behaviour.

The gentleman added that Kitlings Lane had become a 'rat run' and cars were speeding down the lane and then struggling to get around the bend. The sign for lorries at the top of the lane was in the wrong place. Lorries were going down the lane and where they used to be able to turn in the church car park, they now have to reverse all the way up the lane. Cllr M Millichap suggested that Highways could be approached regarding the signage. **Action: Clerk.**

South Staffordshire Local Plan

Another gentleman raised the issue of the South Staffs Local Plan and the proposed site allocation of land at Cannock Road, Stafford. A second gentleman informed the Parish Council that a public meeting had taken place and they planned to make substantial

objections to the inclusion of the area in the Plan. A lot of good information had been shared at the meeting.

Cllr Francis thanked everyone for coming. 5 members of the public left the meeting at 7.50 pm.

- 22/149 To note apologies for absence** – Cllr Alan Taylor due to bereavement and Cllr Andy Cooper as he was at SBC Full Council. Both apologies were accepted.
- 22/150 To record Declarations of Interest regarding items on the agenda** – None.
- 22/151 To approve minutes of the Council meeting held on 1 November 2022** – **Resolved:** agreed as a true record.
- 22/152 Update on matters arising which are not agenda items**
- Milford pavement – TGM had been asked to clear the path as much as possible. SBC to be asked to send a pavement cleaner along Main Road. **Action: Clerk**
- 22/153 To discuss the councillor vacancy** – Cllr M Millichap proposed that the vacancy was left in obedience unless someone volunteered as it was so close to elections. **Resolved:** unanimously agreed.
- 22/154 To agree the contractor for School Lane Trees** – Only one quote had been received for the work despite asking five companies for quotes. **Resolved:** agreed unanimously to use Rob Keyzor's for the work. **Action: Clerk**
- 22/155 Plans for planting a tree for the Queen's Green Canopy** – Cllr Taylor had bought an oak tree on behalf of the Council. Council thanked Cllr Taylor for all the work he had put into getting a suitable tree.
- i tree guard** – Cllr Taylor had done research into a guard for the tree to protect it from deer and vandalism. **Resolved:** Council selected the powder coated black guard from More Than Shelters for £120 +VAT. **Action: Clerk/Cllr Taylor**
- ii the planting** – Cllr Taylor had discussed the planting with TGM and they had quoted £45+VAT to plant the tree. **Resolved:** TGM to be asked to plant the tree with a ceremony in February half-term. **Action: Clerk**
- iii a plaque** – **Resolved:** the previously agreed plaque would no longer be suitable and a memorial plaque should be sought. **Action: Clerk**
- 22/156 Clean Air Campaign** – Cllr Luker had made progress and the member of staff at Walton High School now had posters and banners. The next step was for Cllr Luker to meet with the member of staff and a representative from the Methodist Church. Cllr Rowell shared that he was no longer the Chair of Governors for Walton High School as he was Chair of the Multi-Academy Trust.
- 22/157 Telephone Box** – A bag of soft toys had been left in the phone box and Cllr Francis would put up a notice saying 'books only'. **Action: Cllr Francis** The Clerk had been trying to get hold of the man who had painted the Ingestre box, but it was proving difficult. TGM to be asked if they would put a new shelf inside the box. **Action: Clerk**
- 22/158 Plans for 2023/24 – Coronation of King Charles III** – following the success of the picnic for the reopening of the park in 2022, it was agreed another picnic would

be a good idea. **Resolved:** Picnic to be held at Hollybush Playing Fields on Monday 8 May 2023 with face painting. Ice cream van to be booked if possible and other ideas to be considered such as a treasure/scavenger hunt. **Action:** Clerk

22/159 Parking issues –the issues raised at Kitlings Lane and The Village were discussed. Councillors had inspected the area in Kitlings Lane and had not seen a problem, but would be vigilant in the future. There was little that could be done about the issue at The Village.

22/160 Staffs County Council funding opportunity for landscape projects – A member of staff at SCC had emailed regarding funding opportunities and was prepared to talk to the Parish Council about it. **Resolved:** Cllr Luker to invite the staff member to talk to the Environment Group initially, then he would be invited to Parish Council on 7 February. **Action: Clerk/Cllr Luker**

22/161 Grounds Maintenance Contractor for 2023 – two quotes had been received for the work in the schedule. The Parish Council were happy with TGM's work and theirs was the lowest quote. **Resolved:** TGM's quote to be accepted. **Action: Clerk**

22/162 Financial Matters

i. **Budget for 2023/24 – Resolved:** Unanimously agreed.

