

BRINDLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT THE WHITE HOUSE, MARQUIS DRIVE, BRINDLEY HEATH

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

IN ATTENDANCE: County Councillor Phil Hewitt
Mrs T. Williams (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies and reasons for absence were accepted from Councillor D. Cotton and Councillor M. Sutherland under S.85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

<u>Member</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Type</u>
No interests given		

3. POLICE REPORTS

Local Policing Team representatives were unable to attend the meeting but had forwarded a police report (distributed at the meeting) with information on the work of Rugeley Neighbourhood Policing Team for the period 1 to 30 September 2023.

Incidents occurring in Brindley Heath and surrounding areas included: violence against person – 4, Concern for safety – 9, Transport – 2, Domestic – 3, Family Domestic – 3, Harassment/Stalking – 5, Road traffic collision – 4, Request from other Force – 1, Sudden Death – 2, Abandoned Calls – 3, Vehicle Crime – 2, Anti-Social Behaviour – 3, Recall to Police – 1, Fraud – 1, Suspicious Incidents – 4, Breach of Bail – 1, Theft – 1, Sexual Offences – 1

The Council noted the statistics (which appeared to have gone up in number) and were grateful for the update. The Council acknowledged that the system seemed better with four local officers covering the area. It was thought the bigger numbers may be linked to this and better reporting.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETINGS

Resolved: That the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 25 July 2023 be approved as a correct record.

Chairman's Initials

15/2023-24

The draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 25 July 2023 were noted.

6. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Clerk advised the Council that the Recreation Manager (Central Forest) at Forestry England had forwarded the Parish Council’s enquiry about firebreaks on Cannock Chase to his Forest Planners for comment and would respond when the information was available.

7. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman and the Vice Chairman had no reports under this item.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

a. Items of Post

Staffordshire County Council’s Climate Action Fund is open for parish councils to receive funding for sustainable projects.

The Parish Council noted an email from the Campaign Officer – Climate Change & Waste at Staffordshire County Council (dated 9 August 2023) with information about how to apply to the Climate Action Fund for projects such as LED lighting, insulation, bike sheds, solar panels, EV charging points, composting and more. The fund is open to non-profit organisations, schools, community groups and parish councils for sustainable projects.

Funding can be for £500 to £3,000 and must receive support from a County Councillor.

Charges approved for pre-application planning advice.

The Parish Council noted (in a press release dated 15 September 2023) that Cannock Chase Council had approved a charging scheme for pre-planning application advice for minor and householder applications. The District Council already charge for major pre-planning application advice and have extended the charges to householder applications which they believe will improve the quality and consistency of advice and result in better quality planning applications.

The Parish Council expressed concern about disproportion and balance which it considered would run into a sizeable extra expense for householders. The Chairman questioned the reason the difference in charges for major schemes and householder advice was so narrow.

Funding to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in Cannock Chase.

The Parish Council noted (from a press release dated 18 September 2023) that the Community Safety Partnership at Cannock Chase Council had received funding from the Fire & Rescue Commissioner to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour, and community safety concerns in Cannock Chase.

The funding is to support community and voluntary groups in addressing identified concerns in their area and help local people build on the work they are already doing to keep their communities safe. Funding of up to £5,000 is available and the closing date is Tuesday 31 October 2023.

The Council suggested the Police were called to deal with crime and anti-social behaviour rather than encourage members of the public/community to try to tackle it themselves.

b. Consultations

Local Government Boundary Commission for England’s Consultation on draft recommendations for division boundaries in Staffordshire (open to 16 October 2023)

The Parish Council considered the Boundary Commission consultation and the implications of its proposals on the County and Parish.

A link to the draft proposals and a summary report of the draft recommendations had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

The Parish Council concluded that the recommendation to keep 62 councillors (the same as the existing arrangements) each representing a division, to be acceptable in providing electoral quality and reflect community identities and interests in the Parish.

The Parish Council noted that the division boundaries had changed, and that Hednesford North Division had been renamed ‘Hednesford’.

