

## BERKSWICH PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of Berkswich Parish Council Extraordinary Meeting held on Tuesday 7 September 2021 at 7.30 pm at Walton Village Hall

**Present:** Cllr Sue Francis (Chairman), Cllr Malcolm Millichap (Vice Chairman), Cllr Ann Millichap, Cllr Graham Kilford, Cllr Alan Taylor, Cllr Caroline Pearson, Cllr Ben Rowell, Cllr Margaret Crossland and Cllr Tim Luker

**In attendance:** Cllr Andy Cooper of Stafford Borough Council, Mrs Sue Fullwood as Clerk and five members of the public

Cllr Francis welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### 1. Public questions

Cllr Francis brought forward items 21/139, 21/141 and 21/135 so that they could be discussed with members of the public.

- 21/139 Highways Issues at Milford – way forward** A member of the public from Milford asked that the Parish Council do what it could to keep the speeding and dangerous driving issue in Milford at the top of the local agenda. Community Speedwatch would be considered by residents, but it was felt that the speed limit would need to be reduced to 30 mph first. **Resolved:** that the Clerk should write to Staffordshire County Council expressing residents' concerns **Action: Clerk** Cllr Cooper informed the meeting that people caught speeding were written to by the police, or if the offence was judged serious enough they were visited by the police. Repeat offenders could get points on their driving licence. Cllr Cooper suggested that Brocton and Milford communities could work together and that he would be happy to arrange for someone from Speedwatch to talk to them about it. A member of the public asked of there was a possibility of speed humps or chicanes. Cllr Francis replied that a lot of residents don't want them because of the risk of damage to vehicles and the residents would have to have everyone 'on board' before anything like that could happen.
- 21/141 Information Hut at Milford – way forward** Discussions took place around attracting volunteers to help run the hut. The hut was not owned by the Parish Council, it was owned by Staffordshire County and Cannock Chase Councils. **Resolved:** Clerk to contact Cannock Chase Management Group to ask if they want assistance from the Parish Council to attract volunteers. **Action: Clerk** One Cllr felt that leaflets were outdated and information was usually found by other methods such as mobile phones.
- 21/135 Holly Bush Play Area – update on vandalism** A member of the public had noted that the play area would potentially be closed at night in vandalism had not stopped and they felt that as a community area it should be kept open. Vandalism seemed to have stopped so no further action would be taken. The member of the public said that the roundabout was sticking and was difficult for disabled children to use. Spending on the play area was on hold pending an inspection by RoSPA during September as there were items that would need to be replaced. Cllr Francis thanked Cllr Pearson for her regular visits to check on the play area.
- 21/128 Apologies** received from Cllr Mike Pascoe. **Resolved:** that the apologies were accepted.

**21/129 To record Declarations of Interest regarding items on the agenda** - There were no declarations of interest.

**21/130 To approve minutes of the Council meeting held on 6 July 2021 – Resolved:** agreed as a true record.

**21/131 To approve minutes of the Council meeting held on 3 August 2021 – Resolved:** agreed as a true record.

**21/132 Update on matters arising which are not agenda items**

**Trip rails** – Cllr Kilford suggested that the trip rails on Main Road may stop too soon as people were now parking at the end of them, on the bend. **Resolved:** to be added to the agenda for a future meeting. **Action: Clerk** Cllr Kilford also raised concerns about the trees behind the trip rails from School Lane to Milford Hall, that they may be hazardous now that people were walking/cycling under them. **Resolved:** Clerk to write to SCC **Action: Clerk**

Cllr Francis added that ‘runners’ from the large tree at the junction between Cedar Way and Brocton Lane were causing problems for pedestrians as they were growing wildly. **Resolved:** Clerk to include this issue in the letter to SCC. **Action: Clerk**

**Parking on Old Croft Road** – Realistically there was nothing that could be done without affecting children’s access to sport and exercise, the issue had to be balanced against that. If trip rails were installed, the problem would be pushed to Victoria Way. Parents were responsible for their children’s safety along the road.

**SIDs** – Cllr Kilford felt that there had been a substantial decrease in cars speeding on Main Road following the installation of the SIDs.

**21/133 Walton and Holly Bush Coppice Trees T001 and T005** – the written report had not been received, but Cllr Taylor had had a verbal report. The trees were not in need of urgent work and would need two or three phases of work to reduce the crown of the trees back to healthy stems. Residents on Bluebell Hollow had asked about cutting back overhanging branches on their property.

