

BRINDLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28 MARCH 2023 AT THE WHITE HOUSE, MARQUIS DRIVE, BRINDLEY HEATH

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

IN ATTENDANCE: PCSO Liz Dale (to end of item 3 – Police Reports)
Mrs T. Williams (Parish Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies and reasons for absence were accepted from Councillor Sutherland (who was unwell) under S.85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

County Councillor Hewitt also offered his apologies.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

<u>Member</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Type</u>
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No interests were declared.

3. POLICE REPORTS

PCSO Liz Dale arrived at the meeting and was welcomed by all.

The Council noted her Police report containing details of the work Rugeley Neighbourhood Policing Team had undertaken during the period 1 to 28 March 2023.

PCSO Dale advised the Parish Council that the main area of work in Brindley Heath (and part of Rugeley) had been anti-social behaviour of which there were five reports.

There had also been three burglaries, five vehicle crimes, five domestic related incidents, one theft, six cases where there had been concern for safety, three missing person, three transport related cases, five suspicious incidents, three incidents of violence, five road traffic collisions (mostly deer related) and one public safety incident.

PCSO Dale said that she was strongly appealing to residents not to give thieves an easy ride. Property should be kept secure at all times as none of the burglaries recorded had involved forced entry.

PCSO Dale informed Councillors about the theft of a scooter on Etching Hill which had been set alight.

The Chairman asked PCSO Dale whether patrols could be carried out at the top of Penkridge Bank and Kingsley Wood Road as youths were regularly parking up at night to drink alcohol and while there were discarding large numbers of cans for residents to clear away. Also, a suspected drug dealer had been parking up at Rifle Range Corner (usually between 10 and 11pm).

PCSO Dale advised the Council that she does a monthly patrol with a housing officer and an anti-social behaviour officer from Cannock Chase Council to focus on anti-social behaviour from a number of different angles. They tour the hotspot areas together and the council officers have been helpful in dealing with problems the police don't have the resources to deal with. They use mediation and the enforcement of tenancy conditions where there are potential breaches.

PCSO Dale said she would hopefully be staying put on her patch and after 17 years felt strongly about the benefits of knowing the area and its problems. A lot of local children have grown up knowing her with the Junior cadet scheme soon to start up again in local primary schools. She is also running online safety courses which were going well.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETINGS

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2023 be approved as a correct record.

The draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 31 January 2023 were noted.

6. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

There were no updates.

7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had no report.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

a. Items of Post

Coronation Celebrations across Cannock Chase

The Parish Council noted emails (dated 13 and 14 March 2023) from Cannock Chase Council offering to promote organised Coronation weekend celebrations on the District Council's website and social medial channels.

The Parish Council also noted the waiving of road closure charges for street parties (on applications submitted by 24 March) and free use of parks for organised events (which must be appropriately risk assessed).

b. Consultations

Cannock Chase Council's Consultation on proposed replacement of Smoke Control Order

The Parish Council noted that Cannock Chase Council was seeking views on changes to its smoke control orders.

The proposal involved revoking 15 original smoke control orders (made between 1988 and 1996) and replacing them with one revised order to cover the entire district, making enforcement of the

requirements more straightforward. In the whole of the Smoke Control Area created by the Order, the operation of Section 19A and Schedule 1A of the Clean Air Act 1993 would be applicable to all buildings and all moored vessels (other than the exemptions outlined under Section 19C and 19D).

The Council expressed concern about the monitoring of log burners where fumes were creating problems in the atmosphere. This was a particular issue when people burned old fencing and treated or painted wood products to emit poisonous fumes. Painted wood also blocks the back of the burner risking carbon monoxide build up.

Resolved: That the Parish Council inform the District Council that it would like to see closer monitoring/restrictions placed on log burners which are sometimes a public nuisance.

Cannock Chase Council's Call for Sites: New Developments 2023

The Parish Council noted a letter (dated 1 March 2023) from Cannock Chase Council calling for sites for new development, which help the Planning Policy team identify land that is suitable and available to meet future housing and employment requirements.

9. PARISH ISSUES – CHASE SIDE

No issues were raised for discussion.

10. PARISH WARD ISSUES – BRINDLEY VILLAGE

No issues were raised for discussion.

