

BRINDLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2022 AT THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, MOUNT ROAD, RUGELEY

PRESENT: Parish Councillors: R. Turville (Vice Chairman)
D. Cotton
Mrs M. A. Turville
M. Sutherland

IN ATTENDANCE: PCSO Hannah Lloyd (to the end of item 2)
PC Darren Wilkes (to the end of item 2)
Mrs T. Williams (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors: P. Adams, A. Pearson and Mrs S. Pearson.

Apologies were received from County Councillors P. Hewitt & Dr J. McMahon.

On behalf of all Parish Councillors, Councillor Turville, Vice Chairman and Chairman for the meeting, conveyed his very best wishes to the Chairman of the Council, Councillor Paul Adams, for a speedy recovery after feeling unwell over recent weeks.

2. POLICE REPORTS

The Chairman welcomed PCSO Lloyd and PC Wilkes to the meeting.

PCSO Lloyd issued her Police report (in hard copy) to all Councillors.

Her report detailed the police incidents that had occurred in the Etching Hill & The Heath and Slitting Mill areas during the period 1 January to 31 January 2022.

PCSO Lloyd informed the Council that the 'Domestic' related record of which there were 8 incidents in January, was not necessarily partners against partners but included incidents between wider family members.

She said that the incidents categorised as 'Concern for Welfare' (of which there were 7) mostly encompassed the Mental Health Act but could sometimes include initial reports of missing children/missing people before the matter was resolved or escalated to missing person.

'Suspicious' is a very broad category which included anything relating to the activity and movement of people and their vehicles. There were 6 of these incidents in January.

Other categories included Thefts – 2, Criminal Damage – 2, Anti-Social Behaviour – 4, Transport Related 5 (including off road bikes and parking issues), Burglary 2 (one a shed break-in), RTC – 4 (includes deer incidents), Other Notifiable Crime – 1 (crimes not falling into any other classification), Vehicle Crime – 2 (stolen and broken into), Fraud/Forgery – 1, Drugs Possession – 1, Harassment/Stalking – 1, Violence against the Person – 2, Blackmail – 1, Hate Crime – 2.

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PC Wilkes informed the Council about two burglaries occurring in the area and DNA swabs had identified a suspect arrested two weeks ago.

The officers informed the Council about occurrences of anti-social behaviour on the car park on Stile Cop Road where arrests have been made. A Police presence is noted to have led to a significant decrease in the number of offending vehicles.

Councillor Sutherland expressed concern about the Junction at Shooting Butts Road and Chaseley Road where at least two road traffic related incidents had occurred at the crossroads recently and is a particular problem at night. Road signs have been damaged there a number of times, but the Highways Department are unable to site them in a different position (due to County rules).

Councillor Sutherland advised the Council that he would be contacting Michelle Shaker, Community Engagement Coordinator at Staffordshire Police, to ask whether she would assist in arranging a Community Speed Watch session (or sessions) there.

The Police officers confirmed that not all traffic incidents are attended by the police and as a result are not recorded for statistical purposes. Quite often people just exchange details at the roadside. Incidents are attended by the Police and recorded when they involve an injury.

PC Wilkes offered to assess the junction to see whether it would be suitable for the Safer Roads Partnership to arrange a speed camera van visit.

PCSO Lloyd advised the Council that the Police had attended Post Office Lane and noted inconsiderate on street parking where they placed parking notices on cars and gave motorists advice. The Police officers acknowledged the impact on local residents (caused by people avoiding the car park charges at Birches Valley) and have assured them they would continue to do their best to manage the issue as the weather improves and the area gets busier.

The Council raised concerns about the management of traffic and parking when the Commonwealth Games comes to the area both on the day of the event and its lead up, around Birches Valley. PC Wilkes advised Councillors that he would be raising the matter at upcoming meetings. He expressed the importance of developing a co-ordinated plan of action in consultation with the Council and civil enforcement (for illegal parking), and a regular police presence in the lead up to the Games.

