

BERKSWICH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Berkswich Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 6 February 2024 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 Malcolm Millichap, Cllr Ann Millichap, Cllr Bob Gilson, Cllr Beverley Hughes, and Cllr Vicky Campbell.

In attendance: Cllr Peter Edgeller from Stafford Borough Council, two members of the public and Mrs Sue Fullwood as Clerk.

Cllr Taylor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1 Public session

a Parking on The Rise (see also 24/16 b) below)

The first member of the public raised an issue with the parking at the bottom of The Rise. He felt that there had been a decline in standards of parking for school drop offs, including a Select Bus stopping directly outside Walton High School and more recently a transporter delivering cars to the W R Davies garage. The transporter was parking directly opposite the school entrance, on the footpath, and causing chaos with the traffic just when pupils were crossing the road to get into school. He felt it was very dangerous for the pupils who were often more interested in their friends than road safety. Cllr Taylor replied that the Council had made previous attempts to contact both the garage, the bus company and the police and that there was no easy answer as the Council itself had limited powers. The member of the public suggested that the Select bus could drop off in the school car park, and the school could look at having a one-way system with entry along Old Croft Road and exit at The Rise. The councillors felt that this would just move the problem rather than solve it.

b Lighting at Dora Rose Nursing Home (see also 24/14 below)

The second member of the public raised an issue regarding the lighting at Dora Rose and said that they had never complied fully with the planning conditions. There was special subdued lighting approved for the site when it was rebuilt. The spotlights in the visitor car park now shone straight into the houses across the road, the lights on the signs at the entrance were never approved and the site is part of Cannock Chase National Landscape (previously AONB) and there shouldn't be any spread upwards or sideways from the lighting, but there were coloured lights shining up into the trees. The lights were left on until 3 or 4am. Cllr Taylor felt that the Stafford Borough Council's Planning Enforcement team would be the best people to contact. The member of the public had already contacted the planning team.

24/10 Apologies – received from Cllr Michael Norris as he was unwell. **Resolved:** apologies were noted.

24/11 To record Declarations of Interest regarding items on the agenda. None.

24/12 Minutes of the Council meeting held on 2 January 2024 – Resolved: It was agreed that the minutes were accurate.

24/13 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings

Cllr M Millichap had been in touch the WI Secretary and they had decided not to support a Parish Council event. Cllr M Millichap had also contacted someone within the parish who had a collection of memorabilia and they were consulting with the Phoenix Military History group. Cllr Pearson had asked the person who runs the Phoenix Club if

they would support the Parish Council's event, but they had their own event planned for 7 June with a singer as entertainment. **Resolved:** It was felt that two events in two days would be too much and that the event proposed for 8 June would not go ahead and the room booking should be cancelled. The Clerk should thank the member of the public for offering their gas mask, but it would no longer be necessary. Clerk to cancel the room booking and Cllr M Millichap to inform the person with the collection of memorabilia that it would no longer be required. **Action: Clerk/Cllr M Millichap** The Chairman thanked Cllr M Millichap for investigating the possibilities.

24/14 Lighting Issues at Dora Rose Nursing Home (see item 1 a above)

Resolved: Cllr Taylor to investigate planning conditions further and then the Clerk to write to Dora Rose and if necessary Stafford Borough Council's Planning Enforcement team. **Action: Cllr Taylor/Clerk**

24/15 Contractor for Hedge Cutting at Walton Coppice

The Clerk had asked 7 companies to quote for cutting 41 metres of hedgerow between the play park and 103 Bluebell Hollow to 2m in height and had received three quotes. **Resolved:** it was agreed to accept the quote from Rob Keysor's as their quote was the lowest and Council had been happy with their work previously. **Action: Clerk**

24/16 Issues with the garage on The Rise/Milford Road

a) **Graffiti** – Cllr Luker had been contacted by residents about the graffiti on Walton Garage. One person had told Cllr Luker that potential buyers for their house had said that the graffiti made the area look run down.

b) **Transporter parking** – (see item 1 b above) The transporters should not be parking on the yellow lines near the school or the pavement and they were causing danger to Walton High School pupils in particular. The transporter blocked the view of vehicles turning into The Rise from Milford Road so they couldn't see what was coming down the hill towards them.

Resolved: Clerk to write to W R Davies asking them their plans for parking the transporters and to clean up the graffiti. Clerk to contact the Police, Walton High School and the Select bus company to make them aware of parking concerns. Clerk to ask PCSO to attend the next Parish Council meeting. **Action: Clerk**

24/17 Best Kept Village Competition

Resolved: it was agreed that the competition would be a lot of work and that it could be considered for 2025 provided either a Council member or local resident was prepared to take ownership of the project.

24/18 Dog waste on Footpath from Bluebell Hollow to Milford Road

A complaint had been received about dog waste being left on the footpath from Bluebell Hollow to the traffic lights on Milford Road. The Clerk had asked Streetscene if a dog waste bin could be placed in the vicinity and they had said they would look for a suitable location. The Clerk would ask Streetscene for a further supply of warning stickers and put them up in the area. **Action: Clerk** Cllr Taylor suggested that a map of where the bins are currently would be useful so we could add where we would like new/ replacement bins to be. It was noted that the bins on Green Gore Lane and Cedar Way had still not been replaced. Cllr Campbell suggested that stickers could be put on bins with a QR code on them to direct people to the Streetscene to report when they are full. **Resolved:** Clerk to ask Streetscene for a map if they have one, and to suggest QR labels. **Action: Clerk**

24/19 Financial Matters:

- i. **Banking report** – The Clerk had prepared a report recommending switching the current account from Virgin Money to Unity Trust. **Resolved:** Recommendations were unanimously agreed. **Action: Clerk**

ii. **Bank Reconciliation and Expenditure for January 2024 - Resolved:**
unanimously approved.

