

# **BRINDLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 30 JANUARY 2024 AT THE WHITE HOUSE, MARQUIS DRIVE, BRINDLEY HEATH**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs T. Williams (Clerk)

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies and reasons for absence were received, accepted and approved under S.85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 from the Chairman, Councillor P. Adams.

Councillor Turville and Parish Councillors extended their very best wishes to Councillor Adams as he receives treatment for a medical condition.

Apologies were also received from County Councillor P. Hewitt.

In the absence of Councillor Adams, the Vice Chairman, Councillor R. Turville took the Chair.

### **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. On this occasion there was no written report on their work.

Councillor Pearson informed the Council that there had been several burglaries in Cannock and Etching Hill where perpetrators were breaking into homes to access keys to high performance vehicles. He said that in one case the signal to the doorbell camera app had been cloned as well as the car key.

Councillor Pearson urged everyone to stay on alert and put their keys in tin foil or a faraday pouch to prevent the cloning of the signal.

Councillor Sutherland referred to Smarts Alerts from the Police which are very informative.

Parish Councillors confirmed they were all individually signed up to the Smart Alert service.

**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 28 November 2023 be approved as a correct record.

The draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 28 November 2023 were noted.

**6. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

There were no updates from previous minutes (where the items were not on the agenda).

**7. CHAIRMAN’S REPORT/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Vice Chairman had no reports.

**8. CORRESPONDENCE**

a. Items of Post

**Care Plus Reconnected Project**

The Parish Council noted an email (dated 30 November 2023) from the ReConnected Community Support Advisor at Care Plus (an organisation providing retirement living, based at Acton Gate) with information about free support services to older residents of Stafford and South Staffordshire (aged 55 years and over) who are affected by loneliness and isolation caused by Covid-19 damaging their ability to engage with others.

The telephone response service offers a lifeline of support and connects people to information on engagement opportunities in the community as well as making referrals where required to specialised agencies. This might include arranging home visits to support physical and mental wellbeing and help people to maximise their income entitlement through benefit claims.

In addition to the one-to-one support, ‘ReConnected’ provides group led activities in a variety of locations in Staffordshire offering the opportunity to learn new skills, create healthier lifestyles and develop support networks.

The Community Support Advisor in her email offered to meet with the parish council at a face to face or virtual meeting to discuss what ReConnected has to offer and how Care Plus and the Parish Council can work together for the benefit of older residents in the parish.

Councillors expressed an interested in knowing more about the project, particularly how the one-to-one support service works.

RESOLVED: To invite the Community Support Advisor to a future meeting of the Parish Council.

b. Consultations

No public consultations were considered.

**9. PARISH WARD ISSUES – CHASE SIDE**

Cattle Grazing initiative on Cemex land

The Chairman invited Councillor Cotton to share information on the Cattle Grazing project on Cemex land.

Councillor Cotton informed the Council that he had been contacted by a resident who was concerned that he had seen cattle grazing on land off Kingsley Wood Road (at the track end) in an area that was not contained by fencing, putting them at risk of wandering onto nearby roads.

Councillor Cotton was anxious to know how the cattle were being managed if they hadn't escaped or been accidentally let out of a secure area.

The AONB Land Management Officer at Cannock Chase National Landscape Partnership confirmed (after making enquiries) that the cattle were on Cemex land and a consultant working for Cemex had kindly provided information on their Cattle Grazing project.

Cemex has introduced several cattle to their land as part of its heathland management plan (put together in consultation with the RSPB and Natural England) to control bracken. Preferring not to use herbicides, they have followed professional advice that cattle will do as effective a job as herbicides by stamping down and knocking the bracken back. The cattle will be on site all year round and will breed. Cemex is also working to enhance the landscape to improve the habitat for endangered adders.

The Belted or banded Galloway cattle wear collars that enable tracking of their whereabouts by GPS and following their training have learned not to roam outside the boundary of the Cemex site. A local farmer is managing the cattle on behalf of Cemex, and information signs will in due course be installed on Kingsley Wood Road and other northern points of the site. These will ask people to keep their dogs on leads.

