

## BERKSWICH PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of Berkswich Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 7 November 2023 at 7.30 pm at Walton Village Hall

**Present:** Cllr Alan Taylor (Chair), Cllr Caroline Pearson (Vice Chair), Cllr Sue Francis, Cllr Tim Luker, Cllr Beverley Hughes, Cllr Vicky Campbell and Cllr Bob Gilson.

**In attendance:** Mrs Sue Fullwood as Clerk.

Cllr Taylor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### 1 Public session

No members of the public attended the meeting.

- 23/129 Apologies** – received from Cllr Malcolm Millichap, Cllr Ann Millichap as Cllr M Millichap was unwell, Cllr Michael Norris as he had another engagement and Cllr Peter Edgeller, Stafford Borough Council who was at an SBC meeting. **Resolved:** all apologies accepted.
- 23/130 To record Declarations of Interest regarding items on the agenda.** None.
- 23/131 Minutes of the Council meeting held on 10 October 2023 – Resolved:** It was agreed that the minutes were a true record of the meeting. Cllr Luker updated that he had applied to be on the Cannock Chase AONB group, but they had not accepted his application as he was not from an underrepresented group. Cllr Hughes could be interested. **Resolved:** Cllr Luker to send information to Cllr Hughes. **Action: Cllr Luker/Cllr Hughes** Clerk to ask SPCA if they know of a rep for Staffordshire the identity of the parish council's representative on the AONB advisory board. **Action: Clerk**
- 23/132 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the D-Day Landings on 6 June 2024**  
Item deferred to January meeting in Cllr M Millichap's absence.
- 23/133 Handrail at the War Memorial**  
Cllr Taylor had made enquiries with the War Memorials Trust about a handrail, but was told that they received more enquiries about ramps. Cllr Taylor had found two ramps for sale but they were expensive and most people wanted to walk up to the memorial. Ramps may not be safe to walk on. **Resolved:** it was agreed purchase of a ramp for very limited use would not be reasonable expenditure and to discharge this item.
- 23/134 Replacement Bench on the Corner of the Village**  
Discussion took place over the robustness of wooden benches compared to recycled plastic benches. **Resolved:** It was agreed to purchase a Traditional 3-Seater Bench from ESPO and for TGM to remove the old bench and install the new one. **Action: Clerk**
- 23/135 Replacement Signs for the Telephone Box**  
Discussion took place around whether to have new signs or to leave the signs blank. **Resolved:** it was agreed to purchase 2 signs saying "BOOK EXCHANGE" and 2 saying "BERKSWICH" to be alternated around the phone box. Creative Landscapes to be asked to fit the new signs and mastic the windowpanes to make the box watertight. **Action: Clerk**
- 23/136 Parking at Old Croft Road at Weekends**

**Resolved:** it was agreed that putting Trip Rails on Old Croft Road would simply move the problems elsewhere so no further action on this item.

**23/137 Consultation on Reduction in Speed Limit near Dora Rose Nursing Home**

It was agreed that this would be beneficial to Berkswich Parish, particularly for people crossing the road to and from Milford Common and for the wildlife in the area.

**Resolved:** Clerk to respond that the Council have no objections to the proposals.

**Action:** Clerk

**23/138 Staffs County Council's response to Berkswich PC Comments on Brocton Road weight restriction proposal**

Cllr Taylor felt that the response from SCC was spurious and said that weight restrictions were normally imposed where there were weak bridges, narrow carriageway or specific features such as sharp bends, but that none of these infrastructure issues occurred in Brocton Lane. Berkswich were not aware of any evidence of heavy traffic using that route. A wider strategy was required as there were more pedestrians including young people walking to and from Walton High School and more cyclists using the A513. **Resolved:** Clerk to respond to SCC noting points above. **Action:** Clerk

**23/139 Financial Matters:**

- i. **Draft Budget for 2024/25** – Cllr Taylor confirmed that the proposal was to go for option 3, a £16.67 pa increase per Band D household. **Resolved:** the final decision on the budget and precept for 2024/25 to be made at the January meeting.
- ii. **Earmarked Funds and General Reserves – Resolved:** It was agreed that the Earmarked Funds and General Reserves should continue as they are.
- iii. **Bank Reconciliation and Expenditure for October 2023 - Resolved:** unanimously approved.

**Bank Reconciliation as at 20 October 2023**

Receipts			
Company	Description	Amount	Date Received
Stafford Borough Council	Precept Oct 23 - Mar 24	£ 14,487.88	03/10/2023
Stafford Borough Council	Concurrent Function Allowance Oct 23 - Mar 24	£753.50	03/10/2023
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>£15,241.38</b>	