Bank Reconciliation as at 19 January 2024

Receipts			
Company	Description	Amount	Date Received
Teachers Building Society	Interest for 2023	£1,002.36	29/01/2024
Total Receipts		£1,002.36	

Payments						
Paid to	Description	Invoice date	Cheque #	Gross Incl. VAT	VAT	Net
HMRC	Replace cancelled cheque 000729 - Tax & NI Nov 2022	05/12/2022	815	£193.61	£0.00	£193.61
SPCA	Replace cancelled cheque 000766 - 6 Gd Clrs Guides	05/05/2023	816	£27.53	£0.84	£26.69
TGM	Grounds Maintenance November 2023	09/12/2023	817	£859.50	£143.25	£716.25
Staffordshire Pension Fund	Employee & employer contributions January 2024	31/01/2024	818	£295.36	£0.00	£295.36
HMRC	Employer NI January 2024	31/01/2024	819	£30.81	£0.00	£30.81
Buxtons	Tools for Walton Coppice	29/01/2024	820	£683.16	£113.86	£569.30
Mrs Susan Fullwood	Clerk salary & expenses Jan 24	31/01/2024	821	£1,031.76	£0.00	£1,031.76
Walton (Berkswich) Village Hall	Meeting room for 2 Jan 2024	31/01/2024	822	£30.00	£0.00	£30.00
TGM	Bench installation Jan 2024	01/02/2024	823	£192.00	£32.00	£160.00
Mr Alan Taylor	Reimbursement for plate and duplicate keys for Walton Coppice	01/02/2024	824	£23.90	£0.65	£23.25
Total Payments				£3,146.49	£289.76	£2,856.73

(Reissued cheques not included in totals)

Cashbook

Opening Balance at 20.12.2023	14,034.94
Add:	
Receipts 20.12.2023 to 19.01.2024	1,002.36
Less	
Payments 20.12.2023 to 19.01.2024	3,146.49
Cashbook Balance at 19.01.2024	11,890.81

Current Account

Bank statement Balance at 20.12.2023	27,312.75
Less payments made	12,983.92

Chq No.s	Amount	
(HMRC Nov 22) 729	£193.61	Cheque cancelled and reissued as 815
(SPCA Apr 23) 766	£27.53	Cheque cancelled and reissued as 816
791	£12.75	
811	£60.00	
815	£193.61	
816	£27.53	
817	£859.50	
818	£295.36	
819	£30.81	
820	£683.16	
821	£1,031.76	
822	£30.00	
823	£192.00	
824	£23.90	
	3440.38	
Add: receipts	1002.36	
Add: Unpresented Receipts	0.00	
C/A balance 19.01.2024 carried forward	15331.19	
Available funds in C/A	11890.81	

iii **Budget Report for January 2024. Resolved:** unanimously approved.

Budget Report January 2024

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	1,002	200	802
Interest Hampshire Trust	36	75	-39
Grants	11,211	0	11,211
Misc. Receipts (e.g. VAT reclaim & waylea	12,369	45	12,324
Total income	£ 57,763	£ 33,253	£ 24,510

PAYMENTS	To date	Budget	Under / Over budget
Staff costs	13,276	15,050	1,774
Office costs	3,398	3,492	94
Maintenance costs	9,866	11,400	1,534
Additional maintenance	9,019	600	-8,419
Play Area	103	590	487
Capital purchases	613	-	-613
Community support	285	1,565	1,280
Projects	1,790	700	-1,090
Total Expenditure	£ 38,349	£ 33,397	-£ 4,952

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	£25,630
Total funds	£162,130

24/20

Planning Matters

- i. **Response to Planning Application 23/38456/OUT Land off The Rise** Cllr Taylor had shared a proposed response objecting to the application on the grounds that: the access was too close to the junction of The Rise and Milford Road; the design was too regimented; and that run-off could increase flooding at the bottom of The Rise. **Resolved:** proposed response was agreed unanimously. **Action: Clerk**

24/21

Reports from other Meetings

- i. **Environment Group** – Cllr Luker reported that the working group held on 4 February at Walton Coppice had gone very well and a lot had been done. The Clerk would circulate the report from Burton Conservation Volunteers. **Action: Clerk** 47 people in total had attended including 25 Scouts and 10 people from BCV. The next working party would be a planting day on 3 March 2024 and everyone was welcome. The Clerk had prepared a list of costs which required Council approval – this was agreed unanimously. **Action: Clerk**
The application for FiPL grant funding for Hollybush Coppice was progressing and a meeting was due to be held on 7 February to discuss it.
Cllr M Millichap raised the issue of the fencing at the Chicken Run. Cllr Taylor had tried to speak to who he believed to be the owner of the fence, but there had been no answer at the address. **Resolved:** Clerk to contact the Rights of Way team at Staffordshire County Council and ask them to have a look. **Action: Clerk**

- ii. **Village Hall Council of Management** – Cllr Pearson had raised the issue of pricing and the charge for Parish Council use of the Hall had been reduced from £30 to £20 per use. The next meeting was the AGM and Cllr Pearson was happy to continue as the Parish Council representative.

24/22 Agenda Items for the Next Meeting scheduled for Tuesday 5 March 2024 at 7.30 pm in the Bromage Room, Walton Village Hall

Agenda items agreed were: defibrillator grant application.

The meeting closed at 8:38 pm.