11. CANNOCK CHASE FOREST

a. Cannock Chase AONB Sustainable Development Fund

The Parish Council noted (from an email dated 16 March 2023) that the Sustainable Development Fund was again open to community groups, schools, organisations and individuals who had a project in mind that would make a positive difference to the landscape, wildlife, heritage and communities of Cannock Chase. Applicants were normally expected to contribute at least 25% of the cost through other funding sources or in volunteer time (unless the grant is £500 or under). The closing date is 31 March 2023.

b. Cannock Chase AONB Conference on Wednesday 8 March 2023

Councillor Pearson and Councillor Mrs Turville reported that they had attended the AONB Annual Conference at Brocton Golf Club which had been interesting and informative.

12. INVITATION TO MEETINGS/EVENTS

The following upcoming (external) meetings/invitations were noted:

- Cannock Chase Council Standards Committee meeting on Monday 24 April 2023.
- NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit's Invitation to an Online Focus Group on Wednesday 10 May 2023.

Councillor Cotton advised the Council that he had forwarded the email to the Community First Responders to ask whether they would like to be involved in the Focus Group.

The Chairman suggested the meeting was really concerned with the organisation of regional health authorities which is way above the layperson's level of knowledge.

13. REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED

a. To share information on meetings attended

- Staffordshire County Council Boundary Changes Briefing on 16 February 2023

No report was available on this meeting.

- Briefing for candidates on elections on Friday 24 March 2023

Councillor Pearson advised the Council that he had attended the candidates briefing. He said there was information in the pack with guidance on how to complete the application form. This was a new and helpful addition.

b. The parish representatives to outside bodies gave reports on the meetings they had attended:

Slitting Mill Village Hall (M. Sutherland)

Councillor Sutherland was not available to give a report.

Etching Hill Village Hall (D. Cotton)

Councillor Cotton informed the Council that the Etching Hill Village Hall was doing well with a healthy bank balance and a lot of work being done on the hall.

Chetwynd Charity (P. Adams)

Councillor Adams advised the council that only three school leavers had applied for grants (£80-£90 for each year a student is at university) on the last round which was disappointing. The charity visits schools to inform students about the fund. The charity used to get requests from Girlguiding groups who were travelling overseas but applications are now fewer. The eligibility criteria require applicants to live or be based in the Rugeley area.

Charity for the Recreation Ground (P. Adams & D. Cotton)

Councillor Adams advised the Council that the charity was unable to apply for grants directly as English Nature had cut them off and suggested they be supported through Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. In order to set this up the charity has needed to give the Wildlife Trust a management agreement for the next four years giving the Recreation Ground access to the same funding it used to get. The recreation ground is not maintained to the same standard, but the charity has had to accept it.

He said that half the pitch was hired out by Cannock Chase District Council which they have been maintaining but not using. Councillors on the committee have enquired about the Council's longer-term plans through the officer responsible for the playing fields.

Councillor Cotton reported that the charity was active in encouraging people to use the recreation field for sporting events and training sessions. There were no complicated arrangements for hiring the facility, it was straightforward for people to use.

Charity for an Allotment for the Labouring Poor (P. Adams & D. Cotton)

Councillor Cotton reported that the allotments were not looking too bad. All the allotments were taken up and there was a waiting list of applicants for vacancies. He said that maintenance was needed in respect of replacement kissing gates and perimeter fencing.

Longdon Cotton Alms-Houses (P. Adams to 2024)

Councillor Adams advised the Council that he had attended a meeting last week. One alms house was currently vacant and being redecorated. In general, the houses were well maintained, and the charity well run.

Cannock Chase Council's Standards Committee (R. Turville)

Councillor Turville reported that no meeting had taken place and the next meeting was scheduled for 24 April 2023.

Cannock Chase AONB Conference (A. Pearson & Mrs M. A. Turville)

Councillor Pearson and Councillor Mrs Turville had attended the conference on Wednesday 8 March 2023 which was interesting and informative. They receive a report on the grant funding opportunities to community groups/organisations who had appropriate ideas for schemes.

14. COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Councillor Pearson informed the Council that Cannock Chase Council's Scrutiny Committee had recommended a change of policy so that enforcement cases are investigated after a longer time period than had previously been in operation. Also, that more delegated powers be utilised, leading to fewer cases being subject to enforcement.

