**BERKSWICH PARISH**

**Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 3 May 2022**

**at 7.00 pm at Walton (Berkswich) Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllr Sue Francis (Chair), Cllr Margaret Crossland, Cllr Graham Kilford, Cllr Ann Millichap, Cllr Malcolm Millichap, Cllr Caroline Pearson, Cllr Ben Rowell, Cllr Alan Taylor, Cllr Andy Cooper of Stafford Borough Council, Mrs Sue Fullwood and a member of the public.

**22/1 Welcome and introduction by Chair** – Cllr Francis welcomed everyone to the meeting

**22/2 Apologies** – Cllr Mike Pascoe and Cllr Tim Luker

**22/3 Approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2021** – the minutes were agreed as accurate and approved.

**22/4 Chair’s Annual Report 2021/22** – Cllr Francis read from her report: the new Clerk was very efficient and capable and had worked with Staffordshire County Council (SCC) to design a new website for the council and had taken over the running of the Facebook page. The Clerk had also reformatted the newsletter. Cllr Francis thanked Cllr Malcolm Millichap for producing the newsletters over the past year.

 The Parish Council had had two new Councillors, Caroline Pearson and Tim Luker. Cllr Luker was now the Chair of the Environment Group.

 The two coppices owned by the Parish Council had been surveyed and ideas had been given for future management recommendations. Trees marked with orange paint would be thinned or removed and work would be done to renew the hawthorn hedge. The tendering process for the work was underway. Cllr Francis thanked Cllr Taylor for his work in this area.

 Vandalism in the play area had been a recurring problem and there may be a need to lock the gates on some occasions. New play equipment had been ordered and the council hoped to have a grand reopening when installation was complete.

 The council had been considering work at the war memorial to improve disabled access, but this had been delayed when the memorial had been damaged in a recent incident. The council planned to have the memorial repaired as soon as possible.

 The phone box library on Main Road had not always been used appropriately and items apart from books had been left in there on occasion, such as toys and clothing. Sometimes stocks of books would disappear, presumably to be sold.

 Cllr Francis thanked the public for sharing their concerns with the council.

**22/5 Annual Financial Statement** – the Clerk/RFO read through her financial statement: Parish finances remain healthy with substantial levels of reserves. The precept had increased by 1.67% for 2022/23 as the council were keen to keep any increase low due to the increase in the cost of living which was impacting on people in the Parish.

For 2021/22, income had been around £5,000 under what had been anticipated as money had not been received from SCC and the VAT reclaim for 2020/21 had been less as spending had been reduced due to Covid-19 restrictions. Expenditure had been £10,000 under what was anticipated due to maintenance not being required and purchases not being made because of Covid-19 restrictions.

The three Parish investment accounts had almost the same amount in them, of just under £62,000 each.

Some reserves would be spent on playground equipment and management of the coppices in 2022/23.

**22/6 Matters raised by Parishioners** – none.

**22/7 Close of meeting** – the meeting closed at 7.10 pm