9. DEFIBRILLATOR

The Parish Council noted that the Group Co-Ordinator at Rugeley Community First Responders had accepted ownership and maintenance responsibility for the public access defibrillator at the White House, from 1 August 2023. Emails dated 26 and 29 July 2023 had been circulated.

The Group Co-Ordinator said that the Community First Responders hoped to be able to replace the rusted cabinet before the winter months set in.

Emails to the Group Co-Ordinator (dated 27 July and 3 August 2023) detailing information about the defibrillator (including equipment name and installation date, code to the cabinet, WMAS CAD system registration etc) were noted. The contact details for the White House and AEDdonate (the installer of the equipment) were also provided.

The Council agreed to support the First Responders with extra checks of the equipment to supplement the quarterly checks that would be scheduled by them. AEDdonate had recommended monthly checks where possible.

The Council agreed that it would like to continue to make an annual donation to One Another Ministries at the White House for the electricity the defibrillator consumed (which related to a pilot light in cold weather).

10. PARISH WARD ISSUES – CHASE SIDE

No issues were raised for discussion.

11. PARISH WARD ISSUES – BRINDLEY VILLAGE

No issues were raised for discussion.

12. CANNOCK CHASE FOREST

To discuss issues relating to Cannock Chase Forest

a. Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership

The Council noted an email from the AONB Communications Officer (dated 9 August 2023) stating that the Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership was seeking support in reducing light pollution to protect and improve the dark skies above Cannock Chase.

The email said that artificial lighting introduced a suburban feel and eroded the natural beauty of the nationally important landscape and adversely impacted health and wellbeing, wildlife behaviour, as well as wasting resources.

The Partnership asked that the 'Good Lighting Guide' supporting the vision and objectives of the Cannock Chase Management Plan be forwarded to all appropriate colleagues.

The parish council expressed the view that artificial light came mostly from Hednesford with a little from the north in the direction of Stafford. Beyond that there was little lighting.

Councillor Pearson suggested that when planning applications come through for the parish the Council could emphasise the point that bright lights are not installed to shine up at buildings. He said there was an increasing trend for homeowners to illuminate larger property.

b. Forest Concerts

At the last meeting of the Council the Chairman asked whether the Environmental Health Department would provide the readings for the afternoons and evenings of the concert days which should have been monitored and recorded.

The Clerk advised the Council that information had been requested from Cannock Chase Council and would be shared upon receipt.

c. Nomination of Parish Representative to Cannock Chase National Landscapes Partnership Joint Committee

The Council noted from an article that Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership were inviting new advisors to its governing body, the Joint Committee.

Resolved: To nominate Councillor Pearson as parish representative to the Cannock Chase National Landscapes Partnership Joint Committee.

d. Access for All Funding

The Council noted an email (dated 21 September 2023) from the Cannock Chase AONB Team Leader asking whether there were any 'ready to go' access projects in the AONB that need funding.

DEFRA was offering Protected Landscapes in England the opportunity to receive additional funding from the Access for All Fund for physical and digital infrastructure improvements to make Cannock Chase more accessible.

The Chairman said that DEFRA had a strategy to cut stewardship from Etching Hill and the Charity was having to work through Staffordshire wildlife Trust. A lot of work had been done to get stewardship money back, but requests had been declined. He questioned the reason funding was being offered in a different guise.

The Council talked about the clearance work on the Chase on the road to Penkrige and Silver Birch that now needed clearing because existing strategies hadn't worked to manage the issue.

Councillor Turville asked whether there were any figures on deer roadkill on Chase roads. The Chairman said that he had made enquiries and there had been four or five in the last month and more signs had been put up.

13. INVITATION TO MEETINGS/EVENTS

The Council noted the following upcoming (external) meeting invitations:

Chairman's Initials

18/2023-24

- 20s Plenty for Staffordshire presentation via Zoom on Wednesday 11 October 2023 (about the benefits of 20 mph speed limits).

The Chairman advised the Council that it was a recognised fact that motorists driving at very slow speeds can have a tendency to cruise with lower concentration levels and some motorists circumvent their way around the 20mph limit areas which is causing other issues.