Councillor Pearson said that the Enforcement Officer was working efficiently through a heavy back log of cases (District wide).

15. FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) Financial Position of the Council

A breakdown of income and expenditure for the financial year to date was given in the Clerk's Report (dated 28 March 2023). The budget statement showed the current financial position of the Council with reserves totalling £17,504.78.

The increased cost of the website this year was due to an increase in the cost of the template, a poor exchange rate and the five yearly charge for retaining the Council's domain name.

The Council talked about the benefits of electronic banking in the future for streamlining and speeding up the payment process.

The Council talked about the Clerk continuing to operate the website, and new tiers of service were available.

Resolved: To note the financial position of the Council.

b) To review the Council's Standing Orders

The Parish Council considered a review of the standing orders (based on the NALC Model Standing Orders) which had been circulated electronically by email.

Resolved: That the Model Standing Orders be accepted with a further review of the tailored line items at the next meeting of the Council.

c) To review the Council's Financial Regulations

The Parish Council considered a review of the financial regulations (based on the NALC Model Financial Regulations) which had been circulated electronically by email.

Resolved: That the Model Financial Regulations be accepted with a review of the tailored line items at the next meeting.

d) To review the Council's Financial Risk Assessment

The Parish Council considered a review of the Council's Financial Risk Assessment which had been updated to take account of a new insurance policy taken out with Zurich Municipal.

Resolved: That the Financial Risk Assessment be accepted with comments and additions reviewed at the next meeting.

PCSO Liz Dale arrived at the meeting at 8pm. Her report is recorded under Police Reports at the beginning of these minutes. After PCSO Dale left the meeting (upon completion of the Police Reports item) the order of the agenda continued.

e) To consider the arrangements for the Annual Audit 2023-23

The Parish Council considered the arrangements for the Internal Audit of the accounts at the end of the financial year 2023-24. It had been noted that the internal auditor for the year 2022-23 had recently retired.

Resolved: That the Parish Clerk be authorised to ask a suitably qualified person to internally audit the accounts at the end of the financial year 2023-24.

f) To receive an update on the parish notice board project

This item is ongoing while a notice board at a reasonable cost is being sourced.

Councillor Cotton informed the Council about a notice board he had designed on behalf of Etching Hill. He included in the design an Oak tree and a leaf, a species of bird from his own library of photographs and information from the natural history museum for trees. Although this was factual information, a report from the regulatory body told him to remove some of the design because it may be considered plagiarism.

g) To authorise cheques for payment

100213	The White House	£30.00	Donation for use of room for parish meeting on 28 March 2023
100214	Squarespace Web Design Tool	£247.42	Annual Subscription
100214	Hover – Domain Name October 2022 to 2027	£50.41	Domain name for five years
100214	Trudy Williams	£1076.30 (net)	Salary & Tax Oct, Nov, Dec 2022. Jan, Feb, March 2023
100215	HMRC	£269.20	Income Tax October 2022 to March 2023
	<u>New Year 2023-24</u>		
100216	SPCA New Year	£235.04	SPCA Subscription for 2023-24

Resolved: To authorise payment of the cheques listed.

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

The Chairman questioned whether there had been an increase in the number of events at Hednesford Raceway. The events were listed monthly on the website but not annually to enable a count. He also questioned whether the cars were being adequately silenced.

Councillor Adams said that some years ago, at a meeting with officers from Cannock Chase Council and management at Hednesford Raceway, an agreement had been made for the planting of trees to assist in absorbing noise on race days. He suggested sending a reminder to the estate manager.

The meeting was suspended and reconvened after the Planning Committee meeting had taken place.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council would be the Annual meeting on Monday 22 May 2023.

18. Exclusion of the Press and Public

To resolve, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that the Public and Press be excluded from the meeting whilst the next items of business are discussed on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the debate.

19. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Resolved: That the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2023 (Minute Numbers 1-31/2022-23, 2-31/2022-23 and 3-31/2022-23) be accepted as a correct record.

20. STAFFING ITEM

The Council considered a matter relating to staffing.

Resolved: That the Council take steps to recruit a Parish Clerk and Proper Officer.

The Chairman thanked everyone present for their attendance.

Signed.....

Chairman, Mr P. Adams

Date.....