**21/134 To consider survey reports for Walton and Holly Bush Coppices** – Cllr Taylor informed the meeting that the reports had said that both coppices were in reasonable health and that the density would need to be reduced over time. The Council would need to get someone in to cut off the original stakes as they were restricting the growth of the trees. The biggest problem was the proximity of some trees to the houses and the report suggested a 3-metre buffer strip from the fences of the properties on Bluebell Hollow. The residents of the properties on Bluebell Hollow backing onto the coppice would need to be consulted about clearing the 3-metre strip as that may cause security issues for them. **Resolved:** item to be added to the November meeting agenda. **Action: Clerk**

**21/135 Holly Bush Play Area** – see public questions above.

**21/136 Children’s involvement in Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Celebrations** – Cllr Pearson had made enquiries about mugs and a basic mug would cost £1 and then each colour added would add to the cost per mug. Cllr Pearson suggested a colouring competition for local children. Cllr Kilford said a party could be organised at the Village Hall for local

children, on a different day to the afternoon tea being organised by Cllr M Millichap. Cllr Francis suggested a picnic at Holly Bush Playing Fields, but then you would be reliant on the weather.

**21/137 Ex-Vauxhall Site on Main Road/The Rise** – The Clerk had established that the site was still for sale at £1.75m and apparently there were interested parties.

**21/138 To agree future website development** – for value and experience SCC seemed the best option. **Resolved:** Clerk to contact SCC to agree silver package and to start work on new website ASAP. **Action: Clerk**

**21/139 Highways Issues at Milford** – see public questions above.

**21/140 War Memorial**

**i Maintenance** - Cllr Millichap gave Cllr Francis the plaque which had come loose from the War Memorial. Cllr Millichap suggested that this may be an opportunity to add some names that had originally been missed to a new plaque, to have the memorial repaired and to invite the Bishop to come and dedicate it. Cllr Taylor added that there were two blank facets on the memorial and a new plaque could be added there. Cllr Taylor also felt that the stone wall surrounding the memorial was in need of repair.

The previous Clerk had received for a quote for repair work just before the first lockdown, but work had not been done. **Resolved:** Clerk to work with Cllr Taylor to get quotes for repairs. **Action: Clerk/Cllr Taylor**

**ii Remembrance Day – Resolved:** To purchase two wreaths to be placed on war memorials for Remembrance Day. **Action: Clerk**

**21/141 Information Hut at Milford** - see public questions above.

**21/142 Bench at the top of The Rise** – The previous Clerk had consulted relevant households regarding placing a bench and five had raised concerns that it would be a magnet for antisocial behaviour. The Clerk had asked Highways about the possibility of placing a bench and been informed that a licence would be required which would need public consultation and a fee of £109. **Resolved:** Not to be pursued any further.

**21/143 Christmas Ideas/celebrations** – discussions took place about various possibilities. **Resolved:** Not to be pursued any further.

**21/144 Financial Matters**

<b>Funds Allocation</b>	
Elections	£10,000.00
Replacement of Playground Equipment	£20,000.00
Professional & Legal Planning Advice	£40,000.00
Crime Prevention Measures	£25,000.00
Walton Coppice Maintenance Fund	£25,000.00
Hollybush Coppice Maintenance Fund	£10,000.00
Asset Replacement Fund	£34,000.00
Environmental Care incl: Milford Project	£31,000.00
General Reserve	£30,792.23
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>£225,792.23</b>

**Berkswich Parish Council**  
**Budget Report August 2021**

<b>RECEIPTS</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Precept	14,021.00	26,535.00
Council tax support grant	-	1,231.00
SBC (Concurrent Function Allowance)	-	1,507.00
SCC Minor Highways Agreement	-	1,500.00
VAT refund	-	5,000.00
Interest Santander	-	185.00
Interest Teachers A/c	-	125.00
Interest Hampshire Trust	83.00	125.00
Misc. Receipts	-	50.00
<b>Total income</b>	<b>14,104.00</b>	<b>36,258.00</b>

<b>PAYMENTS</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Staff costs	2,953.68	10,500.00
Office costs	2,793.44	4,392.00
Maintenance costs	5,519.70	11,000.00
Additional maintenance	444.00	700.00
Play area equipment	107.88	1,600.00
Capital purchases	2,024.10	4,500.00
Community support	560.99	3,800.00
Projects	1,344.00	5,530.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>15,747.79</b>	<b>42,022.00</b>

