

COLTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING, WEDNESDAY 1st FEBRUARY 2023
AT 7:30 PM AT COLTON VILLAGE HALL

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Maximum of 20 mins at the beginning of the meeting to hear public questions and comments) – No matters raised.

BUSINESS AGENDA

1. To note attendance and receive apologies for absence

In attendance were Councillors Noel Talbot (NT), who chaired this meeting, Richard Birkin (RB) and Mel Havelock-Crozier (MH-C), District Councillor Shirley Barnett (SB) and Clerk Alison James. Apologies were received from Councillor Nigel Parry (NP) and County Councillor Richard Cox. David Grewer also attended for his subsequent co-option and 3 members of the public observed.

2. To receive declarations of interest - None

3. To approve minutes of meeting held on 4th January – Approved.

4. Chairman's Announcements - None

5. To co-opt David Grewer as a councillor and receive Declaration of Acceptance of Office – David Grewer completed his Declaration of Acceptance, signed by the Clerk, and was co-opted and welcomed on to the council.

6. Payments

a) To approve the following payments:

i)	1923	Cancelled	
ii)	1936	Cllr R Birkin – Reimbursement for replacement defibrillator batteries	£29.99
iii)	1937	Alison James – Clerk's salary, February (336.13); Home working expenses, 4 weeks, 7 Jan – 3 Feb (16.00); Reimbursement for bank payment on 26 Jan to magazine delivery girl for February (20.00)	£372.13

(Total of new payments above is £402.12)

The payments were approved as listed.

7. HS2

To consider any developments and agree any action required including

- a) Annual meeting of Phase 2a Highways subgroup between HS2, DfT, Highways authorities and parish councils - Rerun on 1st February – NT had attended first run so nothing further to report.
- b) Flooding issues including land ownership/tree planting and flooding at top of High Street/Newlands Lane – Recent correspondence with Balfour Beatty – Emma Godwin had taken up flooding on Newlands Lane with Balfour Beatty and HS2 but they had so far failed to accept responsibility for the issues.
- c) Initiative to progress projects and applications for funding from Community and Environment Fund – Feedback from meeting on 10 January – Meeting organised by NP had generated several good ideas and another meeting will be organised. Balfour Beatty attendee was unfortunately not particularly knowledgeable.

8. Planning Matters

- a) To note any applications received and make observations to the Planning Authority:

- i) 22/01660/FUL – Lea Hall Farm, Lea Lane, Rugeley – Creation of a new access track from the main access to original farmhouse (LDC deadline has passed – response of ‘no comments’ submitted by PC)
- b) To report on any recent decisions of the Planning Authority - Shirley Barnett confirmed that the gas station application had been disposed of, after review by the new planning officer, as had the similar application to Stafford Borough. The applicant company had made no contact for a considerable time, which was very poor in leaving parishioners in limbo for so long. It is thought that if the company wished to resurrect its plans, it would have to make a new application.

9. Highways, Footpaths and Open Spaces

- a) To report on progress and agree any action required:
 - i) Any flooding or drain issues – Blocked drain near brook bridge – This had been reported to Highways by a parishioner and then the Clerk, as water had iced over in recent cold spell and caused accidents.
 - ii) Rats at Stockwell Heath pond - Any update from LDC Environmental Health – **Clerk** was asked to send a further email and to pass details to SB to follow up at LDC.
 - iii) Erosion of path alongside Moreton Brook - Enquiries about land ownership and possible landscaping options – SB provided copy of some relevant correspondence from 2016 and also referred to information passed previously to Sarah Plater. **Clerk** to check records. Clerk had followed up contact from PCC for Diocese surveyor who would know about glebe lands. NT offered to meet him on site. **Clerk** to pass on contact details.
 - iv) Action on improving appearance of village – NT summarised note in parish magazine about increase in precept of £3.59 per household per year. PC wanted to fund additional items to improve life in the parish such as those arranged recently and last year like gritting and drain clearance to supplement SCC work and Jubilee events. One plan for next financial year is to pay a handyman to carry out extra jobs including in the Open Burial Ground.
 - v) Litter alongside Colton Road and date for a litter picking event – **MH-C** was contacting Greyhound landlord to see if they would provide refreshments (at PC’s expense) to those taking part in litter pick. Date of Easter Saturday 8th April, 9.45 till 12 agreed. **Clerk** to contact Richard Cox for more litter pickers and hoops for refuse bags. Article to be submitted for parish magazine (**MH-C** and **Clerk**).
 - vi) Website message of 20 October from parishioner about various highways issues – Yew hedge on Bellamour Lane had very recently been trimmed, though minimally and still overhanging pavement. Willow tree removed on Bellamour Way but roots still likely to be in the drain. No response yet from SCC to request regarding speed limit signs.
 - vii) Report to LDC of unstable wall on Bellamour Way – Following parishioner report, RB had contacted LDC who sent engineer to inspect it. He said it is not an imminent problem and will monitor. SB offered to follow up at LDC.
 - viii) Mud at side of Bellamour Lane near Bellamour Corner – SCC Highways reporting system did not have a specific category for this problem and most relevant seemed to be road sweeping so Clerk had reported to LDC.
 - ix) Arrangements for additional road gritting – Gritting had been arranged by RB in recent cold spell, with TGM using map supplied last year. Previous arrangements involved councillors no longer on PC so it was

agreed that in future any 2 of the 4 councillors living on or near High Street should agree when gritting is required and contact TGM (**RB, DG, NP, NT**).