Post Office Lane and Slitting Mill Road are areas of particular concern with on street parking. Councillor Sutherland had noted 18 cars parked on Slitting Mill Road on Sunday. Residents have contacted their County Councillor with concerns about the speed of traffic which is particularly dangerous when walkers out and about (as there are no footpaths). The cycle track is also close to the road creating an access at this point.

Councillor Sutherland advised the Council that with the increasing volume of traffic over the last decade the speed limits on some roads were now inappropriate. Road signage had improved but more walkers and horse riders are out on the roads and a maximum speed limit of 40mph should in particular be introduced on Shooting Butts Road.

It was noted that deer reflector posts had been installed in various locations including Stafford Brook Road. PC Wilkes advised that one of the Cannock Chase rangers compiled data on the deer fatalities across the Chase.

PC Wilkes apologised for not attending meetings as the area officer over the previous 2 to 3 years but hoped to be able to attend more regularly in the future.

He advised the Council that some big changes were planned in the Police Force following the appointment of a new Chief Constable. At present officers often have to travel considerable distances to attend incidents and the service is stretched. He gave the example of working 35 miles away in Stoke on Trent on Saturday and on Sunday dealing with a custody matter at a prison. In the summer the Force are going to be returning
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to a previous police model which they are familiar with and know to work well. They won't have the same number of officers – there will be 3 rather than 6 in Rugeley with 3 officers staying in the town on neighbourhood duties and 3 going on response. They do however think it will work better as the 3 Neighbourhood Officers including PC Wilkes will be designated to the parish. They may have to cover the whole of Rugeley rather than just one part of it, but that should work as long as the officers stay in their area.

PC Wilkes is currently a response officer – attending 999 calls anywhere in the County. It is hoped that having designated response officers will mean that he can be ringfenced to do neighbourhood policing and crime prevention in the area. He thinks the arrangement will work well as officers who know their area know how to approach different issues.

PC Wilkes advised the Council that Chad and Hannah were brilliant PCSO's and prevented a lot of crime. A Special Constable has also been working in the area for many years and prevents/solves lots of crime. He takes a lot of demand off the Police, and everyone knows and respects him.

PCSO Lloyd advised the Council that the Police Station in Rugeley has no front desk and is not open to the public. However, Hannah who works from there will open the door if someone knocks. He doesn't know whether the police station will continue to be used in the long term. Some police officers in the north of the County are based in fire stations which is an arrangement that has worked well. Investment in mobile technology will also enable officers to stay out on the patch in the problem areas, for longer.

Councillors complimented the officers on the level of good service the Police deliver with members of the public likely not recognising the extent of work they do.

The Force has student police officers going through a training programme with new officers coming in all the time. Another intake of PCSO's is due to start in April. It will take two years before they will be fully trained.

PC Wilkes advised the Council that he is one of Staffordshire Police's Rural Wildlife Crime Officers and looks after the Chase in respect of wildlife offences. He would like to know if anyone has any concerns about wildlife offences and suggested mentioning his name, if necessary, when making a report.

A reduction in anti-social behaviour was thought due to an increasing number of patrols and working with Hart School. At first it was thought the reduction in incidents was due to the Covid-19 pandemic but since all the rules have lifted incidents have remained low. Public Space Protection Orders are back in place and street drinking can be dealt with proactively.

There are Issues with off road motorbikes on the Chase but according to figures has dropped significantly. The Police have seized about seven bikes this year. They have five offenders in Crown Court for dangerous driving. The officers said it was a very difficult matter to deal with alone and needed the input of others such as drone trained officers. The old Quarry at the top of Kingsley Wood Road is a problem area.

Incidents such as off-road motor cycling can be reported online or by phoning 101. The Police will then provide a secure link to enable video footage to be attached securely. A 999 report will be required if a danger exists to the public.

