

# **BRINDLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF MEETING ON TUESDAY 21 JULY 2020 AT 7.30PM**

**Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and Government Guidelines on public gatherings, the meeting was held virtually on Zoom**

**PRESENT:** Parish Councillors: P. Adams (Chairman)  
D. Cotton  
A. Pearson  
M. Sutherland  
R. Turville  
Mrs M. A. Turville

**IN ATTENDANCE:** One Member of the public (to end of Public Participation)  
Mrs T. Williams (Clerk)

### **1. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies from Parish Councillors.

Apologies were received from County Councillors: B. Jones and P. Hewitt.

The Chairman requested that item 4 on the agenda (Public Participation) be brought forward.

### **2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

A Member of the public/landowner shared his proposals for the future use of his field located at the corner of Penkrige Bank Road and Shooting Butts Road. This includes a pop-up camp site (for four weeks in August) and the possibility of an overspill carpark to support the annual forest concerts.

It was confirmed that the necessary processes had been followed including consultation with the Environment Agency due to the site's proximity to the Special Area of Conservation.

A pedestrian access point would potentially be installed (opposite the bridle path on Penkrige Bank) as an entrance to the parking facility, not as an exit. The arrangements have not yet been determined and necessary permissions need to be obtained.

The Council expressed concern about installation of an access point at the junction with Shooting Butts Road which is considered a dangerous blind spot. Councillor Sutherland offered to meet the landowner on site to consider the positioning further.

The landowner reassured Members that the pop-up campsite would be run as a family site and would not involve amplified music or entertainment.

Before leaving the meeting, he offered to keep the Parish Council informed of developments.

### **3. POLICE REPORTS**

The Council noted the written Police report received from PCSO Carrington for the period from 1 April to 1 July 2020. The number of incidents that had occurred in Brindley Heath are: 56 – Anti social behaviour, 24 –

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suspicious, 1 – burglary. A large number of COVID related calls had also been received which generally related to neighbours breaching government guidelines.

**4. PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY**

Resolved: That the co-option of a new Parish Councillor be deferred to the next meeting.

**5. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

To declare interests for this meeting:

<u>Member</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Type</u>
Councillor P. Adams	Chetwynd's Charity	Personal
Councillor A. Pearson	Member of Cannock Chase Council's Planning Control Committee	Personal

**6. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2020 were approved as a correct record.

The draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 28 January 2020 were noted.

**7. PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

All items were covered in the agenda.

**8. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman expressed hope that the next meeting can be held in person.

**9. CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

Resolved: To confirm the following Parish Council decisions taken during the COVID-19 lockdown:

- To cancel meetings on 24 March (Ordinary) and 26 May (Annual Meeting)
- To cancel the Annual Parish Meeting in 2020
- That the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Chairman of the planning Committee and Parish Council representatives to outside bodies remain in post until May 2021
- That an Annual Parish Meeting would not be held
- To make payment for SPCA annual membership
- To renew the Council's insurance policy with Came & Company (one year)
- Representations to planning consultations as listed on the Planning Committee agenda
- The reporting of inconsiderate and hazardous parking in Brindley Heath to various agencies

**10. CORRESPONDENCE**

a. Incoming and Outgoing Correspondence

All correspondence was noted from the Clerks Report.

b. Items of Interest/Requiring a Response

The following items of incoming post were considered:

**Letter from Managing Director of Cannock Chase Council** – An email (dated 4 May 2020) acknowledges a letter from the Secretary of State Robert Jenrick recognising the important role of parish/town councils in the current pandemic crisis.

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The Parish Council noted the information along with a second letter from the Secretary of State, sent to Principal Councils.

**Grass cutting and weed control** – An email from Helen Fisher, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on 21 February 2020 advises that from April 2020, the County Council intends to specify a minimum of six grass cuts on highway verges per season and a routine once a year weed spray in specified locations. The County Council will continue to work with parish councils and community groups who wish to undertake additional cuts in their areas.

The Parish Council noted the information.

**Support Staffordshire – Chase VCSE Support** – An email from the Senior Locality Officer supplies information about online support network forums planned in Cannock Chase during July and August 2020.

Councillor Sutherland advised that he had attended one of the meetings where volunteer groups had discussed the pandemic and what they considered to be the way forward. He said it had been a good meeting.

The Parish Council noted the information and the Chairman said that he would like, in the near future, to thank voluntary groups for their support.