Budget Proposal for 2023/24

	20/21 budget	20/21 outturn	21/22 budget	21/22 outturn	22/23 budget	22/23 predicted outturn	23/24 budget proposal
Staff costs							
Salary	7,875.00	4,930.98	8,000.00	8,898.92	11,400.00	11,150.88	11,400.00
Study time	1,200.00	-	-	-	-	1,600.00	-
Pension	-	-	-	2,130.64	3,000.00	3,293.84	3,000.00
NI	114.00	-	-	142.91	300.00	567.44	650.00
Total staff costs	9,189.00	4,930.98	8,000.00	11,172.47	14,700.00	16,612.16	15,050.00
Office costs							
Travel	1,500.00	100.40	500.00	-	50.00	-	50.00
Clerk's Training	500.00	175.00	500.00	230.00	150.00	685.00	100.00
Use of home as office	208.00	26.00	312.00	312.00	312.00	312.00	312.00
Post & stationery inc printer, mobile	350.00	10.47	350.00	611.35	600.00	532.78	550.00
Hall Hire	330.00	84.56	300.00	373.17	450.00	540.00	300.00
Insurance	1,480.00	1266.55	1,400.00	1,303.05	1,400.00	1,414.13	1,600.00
Audit	420.00	438.60	400.00	434.70	400.00	344.00	400.00
Payroll Services	55.00	60.00	60.00	120.00	120.00	120.00	140.00
Info Commissioner/subs	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	40.00
SPCA (inc. NALC)	380.00	374.00	400.00	378.00	420.00	384.30	-
SLCC	130.00	0.00	130.00	140.00	140.00	171.00	-
Total office costs	5,393.00	2575.58	4,392.00	3,942.27	4,082.00	4,543.21	3,492.00
Maintenance costs							
Grounds maintenance	10,900.00	10,184.50	10,000.00	9,377.10	11,000.00	11,000.00	11,000.00
War memorial	5,000.00	-	500.00	-	3,000.00	1,536.67	250.00
Village Pump	-	-	100.00	-	100.00	-	50.00
Noticeboards	100.00	-	100.00	17.52	100.00	-	50.00
SIDs	350.00	-	-	-	100.00	-	50.00
Total maintenance costs	16,350.00	10,184.50	10,700.00	9,394.62	14,300.00	12,536.67	11,400.00

Additional maintenance							
School Lane trees	1,500.00	-	500.00	-	2,000.00	3,000.00	500.00
Trip rails	300.00	348.00	-	250.00	300.00	175.00	100.00
Total additional maintenance	1,800.00	348.00	500.00	250.00	2,300.00	3,175.00	600.00
Play area equipment							
Maintenance	2,500.00	648.00	3,000.00	459.00	1,000.00	-	500.00
Purchases	-	-	-	107.88	20,000.00	29,365.81	-
RoSPA inspection	100.00	90.60	100.00	90.60	100.00	80.50	90.00
Total play area	2,600.00	738.60	3,100.00	657.48	21,100.00	29,446.31	590.00
Other purchases							
Noticeboards	-	36.00	-	36.00	-	-	-
SIDs	6,000.00	3,345.74	2,500.00	2,090.58	-	-	-
Bench	2,000.00	-	2,000.00	-	-	-	-
Total purchases	8,000.00	3,381.74	4,500.00	2,126.58	-	-	-
Community support							
Grant 1	-	-	500.00	-	500.00	-	-
Grant 2	-	-	500.00	-	500.00	-	-
Grant 3	500.00	1,500.00	500.00	-	500.00	-	-
Grant 4	500.00	1,500.00	500.00	-	500.00	-	-
Chairman's allowance	100.00	-	100.00	164.99	150.00	75.00	75.00
Members' training	150.00	-	100.00	25.00	100.00	100.00	300.00
Website	300.00	180.00	1,000.00	-	250.00	131.95	140.00
Parish Newsletter	650.00	118.00	600.00	690.00	1,000.00	1,120.00	50.00
MAW Coffee	400.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
Parish event	1,100.00	100.00	-	-	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Total community support	3,700.00	3,398.00	3,800.00	879.99	4,500.00	2,426.95	1,565.00
Projects		5,065.14					
Educational Support	500.00	-	500.00	-	-	-	-
Phone box	200.00	-	200.00	-	200.00	200.00	200.00
Coppices maintenance	6,000.00	2,685.00	4,500.00	2,959.14	32,000.00	10,560.00	500.00
Village trail leaflet	80.00	-	80.00	-	-	-	-
Wildflowers project with SWT	250.00	-	250.00	-	1,000.00	1,000.00	-
Total projects	7,030.00	7,750.14	5,530.00	2,959.14	33,200.00	11,760.00	700.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	54,062.00	33,307.54	40,522.00	31,382.55	94,182.00	80,500.30	33,397.00
Receipts							
Precept (April & Oct)	24,930.00	24,910.00	26,535.00	25,304.00	25,799.25	25,799.25	
Council tax support grant	1,113.09	1,090.50	1,231.00	1,231.00	1,230.75	1,230.75	1,230.75
B.C. (Concurrent Function Allowance)	1,507.00	1,506.50	1,507.00	1,507.00	1,507.00	1,507.00	1,507.00
SCC Minor Highways Agreement	1,500.00	2,062.94	1,500.00	-	1,500.00	4,406.00	2,200.00
Interest on Stafford Railway BS a/c	110.00	196.50	185.00	-	185.00	200.00	250.00
Interest on Teachers a/c	250.00	154.47	125.00	154.56	125.00	150.00	200.00
Interest on Hampshire Trust Bank	450.00	230.76	125.00	83.09	85.00	85.00	75.00
Other Receipts (Wayleaves etc)	10.00	94.01	50.00	-	50.00	44.01	45.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	29,870.09	30,245.68	31,258.00	28,279.65	30,482.00	33,422.01	4,277.00

