

BERKSWICH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Berkswich Parish Council Annual Meeting held on Tuesday 7 May 2024 at 7.30 pm at Walton Village Hall

Present: Cllr Alan Taylor (Chair), Cllr Caroline Pearson (Vice Chair), Cllr Michael Norris, Cllr Beverley Hughes, Cllr Sue Francis, Cllr Tim Luker, Cllr Malcolm Millichap, Cllr Ann Millichap and Cllr Bob Gilson.

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

Cllr Taylor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1 Public session

a Travellers at Milford Common

The member of the public updated the Council that Travellers had arrived on Milford Common on Sunday 5 May and that had responded very promptly and gone out to the Police to give them 48 hours to leave the site. The Travellers had left the site on Tuesday 7 May and the member of the public was very grateful for what SCC had achieved.

b Damaged Verges at Milford

The member of the public asked for an update on what had happened with the damaged verges. Councillors had been to visit the site and then the Clerk had written to Highways at SCC. The Clerk had also written to R&J Aggregates asking for their support in the matter. Cllr Taylor had raised the issue with a member of the Highways team on a site visit, but he felt that it would not be an SCC priority.

PCSO Emma Fry and Willow, a Trainee PCSO, joined the meeting.

c Toilets at Milford Common

The member of the public asked for an update on what had happened with the anti-social activity at the toilets. The Clerk had written to Environmental Health at SBC and had received a reply to say they had forwarded the email to the local police team and the Streetscene team who were responsible for running the toilets. PCSO Fry said that she had not heard about the issues, but she would ask for the toilets to be put on review between 1 and 1.30am.

24/67 Offer of Walk and Talk Session with the Police

Cllr Taylor brought this item forward on the agenda to allow the PCSOs to get back to work. PCSO Fry apologised for being difficult to get hold of for the past 6-8 months due to staff sickness, but there were now two qualified PCSOs and one who had nearly completed her training. PCSO Fry queried whether a Walk and Talk session would be the best thing as the Police had recently acquired a new van that could operate as a mini-Police Station. She suggested that the vehicle could park in the parish and residents could be invited along. Cllr Taylor asked if it would be possible to have two sessions, one at Milford and one at Walton on the Hill – PCSO Fry confirmed that that was fine.

Resolved: PCSO Fry to liaise with the Clerk to arrange dates for a visit to Milford Common, preferably at the weekend, and a visit to The Rise, preferably at school collection time in the afternoon.

PCSO Fry had looked at crime statistics for the parish and had found that after a spike in July 2022, cases of antisocial behaviour had dropped a lot, although there were still some problems. There had recently been a spate of car key burglaries but it was believed that the offenders had now been caught.

The member of the public asked PCSO Fry if there could be an increased Police presence over school holidays and she replied that if there were hotspots the Police would react. Cllr Taylor thanked PCSO Fry and Willow for attending.

The two PCSOs, the member of the public and SBC Councillor Edgeller left the meeting at 7.55 pm.

24/49 Election of the Chair of the Parish Council

Cllr M Millichap proposed that Cllr Taylor be re-elected as Chair, seconded by Cllr Luker and agreed unanimously.

24/50 Election of the Vice-Chair of the Parish Council

Cllr Taylor proposed that Cllr Pearson be re-elected as Vice Chair, seconded by Cllr Hughes and agreed unanimously.

24/51 Apologies – received from Cllr Vicky Campbell as she was working.

24/52 Minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2024 - Resolved: It was agreed that the minutes were accurate.

24/53 Declarations of Interest regarding items on the agenda. None.

24/54 Review of Delegation Arrangements – a typo to be corrected at the bottom, 2024 to 2023. **Action: Clerk Resolved:** the delegation arrangements to the Clerk regarding planning applications were agreed unanimously.

24/55 Meeting Representatives

Resolved: Meeting representatives were agreed as follows:

- i. Finance Working Group – Cllr Taylor, Cllr M Millichap, Ben Rowell and the Clerk.
- ii. Staffing Committee – Cllr Alan Taylor, Cllr Tim Luker and Cllr Sue Francis.
- iii. Environment Group – Cllr Tim Luker (Chair), Cllr Alan Taylor, Cllr Sue Francis, Cllr Vicky Campbell, Cllr Bob Gilson and Cllr Michael Norris.
- iv. Village Hall Council of Management – Cllr Caroline Pearson
- v. Trent Valley Collaboration Group – Cllr Caroline Pearson

24/56 Review and approval of policies

Resolved: The following policies were approved:

- i. Standing Orders
- ii. Financial Regulations
- iii. Grants Policy

24/57 General Power of Competence

Resolved: Cllr Taylor confirmed that 8 out of 10 Parish Councillors had been elected and that the Clerk held the CiLCA qualification, so the Council were eligible to use the General Power of Competence.

