

**COLTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING, WEDNESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2021  
AT 7:30 PM BY ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Maximum of 20 mins at the beginning of the meeting to hear public questions and comments)**

Richard Cox was asked to introduce himself and explained that he wanted to observe the meeting to find out about the issues affecting Colton. He had been selected as Conservative candidate for the county council elections due in May and hoped to make a positive impact if elected.

Parishioner: Anxious about item 8 a) ii) and had previously sent email urging PC to get professional advice from Staffs Wildlife Trust about the possible dredging of the brook. Brown trout, as well as perch and other wildlife, live in the brook and dredging could ruin their habitat.

Noel Talbot commented that the possible dredging was actually to be the other side of the weir, where the brook divides and flooding occurred recently (not between bridge and weir as specified in the agenda item).

Parishioner: Enquired whether the Environment Agency had been consulted. Sarah Plater explained that a consultant engaged by the EA had been doing work and discussing with the PC.

Parishioner: Concerned about continued blockage of drains under Bellamour Lane bridge and lack of action from Highways to clear them, despite several reports. Water often accumulates then freezes over causing a real safety hazard on a blind corner.

**Sarah Plater** would also report online.

Councillors asked Richard Cox to note these concerns and, if he is elected, would be looking for action on these sorts of issues.

**(No member of public may address meeting hereafter).**

**BUSINESS AGENDA**

1. To note attendance and receive apologies for absence

In attendance were Cllrs Sarah Plater (Acting Chairman), Noel Talbot and Steve Jenkinson, District Councillor Shirley Barnett and Clerk Alison James. Also in attendance were Richard Cox and 4 members of the public. Apologies were received from Chairman Emma Godwin.

2. To receive declarations of interest - None

3. To approve minutes of budget meeting and main meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 by video conference – Both sets of minutes were approved and would be signed at a later date (**Chairman** and **Clerk**).

4. Chairman's Announcements - None

5. Payments

a) To approve the following payments:

i)	1833	Colton Village Hall – Play area insurance	£115.13
ii)	1834	TGM – Strimming wildlife area (60.00) and cutting hedge (90.00) in Closed Burial Ground plus VAT	£180.00
iii)	1835	HMRC – Payroll taxes, Q3 Oct - Dec	£217.04
iv)	1836	Alison James – Clerk's salary, January (239.82); Home working expenses, 5 weeks, 5 Dec –	

	15 Jan excl. 1 week's Xmas leave (20.00);	
	Re-imburement for Zoom licence, 26 Dec –	
	25 Jan (14.39); Re-imburement for 1 <sup>st</sup> &	
	2 <sup>nd</sup> class stamps and envelopes (9.21)	£283.42
v) 1837	St Mary's School – Donation for purchase of	
	2 Chromebooks to aid online learning	
	(t.b.c. – see agenda item 10)	£600.00

(Total new payments above, for approval this month = £1,395.59)

Cheques 1833 to 1836 were approved. Clerk pointed out that she had omitted to include her quarterly Burial Ground Clerk salary and would include next month instead. Cheque 1837 was not approved as specified here (see item 10).

## 6. HS2

To consider any developments and agree any action required – No matters had arisen since the last PC meeting.

## 7. Planning Matters

- a) To note the following application and any more recent applications and make observations to the Planning Authority:
  - i) 20/01777/FUH – Parchfield House Farm, Colton Road, Colton – Erection of leisure building. Also 20/01778/LBC for works to listed building to enable this.  
Only recently received and it was unclear how this application differed from that previously approved.
- b) To note the following appeal decision by the Planning Inspectorate:
  - i) APP/K3415/D/20/3259857 (Original application refused by LDC was 20/00688/FUH) – Wall End Barn, Bellamour Lodge Farm, Colton Road, Colton – Erection of detached log cabin (home office) at front of dwelling – Appeal allowed
- c) To report on any recent decisions of the Planning Authority - None
- d) To consider any further action required on application 18/01303/FULM – Proposed gas fired power station on Land North of Bellamour Lane – Response from LDC to concerns about Construction Management Plan, Network Rail consultation response and LDC procedures for publishing documents to their website – Standing orders revoked: Andy Chappell considered response from Claire Billings had not been satisfactory. He had checked LDC website that day and corrupted documents previously identified had not been corrected. Discussions still ongoing with Highways about routing and loads, which were very difficult to follow and fragmented. He did not feel they would give the Planning Committee a comprehensive view and understanding of the proposals. **Andy Chappell** offered to provide **Clerk** with appropriate wording to raise concerns again with LDC and seek corrections. Standing orders reinstated.
- e) To consider any action required on further information received from company proposing a solar farm project at Colton Mill Farm & Cawarden Springs Farm, including offer of video presentation – PC agreed it would be beneficial to have a video presentation at the next meeting or, failing that, on a separate occasion, also open to the public. **Clerk** to contact the company Spring to arrange.
- f) To consider any other current planning/enforcement issues – **Clerk** was asked to check with LDC the current position on works at the Yorkshireman.

