

BRINDLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 6 DECEMBER 2011 AT CANNOCK CHASE ENTERPRISE CENTRE, HEDNESFORD

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs. T. Williams

1. APOLOGIES:

Apologies were received and accepted from K. Baker, Mrs. A. Turville, and J. Wilkes.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 October 2011 were approved as a true record (proposed by A. Pearson and seconded by R. Turville).

3. PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES

a) Neighbourhood Highways Team

The leaning road signs at the entrance to Kingsley Wood Road have been repaired. The bushes have not been cut back but the leaves have fallen now and the item can be put on hold until next year.

A pot hole sited at the entrance to Kingsley Wood Road will be reported to the Highways Department for a repair.

b) Visit to Silver Trees Holiday Park

The Chairman stated that a visit would be arranged after Christmas now as the owner of the Holiday Park is busy, having recently returned from Canada.

c) Response from Cemex on issues raised by the Chairman

No written update has been received yet from the Manager on the various enquiries made (remodelling scheme and Bird Club etc).

d) Christmas Gift for Mrs Higgs and Councillor Mrs Grice

A Christmas gift and greetings card has been purchased for both former parish councillors, and it was agreed that Cllor R. Turville would make the deliveries.

All items have been financed from the Chairman's Allowance.

e) Other Matters

None

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman informed members that he had received a letter of thanks from Councillor Mrs. Grice (in response to the letter sent to her, thanking her for her many years of service to the Council).

Chairman's Initials

She said she was grateful for the companionship and kindness she enjoyed, and that she will always be there for the Council, should members want to ask anything.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

a) Incoming and Outgoing Correspondence

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

b) Items of Particular Interest/items Requiring a Response

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

- Letter from the charity 'Vitalise' – A request for a donation towards its work in providing respite breaks for disabled people to enable their carers to have a rest. The standard letter, which was not personally addressed to the Council, came from a London head office with no details of local activity. No donation form will be issued.
- Electoral Review of Staffordshire: Final Recommendations.
- Letter from Mike Maryon, Cabinet member for Highways & Transport about Staffordshire County Council's preparations for winter.
- Staffordshire County Council's consultation on Health and Social care (proposals to make it easier for people using NHS and Social Care services to provide feedback to improve how the information is used and complaints handled). Closing date for responses has been extended to 16 January 2012.
- Staffordshire County Council – Brief November 2011. Each member was given a copy of the brief about activities within Staffordshire County Council.

c) Notice of Consultations

- Proposed changes to Mental Health in-Patient Services in South Staffordshire – South Staffordshire PCT (final date for comments 16 January 2012)
- Air Quality Progress Report 2011 – Part IV of the Environmental Act 1995 – Cannock Chase Council (final date for comments 19 December 2011)
- District Integrated Transport Strategies – Staffordshire County Council (final date for comments 16 December 2011)

Resolved: All incoming and outgoing post was noted. No decisions were taken to refer collective/corporate responses to the consultations but individual comments can be made where desired.

6. PLANNING

a) Planning Comments Referred to the District Council

No planning applications have been received and commented upon since the last meeting

b) New Planning Applications Received

CH/11/0395 Land West of Pye Green Road, Hednesford

Mixed use development involving the erection of up to 700 dwellings; local centre consisting of retail/commercial; a primary school; formal and informal open space, equipped play areas and allotments; new highway infrastructure onto Pye Green Road and Limepit Lane; and associated engineering, ground modelling works and drainage infrastructure (Outline including access).

Cllor Pearson informed members that Hednesford Town Council had organised a meeting with County Highways to discuss the application and had particular concerns about the proposals for road and traffic management.

Some of the observations discussed by members:

- There will be a significant impact on the infrastructure of this part of Hednesford, and consideration needs to be given to many issues which include: highways, property types, education, public transport, health and environmental matters.
- No buses can go through the estate because of the density of houses (a lot of people are complaining about this).
- The impact on Pye Green Road (the County say Pye Green Road is underused)
- There is no through route for traffic within the development
- Hednesford Town Council would like to see the installation of an Island at the Jubilee crossroads (Limepit Lane/Belt Road)
- Local residents on Pye Green Road don't want to lose the hedge
- A new school is not needed as existing schools are already short on numbers. A new school may result in the closure of an existing one.
- A new pub is not needed.
- The mix of houses does not address housing need. The site contains only 14% affordable housing which is considered too low.
- Build quality – the houses are very small.
- The project will involve a 10 year build period resulting in an almost permanent mess.