The consultant said that he would be very pleased to meet with Councillors on site if additional information was required. He said that Cemex were aware that the area was misused at times by members of the public with 4 x 4 vehicles, motorbikes and dog walkers who don't pick up the poo etc. and hoped that the presence of cattle would demonstrate the land was managed and deter people from using it as a public recreation area.

The consultant acknowledged there may be a few teething problems with the project, but Cemex didn't consider fencing a viable option due to ongoing damage and vandalism. He said this new initiative with the use of the latest technology had worked well in other areas and if it takes off here, will be very positive for both Cemex and the parish.

Councillor Sutherland referred to establishing lines of communication with staff at the quarry and Councillor Cotton informed the Council that he and the Chairman once had informative meetings with quarry staff until the staffing structure changed. He also referred to the conditions of planning permissions at the Quarry that required liaison meetings with residents, but they didn't get off the ground.

Councillor Pearson informed the Council that dogs were the biggest concern in respect of causing the cattle to move outside the virtual boundary. The cattle are known however to have a dog and people friendly temperament.

The cattle unfortunately would not be controlling the growth of Silver Birch saplings which need to be managed in another way.

The Council concluded that it welcomed the project and was keen to see it succeed.

Chairman's Initials .....

**10. PARISH WARD ISSUES – BRINDLEY VILLAGE**

No issues were raised for discussion.

**11. CANNOCK CHASE FOREST**

To discuss issues relating to Cannock Chase Forest

a. Cycling Event – Glorious Gravel on 16 and 17 March 2024

The Council noted an email (dated 27 November 2023) from Glorious Gravel Cannock, with information on the 2024 cycle ride scheduled to take place on Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 March 2024 with the Tackeroo Camp Site being the event centre.

The race will be a repeat of the events hosted in 2022 and 2023 but will follow a different route. The route will provide a mixed terrain ride using a combination of public roads, byways and bridleways in the local area where cycling is permitted. No road/trail closures or restrictions on access for other users are requested as part of the event.

The contact emphasised that the events were not races as they did not publish finish times in speed order or provide any ranking for those completing the ride and do not encourage race type behaviour. The rides are fun social events that allow people to meet other riders whilst enjoying a good ride.

The contact person from Glorious Gravel provided a Risk Assessment, OS Basted Route Map, Safety Management Plan and Public Liability Insurance. They offered to provide additional information and answer queries where needed.

Councillor Sutherland advised the Council that walkway routes were being developed for Cannock Chase and a regular walking group near his home was very popular, having increased in number considerably.

b. Newsletter from Cannock Chase National Landscape

The Council considered the E-Newsletter from Cannock Chase National Landscapes, a link to which had been enclosed in an email from the National Landscapes Communications Officer on 14 December 2023.

The Newsletter included more information about the AONB rename and gave details for the newly appointed Landscape and Planning Officer who will be providing landscape related advice on proposed developments affecting Cannock Chase.

The information in the newsletter and from the advice of a planning expert confirmed that National Landscapes was still by law an AONB with no loss of protection or rights.

It was suggested that the National Landscape name may improve recognition of the landscape status and provide an umbrella to improve marketing nationally (like national forests). There might also be some benefit in attracting grants.

**12. INVITATION TO MEETINGS/EVENTS**

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

- Cannock Chase National Landscape Annual Conference will take place on 25 April 2024. Further information to be issued.

Councillor Pearson, Councillor Mrs Turville, Councillors Mrs Pearson and Councillor Sutherland expressed an interest in attending the conference.

**13. REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED**

- a. To share information on meetings attended:

Chairman’s Initials .....

No reports were given.

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

Slitting Mill Village Hall (M. Sutherland)

Councillor Sutherland advised the Council that no meeting had taken place.

Etching Hill Village Hall (D. Cotton)

Councillor Cotton advised the Council that the Village Hall was doing very well.

