

**COLTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING, WEDNESDAY 3rd MARCH 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)

Parishioner: Re item 11 a) ii), had noticed people surveying by the brook bridge (PC confirmed that it is Environment Agency (EA)). Had been sent information from Staffs Wildlife Trust by PC and asked if PC could confirm that the EA would not dredge the brook without informing PC.

Sarah Plater said she thought it unlikely EA would go ahead with any action without consulting PC but should be asked (Clerk).

Parishioner: Re item 11 a) iv), offered thanks for PC getting Highways to clear 2 of the gullies, though there is still a lot of silt on the road.

(No member of public may address meeting hereafter).

BUSINESS AGENDA

1. To note attendance and receive apologies for absence

In attendance were councillors Sarah Plater (who chaired the meeting), Richard Birkin, Steve Jenkinson and Noel Talbot, District Cllr Shirley Barnett (left after item 13) and Clerk Alison James. Also in attendance were Mel Havelock-Crozier, Nigel Parry, 5 parishioners and, from item 8, Richard Cox (Conservative candidate for forthcoming County Council elections). Apologies received from Chairman Emma Godwin.

2. To receive declarations of interest – None declared

3. To approve minutes of meeting held on 3rd February by video conference

Minutes approved and signature will be arranged at a later date (Clerk).

4. To co-opt new councillors Mel Havelock-Crozier and Nigel Parry

Mel Havelock-Crozier and Nigel Parry had both expressed willingness to join the PC and were warmly welcomed. They were co-opted into the remaining 2 vacancies so all seats were now filled, which had not been the case for many years.

5. To receive Declarations of Acceptance of Office

Signed declarations had been received from the 2 new councillors and would be signed and submitted to LDC by Clerk, along with their Register of Interests forms.

6. Chairman's Announcements - None

7. Payments

- a) To confirm the payee name for the following payment ratified at the last meeting:

i)	1837	St Mary's Primary School PTFA -	£600.00
		Donation in support of various projects, due to Covid lockdown	

Mel Havelock-Crozier, as a director at the school, passed on its thanks for the donation, which would probably be put towards their horticultural hub project. The school was also grateful for the 2 Chromebooks handed over by Shirley Barnett from LDC. Shirley asked if the children had written to thank the LDC Leader, Doug Pullen as she had suggested to the teacher. Clerk to check that Mel Havelock-Crozier's Register of Interests form includes school directorship and pointed out that, after her co-option, an interest should be declared for any future school items on the agenda.

- b) To approve the following payment:
 - i) 1839 Alison James – Clerk’s salary, March (239.82);
Home working expenses, 4 weeks, 6 Feb – 5 Mar
(16.00); Re-imburement for printer cartridges
(36.47) and 1st class stamps (5.10); Mileage for
March20 – Feb21 (45.00) £342.39

(Total new payments above, for approval this month = £342.39)

Payment was approved.

8. HS2

To consider any developments and agree any action required including

- a) Royal Assent for Phase 2a and availability of Community and Business Funds

Clerk had been asked to request up to date copies of map books. Clerk had reported fence down at Stockwell Heath to Liz Davis. Emma Godwin had asked Liz Davis about preserving access to the bridleway at Longley Lane, the meaning of red and white squares on the roads and access via Moor Lane, which is to be part of the HS2 haul route, in the event of other routes out of the village being flooded. **Sarah Plater** and **Mel Havelock-Crozier** said they would join a virtual presentation on ground investigations, if at a convenient time (**Clerk** to notify HS2). **Clerk** to ask Liz Davis if she is content to have her contact details included in parish magazine for any parishioners’ queries/concerns. **Steve Jenkinson** offered to read HS2’s detailed guidance about their funds, in order for PC to advise local organisations if and how they could apply. Liz Davis had supplied some information to Clerk about potential for their funds to support work on the Colton Rd footpath and possible support from Balfour Beatty (**Clerk** to chase up).
- b) Further HS2 consultation on impacts of Phase 2a and response to Sarah Mallen – Andy Chappell’s draft had been approved by PC by email and submitted to Sarah Mallen by Clerk, with no response yet.
- c) Minutes of Annual Meeting between HS2 and councils affected by Phase 2a – No comments
- d) Phase 2a newsletters including Ground Investigation works and offer of presentation – **Clerk** would circulate email received that day about ecology presentations to councillors and interested parishioners present.