**Berkswich Parish Council**  
**Bank Reconciliation as at 31 August 2021**

<b>Receipts</b>			
<b>Company</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Date Received</b>
<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>£0.00</b>	

<b>Payments</b>						
<b>Paid to</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Invoice date</b>	<b>Cheque #</b>	<b>Gross Incl. VAT</b>	<b>VAT</b>	<b>Net</b>
Trent Grounds Maintenance	Maintenance July 2021	30/07/2021	614	£1,300.20	£ 216.70	£1,083.50
The Benhill Press Ltd	Summer 2021	31/07/2021	613	£118.00	£0.00	£118.00
ElanCity Ltd	Evolis SID 2 of 2 inc solar panel and batteries	25/08/2021	612	£1,970.58	£328.43	£1,642.15
Walton Village Hall	Hall hire 6 July 21	30/07/2021	611	£30.00	£0.00	£30.00
Staffordshire Pension Fund	Empsee and Emper. contributions July 21	31/07/2021	610	£220.58	£0.00	£220.58
Mrs Susan Fullwood	Clerk salary and expenses July 21	31/07/2021	608	£753.41	£9.53	£743.88
<b>Total Payments</b>				<b>£4,392.77</b>	<b>£554.66</b>	<b>£3,838.11</b>

<b>Cashbook</b>	
Opening Balance at 01.08.2021	17,806.95
Add:	
Receipts 01.08.2021 to 31.08.2021	0.00
Less	
Payments 01.08.2021 to 31.08.2021	4,539.47
Cashbook Balance at 31.08.2021	<u>13,267.48</u>

<b>Current Account</b>	
Bank statement Balance at 31.08.2021	13,560.88
Less: Unpresented Cheques	
	Chq No                      Amount
	603                      146.70
	<u>146.70</u>
Add: Unpresented Receipts	0.00
Available funds in C/A	<u>£13,414.18</u>
Reconciles to Cash Book (check zero)	0.00

<b>Total Funds</b>	
Teachers Building Society	£61,822.20
Hampshire Trust Bank	£61,905.29
Stafford Railway Building Society	£61,822.20
Funds in C/A after receipts & payments	£13,414.18
<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>£225,792.23</b>

**Resolved:** The budget report, expenditure and bank reconciliation were agreed as accurate and approved.

#### 21/145 **Planning Matters**

- i **Commenting on planning applications** – The Clerk had received an example of a delegated powers agreement from another Clerk. **Resolved:** The Clerk to edit the document for Berkswich Parish Council and bring to the next meeting. **Action: Clerk**
- ii **Planning Application Reference 21/34563/COU at Brocton Park Farm** – The Council would object on the grounds that there was insufficient information. Cllr Taylor to prepare a response for the Clerk to send. **Action: Cllr Taylor**
- iii **Amended Planning application 21/33769/HOU at 19 Cedar Way** – The Council had previously commented on this application and had no further comment. Councillors were disappointed that previous comments did not appear to have been acted upon and the design had not been changed.

#### 21/146 **Reports from other meetings**

- i **Environment Group** – the group had not met. Cllr Crossland was asked to arrange a meeting before the October Council meeting and to ensure that Cllr Francis was included. **Action: Cllr Crossland** Cllr Luker had been in discussion with Stafford Wildlife Trust about verges for wildlife.
- ii **Village Hall Council of Management** – the Council had not met. Cllr Kilford informed the meeting that bookings were increasing and groups were starting to meet regularly again.

#### 21/147 **Correspondence Received**

- i **Shugborough Estate future developments – Resolved:** The Project Manager to be invited to a closed section of the meeting starting at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 5 October.  
**Action: Clerk**
- ii **Possible Geocaching Event on Milford Common** – This was not something that the Council wanted to be involved in.
- iii **Doorstep Walks** – to be considered by the Environment Group **Action: Cllr Crossland**
- iv **Stafford Railway Building Society** – A letter had been received by Cllr Rowell regarding confirmation of the 2021/22 annual budget – Clerk to respond. **Action: Clerk**

**Dog Show** – An impromptu discussion took place about the Dog Show which took place at the Scout Hut, and the issue of parking for the event which Councillors had hoped to discuss with the PCSO if she had attended the meeting. **Resolved:** Clerk to write to the PCSO saying the Council were disappointed that she could not attend the meeting.

**21/127 Agenda items for the next meeting**

The next meeting would take place on Tuesday 5 October 2021 at 7.30 pm at Walton Village Hall. Items for the agenda would include: Telephone Box, trip rails. **Action: Clerk**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.20 pm.