

BRINDLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28 MAY 2024 AT THE WHITE HOUSE, MARQUIS DRIVE, BRINDLEY HEATH

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs T. Williams (Clerk)

The Chairman thanked Councillors for their support during his absence from meetings.

Councillor R. Turville on behalf of the Parish Council wished Councillor Adams a speedy recovery after his period of ill-health and suggested the Council bestow upon him the honour of Alderman.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Chairman, Councillor Adams, invited nominations for Chairman for the year 2024-25.

It was proposed by Councillor R. Turville and seconded by Councillor Mrs Pearson that Councillor Paul Adams be appointed as Chairman for the ensuing year. There were no further nominations, and all Councillors agreed.

Resolved: To appoint Councillor Paul Adams as Chairman to Brindley Heath Parish Council for the municipal year 2024-25.

2. SIGNING OF DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Councillor Adams signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and retained the Chairman's Badge of Office.

3. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor P. Adams and seconded by Councillor Mrs Turville that Councillor Ron Turville be appointed to the position of Vice Chairman.

Resolved: To appoint Councillor Ron Turville as Vice Chairman to Brindley Heath Parish Council for the municipal year 2024-25.

4. SIGNING OF DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Councillor Turville signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and retained the Vice Chairman's Badge of Office.

5. RECORD THE PARISH COUNCIL'S APPRECIATION OF THE CHAIRMAN, VICE CHAIRMAN AND ALL WHO SERVED ON THE COUNCIL

The Chairman thanked all Councillors for the work they had done for the Parish Council over the previous year. He thanked Councillor Cotton for his longstanding commitment to the Planning Chairman's role.

6. APOLOGIES

Apologies and reasons for absence were approved from Councillors A. Pearson and M. Sutherland. It was noted that County Councillor Phil Hewitt had given his apologies for the meeting.

7. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

8. PLANNING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Council considered the terms of reference for the Council's Planning Committee which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting.

Resolved: The terms of reference for the Council's Planning Committee were agreed.

9. APPOINTMENT OF PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Council considered the membership of the Planning Committee and appointment of the Chairman and Vice Chairman for the year 2024-25.

Resolved: That all Members be appointed to the Planning Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor R. Turville, seconded by Councillor Adams and agreed that Councillor D. Cotton be appointed as Chairman of the Planning Committee.

Resolved: That Councillor David Cotton be appointed as Chairman of the Planning Committee for the year 2024-25.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that Councillor A. Pearson be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee for the year 2024-25.

Resolved: That Councillor Alan Pearson be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee for the year 2024-25.

10. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Parish Council considered the appointment of representatives to outside bodies:

Resolved: To make the following appointments of Council representatives on outside bodies:

Slitting Mill Village Hall	M. Sutherland
Etching Hill Village Hall	D. Cotton
Chetwynd's Charity	P. Adams (R. Turville to attend meetings if P. Adams is unable to attend)

Charity for the Recreation Ground for the Benefit of the Inhabitants of the Ancient Parish of Rugeley and Neighbourhood in the County of Stafford	P. Adams & D. Cotton
Charity for an Allotment for the Labouring Poor in the Ancient Parish of Rugeley in the County of Stafford	P. Adams & D. Cotton
Longdon Cotton Alms-houses (four-year term to 2024)	P. Adams (to 2028) (R. Turville to attend meetings of P. Adams is unable to attend)
Cannock Chase Council's Standards Committee	R. Turville
Cannock Chase National Landscape Conference	A. Pearson (second appointee to be considered at the next meeting of the Council)

11. MINUTES OF LAST MEETINGS

Resolved: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 26 March 2024 be approved as a correct record.

The draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 26 March 2024 were noted.

12. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Councillor Cotton advised the Council that the Rugeley Community First Responders had replaced the rusting defibrillator box on the external wall of the White House.

13. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman and the Vice Chairman had no reports.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

a. Items of Post

Letter from Vibe2ThriveCIC – Young People in Your Area

The Council noted an email from Vibe2ThriveCIC (dated 16 April 2024) a community interest company based in Staffordshire who arrange community workshops to encourage social interaction and meaningful community participation. Vibe2Thrive offered to present their 'Be Yourself & Love it' workshop at an upcoming parish council meeting. The workshop was tailored towards 6–16-year-olds and addresses the struggles young people have with self-confidence, self-worth and self-esteem through various activities such as dance, drama and clay making.