Members of the public can send direct private messages to the Police on Facebook (by Facebook Messenger) and on Twitter. The area control room is staffed by digital media staff who constantly monitor the messages that come in. Members of the public don't have to wait on the phone, they can send a quick text message via Facebook to Staffordshire Police and staff will come back quite quickly. It is also possible to send videos or photographs that way (which saves waiting in the queue for 101).

Crimestoppers is another option for reporting crime as is the Staffordshire Police website.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for attending the meeting.

PC Wilkes and PCSO Lloyd said they would send a written report in the event they were unable to attend future meetings.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were in attendance.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No Interests were declared.

<u>Member</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Type</u>
Councillor Sutherland	Item 8b. Cannock Chase Council's Call for Sites	Personal Interest (Portfolio Leader for District Development)

5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETINGS

Resolved: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 30 November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

The draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 30 November 2021 were noted.

6. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Council noted that the group meeting to discuss district town centres and green spaces on 8 December 2021 at Cannock Leisure Centre had been cancelled.

The Council noted that the damaged grit bin in Kingsley Wood Road had been replaced.

The County's 'Report It' system seems to work well and the 'My Staffs App' recommended by Councillor Sutherland allows users to easily report issues on a number of different council services with acknowledgements, report references and progress updates.

Councillor Cotton updated the Council on a vehicle that had been abandoned on 16 December 2021 in Kingsley Wood Road. The vehicle had no tax or MOT (and therefore no insurance) and had been reported online to the Cleansing Department at Cannock Chase Council by PCSO Nicholls. A notice had after a period of time been put on the vehicle (the Principal Waste and Engineering Services Officer being instrumental in arranging this) and after 10 days if not collected (by 16 February) will be towed away.

7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no report.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

a. Items of Post

Community On-Line Directory

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An email (dated 27 January 2022) from Cheshire Directory.co.uk invites the Council to consider commissioning the development of a community online directory to support local businesses in the area, thought to promote economic development and parish wellbeing.

A booklet entitled 'Guide to Creating an Online Community Directory' had been issued with the electronic agenda for the meeting'. The online company provide marketing support, a digital marketing service, community investment support and run a Facebook page.

The Council discussed the benefits of having a business directory in the parish and noted the requirement to fund its compilation and ongoing development.

Resolved: To note the services on offer from Cheshire Directory.co.uk in developing an online business directory for the parish.

Small Habitats Grant Fund Programme – European Regional development Fund

An email (dated 16 December 2021) from the Project Manager Landscape Architect at Solihull MBC reminded the Council about the availability of funding opportunities through the European Regional Development Fund.

The GBSLEP (Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership) Habitats Grants Programme enables eligible organisations (which include parish councils) to deliver small scale green and blue infrastructure improvements on land in the GBSLEP. The GBSLEP is made up of Birmingham, Solihull, Cannock, East Staffs, Lichfield, Tamworth, Wyre Forest, Redditch and Bromsgrove. Grants from £20,000 to £200,000 are available for both capital and revenue projects as a 40% -60% match funding.

A leaflet and Frequently Asked Questions paper had been enclosed with the electronic version of the agenda for the meeting.

Projects might include grassland creation, woodland improvement, wildflower seeding, wetland improvement, access improvements through land that was also being improved, hedgerow planting, tree planting, planting of native species, river restoration. Projects will only be funded where the land is open to the public and where people are free to enter and enjoy the space.

Resolved: The Council noted the funding opportunity whilst recognising that it had no legal interest in any land.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee Street Parties and Beacons – Email from Miles Brough DL

An email from Miles Brough DL (dated 14 December 2021) provided information on the opportunity to apply for potential lottery funding for public events that celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022.

A leaflet containing the national programme of celebrations including the lighting of beacons and Street Parties, had been enclosed with the electronic version of the agenda for the meeting.

Councillor Turville advised the Council that he would like to establish how interested the community are in attending a celebratory Queen's Platinum Jubilee event and suggested reporting back to the Council at the next meeting.

The Council agreed that a working group would need to be set up and consideration given to other events in the area.