24/58 Review of Asset Register and Financial Risk Assessment

Resolved: both documents were agreed as accurate.

24/59 Review of annual subscriptions to: SPCA (inc. NALC) and SLCC

Resolved: SPCA subscription to be renewed. The Clerk did not feel that there was a benefit in being a member of SLCC and was happy to continue without membership.

Action: Clerk

- 24/60 Meeting schedule and forward plan for 2024/25**
Resolved: as in recent years meetings would be held on the first Tuesday of every month with the exception of August and January.
- 24/61 Clerk's Report for April 2024**
Resolved: the report was accepted.
- 24/62 Suggested Clean Air Zone**
An email had been received from a member of the public suggesting a Clean Air Zone for the parish. Cllr Taylor reported that Clean Air Zones were to do with vehicle emissions rather than the burning of materials and that the only place in Stafford Borough that vehicle emissions were particularly bad was near the M6 around Burton Manor. With regards to log burners SBC's Environmental Health department had done a Local Air Quality Management Status Report and they had not raised any issues about air quality. If the Parish Council were to raise the issue with SBC we would need a lot of data to argue with the Environmental Health report. Cllr Luker suggested that the Council could inform people about the dangers of log burners and particulates. Clerk to share information on Facebook and include in the Summer newsletter. **Action: Clerk** Cllr Norris added that having a log burner could be the most injurious thing someone could do apart from smoking.
- 24/63 Flower Beds on Main Road**
The Clerk had asked TGM if they could come up with a scheme and they had replied that they would be very interested in this and would like an on-site meeting to share ideas.
Resolved: Clerk to set up a meeting of the Environment Group, Cllr Campbell and TGM.
Action: Clerk
- 24/64 Potential for Speed Indication Devices at Milford**
Cllr Taylor, Cllr Francis and the Clerk had met an officer from SCC Highways at Milford Common to discuss suitable locations for SIDs and she had pointed out one location on Brocton Road and one on the A513. She had suggested initially having one SID near the entrance to the Milford Common car park and making it able to turn on the pole so that it could face in either direction. She agreed to get a quote from the relevant SCC team for installation of a suitable pole. Cllr Norris asked which year's budget the SID would be funded from and Cllr Taylor confirmed it would be the 2025/26 budget. **Resolved:** Clerk to get quotes for installation of the pole and installation of the SID itself.
- 24/65 Attendance at the Parish Fete**
Cllr Pearson thanked everyone for replying to her message regarding attendance at the fete. She had allocated people to roles setting up the stall, to the 1.30pm – 2.30pm slot, 2.30pm – 3.30pm slot and then packing up, so that everyone had an opportunity to go around the fete. **Resolved:** Cllr Pearson to confirm when everyone was required to attend and to liaise with the Clerk about materials required. **Action: Cllr Pearson**
- 24/66 Changing to a .gov.uk Web Domain**
Councillors were still unconvinced that changing domain was necessary. Cllr M Millichap proposed that the item was deferred to the June meeting, seconded by Cllr Taylor.
Action: Clerk
- 24/67 Offer of Walk and Talk Session with the Police**
Item moved up the agenda – see page 1.

24/68

Contractor for Weed Control at Walton Coppice

Cllr Taylor informed the Council that the professional advice for the new trees at Walton Coppice was to have the 0.5m around the bottom of each plant sprayed with weed killer to allow the new plants to thrive. Cllr M Millichap stated that the weed spraying was not budgeted for and Cllr Norris replied that as the investment had already been made in the plants they would need to be protected. The Clerk had asked for quotes from 7 companies, but had only received two quotes. **Resolved:** As the quotes from both companies were very similar it was agreed to accept the quote from TGM due to their proximity and previous working relationship with the Council. **Action: Clerk**

24/69

Financial Matters:

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

Bank Reconciliation as at 31 March 2024 YEAR END

Cashbook

Opening Balance at 20.03.2024	686.13
Add:	
Receipts 20.03.2024 to 31.03.2024	0.00
Less	
Payments 20.03.2024 to 31.03.2024	0.00
Cashbook Balance at 20.03.2024	686.13

Current Account

Bank statement Balance at 20.03.2024	2,544.59
Less payments made	0.00

Less: Unpresented Cheques	Chq No.s	Amount
	836	£ 600.00
	837	£ 241.39
	838	£ 966.26
	839	£ 30.81
	840	£ 20.00
		1858.46

Add: receipts	0.00
Add: Unpresented Receipts	0.00
C/A balance 20.03.2023 carried forward	2544.59
Available funds in C/A	686.13
Reconciles to Cash Book (check zero)	0.00

Total Funds	
Teachers Building Society	£61,822.20
Hampshire Trust Bank	£26,003.42
Stafford Railway Building Society	£64,004.55
Funds in C/A after receipts & payments	£686.13
Total Funds Available	£152,516.30