Health & Wellbeing related funding round launched on 29 April 2024

The Council noted (in an email dated 29 April 2024) the details of a new health & wellbeing related funding opportunity administered by the Community Foundation for Staffordshire. The information had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

Health & Wellbeing Toolkit, resource for Town & Parish Councils

The Parish Council noted that a SPCA Health and Wellbeing toolkit, a resource for Town & Parish Councils, was now available via the SPCA website. The website contains information on partner organisations and resources, funding opportunities and training.

Safety of Lithium-ion batteries and e-bikes and scooters

The researcher for Lord (Don) Foster (in an email dated 17 May 2024) asked the parish council to consider supporting a campaign to improve the safety of lithium batteries (used in e-bike and e-scooters) and their disposal. Lord Foster had been campaigning on the issue in the House of Lords and Mr Bailey, his Researcher, was the parliamentary advisor to Electrical Safety First, a UK Charity dedicated to reducing deaths and injuries caused by electricity.

Councillors noted the information and said that it would spread the news in the parish.

b. Consultations

Recommendations for Staffordshire County Council’s Divisions in Cannock Chase

The Council noted the Boundary Commission for England’s Summary of Recommendations on the Electoral Review of Staffordshire County Council.

The final recommendations propose that 62 councillors should serve the Council in 62 single councillor divisions across the county from 2025. In Cannock Chase it is proposed that one councillor serves in each of the following divisions: Brereton & Ravenhill; Cannock Town; Chadsmoor; Etching Hill & The Heath; Hawks Green, Rawnsley & Cannock Wood; Hednesford North; and Norton Canes, Heath Hayes & Wimblebury.

15. PARISH ISSUES

a. Chase Side

The Parish Council discussed its request made to Cannock Chase Council for consideration to be given to the placing of a temporary Tree Preservation Order on protected SAC and SSSI land after residents had seen trees being felled.

The Parish Council also noted an email sent to Natural England informing the regulatory authority for protected landscapes that trees were being felled.

Natural England had replied with a request for additional information which the Parish Council understood Cannock Chase Council had provided, following the Tree Officer’s service of a Tree Preservation Order on 3 May 2024.

The Tree Officer was praised by the Parish Council for his very swift action in investigating the matter.

The Council were disappointed that Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest were not automatically protected through these land designations, and that permitted development rights (for example for the installation of fencing) had not been removed.

The Council asked that the item be kept on the agenda as the Tree Preservation Order was only a temporary one (for six months) and the future protection of the land would need to be monitored.

b. Brindley Village

No reports were given.

Chairman’s Initials

c. National Landscapes & Cannock Chase Forest

Report on the Cannock Chase National Landscape’s Annual Conference on 25 April 2024

Councillor Mrs Turville provided a report on the Cannock Chase National Landscape’s Annual Conference which she had attended on 25 April 2024. She said that the conference was informative with lots of pop up workshops on different subjects such as the adder population and grazing on Cannock Chase.

Councillor Mrs Turville said that the National Landscapes Team seemed to be working hard to make the area work.

Review of Cannock Chase National Landscape Management Plan 2025-30

The Council noted a survey in preparation for producing revised management plan from 2025 and onwards where views were being collated on the things people value about the area, what their concerns are and what the priorities should be in the future.

Cannock Chase National Landscape Sustainability Development Fund

Information on the Sustainability Development Fund (an opportunity to apply for grant aid for projects that make a difference to the landscape, wildlife, heritage and communities of Cannock Chase) had been enclosed with the agenda for the meeting.

16. PORTRAIT OF KING CHARLES III

The Parish Council considered how it could put on display a framed portrait of His Majesty the King, which had been received from the Cabinet Office in London who were administering a government funded voluntary scheme (throughout the UK) that allowed public authorities to apply for a free, framed portrait. This initiative formed part of the celebrations for the King’s Coronation.

Resolved: That the portrait of King Charles III be loaned to One Another Ministries at The White House until such a time as the Council could identify a permanent home for its future display.

17. INVITATION TO MEETINGS/EVENTS

The Council noted that there were no upcoming (external) meeting invitations.

18. REPORTS ON MEETINGS ATTENDED

No reports were given.

19. COUNCILLOR REPORTS

No Councillor reports were given.

20. WEBSITE

The Parish Council considered the need to update and upgrade its website to modernise its appearance and make accessibility compliance easier to achieve. The subscription to Squarespace renews in October and alternative options through Staffordshire County Council could be explored ahead of the renewal date.

Resolved: That the Clerk is authorised to make enquiries to Staffordshire County Council about its website services to parish councils.

21. FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) Financial Position of the Council

The Council considered the end of year accounts for the financial year 2023-24 which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting. The accounts comprised the cash book, bank reconciliation, budget and spend statement, variance report and analysis of budget heads.