- x) Parking issues in the village – Particular problem with cars parking opposite junctions making safe exit difficult, especially in icy conditions. Also parking on pavement, causing obstruction to pedestrians. PC agreed to put article in magazine (**Clerk** to draft for **councillors'** approval) and possibly put copies on relevant car windscreens too.
- xi) Enquiry from landowner about fencing off public footpath – Email enquiry to Clerk was unclear so clarification was sought and it was also explained that SCC are responsible for Rights of Way. Nothing further heard.

10.To consider progress on installation of new village signs

RB had spoken again to a contractor and received verbal quote. However contractor would need to obtain a permit to dig and include that cost. **Clerk** to email again seeking written quote.

11. To discuss action on Climate Change and working towards Carbon Neutral Colton

It was agreed to wait for return of NP for an update.

12.To consider progress on reducing dog fouling around village

Clerk had recently requested a bag dispenser from LDC. The Martlins are still considered a problem area so **Clerk** to ask the Parish Lands Trust if they have any concerns and plans. **NT** offered to write an article for the magazine.

13.Correspondence

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

- a) SCC – Temporary road closure on Blithbury Road, by Old Wood Farm, on Tuesday 21st March for pole testing (Email, sent to parish magazine)
- b) HS2/Balfour Beatty – Phase 2a Early Environmental Works update (Email, circulated to cllrs)
- c) Rural Services Network – Encouragement to complete Rural Cost of Living Survey as research shows rural costs are higher than urban (Email, circulated to cllrs)
- d) CPRE Staffs – News for parish councils (Email, circulated to cllrs)
- e) LDC – Local Design Code workshops in March for anyone interested in contributing to criteria for design for housing development in the district (Email) – SB said she would be attending one of the workshops relating to rural development. **Clerk** to forward email to councillors.
- f) Local Govt Boundary Commission – Details of a consultation on council divisions and division boundaries for Staffordshire County Council (Email)
- g) SPCA – Weekly bulletins (Emails, circulated to cllrs)

14.Committees

To discuss future arrangements for managing the burial grounds and the Burial Ground Committee – Information from follow up enquiries – Clerk had emailed Alan Toplis for advice, particularly regarding the charitable status, but not yet received reply. NT had circulated some photos of the Open Burial Ground demonstrating various maintenance issues and a relative had been in contact about certain graves having sunk. **Clerk** to circulate details of the maintenance agreement with TGM and ask them for a quote for spraying the moss on the path.

Regular work may be required to deal with moles and possibly work to move soil to top up graves, reseed bare patches and clear twigs etc.

15. Finance and audit

- a) To confirm submission of VAT claim for 2020/21 financial year (£766.56) and imminent submission of 2021/22 claim (£1258.54) – Claims to be made before end of financial year now that it was clear that PC income would not exceed the threshold for external audit.
- b) To confirm submission of precept request for 2023/24 to LDC – Confirmed.
- c) To hear progress on updating bank mandate with additional signatories and discuss setting up internet banking – With current bank, PC would have to pay for an online banking system to enable dual authorisation. Advice had been sought from the internal auditor who was making enquiries of how other small councils managed. Moving to a different bank was another option.
- d) To review the PC's risk assessment – Clerk had circulated an updated document with various suggested actions. PC agreed to adopt that version and review progress on those actions over the next few months (**Clerk**).
- e) To note completion of renewal of grazing licence for land at Heathway – Signed copy received back from licensee.

16. Parish Council matters

- a) To discuss how to fill councillor vacancies and prepare for May 2023 parish elections – Clerk was booked on SPCA course as elections refresher. A vacancies notice had been submitted for the February magazine and would be placed on noticeboard that evening.
- b) To discuss any further arrangements needed for maintenance and registration of the defibrillator – RB confirmed that pads and batteries had been changed and should last 4-5 years unless defibrillator is used. AED had referred him to the national database where he had registered to be notified if used. He will also check the machine each month and was thanked for his work.
- c) To discuss arrangements for a village event this year – MH-C had spoken to landowner and Dun Cow about possibly repeating bonfire and beer festival at the Coronation weekend and it was confirmed that the Village Hall had been left free of bookings. It was agreed to arrange a small meeting initially to further plans and then open to others to get involved.
- d) To discuss best dates and time for future PC meetings – Wednesdays have proved difficult for certain councillors but a move to the first Thursday of the month would clash with Produce Guild and later in the month would make it difficult to supply approved minutes for the magazine deadline. It was agreed to continue as now on the first Wednesday of the month and review with the new group of councillors after the May elections. Due to requirement to hold Annual Meeting within 2 weeks of the elections, May meeting was arranged for Thursday 11th at earlier time of 7pm, with Parish Assembly social evening proposed for Thursday 25th May (**Clerk** to try to book Village Hall).
- e) Date of next meeting – Wednesday 1st March at 7.30pm
Meeting closed at 9.10pm