Resolved: To note the information provided by the Deputy Lieutenant and to await a report from Councillor Turville.

Boundary Commission Review – Stakeholder Database

An email (dated 3 December 2021) from the Consultation and Engagement Officer advised the Parish Council that Cannock Chase Council is working with the Local Government Boundary commission on an Electoral Review to look at future arrangements in the Cannock District. It is expected that there will be a re-drawing of some of the ward boundaries and potentially a reduction in the number of district councillors on Cannock Chase Council.

The review will determine the number of councillors that should be elected to the Council, the boundary names and number of councillors representing each ward. The change will take effect for the May 2024 District Council Elections.

Resolved: That the Council should be listed in the stakeholder database.

b. Consultations

Cannock Chase Council’s Call for Sites

The Council considered an email from the Senior Planning Officer at Cannock Chase Council (dated 9 December 2021) offering landowners and developers the opportunity to submit details of their sites for development. This exercise helps the Planning Policy team identify suitable land to meet future housing and employment requirements. The District Council is also interested in identifying sites available and suitable for gypsy, travellers and travelling show people, and sites for tree planting and biodiversity enhancements.

The Council agreed that it should be aware of the content of the consultation in respect of whether relevant points need to be made or reinforced.

Resolved: To note Cannock Chase Council’s Call for Sites for development (which closed on 31 December 2021).

9. ROAD SAFETY

The Council noted there hadn’t as yet been any update on the speed and volume data collected from the installation of counting equipment on Brindley Heath Road and Stafford Brook Road.

The latest technology in the form of flicker posts (flashing back into the forest with signage) to deter deer from entering the roads across Cannock Chase were considered a welcome addition on Penkridge Bank Road and Stafford Brook Road.

10. PARISH ISSUES – CHASE SIDE

Community Speed Watch

Councillor Sutherland advised the Council that he had met with Rugeley Community Speed Watch and had taken the opportunity to view the list of roads currently monitored by the volunteer group. He was particularly concerned about Slitting Mill Road (after receiving complaints) and has asked that the Community Engagement Coordinator at Staffordshire Police to undertake a risk assessment to enable the road to be added to their programme.

It was agreed that a request should also be made for Stafford Brook Road and Chaseley Road (where the speed limit changes to 30mph) to be included in the programme after an assessment by the Police.

Councillor Cotton explained to the Council the ongoing issues with speeding on Stafford Brook Road particularly in the dip.

The Council agreed that a Speed Watch presence would have a significant effect on motorist behaviour.

Damage to Bridge

Councillor Cotton advised the Council that the parapets to the bridge on Stafford Brook Road had been damaged and he would provide photographs to enclose with a report to the County.

Access on Shooting Butts Road

The Council had noted the hedge had been thinned in a number of places on land off Shooting Butts Road indicating that the position for a new entrance (or entrances) was under consideration. The Council agreed that an enquiry should be made to the District or County Council if any enquiries are raised in the parish.

11. PARISH WARD ISSUES – BRINDLEY VILLAGE

No issues in Brindley Village were raised.

12. CANNOCK CHASE FOREST

a. Ironman Competition

The Clerk advised the Council that the Chief Executive Officer at Ironman had offered to attend this evening's meeting (on 8 February 2022) but as the Chairman, who had a particular interest in speaking on this item, could not be present, the matter was postponed to a future date.

The Parish Council agreed that the Ironman team be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss the difficulties the competition was causing some residents on event day and to ask whether consideration could be given to varying the route in future years.

It was noted the Chief Executive Officer had offered to deal with the enquiries by email.

b. Commonwealth Games

The Clerk advised the Council that representatives of the Commonwealth Games Organising Committee had offered to attend a meeting of the Parish Council on 29 March 2022.

The Council agreed that it should prepare questions to ask representatives in relation to traffic management on event day and in the lead up to the competition.

Resolved: To note that representatives of the Organising Committee would be joining Parish Councillors at their meeting on 29 March 2022.

c. Cannock Chase AONB

The Council noted that registration was open for the Cannock Chase AONB Conference on 3rd March 2022 (via Zoom). The theme is 'Changing perceptions and behaviours'.