The Council noted the financial position of the Council on 22 May 2024 and commented upon the healthy bank balance which needed to be used on local projects.

b) Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023-24

i) To receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2023-24

The Council noted the Internal Audit Report for 2023-24 which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting. No issues of concern had been raised as internal control objectives had been achieved to meet the standards required for a smaller authority.

Resolved: That the report of the Internal Auditor for the year 2023-24 be noted.

ii) Annual Governance Statement 2023-24 (Section 1)

The Council considered the Annual Governance Statement for 2023-24.

Resolved: That the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year 2023-24 be approved.

iii) Accounting Statements 2023-24 (Section 2)

The Council considered the Accounting Statements for the year 2023-24.

Resolved: That the Accounting Statements 2023-24 be approved.

iv) Certificate of Exemption

The Council noted that there was no requirement to have a limited assurance review or to submit an Annual Governance and Accountability Return to the external auditor provided it had certified itself as exempt at a meeting of the Council after 31 March 2024 and a Certificate of Exemption submitted to the external auditor.

The Certificate of Exemption is completed by smaller authorities (where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure does not exceed £25,000 in the year of account ended 31 March 2024) who wish to certify themselves as exempt from a limited assurance review under Section 9 of the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015.

Resolved: That the Chairman signs the Certificate of Exemption to confirm that the Council wishes to be exempt from a limited assurance review.

c) Appointment of a Responsible Finance Officer for the year 2024-25

Resolved: The Parish Clerk was confirmed as the Responsible Finance Officer for the year 2024-25.

d) Appointment of Internal Auditor for the year 2024-25

Resolved: Councillor Mrs Turville take on the internal audit checks, in addition to the internal audit which should be undertaken by a suitably qualified person at the end of the year 2024-25.

e) Financial Regulations and Standing Orders for 2024-25

The Parish Council undertook to review the Council’s Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which had been circulated (electronically) with the agenda for the meeting.

Resolved: To approve the NALC Model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations for with consideration to the tailored consideration at the next meeting.

f) Financial Risk Assessment and Management Plan

The Clerk advised the Council that copyright had been introduced as a new item to the risk assessment.

Resolved: To accept the Financial Risk Assessment and Management Plan 2023-24.

g) To authorise insurance policy with Zurich Municipal

Resolved: To authorise Renewal of the Council’s insurance Cover with Zurich Municipal at a cost of £214.00 for the period 6 July 2024 to 5 July 2025.

h) Banking Update

The Clerk advised the Council that the Parish Clerk will need to be a signatory in order to move to online banking and a new Parish Clerk would be best placed to make these arrangements, rather than for an application to be made which will then need to be updated.

i) Noticeboard Update

The Clerk advised the Council that preparations for placing the order for a notice board are done but the licence agreement is under review by Cannock Chase Council to ensure the terms and conditions remain relevant/current for installation on Cannock Chase Council land. When approved by the District Council the order can go ahead. The method of installation will be specified by the Principal Landscape & Countryside Officer.

Councillor Cotton advised that he had the artwork prepared for the noticeboard header which could be sent to the supplier in whatever form was preferred.

The Council confirmed that it preferred the title ‘Brindley Heath Parish Council’ rather than ‘Brindley Heath Parish Notice Board’.

j) To authorise cheques for payment

Resolved: To approve following cheque payments:

100236	The White House	£30.00	Use of meeting room for Parish meeting on 28 May 2024
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100237	SPCA	£245.00	Annual Subscription
100238	Zurich Municipal	£214.00	Insurance cover from 6 July 2024 to 5 July 2025
100239	Internal Audit	£50.00	Donation to charity in lieu of payment to Rob Mincher, Internal Auditor.

Resolved: To authorise payment of the cheques listed.

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

The Chairman advised the Council that the records he had been holding for Colwich Parish Council (from 1895) had been returned to the Parish Clerk.

The Chairman confirmed that Brindley Heath Parish records had been sent to the County Archivist some years ago. There was no charge at the time for this service.

23. SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: That Parish meetings would take place on: 30 July 2024, 24 September 2024 and 26 November 2024.

24. 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.

25. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Resolved: To approve the confidential minutes of the Meeting held on 26 March 2024: Minute Number 1-46/2023-24, 2-46/2023-24 and 3-46/2023-24.

26. CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

The Council considered a draft contract of employment and Clerk’s job description.

Resolved: The Clerk’s contract of employment and job description were approved.

The Chairman thanked everyone present for their attendance.

Signed.....

Chairman, Mr. P. Adams

Date.....

Chairman’s Initials

8/2024-25