**Correspondence from Brereton & Ravenhill Parish Council** – items of correspondence to and from Amanda Milling MP and George Eustice MP were noted after Brereton & Ravenhill Parish Council had expressed its view that town and parish councils should have the right to report breaches of environmental law to the Office for Environmental Protection.

The Parish Council (Brindley Heath) asked that its support is sent (in an email) to Brereton & Ravenhill Parish Council.

**Rugeley Neighbourhood Area Designation** – An email from the Planning Policy Team at Cannock Chase Council advised that the Rugeley Neighbourhood Area had been designated on 9 June 2020, the first step to enable the production of a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish Council noted the information.

**Great British Clean Up – 11 to 24 September 2020** – Keep Britain Tidy will be bringing communities together for a clean-up and provided details about how to get involved.

c. Consultations

• **The West & Shires Permit Scheme Consultation**

An email from the Traffic Manager, Highways & Built County, Staffordshire County Council, confirmed that that Staffordshire County Council had exercised its powers to introduce a system of permits to street works and road works under the West and Shires Permit Scheme from 1 April 2020.

The information was noted.

• **Fire & Rescue Consultation**

A consultation on the now closed draft Safety Plan 2020-2024 was noted.

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- **Cannock Chase Council's Parks and Open Spaces Consultation**

A District Council consultation (now closed) on Parks and Open Spaces, arranged in preparation for the new Local Plan, was noted.

**11. SPEEDING AND SPEED LIMITS**

The Parish Council considered the issue of speeding traffic and speed limits on local roads with a view to identifying solutions on Brindley Heath Road, Chaseley Road, Shooting Butts Road and others.

Councillor Sutherland advised that Chaseley Road has a speed limit that goes from 60mph (at the Stafford Brook Road end) to 30mph at the junction with Shooting Butts Road. A number of cars have hit the junction at too high a speed and ended up in the hedge. He has been working to get the 60mph limit reduced to 40 or 30mph and has attended numerous meetings. All incidents are now being recorded for evidence purposes.

On Shooting Butts Road the national speed limit applies but an increase in stabling and horses on the road over the last couple of years has changed the circumstances and usage. On this basis the Highways Department are undertaking a formal audit and Councillor Sutherland is hoping this will lead to a reduced speed limit of 40mph. He has asked for the speed van to visit Chaseley Road and Shooting Butts Road which will periodically monitor traffic speeds over the next few months and feed the data back.

Councillor Pearson expressed the view that traffic has been travelling faster not slower over the lockdown period. In particular high-performance vehicles and motorbikes are a problem along the Rugeley Road. He said that motorists do not necessarily respect the Community Speed Watch, of which an example was given in Bradbury Lane.

Councillor Cotton advised that exceeding advisory speed limits of 40mph (across Cannock Chase) could lead to charges for driving without due care and attention if an accident should occur and people. People are not always aware of that.

An observation was made that debris is often evident at the corner of Stafford Brook Road and Penkrige Bank Road but statistics don't indicate that accidents have happened there.

It was acknowledged that communities have lots of options in terms of actions they can take and the Safer Roads Partnership will offer advice.

**Resolved:** That the Police are given a resume of the issues in Brindley Heath and that the speed van is requested on Brindley Heath Road and Stafford Brook Road (between Penkrige Bank Road and the Quarry).

**12. RIGHTS OF WAY**

Councillor Pearson informed the Council that rights of way will be under threat if not documented on the definitive map within the next two years. Councillor Sutherland offered to speak to Councillor Dudson for further information.

Many rights of way have been removed by landowners and members of the public don't know about them. There are also issues with Right to Roam.

**13. PARISH WARD ISSUES – CHASE SIDE**

a. On Street Vehicular Parking

It was reported that on street parking has been a big problem on Penkridge Bank Road immediately after lockdown. Parking on Shooting Butts Road, Stafford Brook Road and Marquis Drive have also been an issue which is anticipated to worsen with the onset of Cannock Chase parking charges.

The Police have undertaken a drive around but didn't find cars parked in inappropriate places. Parking on the roadside is not an offence where there are no parking restrictions, no blocked accesses, obstructions or other dangers.

Questions were raised about whether Staffordshire County Council could issue a schedule detailing when car parks will be improved, and charges introduced.

b. Use of field for vehicular parking

The Council expressed concern about the proposed access for a large-scale car parking facility near Birches Valley, particularly in respect of the pedestrian access and potential for nuisance and disturbance to neighbours.

**14. PARISH WARD ISSUES – BRINDLEY VILLAGE**

Fly tipping off Rugeley Road – Staffordshire County Council appear to have cleared some of the debris along the entrance road to the old quarry. Unfortunately, several loads of debris remain on both the sides of the road and the embankment. This includes tyres, builders rubbish, mattresses etc.

