

BRINDLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 18 OCTOBER 2011 AT THE BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE, BRINDLEY HEATH

PRESENT: Parish Councillors: P. Adams (Chairman)
A. Pearson
R. Turville
Mrs. A. Turville

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs. T. Williams

1. APOLOGIES:

Apologies were received from K. Baker (work/family commitments), D. Cotton (Charity Commitment - St John Ambulance) and J. Wilkes.

2. TO APPROVE LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Chairman informed members that due to work and family pressures, Councillor Baker was unable at present to contribute time to Parish Council work. Councillor Baker had offered his resignation; but given that his pressures may ease with time, Councillor Adams proposed that the Council grant a period of leave of absence.

Under S.85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972, if a member of a council fails to attend any council meeting for a period of 6 consecutive months that person will cease to be a member of the Council, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority, before expiry of the period. If no leave of absence was granted for Councillor Baker and he did not attend a meeting between 6 September 2011 and 5 March 2012, he would automatically cease to be a member of the Council.

Resolved: To accept Councillor Bakers reasons for absence and to grant approval for him to be absent from Council meetings for a period longer than six months (from 6 September 2011), if required. Approval of leave will continue until the matter is reviewed by full Council. A review will be scheduled at the meeting closest to the six month term (6 March 2012).

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 September 2011 were approved as a true record (proposed by Councillor Pearson and seconded by Councillor Adams).

4. PROGRESS REPORTS

a) Notice Board

Councillor Pearson confirmed that the owner of the Tackeroo Club (Geoff) was unable to find the two notice board keys which had been left with him following installation of the notice board. He also reported that Bert Mason does not wish to take possession of a key.

It was agreed that the Clerk would give Councillor Pearson one of the two remaining keys, and that additional keys would be cut as and when required.

It was also agreed that notices displayed on the board should come through the Clerk and should be relevant to the work of the Council and local community.

b) Neighbourhood Highways Team

Mark Keeling, Community Highways Liaison Officer had confirmed (7 September 2011) that he had added the two leaning road signs and overgrown bushes in Kingsley Wood Road (at the junction with Stafford Brook Road) to the Neighbourhood Highways Team work program (for week commencing 27 September 2011 for 12 days when in the Rugeley area). In theory the work should have been done. It was thought that the signs had been repaired but the bushes had not been cut back. An enquiry will be made with Mark to confirm the situation.

The pot hole half way along Kingsley Wood Road (near Friar's Cottage) has been reported to the Highways department and the reference number is 11110400.

c) Septic Tanks – Changes to Legislation

The Chairman reported that the Environment Agency is undertaking a joint review with Government on the requirement to register small domestic discharges in England, and whilst underway, there is no requirement to register septic tanks, unless people want to register them. He confirmed that he was advising residents to do nothing at the moment, and to wait for the outcome of the review.

d) Visit to Rugeley Quarry and Silver Trees Holiday Park

The Chairman reported that he had been unable to arrange visits to both the Quarry and Holiday Park.

A new manager is in post at the Quarry but did not have knowledge of the local issues the Parish Council are interested in, so Councillor Adams contacted another manager to raise enquiries about a number of matters including the remodelling scheme and Bird Club. This manager agreed to investigate and supply the Council with a written update.

The owner of the Holiday Park (Mr. Barber) has been away in Canada, and won't be available until the end of October.

e) Removal of Debris in Slitting Mill Road

It wasn't clear whether the debris had been removed from the location in Slitting Mill Road. It was agreed to make the assumption that it had been removed unless information comes to light suggesting otherwise. David Pritchard, Pollution Control Officer had been actively dealing with the matter and had given his assurances that the accumulation of bin bags (containing leaves) would be removed.

f) Thank You Messages

The Clerk, Mrs Williams reported that she had hand delivered a letter thanking both Councillor Mrs. Grice and Mrs. Higgs for their many years of service to Brindley Heath Parish Council.

Mrs. Higgs was also presented with a gift from the Council (a basket containing an arrangement of plants) in recognition of her retirement from public life. Mrs. Higgs asked that a message be forwarded on her behalf, saying 'Thank You' for the gift.