9. Planning Matters

- a) To note the following applications and any more recent applications and make observations to the Planning Authority:
 - i) 21/00301/FUH – Lea Hall Farm Cottage, Lea Lane, Rugeley – Single storey side and rear extensions and various alterations to form kitchen, utility, lounge, entrance hall, laundry room and re-alignment of drive; also 21/00302/LBC for works to listed building to enable the above
 - ii) 21/00309/PND – The Brookland, Blithbury Rd, Colton – Prior Notification: Change of Use from Offices (Class B1) to a 3 bedroom dwelling (Class C3)
 - iii) 21/00375/FUH – Griffin Lodge, Bellamour Way, Colton – Replacement of 4 north facing windows and 1 west facing window; also 21/00376/LBC for listed building consent

Details had been circulated and no further comments made. Sarah Plater suggested that next meeting new councillors are given an explanation of what is required regarding commenting on applications.
- b) To report on any recent decisions of the Planning Authority - None

- c) To consider any further action required on application 18/01303/FULM – Proposed gas fired power station on Land North of Bellamour Lane – Shirley Barnett confirmed it was not on agenda for next LDC planning committee meeting.
- d) To consider any action required concerning proposed solar farm project at Colton Mill Farm & Cawarden Springs Farm – Application not yet submitted. Emma Godwin had followed up issue of solar flare and also PC had been told they could not be given any details of locals responding to company's questionnaire and if they were content, due to GDPR.
- e) To consider any other current planning/enforcement issues – Clerk to chase up response from LDC to PC request for visit to investigate works at the Yorkshireman. Clerk to copy any further correspondence to Shirley Barnett.

10. Finance and audit

- a) To receive update from Clerk on actions required after interim 2020/21 audit by Alan Toplis including reviews of Financial Regulations and Risk Assessment – Clerk had circulated summary of interim audit meeting to councillors. Financial regulations had been adapted from NALC template and auditor thought more regulations should have been retained about criteria for obtaining quotes for works. It was agreed that financial regulations should be reviewed at next meeting including item b) below (Clerk to note for April agenda). Clerk had not yet found time to review risk assessment but was asked to prioritise for next meeting. Clerk hoped to take leave w/b 15th March to coincide with time off her other jobs.
- b) To decide if any amendments are needed to Financial Regulations for additional powers to be delegated to the Clerk to keep essential services running in unforeseen circumstances such as the Covid pandemic–see above
- c) To receive report of income and expenditure for year to date against budget and projected financial position at year end – Report included all items known to date including March cheque just approved and a year end surplus against budget of approximately £450 was forecast, with total PC reserves of about £42,000.
- d) To consider the earmarking of reserves required at end of financial year – PC agreed that funds earmarked some years ago for Martlin Lane parking restrictions be released, as SCC had never requested payment. Also sums earmarked in 2017 for legal fees and tree inspection works to be released into general reserves. Earmarked money from HS2 for survey access at Stockwell Heath to be used to cover 20/21 grass cutting costs and NALC transparency grant to be used to cover 20/21 website costs. As play area spend in 20/21 had been over the budget of £750, the difference would be taken from the play area reserve.
- e) To update bank mandate to include new councillors – Clerk to request required details from new councillors.
- f) To consider email from PCC treasurer about Parish Magazine costs in 2020 and approach for 2021 – Costs in 2020 had been lower than expected. PC agreed that leftover from their 20/21 contribution should be retained by PCC and put towards the PC's 21/22 contribution (Clerk to notify PCC).
- g) To agree the terms of instruction for TGM for 2021 – PC agreed addition of clearance of leaves in the Open Burial Ground as a regular annual task. Sarah Plater to send list to Clerk to formally instruct TGM.