Payments						
Paid to	Description	Invoice date	Cheque #	Gross Incl. VAT	VAT	Net
Walton (Berkswich) Village Hall	Room hire 10 October 2023	30/10/2023	796	£30.00	£0.00	£30.00
TGM	Scheduled maintenance Oct 23 + War Memorial	30/10/2023	797	£1,373.94	£228.99	£1,144.95
Creative Landscapes	Phone box and notice board repairs	25/10/2023	798	£1,750.00	£0.00	£1,750.00
Staffs Pension Fund	Employee & employer pensions contributions Oct 2023	31/10/2023	799	£295.36	£0.00	£295.36
Mrs Sue Fullwood	Clerk Salary & expenses Oct 2023	31/10/2023	800	£1,010.95	£0.00	£1,010.95
HMRC	Employee & employer NI contributions Oct 2023	31/10/2023	801	£30.81	£0.00	£30.81
Stafford Borough Council	Uncontested Election charges 2023	23/10/2023	806	£159.33	£0.00	£159.33
<b>Total Payments</b>				<b>£4,650.39</b>	<b>£228.99</b>	<b>£4,421.40</b>

**Cashbook**

Opening Balance at 20.09.2023	17,767.31
Add:	
Receipts 20.09.2023 to 20.10.2023	15,241.38
Less	
Payments 20.09.2023 to 20.10.2023	4,650.39
Cashbook Balance at 20.10.2023	<b>28,358.30</b>

**Current Account**

Bank statement Balance at 20.09.2023	21,488.77
Less payments made	1,694.33

Less: Unpresented Cheques	Chq No.s	Amount	
	(HMRC Nov 22) 729	£193.61	
	766	£27.53	
	788	£1,355.28	
	789	£40.00	
	790	£102.60	
	791	£12.75	
	794	£295.36	
	796	£30.00	
	797	£1,373.94	
	798	£1,750.00	
	799	£295.36	
	800	£1,010.95	
	801	£30.81	
	806	£159.33	
			6677.52
Add: receipts			15241.38
Add: Unpresented Receipts			-
C/A balance 20.10.2022 carried forward			35,035.82
Available funds in C/A			<b>28,358.30</b>

iv **Budget Report for October 2023. Resolved:** unanimously approved.**Budget Report October 2023**

RECEIPTS	To date	Budget	Less / more than budget
Precept	27,745	27,745	-0
Council tax support grant	1,231	1,231	0
SBC (Concurrent Function Allowance)	1,507	1,507	0
SCC Minor Highways Agreement	2,662	2,200	462
Interest Stafford Railway BS A/c	0	250	-250
Interest Teachers A/c	0	200	-200
Interest Hampshire Trust	36	75	-39
Grants	11,211	0	11,211
Misc. Receipts (e.g. VAT reclaim & waylea	12,369	45	12,324
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£ 56,760</b>	<b>£ 33,253</b>	<b>£ 23,508</b>

PAYMENTS	To date	Budget	Under / Over budget
Staff costs	9,495	15,050	5,555
Office costs	3,180	3,492	312
Maintenance costs	9,200	11,400	2,200
Additional maintenance	-	600	600
Play Area	103	590	487
Capital purchases	-	-	0
Community support	160	1,565	1,405
Projects	965	700	-265
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£ 23,103</b>	<b>£ 33,397</b>	<b>£ 10,294</b>

**Earmarked Funds Allocation**

Elections	£10,000
Crime Prevention Measures	£24,000
Walton Coppice Maintenance Fund	£12,500
Hollybush Coppice Maintenance Fund	£10,000
Asset Replacement Fund	£45,000
Environmental Care	£35,000
General Reserve	£42,098
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>£178,598</b>

**23/140 Planning Matters**

**i Response to Planning Application 23/38135/HOU 39 Old Croft Road**

**Resolved:** The Council had no objection to the application and the Clerk would respond to the consultation. **Action: Clerk**

**ii Response to Planning Application 23/38127/HOU 36 The Village**

**Resolved:** The Council had no objection to the application and the Clerk would respond to the consultation. **Action: Clerk**

**23/141 Reports from other Meetings**

i. **Environment Group** – Cllr Luker and Cllr Taylor had met a tree surgeon at both coppices to discuss the requirements. The tree surgeon would also meet with the FiPL Officer on both sites and feedback to Cllr Luker and Cllr Taylor for the grant applications. The plan was to get two grant applications in, one for each coppice, for the FiPL panel on 22 November. Cllr Taylor had received one quote for moving the fencing and was struggling to get more. Cllr Taylor had met with someone from the Burton Conservation Volunteers. The Headteacher of Berkswich Primary needed to do a letter to support the Hollybush Coppice application.

ii. **Village Hall Council of Management** – The Music Group was no longer running as the organiser was unwell. The next meeting was to take place on 8 November.

iii. **Trent Valley Collaboration Group**

A meeting had been held on 18 October, attended by Cllr Pearson and the Clerk. Various items had been covered including highways, difficulty in contacting PCSOs and banking facilities for Parish Councils. The new Shugborough entrance meant that HGVs travelling from the Rugeley side would have to do a U-turn at the Milford roundabout due the obtuse angle of the entrance. The Police had given advice to beware of Open Garden events giving an opportunity to 'case' properties for robbery.

**23/142 Agenda Items for the Next Meeting scheduled for Tuesday 2 January 2023 at 7.30 pm in the Main Hall, Walton Village Hall**

Agenda items agreed were: 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the D-Day Landings; 2024-25 Budget and precept; and the weight limit on the Brocton Road.

The meeting closed at 8:40 pm.