Bank Reconciliation as at 19 April 2024

Receipts			
Company	Description	Amount	Date Received
Staffordshire County Council	Extra grass cut in March 24	£382.00	04/04/2024
Stafford Borough Council	Precept & Council Tax Support Grant	£21,743.00	08/04/2024
National Grid	Wayleave payments	£44.01	10/04/2024
Hampshire Trust Bank	Interest 23-24	£26.08	12/04/2024
HMRC	Vat reclaim 23-24 (after £2,734.38 deducted for FIPL overclaim)	£1,339.14	17/04/2024
Total Receipts		£23,508.15	

*not in C/A so not inc in bank rec

Payments						
Paid to	Description	Invoice date	Cheque #	Gross Incl. VAT	VAT	Net
TGM	Extra grass cut March 2024	02/04/2024	841	£462.91	£77.15	£385.76
Walton Village Hall	Hall hire 5.3.24	31/03/2024	842	£20.00	£0.00	£20.00
Creative Landscapes	Phone box signs and sealant	15/04/2024	843	£210.00	£0.00	£210.00
Staffs Pension Fund	Contributions April 2024	30/04/2024	844	£285.55	£0.00	£285.55
HMRC	Employer NI April 2024	30/04/2024	845	£30.81	£0.00	£30.81
Mrs S Fullwood	Clerk salary & expenses April 2024	30/04/2024	846	£1,058.75	£12.17	£1,046.58
Total Payments				£2,068.02	£89.32	£1,978.70

Cashbook

Opening Balance at 01.04.2024	632.16
Add:	
Receipts 01.04.2024 to 19.04.2024	23,508.15
Less	
Payments 01.04.2024 to 19.04.2024	2,068.02
Cashbook Balance at 19.04.2024	22,072.29

Current Account

Bank statement Balance at 01.04.2024	2,544.59
Less payments made	1,912.43

Less: Unpresented Cheques	Chq No	Amount
	841	£462.91
	842	£20.00
	843	£210.00
	844	£285.55
	845	£30.81
	846	£1,058.75
	£ 2,068.02	

Add: Receipts	£23,508.15
Add: Unpresented Receipts	£0.00
C/A balance carried forward 19.04.2024	£24,194.28
Available funds in C/A	£22,072.29

- ii **Budget Report for Year End and April 2024 - Resolved:** the reports were unanimously approved.

Budget Report Year End 2023-24

29/04/2024

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
Total income	£ 59,353	£ 33,253	£ 26,101

£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
Total Expenditure	£ 48,603	£ 33,397	-£ 15,206

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

Budget Report April 2024

RECEIPTS	To date	Budget	Less / more than budget
Precept	20,990	41,274	-20,285
Council tax support grant	754	705	49
SCC Minor Highways Agreement	382	2,750	-2,368
Interest Stafford Railway BS A/c	0	600	-600
Interest Teachers A/c	0	350	-350
Interest Hampshire Trust	26	70	-44
Grants	0	0	0
Misc. Receipts (e.g. VAT reclaim & wayleave)	1,383	300	1,083
Total income	£ 23,534	£ 46,049	-£22,515

PAYMENTS	To date	Budget	Under / Over budget
Staff costs	1,337	14,483	13,146
Office costs	46	4,495	4,449
Maintenance costs	386	11,650	11,264
Additional maintenance	-	750	750
Play Area	-	2,610	2,610
Capital purchases	-	500	500
Community support	-	2,385	2,385
Projects	210	9,300	9,090
Total Expenditure	£ 1,979	£ 46,173	£44,194

24/70

Reports from other Meetings

- i. **Environment Group** – Cllr Luker reported that the FiPL grant application for Hollybush Coppice had just been submitted and would be going to the panel in mid-May. The FiPL Officer who had been so supportive towards the Council would be leaving SCC in June 2024. On the positive side, Cllr Taylor had worked with the other FiPL Officer at SBC and had known her for 30 years.

Cllr Luker, Cllr Taylor and Cllr Gilson had attended the Cannock Chase National Landscape Conference and found it very informative. In 2020, the government committed to protecting 30% of the UK's land by 2030 (30by30) and Cannock Chase was of national and international importance having achieved this target already.

24/71 Agenda Items for the Next Meeting scheduled for Tuesday 4 June 2024 at 7.30 pm in the Main Hall, Walton Village Hall

Agenda items agreed were: the Annual Internal Audit Report, the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements for 2023/24; grant application from Berkswich PS; speeding on Main/Milford Road; flower beds on Main Road; SIDs at Milford; Parish Fete; access issues; social activities; and moving to a .gov.uk web domain.

The meeting closed at 8:50 pm.