11.Highways & Footpaths

- a) To report on progress and agree any action required:
 - i) Flooding including Blithbury Road and Colton Road by the Yorkshireman and further feedback to Environment Agency – Environment Agency (EA) in process of surveying the Moreton Brook to create model of flows, towards trying to prevent flooding on Blithbury Rd. Clerk to email Dave Hughes to ask how long modelling will take.
 - ii) Enquiries into possible dredging or de-silting of Moreton Brook below weir – Noel Talbot had provided video of brook near its bifurcation showing some flow upstream and suggested some clearing of right hand fork might be beneficial. PC agreed to wait for advice from EA. Standing orders revoked: Parishioner pointed out that speeding brook flow could exacerbate flooding at Rugeley Trent Valley and there may be confusion between trying to reduce flooding there and reducing flooding in the village by the bridge. Some work recently done by first bridge near fork and large sycamore is to be removed as dangerous and that could improve flow down left fork. Standing orders reinstated.
 - iii) Drain and gully clearance around the parish – Noel Talbot and Sarah Plater felt that parish was not being well treated by SCC, especially when unable to get out of village for a few days. They had obtained quotes for clearance of gullies from a few contractors. However SCC Highways was not prepared to allow PC to arrange this work, even if PC paid for it. Sarah Plater to circulate email received from Garry Hunt. PC confirmed that in principle it would be willing to pay for a one-off clearance of gullies, especially on Hollow Lane, Bellamour Lane and Bellamour Way near bridge. It would not stop flooding but would ensure water drained away more quickly. Sarah Plater to draft an email for Clerk to send in reply to Garry Hunt, to keep pursuing action. Mel Havelock-Crozier suggested a dialogue with farmers to encourage them to keep roads clear of mud. Also councillors and parishioners need to keep reporting issues online.
 - iv) Blocked drains under Bellamour Lane bridge – dealt with above.
 - v) Footpath alongside Colton Rd - Emma Godwin was chasing up estimate from contractor for some limited works to make it walkable, as SCC quotes were exorbitant and expected 50% PC contribution. Richard Birkin asked about work done recently to verge near Closed Burial Ground, which Sarah Plater said appeared to have been done by LDC.
 - vi) Any other footpath issues – Overgrown hedge on footpath 49 – Clerk had reported via SCC online system but given low priority rating.
 - vii) Safety on corner at junction of Blithbury Rd and Hollow Lane – SCC Highways' response to online report – SCC response was that request for chevron/signage would have to be considered in priority order alongside all other road issues and so no action was expected.
 - viii) Progress with litter picking initiative – Facebook group had been set up and Richard Cox had obtained litter pickers and green bags from LDC, which were now held by Emma Godwin and Polly Macmillan.
 - ix) Possible additional gritting e.g. High Street – TGM had quoted £45 per time to grit High St, which is not gritted by SCC. PC agreed to fund this should it be required and TGM could be called on the day.
 - x) Removal of fallen tree over Moreton Brook below weir – Environment Agency had been notified by Clerk but said it might be responsibility of landowner. Richard Birkin to check if tree still there and notify Clerk.
 - xi) Overgrown hedge on Heathway – Bromford had said they would contact tenant. Shirley Barnett offered to follow up if nothing done.

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

Sarah Plater had circulated a revised costing of about £2,500. After discussion it was agreed the proposed revised design would be circulated again to enable new councillors to comment. Pre-planning submission to LDC would therefore be held back for now. **Sarah Plater** and **Mel Havelock-Crozier** offered to do an article for the parish magazine and put copy on noticeboard.