Councillor Pearson advised the Council that some businesses had reported that 20mph speed limits had put extra time on their jobs causing a price increases.

- Staffordshire Parish Council’s Annual General Meeting on Monday 30 October 2023.
Details of the meeting were noted by the Council.
- Cannock Chase Council Chairman’s Christmas Carol Service on Monday 18 December 2023.
Details of the Service were noted, and Councillor Pearson said that everyone was welcome to attend.

14. STAFFORDSHIRE PARISH COUNCILS’ ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The parish council considered nominations to Staffordshire Parish Councils’ Executive Committee, but none were put forward.

15. REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED

- a. To share information on meetings attended:

The Parish Council noted that the Standards Committee Meeting on Monday 25 September 2023 had been cancelled.

Councillor Pearson advised the Committee that a briefing/training session would be valuable to new and existing Committee members.

- b. The parish representatives to outside bodies gave reports on 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 was not available to give a report.

Chetwynd Charity (P. Adams)

Councillor Adams advised the Council that he had spoken with the treasurer and discussed whether the Charity should continue. Plenty of funding was held on account but there had been very few requests from students for financial support. He said the funding opportunity was well advertised as the secretary visits local schools.

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

Councillor Adams reported that Cannock Chase Council was wishing to end the contract for the recreation ground which runs to 2030. The Charity had budgeted to receive income from Cannock Chase Council, but Cannock Chase Council has reported that it doesn’t have the budget to make the payment.

He said the Charity has had to pay to have the field cut while Cannock Chase Council haven’t wanted to use it.

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

Councillor Adams reported that most of the funds had dried up and the Charity was having to go through Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to apply for money from DEFRA. He said the Hill was not looking so good and volunteers get disheartened when they are unable to do all the work that is needed.

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

Councillor Adams advised the Council that the Charity had a special meeting coming up to discuss the three arms-houses which were all let.

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

No meetings of the Standards Committee had taken place.

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

Councillor Pearson and Councillor Mrs Turville advised the Council that no meeting had taken place.

16. COUNCILLOR REPORTS

The Chairman invited County Councillor Hewitt to address the Council.

Councillor Hewitt thanked the Council for inviting him to the meeting and made the point that as County Councillor Sutherland was usually in attendance, and the parish was so small, he didn't feel there was a need for more than one County Councillor to be present. He said he would endeavour to attend meetings whenever Councillor Sutherland was unable to.

Councillor Hewitt advised the Council that he had recently attended a meeting about the County's coverage of Fibre and mobile phone systems. He said the Government had set a target of 95% coverage which was being achieved but he was interested to find out about the 5% and asked what the coverage was like in Brindley Heath.

The Chairman reported that Openreach provided a poor service and connectivity was weak in the parish with the provider biding its time to go digital. He said so few people were living in some parts that the installation of another transmitter was not thought to be viable.

Councillor Hewitt noted the feedback with interest.

17. 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 21 September 2023). The budget statement showed the current financial position of the Council with reserves totalling £17,043.39.

Resolved: To note the financial position of the Council.

b) Noticeboard Update

Councillors considered some designs of notice boards which were distributed at the meeting. Different preferences were expressed for different designs and the Chairman asked Councillors to consider them at home and confirm their choices.

The Clerk advised that different specifications can be put together which would influence the final price. The prices did not include installation costs which need to be investigated.

Councillors suggested that a three bay notice board would provide more display space and better flexibility.

c) To authorise cheques for payment

Resolved: To approve following cheque payments:

100223	Cannock Chase Council	£417.60	Parish Election Recharges May 2023 (paid)
100224	HMRC	£269.00	PAYE (April to September 2023)
100225	Trudy Williams	£1076.50	Salary April to September 2023 (six months)
100226	The White House	£30.00	Donation for use of room for parish meeting on 26 September 2023
100227	Parish Online	£67.20	Annual Subscription for Digital Mapping product

Resolved: To authorise payment of the cheques listed.

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

No items

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Tuesday 28 November 2023.

Signed.....

Chairman, Mr. P. Adams

Date.....