Chetwynd Charity (P. Adams)

Councillor Adams was not available to give a report.

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

Councillor Cotton reported that the charity was looking for funding opportunities because Cannock Chase Council was not now involved with their lease of the recreation ground and didn't carry out any grass cutting or maintenance.

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

Councillor Cotton advised the Council that the charity's only way of keeping the field going was through donations and successful bids for funding.

Staffordshire County Councillor, Councillor Sutherland, confirmed that he would advise the charity when County funding opportunities become available.

Councillor Cotton informed the Council that the field was now being used by a young person who had started up a successful football training business for all age groups.

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

Councillor Adams was not available to give his report.

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

Councillor Pearson confirmed that 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 confirmed that they will be attending the conference in April. Councillor Sutherland and Councillor Mrs Pearson would also like to attend.

## 14. COUNCILLOR REPORTS

The Chairman invited reports from District and County Councillors.

Councillor Pearson advised the Council that the District Council was about to set the Council Tax for the year 2024-25 with an increase of just below 3%. He had no new news that would directly affect the parishes.

Councillor Sutherland advised the Council that his main activities involved highways and Police related issues.

Councillor Turville commented on the number of road works in Cannock and asked whether it related to improvements for cyclists.

Councillor Sutherland said that the County Council had been applying for grants and some big grants had been approved, one of them part of the A38 interlinked with HS2 for improvements to footpaths

and cycle routes. The aim was for Cannock to be made more accessible for walking and cycling around the town.

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust had instigated improvements to the infrastructure to serve a second MRI scanner at Cannock Hospital. In order to achieve this, more power needed to be transported there, requiring the road to be lifted from the area of Asda at Rumer Hill. The County was trying to link everything up, but this can be difficult to achieve as utility companies don't always communicate well with their partners.

The Council expressed its support for improved medical facilities locally. Cannock Hospital is known as a centre of excellence for some medical services.

The Council discussed the poor state of some roads because of potholes, particularly a road in Rugeley which had recently been repaired.

## 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 Clerks Report (dated 25 January 2024). The budget statement showed the current financial position of the Council with reserves totalling £17,418.34.

The bank account balance on 2 January 2024 (taken from the bank statement) was £17,608.89 (with an unrepresented cheque of £190.55).

The Council raised the point that no office costs had been put forward for printing and stationery. The suggestion was made that these be calculated for a twelve-month period and reimbursed as a regular payment with the Clerk's salary.

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

### b) Noticeboard Update

The Council reconsidered the size of the notice board previously selected after questioning whether its size was a larger than needed after seeing photographs of a life-sized example of the notice board in a neighbouring parish.

There were also several decisions required on the individual design features of the chosen notice board.

The Council considered the following details to be acceptable:

Type: 2 bay single sided A1 A-Multi Decorative aluminium noticeboard Reference: AF30MD/DA1  
To display: 9 x A4 sheets in each bay (18 x A4 sheets in total)

Notice board Features: colour: moss green, one sided with painted back panel in green, finials required (in green), bow top, headed with 'Brindley Heath Parish Council' in gold, upper case arial font computer cut out vinyl letting, deer illustration included, acrylic display panels (if there is a choice), magnetic fixings, standard lock with extra set of keys.

#### Delivery:

The notice board can be delivered to Councillor Pearson prior to installation.

The price does not include installation or VAT (which can be reclaimed).

**Resolved:** That the specification for a two bay Greenbarnes noticeboard reference: AF30MD/DA1 is taken forward for pricing and that permission for the design is requested from the Cannock Chase Council.

a) To authorise cheques for payment

**Resolved:** To approve the following cheque payments:

100230	The White House	£30.00	Donation for use of room for parish meeting on 30 January 2024
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**Resolved:** To authorise payment of the cheques listed.

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

Costings for office costs.

**17. SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Council will be held at The White House, Marquis Drive, Brindley Heath on Tuesday 26 March 2024.

Signed.....

Chairman for the meeting, Mr R. Turville

Date.....