It was agreed that a box of chocolates and a greetings card would be delivered to both ladies near to Christmas.

It should be noted that all gifts are financed from the Chairman's allowance.

g) Other Matters

None

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

No report

Chairman's Initials

6. CORRESPONDENCE

a) Incoming and Outgoing Correspondence

All incoming and outgoing correspondence was noted from the Clerks Report.

b) Correspondence (Items of Specific Interest or Require a Response)

The following items of post were drawn to the attention of members:

- The training courses which are currently being offered by Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association. Councillor R. Turville expressed an interest in the Planning training and Trudy Williams the financial training (accounts/budgets etc). It was agreed that these names be forwarded to SPCA as prospective delegates for future courses, when arranged.
- E Petition urging the government to stop merchants from paying cash for metal
- Staffordshire County Council's Broadband Survey to find out the quality of broadband across Staffordshire.
- Staffordshire Police Citizens Panel - A leaflet was given to members with information about how to join the Panel.
- Staffordshire County Council are undertaking a consultation on Health and Social care to find out what the public think about these services across Staffordshire. The information will assist in decision making on service provision in the future. The consultation finishes on 12 December 2011

7. PLANNING

a) Planning Discussion with Councillor Kraujalis

Councillor Pearson reported that Councillor Kraujalis had raised a proposal at the District's Planning Control Committee, recommending that a policy is adopted to automatically submit planning applications to Committee where objections and comments have been made by Parish Councils'.

The Planning Control Committee agreed with the recommendations and approval of full Council is now being sought.

Parish Council members commented that the new Localism proposals will do away with the Planning Inspectorate and planning decisions will again be vested solely with officers. It was suggested that this may not necessarily be a good thing for local communities.

b) Planning Comments Referred to the District Council

CH/11/0284 7 Forge Row, Rugeley

Rear dormer incorporating additional bedroom and bathroom in roof space.

No objections were confirmed in a letter dated 8 September 2011

CH/11/0300 Birchbrae, Chaseley Road, Rugeley

Change of use from residential (C3) to a mixed use residential and tailors workshop (B1)

The following comments were stated in a letter dated 28 September 2011:

Objection:

Inappropriate use of residential property in the Green Belt.

Observations:

Chairman's Initials

- The business will result in a marked rise in traffic and people calling. The extra vehicular parking requirements, and the arrival and departure of both customers and deliveries, would be inappropriate for this area.
- A change of use would have an adverse impact on the neighbouring properties.
- There is concern that the principal use of the property will be as business premises rather than a home. There is also concern that the premises may in time be further developed into a small factory unit.
- The applicant was granted planning permission to build over the garages a couple of years ago but there was no reference to 'business use' at that time. This has raised questions about whether all information was included on the original application, and whether this new application is a retrospective one.

CH/11/0304 147 Rugeley Road, Hazel Slade

Single storey rear extension

No objections were confirmed in a letter dated 28 September 2011

Resolved: To confirm all comments made by the Parish Council's Planning Committee on the above proposed developments.

c) New Planning Applications Received

None

d) Planning Decisions made by District Council

CH/11/0184 Bentley Brook House, Rawnsley

Approved (14 September 2011)

CH.00/0577 Revised Conservation Scheme at Rugeley Quarry

(Scheme details were contained in a letter dated 7 September 2011)

CH/11/0271 Holford Equestrian Centre, Cotswold Road, Hednesford

Refused (3 October 2011)

CH/11/0284 7 Forge Row, Rugeley

Approved (7 October 2011)

e) Other Planning Issues

- Removal of Trees at Birches Valley Visitor Centre – In an email dated 7 October 2011, Mr. Aqbal, Development Control Manager stated that he was in the process of arranging a further meeting with the Forestry Commission to discuss matters relating to the car park and will advise on progress with this issue.
- Land at the junction of Penkridge Bank Road and Stafford Brook Road – Mr. Aqbal provided the following response to a request for the views of the Planning Department on future development of the land:

'As you correctly point out, the land is within the Green Belt and also forms part of the AONB. Redevelopment of the site for residential development would constitute inappropriate development, which would be contrary to local and national planning policy. Therefore, if an application for residential development is submitted on the site, the applicant would need to demonstrate 'very special circumstances' to justify the development. In determining any such application, the Local Planning Authority would also need to have regard to the fact that the site is within the AONB. If any planning application is submitted for the site then Brindley Heath Parish Council would be consulted.