13.To consider request from VHMC for PC to pay for consultant's advice on badger setts on Village Hall field near Nature Reserve

VHMC wants a consultant to inspect and advise what can be done, as the potholes the badgers are creating near the entrance to the Nature Reserve are a safety hazard. PC had been asked if it would pay initial cost of about £800, as VHMC had been unable to obtain free advice. PC decided it was not happy to contribute at this stage and thought other consultants might be available at a more reasonable cost. PC would however be prepared to consider contributing when it can see what remedial work can be done. **Clerk** to reply to VHMC.

14.Correspondence

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

- a) SCC - Regular updates on community testing for Coronavirus (Emails)
- b) SCC – Staffordshire Libraries Update for March including new telephone IT support service, Reading Friends and various online events (Email)
- c) HS2 – Applications sought from residents on Phase 1 and Phase 2a route to serve as Local Community Representatives on the Construction Commissioner Steering Group (Email)
- d) LDC – Various information about funding opportunities for local voluntary groups and organisations (Emails)
- e) Staffordshire Lieutenancy – Looking for nominations for honours for local unsung heroes (Email)
- f) LDC – Consultation on long-term car parking options for Lichfield city centre, closing date 21st March (Email)

15.Committees

To receive any update from Burial Ground Committee – Proposed copying of Open Burial Ground plan – **Sarah Plater** to tidy up in the Open BG before Mother's Day.

16.Parish Council matters

- a) To update on progress with renewal of Heathway grazing licence – Draft licence recently received by **Clerk** from Hinson Parry for checking, before copies issued for signature, which could be done digitally.
- b) To agree arrangements for duck race in village in 2021 – Steve Jenkinson suggested it could be linked with social event recently proposed by VHMC. That email received too late for this agenda so to be on agenda next time (**Clerk**).
- c) To update on request from parishioner as to whether there is any land in the parish that could be made available for allotments - PLT Clerk said PC enquiry would be on the agenda for their next meeting.
- d) To consider whether to arrange another hanging basket competition – PC agreed it had been successful last year and John Carter was happy to hand over his information. Request for a volunteer to organise to be put in parish magazine (**Clerk**).

- e) To agree arrangements for the upkeep of the phone box – Good to see it being used but too many books being left so often very untidy. Sarah Plater to arrange for more shelving, put notice on door and article in magazine.
- f) To discuss communication between councillors and clerk – Sarah Plater had requested this item, recognising that it is difficult for Clerk to know what she is required to do when emails are exchanged outside meetings, especially now there will be 7 councillors contributing. It was agreed that instruction should generally be during meetings for transparency. Standing orders revoked: Andy Chappell pointed out that when the Bellamour Lane gas station application goes to Planning Committee, a decision cannot wait for a meeting. Clerk to ask George Burda if he is still willing to present parish views, provided the PC obtains the one speaking place available at the determination meeting. Standing orders re-instated.
- g) To register any interest in SPCA training courses and consider possible bespoke council training course – SPCA had quoted £350 for a bespoke 2 hr course for Colton PC, which councillors felt too expensive. Councillors to consider other SPCA training options for now, which were normally around £25 per course.
- h) To discuss arrangements for any Parish Assembly and the Annual Meeting – Current legislation only allows virtual PC meetings until 7th May, although NALC are lobbying for extension. PC Annual Meeting could be held as usual before the main meeting on 5th May. No national guidance had been received about legal requirement for PC to convene a Parish Assembly between 1st March and 1st June. SPCA had suggested holding a 'perfunctory' Assembly before next scheduled PC meeting, with one agenda item which deferred the opportunity for debate to an open forum to be held when circumstances allow. Clerk to arrange and notify organisations normally invited.
- i) To note date of next PC meeting – Wednesday 7th April at 7.30pm
It was agreed that councillors would convene at 7pm to explain PC finances to new councillors, with PC meeting starting at 7.30pm.