

## BERKSWICH PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Berkswich Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 2 July 2024 at 7.30 pm at Walton Village Hall

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

**In attendance:** Six members of the public and Mrs Sue Fullwood as Clerk.

Cllr Taylor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### 1 Public session

##### a) Amended outline planning application 23/37587/OUT - Land off Old Croft Road

The six members of the public confirmed that they were all attending the meeting regarding this issue. Cllr Taylor explained that the Parish Council were only a consultee in the process and had no influence over the decision apart from objecting to the proposals. Cllr Taylor explained that he had made 11 points in his proposed response for the Parish Council as if the application went to appeal it could not raise new information at that point. Cllr Taylor read the 11 points to the members of the public.

The first member of the public queried whether going back to the basic plans and including a household waste collection lorry was in the hope of having the application approved. Cllr Taylor responded that he felt that simplified plans had been submitted so that the developers didn't have to pay for architects, etc each time they made amendments. They could put as much or little detail as they liked into an outline planning application. The member of the public asked why they would put the waste vehicle on the plans. The second member of the public said that Highways now accepted that the road would be wide enough so that was not an issue any longer. Cllr Taylor added that it was there to show that the road was big enough for the biggest vehicle that was likely to go onto the site.

The second member of the public said that he had seen that Highways had recommended refusal of the application and asked if that would add weight towards the rejection of any appeal. Cllr Taylor replied that Planning Inspectors were impartial and would give their unbiased opinion on the application. In Cllr Taylor's experience they would have a 50/50 chance of succeeding.

The third member of the public said that her son worked for a developer and he felt that if the developer got outline planning permission for houses they could change the layout and houses. Cllr Taylor confirmed that that was the Parish Council's feeling.

The fourth member of the public was concerned that the developer had left all the tick boxes unticked on the planning application form apart from the access ones. Cllr Taylor felt that the developer had to show that it was possible to access the site in order to have any hope of getting permission.

Cllr Norris said that affordable housing was the thin end of the wedge and that developers could be using that as leverage. He asked if there was anything else the Parish Council could do to weaken the developers' case. The second member of the public said that all developers say they will do a percentage of affordable housing. He added that developers get the best people to give evidence to the Planning Inspector and that local authorities find it difficult to respond. Cllr Taylor said that whilst affordable

housing was perceived to be a ruse, the Parish Council needed to object to the principle of housing on that site.

Cllr Taylor thanked the members of the public for attending and they left the meeting at 7.55 pm.

- 24/91 Apologies** – received from Cllr Beverley Hughes as she was away and Cllrs Ann and Malcolm Millichap as they were unwell.
- 24/92 Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2024 - Resolved:** It was agreed that the minutes were accurate.
- 24/93 Declarations of Interest regarding items on the agenda.** None.
- 24/94 Clerk's Report for June 2024 - Resolved:** the report was accepted.
- 24/95 Flower Beds on Main Road**  
TGM had suggested meeting w/c 8 July in the afternoon. **Resolved:** Thursday 11 or Friday 12 July would be most suitable for councillors. **Action: Clerk**
- 24/96 Potential Speed Indication Devices at Milford**  
The quote from Amey for pole installation had been higher than expected. The Clerk had seen some other companies recommended by other Clerks and would ask them for quotes. **Action: Clerk**
- 24/97 Moving to a .gov.uk Web Domain**  
Item deferred for the Clerk to get clarity from SCC on what they can offer. **Action: Clerk**
- 24/98 Access Issues Within the Parish**  
Cllr Luker raised the issue of people parking on the pavement making it difficult for people using mobility scooters, prams and pushchairs to pass through and often forcing them to use the road, putting themselves and their children in danger. **Resolved:** Clerk to raise awareness using Facebook and put an article in the newsletter. **Action: Clerk**
- 24/99 Storage of Important Council Documents**  
The Clerk had asked other Clerks where they stored their Council's deeds etc and one said a fireproof box and another a fireproof cupboard. **Resolved:** Clerk to do further research into document storage and ask Iron Mountain, storage companies and solicitors for quotes. Clerk to purchase a fireproof box initially while other options were investigated. **Action: Clerk**
- 24/100 Speeding on Main/Milford Road**  
The Clerk had emailed the Staffordshire Road Safety Partnership to ask if the camera at the end of Stockton Lane would be upgraded soon but had not had a response. The Clerk had forwarded the email to a Community Speedwatch Officer who had forwarded the email to a colleague who worked on that team. Item deferred until a response received.
- 24/101 Walton Coppice Fence Repairs**  
The Clerk had asked 8 fencing companies for a quote, but none had been received. Trentham Fencing had shown an interest in providing a quote by needed a site visit first. Cllr Francis suggested asking at Milford Hall to see if their groundsman would be interested. **Action: Clerk** Deferred to September meeting.

## 24/102 Events

### i Review of attendance at the Parish Fete

The Parish Council had a good spot in the fete, but it was difficult for people to identify that it was the Parish Council gazebo. Clerk to research prices of printed banners.

**Action: Clerk** Cllr Pearson suggested leaflets with information on what the Parish Council does would be useful for the next Fete and a face painter to draw children to the gazebo. Cllr Hughes had been very good and walked around the fete engaging with people and it would have been good if she had had leaflets to hand out.