Resolved:

- To request a further extension for the submission of observations on the application (to early February 2012 at least).
- To appoint Cllor Pearson and Cllor Turville to liaise on the application and prepare a comprehensive response on behalf of the Parish Council, to include all points of concern.

c) Planning Decisions made by the District Council and Planning Inspectorate

CH/11/0238 Cannock Chase Camping & Caravan Club

Approved (5 October 2011)

CH/11/0270 Swiss House Farm, Penkrige Bank

Approved (26 October 2011)

CH/11/0300 Birchbrae, Chaseley Road, Rugeley

Approved (31 October 2011)

CH/11/0304 147 Rugeley Road, Hazel Slade

Approved (31 October 2011)

CH/10/0424 Birchwood, Kingsley Wood Road, Rugeley

Dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate on 11 November 2011

Resolved: The Planning decisions were noted.

d) Other Planning Issues

- i. Removal of Trees at Birches Valley Visitor Centre – No update has been received from Mr Aqbal, Development Control Manager. However, it was noted that no additional work has been carried out by the Forestry Commission (to remove any more trees) since the Council's contact with the Planning Department, highlighting its concerns.

- ii. Land at Bow Street, Rugeley (site of former play group) – Geoff Winslow (Property Services at Cannock Chase Council) has requested an estimate from the Street Scene Section, of the costs involved in improving the condition of the site. As budgets are very limited he could not say whether the work could be done during the current financial year (it depends on the cost).

It was suggested that the litter could be removed by the street litter pickers, and it was agreed that an enquiry should be made to see if this would be possible.

- iii. Land at junction of Penkrudge Bank Road and Stafford Brook Road – The land was not sold as it did not reach the reserve price at auction.
- iv. Staffordshire County Council & Stoke-on-Trent City Council Joint Waste Core Strategy 2010 to 2026 – No comments were forwarded by the Parish Council on this consultation.

7. KINGSLEY WOOD ROAD

a) Discharge of firearms from an 18ft tower

It was reported that Chief Inspector Carl Ratcliffe had been asked to investigate the discharge of firearms activity on land adjoining Kingsley Wood Road.

Chief Inspector Chris Ellerton has been assigned to lead on the enquiry and establish the facts of the case; and a trained Firearms Commander will review the information and take action accordingly.

A Firearms Officer has visited the land and confirmed to the Chairman that a firearms licence was issued by West Midlands Police. Staffordshire Police will be compiling a report and forwarding a copy to the West Midlands Force. An evaluation of the owners plan for safe shooting on the land will also be undertaken.

Concerns were raised by members about the suitability of the land for shooting. It is very narrow in width and bullets will stray over the boundary putting adjoining land owners (including visitors and trespassers) at risk of injury.

The following points were also made:

- Shooting from the ground is more hazardous than shooting from a position of height where the firearm can be aimed down towards the ground.
- The legal minimum distance from the highway for shooting activity is 50 metres (the land is thought to be just over this distance from the road).
- There are seasons for shooting deer which are different for hinds and stags.
- There are few controls over the shooting of deer on private land.

The erection of an 18ft tower on the land has been referred to the District Council's Planning Enforcement Officer for investigation.

b) Felling of a tree on AONB land

An incident involving two men who were seen felling a tree supposedly for firewood, has been reported to the Tree/Arboricultural Officer (Chris Garner) for investigation. Vehicular number plates have been noted.

8. INVITATIONS TO MEETINGS

The forthcoming meeting was noted:

- a) Hednesford Community Forum – 7 December

9. REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED

- a) AONB Parish Council's Meeting – 20 October 2011. Cllor Pearson attended this meeting and informed members that AONB is undertaking a review of its management plan. A public

Chairman's Initials

consultation has started and comments are invited on the AONB and plan. A notice advertising this information will be displayed on the parish notice board.

Cllor Pearson also informed members that Hednesford Town Council had resolved to become a corporate member of AONB, following the lead of Heath Hayes & Wimblebury Parish Council which was the first local council to join. He suggested that Brindley Heath Parish Council give consideration to becoming a member as the AONB is within the parish boundary.

It was reported by other members that there had been instances in the past where AONB had appeared unwilling to support the Parish Council on various local issues of concern.

It was agreed that the item would be put on the agenda for consideration at the next meeting.

- b) Rugeley Community Forum – 21 November 2011. No report given.
- c) Evening Closure of A & E at Stafford Hospital – 25 November 2011. Cllor Cotton attended this meeting and provided a summary of the issues discussed. The meeting was very well supported; Jeremy Lefroy and a number of other M.P.'s and Councillors were in attendance.

The A & E Department is not going to be closed permanently and still provides a 24 hour service to paediatric and elderly patients. A full service will be opened up again in three months time. The reason for closure has been down to a shortage of doctors and consultants. A new consultant has recently been appointed and is due to start work in January 2012. There has been no cutback on clinical staff at the hospital.

A number of community events are planned to raise the profile of the hospital and publicise the good/positive things that are happening now. The ambulance service is running ok as additional ambulances have been brought in.

- d) Any other reports – None.

10. LOCALISM AGENDA

a) Localism Act

The Localism Bill received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. Different parts of the Act will come into effect at different times and the Government will be setting out further details on the exact rules on how different community rights will work. In some cases the public will be asked for their views, and Parliament will also have to consider the rules and vote on them before they are made final. The timings are uncertain but it is hoped that many of the major measures will come into effect from April 2012.