## 8. Highways & Footpaths

- a) To report on progress and agree any action required:
  - i) Flooding including Blithbury Road and Colton Road by the Yorkshireman and discussions with Environment Agency – Dave Hughes, EA consultant, had been provided with recent flooding photos and landowner details and had sent a short update on his work. Clerk to chase a further update in 2 weeks, to obtain before next meeting.
  - ii) Ideas for possible laid path and dredging of Moreton Brook between bridge and weir – Clerk to contact Staffs Wildlife Trust to find out their charge for advice concerning dredging below the weir and its effect on wildlife habitats. Doubts were also expressed about the benefits of a laid path, with trip hazards likely to remain and wildflowers lost.
  - iii) Footpath alongside Colton Rd – Shirley Barnett had spoken to County Cllr Martyn Tittley about absence of SCC response to petition. Highways had subsequently provided costings for work (from Fog Cottages to end of Bellamour Way) and were looking for match funding (50%) from PC. Their estimate for complete resurfacing was about £80,000 or to scrape off and patch work repair would be about £30,000. Expecting PC to find such a sum was considered completely unreasonable and there was frustration at the lack of resources allocated to issues in Colton compared to other local areas. The footpath used to just be cleared back by the SCC Neighbourhood working team and it was thought that sort of job would be sufficient. It was suggested asking a contractor how much they would charge to cut back vegetation and possibly fill in any significant holes.
  - iv) Removal of blockage on Footpath 11 – Request for a gate had been endorsed by PC and passed to Rights of Way, who had agreed to contact landowner.
  - v) Any other footpath issues – broken stile at junction of footpaths 50-53 – Reported to Rights of Way who confirmed it was already on their list.
  - vi) Further concerns about safety of Blue Wall – Photos had been sent to Stephen Earp at LDC Building Control, who had said he would inspect again. Clerk to chase response.

## 9. To consider progress and further action required on proposed new village gating/signs

Various correspondence had taken place with Mary Lee in Highways and LDC. Investigation of location of services would take place after confirmation of LDC approval. A pre-planning application required a decision on exact size and also design of the signs e.g. whether to include speed signs, planters. Sarah Plater would circulate for comments the smaller design put forward recently by John Carter. Sarah would also measure signs at Abbots Bromley during a forthcoming essential visit.

## 10. To discuss potential donation to St Mary's School for purchase of Chromebooks

In absence of response from auditor yet, SPCA advice was that PC did not have a power for providing education and should not make grants towards anything used for delivering the National Curriculum, which is the responsibility of SCC as education authority. However, a follow up response had suggested that a donation might be made to the PTA as a charity, as allowed if of public benefit and for the advancement of education, which would arguably be reasonable in current Covid situation. Clerk to urgently check with Alan Toplis and, if he considered allowable, PC agreed to authorise issue of a cheque to the PTA for £600, equivalent to 2 Chromebooks (re-specification of cheque 1837 listed at item 5 a) v) ).

## 11. Correspondence

To note items of correspondence received and agree any actions required:

- a) LDC – Information about 'Window Wanderland' initiative, 'a Covid-safe way to connect people, transforming streets into magical outdoor galleries' and invitation to Zoom event on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January at 11.30am to find out more (Email, circulated to cllrs) – Although an interesting idea, it was thought not to be advisable to encourage more people outside currently.
- b) LDC – Reminder about the new Lichfield Community Lottery and invitation to the virtual 'Good Cause Launch' on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January at 5pm (Email)
- c) Community Foundation of Staffs – Grants available for community organisations supporting those affected by Covid-19 (Email, circ. to orgs.)
- d) LDC – Opportunity to subscribe to a new email newsletter to keep up to date with LDC matters (Email)

## 12. Committees

To receive any update from Burial Ground Committee – Committee unable to meet as some members cannot access Zoom so matters being dealt with by email. New line of graves had been marked out and TGM would shortly be clearing leaves.

## 13. Finance and audit

- a) 2020/21 – To receive update from Clerk on arrangements for interim audit - Availability given to auditor but no date for virtual audit yet offered.
- b) 2021/22 - To note progress on submission of precept request to LDC – Form had now been prepared so Clerk would obtain signatures, scan & submit.
- c) To receive update on amendment to bank mandate – Clerk had only managed to access mandate pdf file via another laptop and now needed to upload signatures there. Sarah Plater and Noel Talbot were asked if they could supply digital signatures.

## 14. Parish Council matters

- a) To discuss any progress on filling vacancies on the parish council – A parishioner had expressed interest and was observing the meeting and there may be another person prepared to consider joining. Sarah Plater had received comments on her article and was now submitting for magazine.
- b) To agree arrangements for renewal of Heathway grazing licence – Subject to confirmation that the licensee wished to continue (Clerk), a new licence would be drawn up. Sarah Plater offered to type up a new document.
- c) To consider suggestion of possible duck race in village in 2021 – PC agreed this could be a nice summer event. Noel Talbot to look into it further.
- d) To consider previous request from parishioner as to whether there is any land in the parish that could be made available for allotments – Clerk to contact PLT, to see if they have any suitable land, as no response had been received to enquiry in mid 2020. PC's only land is licenced for grazing.
- e) To register any interest in latest list of SPCA training courses – No interest from existing councillors but any new ones may wish to undertake training.
- f) To note date of next PC meeting – Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February. Time to be confirmed (7pm if solar farm presentation can be arranged, otherwise 7.30pm).  
PC also agreed to enquire about potential cost of additional gritting of High St.  
Meeting closed at 8.45pm.