If you have any specific concerns about development in relation to existing dwellings surrounding the above site, then please advise me and I will investigate further.

I trust this addresses the points raised in your e-mail and letters. If you have any other queries please do not hesitate to contact me'.

- iii. Land at Bow Street, Rugeley (site of former play group) – Geoff Winslow in Property Services at Cannock Chase Council has confirmed (in an email on 18 October 2011) that the ultimate intention is to dispose of the site possibly for housing but there are some legal issues associated with the land which prevent a disposal at this time. Although budgets are very limited he said that he would see what he could do to get the site tidied up.

It was stated that the Council has a statutory duty to clear up the land and the Clerk was asked to chase the matter.

f) Planning Consultations

- i. Stafford Borough Local Development Framework – A letter dated 5 September 2011 invites comments on the 'Plan for Stafford Borough – Draft Publication' which is out for consultation during September and October 2011. As the closing date is 21 October 2011 it was agreed that there was insufficient time to compile a response.
- ii. Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council Joint Waste Core Strategy 2010 – 2026 Submission Draft – The consultation documents were handed to Councillor R. Turville for perusal. The closing date for comments is 4 November 2011.

8. INVITATIONS TO MEETINGS

- AONB Parish Councils' Meeting on 20 October 2011 – Councillor Pearson would be attending this event (he is a member of AONB).
- Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, AGM on 5 November 2011 – No members were able to attend this event.
- Rugeley Community Forum – To be held on 4 November 2011
- Hednesford Community Forum – To be held on 7 December 2011

9. REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED

- Rugeley Community Forum on 8 September 2011 – No report

10. FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF CANNOCK CHASE FOREST

The Chairman reported that he had taken part in a lengthy telephone call with the Panel Secretariat and had successfully contributed his views on the future direction of forestry and woodland in England.

Councillor Adams stated that he had received feedback from the interviewer saying that his views were of a different theme to other local stakeholders who had made contributions to the Panel. Councillor Adams had emphasised in his interview the importance of ensuring that legislation adequately regulates how forests can and cannot be used and that clear provision is made for preventing overuse; rather than focussing on who owns the forest. He believes that ownership of the forest is not an important issue.

Members expressed concern about mountain bike activity on the Chase and suggested that bikers should be required to obtain a license to ride in the area. Bikers present a significant health and safety risk to other users of the Chase and damage to the environment is also a concern.

Resolved: To confirm Councillor Adams' comments to the Panel Secretariat on future forestry management, and to look forward to receiving a copy of the report.

Chairman's Initials

11. NATIONAL ISSUES

a) Localism Bill

It was reported that the Localism Bill (which is just two stages away from royal assent) will devolve greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods, and give local communities more control over housing and planning decisions. Its proposals represent a fundamental shift of power away from Westminster to Councils and Communities; and Parish Councils are the tier of local government that stands to be a major beneficiary within the process.

A summary of the Bill's proposals were noted and the Council were asked for guidance on whether the Localism item should feature on the agenda regularly to enable progress to be followed and developments reported (as necessary).

Resolved: To note the proposals and implications of the Localism Bill and to include the item on the agenda for the purpose of receiving progress reports.

b) Proposals for Business Rates Retention

It was reported that a national consultation on the Local Government Resource Review had taken place but the closing date for submitting comments was 14 October 2011.

A summary of the proposals were noted, but it was considered that this issue would be less relevant to Brindley Heath (than other local councils) as there are very few businesses operating within the parish.

Resolved: To note the proposals for business rates retention and the reasons for recommendation for change.

12. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

13. FINANCE

a) Internal Auditor's Report

The report of the Internal Auditor, Julie Hill, for the financial year 2010/11 was noted.

It was also noted that the Parish Council had acted on advice given by Julie at the time of the audit and do not need to take any further action in respect of the report; other than aligning reserves with the recommendations of the Audit Commission. The Council has:

- Approved notification of the Parish Council's use of personal data to the Information Commissioner's Office (Meeting on 5 July 2011).
- Sought advice from HMRC (for a second time) and received confirmation that there is no requirement for the Council to register as an employer whilst the Clerks salary is below the threshold for payment of tax or national insurance. Registration will be required if the Clerks total gross salary (from all employments running concurrently) goes over the threshold.
- Invoices are being signed by the same signatories who sign the cheques.

Resolved: To note the report of the Internal Auditor for the financial year 2010/11.

b) Update on Financial Position of the Council

Expenditure from April 2011 to the present date, set against each budget head was noted.

The Council currently holds funds of £4548.04.

£2548.04 is held in the Co-op account (the most recent bank statement has not been received from Bob Young to confirm that all payments have been presented).

Chairman's Initials

The second precept instalment of £2000.00 has been credited into the new HSBC bank account.

Resolved: That the financial position of the Council is noted.

c) Banking Arrangements

HSBC has certified the ID's of six members (all except Councillor Baker) and a cheque book has been received for use by these signatories.

All seven members had signed the bank mandate but Councillor Baker cannot be a signatory (within the current mandate) as his ID has not been certified and the application forms have now been finalised and posted off to another division of the Bank.

Three copies of a letter were signed by members for the purpose of providing authorisation for the Clerk to make general enquiries with HSBC on matters relating to administration of the account. Administration of the account could be problematic because the Clerk is not an account signatory, and the bank appear not to give any recognition to the role of secretary (Clerk signed the paperwork as secretary for the purposes of opening the account). The Bank has already refused to provide general information on a cheque book order. Two copies of the letter will be handed in at the Cannock branch of HSBC and one copy will be retained on file by the Clerk.

Resolved:

- To confirm that the signatories of the HSBC Community bank account are:
P. Adams, D. Cotton, J. Wilkes, A. Pearson, Mrs. M.A. Turville and R. Turville.
- To authorise the Clerk to make enquiries about the account to HSBC.
- To transfer funds from the Co-operative account to the HSBC account by writing a series of cheques.
- To make an attempt to close the Co-operative account officially, by forwarding a written request using a former member's signature as one of the three signatories. (If approved by the Bank, the account can be properly closed and the missing cheque book cancelled/invalidated).

d) Cheques for Payment

200021	Julie Hill	£47.50	Internal Audit for 2010/11
200022	Cannock Chase Council	£45.00	Recharge for Parish Elections on 5 May 2011. Chase Side Ward Invoice No. 600081807
200023	Cannock Chase Council	£45.00	Recharge for Parish Elections on 5 May 2011. Brindley Village Ward Invoice No. 600081793
200024	Trudy Williams	£184.82	Salary September £162.71 Telephone calls made (12 April to 11 July 2011) £22.11
200025	Baptist Bible College	£25.00	Room Hire for meeting on 18 October 2011
TOTAL		<u>£374.32</u>	

Resolved: To authorise payment of the cheques listed.

14. TO CONSIDER A NEW VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

It was reported that the Baptist Bible College are relocating, and room hire at the White House will not be available for the next Council meeting on 6 December 2011. It is hoped that the new occupants, 'One Another Ministries International' will be able to offer a room hire facility when its staff have settled in.

Resolved: To hold the next meeting of the Council at Cannock Chase Enterprise Centre, Rugeley Road at a cost of £20 + vat.

15. ANY OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Budgetary considerations for financial year 2012/13.

16. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Tuesday 6 December 2011 at Cannock Chase Enterprise Centre, Rugeley Road, Hednesford. The start time will be 7.30pm.

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 8.50pm

Signed.....
Chairman, Mr. Adams

Date.....