The Government will issue regular updates and consultations on different parts of the Act.

A plain English guide to the Localism Act is available to any member of the Parish Council who would like to view it.

Resolved: To note the developments with the legislation.

b) Proposals for Business Rates Retention

A report containing NALC's response to the Local Government Resource Review Consultation was noted.

Resolved: To note NALC's response to the proposals for business rates retention.

c) Technical Reforms of Council Tax

The Department for Communities and Local Government has gone out to formal consultation with a document called 'Technical Reforms of Council Tax'. The Government wish to explore modernising the system and gain views on how some aspects can be changed. It is contemplating changes such as: giving principal authorities the power to levy for full council tax on second homes; replacing exemption classes A and C2 (vacant and substantially unfurnished property) with discounts; abolishing Class L exemption

(vacant through repossession); and allowing billing authorities to levy an 'empty homes premium' in respect of dwellings which have been left empty for two years or more.

The closing date for views is 29 December 2011

Resolved: To note the NALC Policy Consultation on Technical Reforms of Council Tax (P43-11) and the Government's invitation to submit views.

11. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

12. FINANCE

a) Update on Financial Position of the Council

Expenditure from April 2011 to the present date, set against each budget head was noted from the Clerks Report. In summary, the Council holds funds of £4201.28.

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

b) Bank Accounts

The Council's funds are split between two bank accounts:

HSBC Account: £3500 (when the third and final transfer payment of £500 has cleared)

Co-op Account: £701.28

A letter was signed by two members of the Council (and a third signature will be obtained from a former member) to request yet again that the Council's contact address for the Co-op account be amended (the purpose being to prepare for closing the account formally, rather than clearing the balance and leaving it open).

Resolved: That the distribution of funds between accounts be noted.

c) Requests for a Charity Donation

- i. Chase Arts in Public Spaces – The final phase of the Hednesford Miners Memorial involves creating a footpath with engraved paving slabs to link the garden area at the top of Market Street, Hednesford with the Miners Lamp and Wall of Bricks (outside the Library). The Parish Council has been invited to sponsor a dedicated paving slab noting the name of a local pit; the cost being no more than £50 per slab.

Resolved: To sponsor one slab to a value up to £50 and to submit the local pits: Fair Oak Colliery and 'Fives' Colliery (West Cannock No. 5) for recognition within the memorial.

- ii. Chetwynd's Charity – A letter requesting a donation has been received from this local charity whose work involves providing financial support to students with their studies.

Resolved: To award a donation of £50 towards the work of Chetwynd's Charity.

d) Budgetary Considerations for Financial Year 2012/13

A copy of the Cash book (April 2011 to present) was given to members along with a projection of income, expenditure and reserves at the end of the financial year 2011/12.

Consideration was given to the draft figures, and information provided by the Elections Office (Cannock Chase Council) for estimating the costs of the next ordinary parish elections (in 2015); and cost implications of a by-election which (although unlikely) could be called at any time.

Resolved: To set a budget and precept for the financial year 2012/13 at the January 2012 meeting. If there are no substantial changes in the Council's circumstances, consideration will be given to maintaining the precept at (or near to) the current year's figure of £4000.

e) Cheques for Payment

200026	Staffordshire County Council	£24.00	Cannock Chase Enterprise Centre – Room Hire for meeting on 6 December 2011
200027	Brindley Heath Parish Council	£500.00	Transfer of funds to HSBC Bank Account
200028	Brindley Heath Parish Council	£500.00	Transfer of funds to HSBC Bank Account
200029	Brindley Heath Parish Council	£500.00	Transfer of funds to HSBC Bank Account
200030	T. Williams	£351.85	Salary October & November £325.42, Postage £17.99 (including replenishing stock of stamps -24 x 1 st class), Telephone £8.44 (12 July to 11 October 2011)
200031	Chetwynd's Charity	£50.00	Charity Donation (S.137 payment)
TOTAL		<u>£425.85</u>	

Resolved: To authorise payment of the cheques listed.

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

It was proposed by Cllor Cotton that during the absence of Cllor Baker, Cllor Turville be asked to take on the role of Vice Chairman. Cllor Turville said that he would be honoured to accept the position (to be confirmed at the next meeting).

Cllor Cotton reported that Brereton and Ravenhill Parish Council and Rugeley Town Council have joined forces to set up a Community Mediation Service. He suggested that Brindley Heath Parish Council might wish to consider signing up too, for the benefits it will bring to the local community. There is no fee other than the scheme requiring an administrative input (dealing with related correspondence connected with the Parish). The item will be put on the next agenda for consideration.

14. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Tuesday 17 January 2012 at Cannock Chase Enterprise Centre, Rugeley Road, Hednesford. The start time will be 7.30pm. (Enquiries will be made to the White House about room hire availability for the March 2012 meeting)

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 8.50pm

Signed.....
Chairman, Mr. Adams

Date.....

Chairman's Initials