

## BERKSWICH PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of Berkswich Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 2 April 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 and Cllr Vicky Campbell.

**In attendance:** Cllr Peter Edgeller from Stafford Borough Council and Mrs Sue Fullwood as Clerk.

Cllr Taylor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### 1 Public session

#### Issues at the Public Toilets near Milford Common

Cllr Edgeller raised an issue which had been raised with both him and the Parish Council by a member of the public regarding the public toilets at Milford. The toilets have been increasingly targeted by vandals trying to block the pans, and knocking dispensers and more recently tiles from the walls. It had also been reported that there was sexual activity there in the early hours of the morning with the same vehicles regularly parked outside the block roughly between 1.30 am and 2.30 am. Cllr Francis asked if the doors were lockable and Cllr Edgeller confirmed that they were. Cllr Francis asked if the issues were with the male and female toilets and Cllr Edgeller confirmed it was just the male toilets. People seemed to be parking quite blatantly outside the toilets so local residents could be asked to record registration numbers and report them to the Police. **Resolved:** Cllr M Millichap proposed that the Clerk should write to Environmental Health at SBC expressing the Council's concerns about the toilets, asking them to consider locking the toilets at night and to call upon the Police to investigate the very concerning sexual and antisocial behaviour. **Action: Clerk**

**24/34 Apologies** – Apologies were received from Cllr Beverley Hughes as she was away and Cllr Michael Norris as he was tired from travelling.

**24/35 To record Declarations of Interest regarding items on the agenda.** None.

**24/36 Minutes of the Council meeting held on 5 March 2024 – Resolved:** It was agreed that the minutes were accurate.

#### **24/37 Clerk's Report for March 2024**

Regarding item 1a, Cllr A Millichap asked if the Clerk had written to R&J Aggregates. She replied that the Chairman had asked her not to write to them as the Council had no evidence that the damage was caused by their vehicles. **Resolved:** Clerk to write to the company asking for their assistance in the matter. **Action: Clerk**

#### **24/38 Local Boundary Commission proposed changes for Staffordshire**

The Clerk had been sent the final recommendations for the ward changes and Berkswich was still due to be split between two wards. Cllr Taylor felt that it was illogical for Berkswich Parish Council to have two County Councillors. It was almost as though the Commission had not listened to the Council's response. Cllr Francis said that if proposals went ahead, the Trent Valley councillor would have about 12 Parish Councils. **Resolved:** A further letter would be sent to the Commission reiterating the Council's concerns. **Action: Cllr Taylor/Clerk**

**24/39 Parish Fete on 16 June**

There was a general consensus that attendance at the fete was a good idea and that it raised the profile of the Parish Council. **Resolved:** Cllr Pearson agreed to take the lead on organising activities and manning the stall. **Action: Cllr Pearson**

**24/40 Waste Bin Sites Within the Parish**

The Clerk had asked on Facebook and in the Spring Newsletter if anyone thought there was a need for more waste bins, but there had been no response. Cllr Luker said that there may be a case for having more regular collections or larger bins as the bin on the way to Jacob's Ladders was always overflowing. It was felt that Street Scene responded quite quickly when full bins were reported and that the Parish Council should continue to encourage people to report them to SBC. No further action.

**24/41 Possible Use of Walton Coppice by the Scouts**

The Clerk had forwarded a letter from the Scouts requesting the opportunity to use Walton Coppice for periodic nature walks for younger members and den building once a month by older Scouts. Advice had been sought from the SBC ecologist about the possible impact of these uses on the nature conservation purpose of the woodland. Concerns were raised about birds being disturbed while nesting, the amount and frequency of visits from 9 different groups and possible nuisance to adjoining householders. There were also concerns about setting a precedent for other groups to visit and it seemed like many more children would be using the site than volunteered at the working parties. **Resolved:** Whilst it was originally thought that it would be a good idea for the Scouts to be able to use the Coppice, on balance it was felt that it was best to decline the Scouts' request. **Action: Clerk**

**24/42 Planting in the Flower Beds on Main Road**

Cllr Campbell suggested that the flower beds on Main Road could use a revamp. Cllr M Millichap raised concerns that this was a project which hadn't been budgeted for. It was suggested that B&Q or a supermarket might be interested in sponsoring the flower beds. **Resolved:** Clerk to ask TGM to come up with a new scheme and provide a quote, either for 24/25 financial year with sponsorship or to be budgeted for financial year 25/26. **Action: Clerk**

**24/43 Potential Grant Application for Speed Warning Beacons at Milford**

The Clerk advised that Highways had felt that Milford would not be suitable for flashing beacons, but could be suitable for similar Speed Indication Devices (SIDs) to those near Walton Village Hall. **Resolved:** Clerk to ask Highways for an onsite meeting to discuss where SIDs could be sited. **Action: Clerk**

**24/44 Data from SIDs on Main Road/Milford Road**

Cllr Taylor felt that the data showed that while some vehicles were doing high speeds late at night, there was not a serious speeding problem in that area. Cllr Francis said that vehicles generally did slow down as they approached the SIDs. Cllr Francis also felt that some of the vehicles travelling at high speeds could be emergency vehicles. No further action.