Litter/Rubbish on concrete pad off Brindley Heath Road – the matter has been reported to Cannock Chase Council.

**15. CANNOCK CHASE FOREST**

The Council expressed the wish to learn more about the Commonwealth Games which is coming to the area and what Cannock Chase Council and Staffordshire County Council are doing in preparation. It was reported that the item had been discussed at Cannock Chase Council's Cabinet, but COVID-19 had recently been the predominant topic.

The Clerk reported that she had been advised at the Managing Director's Meeting with Parish Clerks that the event was one-day on Cannock Chase with a limit on spectators. Many of the existing mountain bike trails will be used and if extensions to the trails are required a consultation will take place with stakeholders. Cannock Chase Council will be involved in the planning, but Forestry England is the lead body.

**16. DIGITAL MAPPING**

The Clerk reported on a Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association's 1.5-hour virtual session on the benefits of Digital Mapping for Local Councils. Parish Online, endorsed by NALC offers a digital mapping tool enabling access to multiple interactive mapping layers and a tool for documenting and managing assets, marking land designations, boundaries, addresses, listed buildings, aerial mapping, publication of interactive maps for websites and more.

**Resolved:** To subscribe to Parish Online at a discounted cost of £67.20 (pricing based on population).

**17. INVITATION TO MEETINGS/EVENTS**

No invitations to meetings had been received.

**18. REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED**

It was reported that members are continuing to attend meetings as representatives of the parish council.

Etching Hill Village Hall trustees are looking to appoint a new Chairman who will oversee the process for getting the hall COVID-19 ready in preparation for re-opening.

Vital community services are delivered from the hall (as well as use by regular groups) and trustees are keen to see the facility back open as soon as possible.

**19. COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

Councillor Pearson reported that another 60 Police have been recruited in Staffordshire.

**20. FINANCIAL MATTERS**

a) Financial Position of the Council

A breakdown of income and expenditure for the financial year to date was provided (Clerks Report dated 21 July 2020). The budget statement shows the current financial position of the Council with reserves totalling £16,591.50.

**Resolved:** To note the financial position of the Council.

b) Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019-20

Prior to the meeting, Members of the Council had received copies of the end of year accounts for the financial year 2019-20 comprising: cash book, bank reconciliation, budget and spend statements, variance report and analysis of budget heads.

i) To receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2019-20

The Council noted that an internal audit had been completed by the internal auditor for the financial year 2019-20 and that no issues of concern had been raised. Internal control objectives have been achieved within standards that meet the requirements for a smaller authority.

**Resolved:** That the report of the Internal Auditor is noted.

ii) To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2019-20 (Section 1)

**Resolved:** The Annual Governance Statement for the financial year 2019-20 was approved.

iii) To approve the Accounting Statements 2019-20 (Section 2)

**Resolved:** The Accounting Statements 2019-20 were approved.

iv) Certificate of Exemption

Completed by smaller authorities where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure does not exceed £25,000 in the year of account ended 31 March 2020, who wish to certify themselves as exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015.

The Council noted that there is no requirement to have a limited assurance review or to submit an Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor provided it has certified itself as exempt at a meeting of the Council after 31 March 2020, and a Certificate of Exemption is submitted notifying the external auditor.

**Resolved:** That the Chairman signs the Certificate of Exemption to confirm that the Council is exempt from a limited assurance review.

c) To confirm/authorise cheques for payment

100168	Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association	£20.00 (paid)	Councillor Training – Councillor Sutherland on 19 February 2020 - YEAR 19-20
100169	Trudy Williams	£643.50 (paid)	Gross Salary January, February and March 2020 (fourth quarter) YEAR 19-20
100170	Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association	£228.00 (paid)	Membership Subscription 2020-21 (YEAR 2020-21)
100171	Came & Company	£218.00 (paid)	Parish Council Insurance 6 July 2020 to 5 July 2021 (YEAR 2020-21)
100172	Ray Smythe	£40.00 (paid)	Parish Council internal audit 2019-20 (YEAR 2020-21)
100173	Support Staffordshire	£25.00	Membership Subscription

Resolved: To authorise payment of the cheques listed.

**21. ANY OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

Pop up posters/banners have been noted in a number of locations in the parish which may be displayed in contravention of advertising/planning law.

**22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Tuesday 29 September 2020. Venue to be confirmed.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

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Signed.....

Chairman, Mr. P. Adams

Date.....

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