Councillor Sutherland confirmed that he would be attending and it was hoped Councillor Pearson, who usually represented the Parish Council at AONB meetings, would also attend.

The Council agreed that the Conference might provide an opportunity for representatives to express the view that Brindley Heath Parish Council should be represented on the Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee.

Resolved: That Councillor Sutherland and Councillor Pearson, if available, represent the Parish Council at the Cannock Chase AONB Conference on 3 March 2022.

13. INVITATION TO MEETINGS/EVENTS

The Council noted upcoming (external) meetings and nominated members (where appropriate) to represent the Parish Council:

- Cannock Chase Chairman's Burns Night at Beaudesert Golf Club on 20 March 2022.
- Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service – On-Line Home Safety Workshop on 16 February 2022.

14. REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED

Councillor Cotton advised the Council that as Vice Chairman and trustee of the Etching Hill Charity with allotments and adjoining field, he was in the process of appointing a new Clerk (after the retirement of the existing Clerk). This was work done in the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Adams. Councillor Cotton was also dealing with a tree that had come down on Etching Hill.

15. COUNCILLOR REPORTS

No Councillor reports were given.

16. FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) Financial Position of the Council

A breakdown of income and expenditure for the financial year to date was given in the Clerks Report (dated 8 February 2021). The budget statement showed the current financial position of the Council with reserves totalling £17,341.84.

Resolved: To note the financial position of the Council.

b) Changes to HSBC Community/Charitable bank accounts

The Clerk advised the Parish Council that HSBC had ended its free Clubs and Community Bank account (to existing and new customers) and had moved its customers to a new Charitable Bank Account from 1 November 2021.

The Charitable Bank Account comes with a £5 monthly fee, a fee when paying in cash at a branch or Post Office (0.4%), a fee when withdrawing change (1.5%) and a fee to cash cheques (40 pence a cheque).

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The Council considered whether to investigate alternative providers offering free banking services. It acknowledged the work needed to switch banks with the requirement to sign a new bank mandate and the possibility that the new provider might follow the HSBC lead in charging for community banking services in the near future.

Resolved: That the Parish Council continue using HSBC for its banking services at the present time but consider whether cost saving arrangements might be pursued in the near future.

c) Charity Donation to Chetwynd Charity

Chetwynd's Charity

The Council considered a letter (dated 1 December 2021) from the Clerk to the Trustees, asked for a charity donation towards the work of Chetwynd's Charity. The charity operates locally in the Rugeley and Brindley Heath area, offering financial assistance to young people who are in further education.

Resolved: To award £50 to the work of Chetwynd's Charity.

d) Parish Notice Board

The Clerk reported that little progress had been made on sourcing the production of a hardwood notice board from a local company. It had proven difficult to obtain a quotation for a bespoke notice board and more difficult again to achieve a price point that was reasonable. Quotations for notice boards had already been obtained from specialist and local companies.

The Council reconsidered its brief to commission a hardwood notice board and whether a metal notice board, similar to the notice board at Slitting Mill Village Hall, might be more suitable and long lasting.

Cannock Chase Council had already advised that metal posts be incorporated into the design.

Resolved: That the Parish Council explores metal notice boards as an alternative to hardwood.

e) To authorise cheques for payment

100196	Church of the Holy Spirit	£30.00	Use of community room on 30 November 2021
100197	Chetwynd's Charity	£50.00	Charity Donation
100198	Trudy Williams	£661.05	Gross salary Oct, Nov, December 2021

Resolved: To authorise payment of the cheques listed.

17. ANY OTHER ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA
None

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Tuesday 29 March 2022 at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Mount Road, Rugeley.

The Council agreed to hold its Annual Meetings on Tuesday 31 May 2022.

The Chairman thanked everyone present for their attendance.

Signed.....

Chairman, Mr. R. Turville

Date.....