(less in account than pre before precept & CTSG (

22/23 tax base for precept - 798.51
22/23 Band D Tax Amount - £32.31

	23/24	
Confirmed 23/24 tax base for precept	795.09	
Expenditure	33,397.00	
Minus receipts (before precept and CTSG)	4,277.00	
Top up from reserves (VAT reclaim for 22/23 should cover due to large projects)	1,375.00	
Total precept required 23/24	27,745.00	
	£34.90	per Band D
	8.0%	increase
	£2.59	increase

- ii. **Precept demand for 2023/24 - Resolved: 8% increase unanimously agreed.**
- iii. **Bank Reconciliation and expenditure for November 2022 – The Clerk had not sent the bank statement for November to the Councillors so this could not be agreed. Resolved: to be agreed at February Council meeting. Action: Clerk**

iv. **Budget report for November 2022 – Resolved:** agreed.

Budget Report November 2022

RECEIPTS	Total	Budget	Outturn
Precept	28,537	25,523	3,014
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
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	£72,842	£35,206	£37,636

PAYMENTS	Total	Budget	Outturn
Staff costs	12,044	14,700	2,656
Office costs	3,962	4,082	120
Maintenance costs	16,084	14,300	- 1,784
Additional maintenance	875	2,300	1,425
Play Area	29,446	21,100	- 8,346
Capital purchases	-	-	-
Community support	1,345	4,500	3,155
Projects	-	33,200	33,200
Total Expenditure	£63,757	£94,182	£30,425

22/163 Planning – response to:

- i. **South Staffordshire Local Plan – housing on Cannock Road and Acton Lane**
Cllr Taylor had drafted a detailed suggested response to the consultation objecting to the proposals. **Resolved:** unanimously agreed. **Action: Clerk**
- ii. **Stafford Borough Local Plan 2020-2040** – Cllr Taylor had proposed a response to the consultation that the Parish Council had no comments on the content but welcome the designation of Hollybush Field and Bluebell Hollow as Local Green Space. **Resolved:** unanimously agreed. **Action: Clerk** Cllr Francis thanked Cllr Taylor for his work on the two Local Plans. Cllr Rowell felt that the Council may rely too heavily on Cllr Taylor on planning issues and suggested setting up a Planning Committee after the elections so that other councillors and the Clerk could learn from Cllr Taylor.

22/164 Other Meetings

- i. **Environment Group** – Cllr Taylor and Cllr Luker had inspected Holdiford Road and there were not a lot of issues.
- ii. **Village Hall Council of Management** – Cllr Pearson updated that the VHCM would still like the cupboard to be cleared and she had arranged to take the gazebo for storage at her home. Another date would be set up in the New Year to look at the remaining contents. **Action: Clerk** Internal cameras were due to be installed at the hall. Council agreed that if sound was not recorded they were satisfied that their meetings were recorded but they would need to delete regularly and not stored for long periods. Cllr Kilford added that they were looking at a fully electronic booking system for the hall.

- iii. **TVCG** – The meeting had considered the Stafford Borough Local Plan, gulley emptying and HS2, and there had been attendees from Highways and HS2. The next meeting was due to be held in Spring 2023 at Gayton Village Hall.

22/165 Agenda items for the next meeting

The next Berkswich Parish Council Meeting would take place on Tuesday 7 February 2023 at 7.30 pm at Walton (Berkswich) Village Hall. Agenda items agreed were: Staffs County Council Funding Opportunities (speaker to be invited).

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

The remaining member of the public and the Clerk left the meeting at 8.45 pm. The Clerk rejoined the meeting at 8.55 pm.

22/166 Job evaluation report and Clerk's salary grade

The Council discussed the job evaluation report and the Clerk's salary grade. **Resolved:** The grade for the role to be 'LC2 below substantive' as per the report, with arrangements made to protect the Clerk's current salary. **Action: Clerk**

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