

## BERKSWICH PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of Berkswich Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 4 May 2021 at 7.30 pm via Zoom

**Present:** Cllr Sue Francis (Chair), Cllr Margaret Crossland, Cllr Graham Kilford, Cllr Ann Millichap, Cllr Malcolm Millichap, Cllr Mike Pascoe, Cllr Ben Rowell, Cllr Alan Taylor

**In attendance:** Sue Fullwood as Clerk, one member of the public as an observer

#### Public session

1. Issues from residents – none
2. Report from Staffordshire County Council – none (purdah)
3. Report from Stafford Borough Council - none

**21/59 Election of the Chair of the Council** – Cllr M Millichap proposed Cllr Francis should be elected as Chair of the Council. This was seconded by Cllr Crossland. **Resolved:** It was unanimously agreed that Cllr Francis should continue as Chair. Cllr Francis accepted the nomination.

**21/60 Election of the Vice-Chair** - Cllr M Millichap was proposed as Vice-Chair of the Council by Cllr Francis. This was seconded by Cllr Taylor. **Resolved:** It was unanimously agreed that Cllr M Millichap should continue as Vice-Chair. Cllr M Millichap accepted the nomination.

**21/61 Apologies** Cllr Andy Cooper, Stafford Borough Council.

**21/62 Declarations of Interest; Written applications for dispensations under the Localism Act 2011** There were no declarations of interest or written applications for dispensation.

**21/63 Updates to Councillors' register of interest forms.** No declarations of interest or updates to register of interest forms had been received.

**21/64 Minutes of the Council meeting of 6 April 2021.** **Resolved** that the minutes of the Berkswich Parish Council meeting held on 6 April 2021 were a true record and should be approved and signed by the Chairman.

**21/65 Matters arising from the minutes and not discussed as agenda items** – none.

**21/66 Financial matters**

**21/66 i. Bank Reconciliation Statement, Schedule of Payments, Cashflow Statement**  
The documents were shared on screen by Cllr Rowell. The payments were approved and confirmed. The Chair viewed the bank statements and confirmed these to be correct. Cllr Millichap thanked Cllr Rowell for all the work he had put into financial matters and data for the Council. **Resolved:** £44.01 wayleave payment received to be deposited in Stafford Railway Building Society account.

| <b>Receipts</b>   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| Stafford Borough Council (Precept)                        | £14,021.00        |
| Hampshire Trust Bank Interest (reinvested to HTB account) | £83.09            |
| <b>Total Receipts</b>                                     | <b>£14,104.09</b> |

| <b>Payments</b>                              | <b>Cheque No:</b> | <b>Gross Incl. VAT</b> | <b>VAT</b>    | <b>Net</b>       |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Trent Grounds Maintenance                    | 581               | £231.30                | £38.55        | £192.75          |
| Colwich Parish Council (Newsletter Delivery) | 582               | £200.00                | £0.00         | £200.00          |
| N B Rowell (Zoom fees)                       | 583               | £14.39                 | £2.40         | £11.99           |
| J Price (Stafford Computing) Laptop Repair   | 584               | £165.00                | £27.50        | £137.50          |
| Susan Fullwood (Clerk's April Salary)        | 585               | £576.27                | £0.00         | £576.27          |
|  |                   |                        |               |                  |
| <b>Total Payments</b>                        |                   | <b>£1,186.96</b>       | <b>£68.45</b> | <b>£1,118.51</b> |

| <b>Total Funds</b>                     |                    | <b>Bank Account Adjusted for all Receipts &amp; Payments</b> |                          |
|--|--------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Teachers Building Society              | £61,822.20         | Bank Statement 20 April 2021                                 | £34,763.19               |
| Hampshire Trust Bank                   | £61,905.29         |  |                          |
| Stafford Railway Building Society      | £61,822.20         |  |                          |
| Yorkshire Bank (current account) B/Fwd | £22,334.58         | Total of Unpresented Cheques                                 | £7,002.10                |
| Add: Receipts this month               | £14,021.00         | Available C/A Funds to C/Fwd                                 | <b><u>£27,761.09</u></b> |
| Less Payments this month               | £1,186.96          |  |                          |
| Funds in C/A after receipts & payments | £35,168.62         |  |                          |
| <b>Funds Available</b>                 | <b>£220,718.31</b> |  |                          |

**21/67 Planning matters**

A future planning application at Brocton Park Farm had been circulated for information. It would be improper for the Councillors to comment on the application before being consulted by Stafford Borough Council.

**21/68 Maintenance, update on outstanding tasks**

**21/68 i Damage to grass verges** The Clerk had written to Cadent asking them when they would be restoring the verges to their original state. Clerk to chase response from Cadent **Action: Clerk**

**21/69 Footpath/Roads**

**21/69 i. Jacob's Ladder footpath, damaged gates** Cllr Rowell said that although the footpath had looked fantastic when the work was first done, it had already started to sink and might need to be redone at least once. If Mr Haszard agreed to provide the labour, The Council would consider paying for materials such as hardcore. It was thought that Staffordshire County Council had installed the stone steps, but it was not known who was responsible for them. The parish boundary line would need to be established as the gate was within Brocton Parish. **Action: Cllr Taylor and Cllr Francis**

**21/69 ii. Lane alongside Holly Bush Field** Cllr Rowell felt that the lane was getting narrower whilst the verges were getting wider, as they were so overgrown. The road sign was becoming obscured.