**24/45 Changing to a .gov.uk Web Domain**

Councillors were unsure of the need to transfer to another domain. **Resolved:** Clerk to investigate further around the options available and the costs involved. **Action: Clerk**

**24/46 Financial Matters:**

- i. **Bank Reconciliation and Expenditure for March 2024 – Resolved:** The bank reconciliation and expenditure were unanimously approved.

**Bank Reconciliation as at 20 March 2024**

<b>Receipts</b>			
<b>Company</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Date Received</b>
Stafford Railway Building Society	Interest 6.4.23-30.1.24	1590.61	30/01/2024
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>£1,590.61</b>	

\* Not in Bank reconciliation as not in C/A

<b>Payments</b>						
<b>Paid to</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Invoice date</b>	<b>Cheque #</b>	<b>Gross Incl. VAT</b>	<b>VAT</b>	<b>Net</b>
Burton Conservation Volunteers	Walton Coppice labour 4 Feb & 3 Mar	19/03/2024	836	£ 600.00	£ -	£ 600.00
Staffs Pension Fund	LGPS Emper & Empee Contributions Mar 24	31/03/2024	837	£ 295.36	£ -	£ 295.36
Mrs S Fullwood	Clerk Salary & Expenses Mar 24	31/03/2024	838	£ 966.26	£ 2.17	£ 964.09
HMRC	Employer NI Mar 24	31/03/2024	839	£ 30.81	£ -	£ 30.81
Walton (Berkswich) Village Hall	Room hire 6/2/24	29/02/2024	840	£ 20.00	£ -	£ 20.00
<b>Total Payments</b>				<b>£ 1,912.43</b>	<b>£ 2.17</b>	<b>£ 1,910.26</b>

**Cashbook**

Opening Balance at 20.02.2024	2,544.59
Add:	
Receipts 20.02.2024 to 20.03.2024	0.00
Less	
Payments 20.02.2024 to 20.03.2024	1,912.43
Cashbook Balance at 20.03.2024	<b>632.16</b>

**Current Account**

Bank statement Balance at 20.02.2024 11,903.56

Less payments made 9,358.97

Chq no.s  
791, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 831, 832, 834, 835

Less: Unpresented Cheques	Chq No.s	Amount
	836	£ 600.00
	837	£ 295.36
	838	£ 966.26
	839	£ 30.81
	840	£ 20.00
		<b>1912.43</b>

Add: receipts 0.00 \*

Add: Unpresented Receipts 0.00

C/A balance 20.03.2024 carried forward 2544.59

Available funds in C/A **632.16**

- ii **Budget Report for March 2024 - Resolved:** the report was unanimously approved.

**Budget Report March 2024**

27/03/2024

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	1,591	250	1,341
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 & wayleave)	12,369	45	12,324
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£ 59,353</b>	<b>£ 33,253</b>	<b>£ 26,101</b>

£2,734.38 to be deducted from 23/24 VAT reclaim to HMRC for FiPL grant

PAYMENTS	To date	Budget	Under / Over budget
Staff costs	15,782	15,050	-732
Office costs	3,487	3,492	5
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	9,448	700	-8,748
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£ 48,603</b>	<b>£ 33,397</b>	<b>-£ 15,206</b>

FiPL grant work completed & paid for - grant of £9,192.02 to be paid by SC

**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	£16,284
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>£152,784</b>

24/47

**Reports from other Meetings**

- i. **Environment Group** – Cllr Luker reported that the bulk of the work on the first phase of Walton Coppice was now complete. The group would now be moving onto the Hollybush Coppice application and the school were keen to get started. **Resolved:** Cllr Taylor to organise a date to meet at the Barley Mow to complete the Hollybush FiPL application. **Action: Cllr Taylor**
- ii. **Village Hall Council of Management** – Cllr Pearson reported that the AGM had taken place in March and a new Secretary had been appointed and they were looking for an auditor. The Hall were working with local residents and the Tennis Club to get the top of Green Gore Lane retarmacked. It had been widely known that a local landowner had been declared bankrupt so it would be wise to keep an eye on planning applications.
- iii. **Trent Valley Collaboration Group**  
The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, had attended the meeting to explain his plans for the future and to discuss communication with Parish Councils. Highways had attended the meeting and Cllr Pearson had raised the issue of the Grade II listed bridges being damaged by HGVs. The signalisation of Holdiford Road had begun. Highways planned to put temporary traffic lights on Baswich Lane to monitor traffic whilst Radford Bank was closed for roadworks. Highways had reassured the Clerk that the works would not affect the War Memorial. The Acting Chief Executive of the SPCA had attended and said that recruitment for a new Chief Executive was due to start. The Project Manager from the National Trust had attended to give an update on progress at Shugborough. The new entrance further along the A513 had been given planning permission.

**24/48 Agenda Items for the Next Meeting scheduled for Tuesday 7 May 2024 at 7.30 pm in the Main Hall, Walton Village Hall**

Agenda items agreed were: Flower beds on Main Road; SIDs at Milford; Parish Fete; defibrillator grant application; and .gov.uk web domain – this meeting would be the Annual Parish Council Meeting. The Annual Parish meeting would take place at 7.00 pm in the Main Hall, Walton Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 8:45 pm.