### ii Barley Mow Macmillan Event 3 August

Cllr M Millichap had sent a report on his actions from the meeting on 4 June. He had booked and paid for a table for the event on Milford Common from 11am until about 4pm.

### iii Service at St Thomas' Church

Cllr M Millichap had discussed the idea of a service of peace with Fr Graham and he was keen to progress it. Fr Graham would contact Cllr M Millichap in due course.

## 24/103 Financial Matters:

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

### Bank Reconciliation as at 20 June 2024

Receipts			
Company	Description	Amount	Date Received
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>£0.00</b>	

Payments						
Paid to	Description	Invoice date	Cheque #	Gross Incl. VAT	VAT	Net
TGM	Grounds Maintenance May 24	31/05/2024	855	£1,235.50	£205.92	£1,029.58
Walton Village Hall	Village Hall use 7 May 2024	31/05/2024	856	£20.00	£0.00	£20.00
Staffs County Council (Berkswich PS)	Grant for litter picking equipment	06/06/2024	857	£171.85	£0.00	£171.85
Mrs S Francis	Reimbursement for gifts for upkeep of phone box	24/06/2024	858	£30.00	£3.72	£26.28
Mrs S Fullwood	Clerk salary & expenses June 24	30/06/2024	860	£1,017.07	£10.64	£1,006.43
HMRC	Employer NI June 24	30/06/2024	861	£30.81	£0.00	£30.81
Staffs Pension Fund	Empee & Emper contributions June 24	30/06/2024	862	£285.55	£0.00	£285.55
TGM	Herbicide treatment at Walton Coppice 19.6.24	25/06/2024	863	£558.00	£93.00	£465.00
<b>Total Payments</b>				<b>£3,348.78</b>	<b>£313.28</b>	<b>£3,035.50</b>

**Cashbook**

Opening Balance at 20.05.2024	26,817.88
Add:	
Receipts 20.05.2024 to 20.06.2024	0.00
Less	
Payments 20.05.2024 to 20.06.2024	3,348.78
Cashbook Balance at 20.06.2024	<b>23,469.10</b>

**Current Account**

Bank statement Balance at 20.05.2024	30,008.81	
Less payments made	850, 851, 853, 854, 856	
	2,794.03	
Less: Unpresented Cheques		
	Chq No	Amount
	849	£147.00
	852	£269.90
	855	£1,235.50
	857	£171.85
	858	£30.00
	860	£1,017.07
	861	£30.81
	862	£285.55
	863	£558.00
		3,745.68
Add: Receipts		0.00
Add: Unpresented Receipts		0.00
C/A balance carried forward 20.06.2024		27,214.78
Available funds in C/A		<b>£23,469.10</b>

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

**Budget Report June 2024**

RECEIPTS	To date	Budget	Less / more than budget
Precept	20,285	41,274	-20,990
Council tax support grant	705	705	0
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	9,192	0	9,192
VAT Reclaimed	1,339	0	1,339
Misc. Receipts (e.g. VAT reclaim & waylea	44	300	-256
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£ 31,973</b>	<b>£ 46,049</b>	<b>-£14,076</b>

PAYMENTS	To date	Budget	Under / Over budget
Staff costs	3,861	11,959	8,098
Office costs	2,156	2,385	229
Maintenance costs	2,445	11,650	9,205
Additional maintenance	-	750	750
Play Area	-	2,610	2,610
Capital purchases	-	500	500
Community support	235	2,385	2,150
Projects	675	9,300	8,625
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£ 9,371</b>	<b>£ 41,539</b>	<b>£32,168</b>

**24/104 Planning Matters**

- i. **Response to Amended application 23/37587/OUT – Land off Old Croft Road**  
Cllr Taylor's proposed response had been circulated with the agenda before the meeting. **Resolved:** agreed unanimously to maintain the Parish Council's opposition to the application in line with the grounds of objection set out in the draft letter. **Action: Clerk**

**24/105 Reports from other Meetings**

- i. **Environment Group –** The Environment Group had met on 19 June to discuss plans for the work at Hollybush Coppice. The new fence panel and gate would be installed in August; the tree surgeon would trim and remove trees flagged in the tree report and arrange flailing in September; tools for the school would be ordered and delivered in October; and Cllrs would work with the school to plant 460 hedgerow plants and 6 trees in November.  
Cllr Norris had attended a NALC online session on Council and Climate Change and found it interesting. There were updates from the Woodland Trust, Corsham Town Council and Save our Shropshire. The Woodland Trust (WT) speaker explained that they offer match funding and provide free trees in packs from 30 – 420. The WT speaker also said that they could help with woodland management plans and that TPOs could be useful for putting the breaks on developers, one place had a TPO on a tree stump! One concerning statistic was that the UK had 13% canopy vs 30% on average across Europe. Cllr Norris was thanked for attending the session.

**24/106 Agenda Items for the Next Meeting scheduled for Tuesday 3 September 2024 at 7.30 pm in the Main Hall, Walton Village Hall**

Agenda items agreed were: flower beds on Main Road; SIDs at Milford; moving to a .gov.uk web domain; and feedback from the Barley Mow event.

The meeting closed at 8:45 pm.