**21/70 Environment Group Update** The Environment Group had not met, Cllrs Crossland, Taylor and Francis would meet before the next Council meeting. Cllr Crossland asked for clarification on where the wildflower verge trial could happen – Cllr Francis clarified that the Council already had permission for this at Holdiford Road.

A resident had emailed in response to the parish newsletter and had raised an issue with a new brick wall which had been built opposite the church on Kitlings Lane. The wall had been built very neatly though very sympathetically, but was within permitted development. The same resident had suggested fruit trees in the large verge in Kitlings Lane, but it was felt this would not be possible due to service runs, pipes, etc running under the verge, particularly near the Severn Trent Pumping Station. The resident had also asked about TPOs and a Scots Pine and Yew tree in particular – Cllr Taylor knew that permission had been obtained for the removal of the Scots Pine, but would investigate what had happened to the Yew tree. **Action: Cllr Taylor** Clerk to respond and to invite the resident to join the Environment Group. **Action: Clerk**

**21/71 Reports from representatives – Village Hall – no meetings**

**21/72 Land to the rear of Bluebell Hollow**

**21/72 i. Fence lines** Cllrs Taylor, Rowell and Francis had met at Bluebell Hollow and looked at the fence lines backing on to Walton Coppice. A resident had complained that recent work had led to their fence leaning. The Councillors concluded that the fence was insecure because the fence posts had rotted, and was not caused by tree roots. Clerk to write and suggest the resident strengthens the posts or replaces the fence. **Action: Clerk**

**21/72 ii Hawthorn Hedge** The hawthorn hedge at the Coppice had become very overgrown. There were some broken fences – part of one fence had become detached and had fallen over the rails – Clerk to ask TGM to rectify. **Action: Clerk**

**21/72 iii Application to purchase part of Walton Coppice** The Clerk had searched on the laptop for the resolution made regarding the covenant when Walton Coppice was given to the Council, but had not been able to locate the minutes. Clerk to check minutes from 2005 stored at the Village Hall. **Action: Clerk**

**21/73 Milford Parking and improvement proposals** A Milford resident had emailed Cllr Cooper about dangerous parking at Milford roundabout and sent a copy to the Clerk. It was felt that there was little the Parish Council could do as if barriers were put up in the

area, it would push the problem further up the road. The speed limit, signage and road surface were all outside of the Parish Council's remit, but the Clerk would write to Staffordshire County Council and ask them to look at the issues raised and ask Highways for a report. **Action: Clerk**

**21/74 Email addresses** Peter Bickerstaffe from Avdec could provide @berkswich-pc.gov.uk email addresses as part of his website package so there would be no extra cost. Clerk to get email addresses set up in the format forename.surname@. **Action: Clerk**

**21/75 Holly Bush Park** A resident had emailed the Parish Council suggesting a fundraising initiative for improvements at Holly Bush Playing Fields. The Clerk had also circulated photos of recent vandalism at the park. Clerk to research age restriction signs and see what was available. **Action: Clerk**

Clerk to ask Stafford Borough Council to assess the park and give their considered views, particularly with regards to any anti-vandal equipment that was available.

**Action: Clerk**

Clerk to respond to resident's email encouraging further input. **Action: Clerk**

**21/76 New Clerk**

**21/76 i Local Government Pension Scheme** If the Clerk was to be able to join the LGPS, the Council would need to resolve to join the pension scheme and employers contributions would be 25.6%. **Resolved:** It was unanimously agreed to join LGPS. Clerk to send a copy of the meeting minutes to Staffordshire Pension Fund. **Action: Clerk**

**21/76 ii/iii Pay date/pay method** Cllr Rowell suggested that the Clerk could be paid by monthly standing order between 24<sup>th</sup> and the end of each month so pay would be a maximum of three weeks in arrears and one week in advance. Expenses would continue to be paid by cheque. Cllr Rowell to make enquiries about payment by standing order. **Action: Cllr Rowell**

**21/76 iv Phone** The landline at the home of the Clerk was used by other family members and was not appropriate to be published for Parish Council business. Tesco mobile had monthly phone contracts starting from £7.50 pcm. **Resolved:** Clerk to take out contract from Tesco mobile for £7.50 pcm. **Action: Clerk**

**21/76 v Microsoft Office** The Parish Council laptop used by the Clerk did not have Microsoft Office installed. There were various options including lifetime subscriptions and pay monthly. Clerk to enquire which packages were used at Brocton Parish Council. **Action: Clerk**

**21/77 Correspondence received since last meeting** Pen Underwriting Limited had sent renewal details which had previously been circulated by the Clerk. **Resolved:** renewal approved. Clerk to arrange payment. **Action: Clerk**

**21/78 Agenda items for the next meeting**

The next meeting would take place on Tuesday 1 June 2021 at 7.30 pm at Walton Village Hall. Items for the agenda would include: SIDs [Cllr Kilford to chase by email **Action: Cllr Kilford**]; Holly Bush park; Review of Trip Rails; an Environment Group update; Jacob's Ladder – steps and lane.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.45 pm.