

COLTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING, WEDNESDAY 28th AUGUST 2024
AT 7 PM AT COLTON VILLAGE HALL
(REARRANGED FROM 4th SEPTEMBER TO ENSURE A QUORUM)

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

Parishioner: Observed that grassy bank opposite the school had now been cut. Also stated that litter picking equipment previously supplied by SCC/LDC (mainly bags plus a few litter pickers) is now stored in the Village Hall loft and wondered if PC planned any further litter picks.

Clerk had received an email from a parishioner about the yew hedge on Bellamour Way overgrowing the pavement and forcing people to walk near the edge, with the risk of tripping into the road. **Clerk** was asked to forward details to SCC Highways for them to take up, as they had previously been in contact with the landowner.

(No member of the public may address the meeting hereafter)

BUSINESS AGENDA

1. To note attendance and receive apologies for absence

In attendance were Cllrs Nigel Parry (NP), Garren Edwards (GE) and Noel Talbot (NT), Clerk Alison James and Richard Monbiot (RM). NP was proposed by NT and seconded by GE to be Chair for the meeting. Apologies were received from County Cllr Richard Cox. 1 member of the public observed.

2. To receive declarations of interest - None

3. To approve minutes of meeting held on 3rd July – Approved then signed by NP.

4. To note the resignation of Councillor Lynne Richardson on 27th July – Noted and Clerk had sent thanks when acknowledging receipt of the resignation.

5. To co-opt new councillor Richard Monbiot (postponed from July meeting) – RM had been unable to attend the July meeting at short notice and so his co-option had been postponed. He was warmly welcomed by the other councillors.

6. To receive his Declaration of Acceptance of Office – Declaration completed and **Clerk** to notify LDC. RM confirmed he was happy to have his email address included on the PC website and in the parish magazine and for his home address to be shown on the LDC website.

7. Chairman's Announcements - None

8. Payments

a) To note the following payment confirmed at July meeting:

- i) Petty cash – Cllr G Edwards – Barrier tape and bin liners
for Summer Festival (15.64) plus VAT (3.13) £18.77

b) To ratify the following payments for August approved by email:

- i) 2024 TGM – Grass cutting in June – Village Hall, 1 cut (95.85); Closed Burial Ground, 2 cuts (94.56), Stockwell Heath, 2 cuts (63.04); Bridge to B5013, 1 cut (73.44); Corner by Vicarage, 1 cut (25.50); Heathway footpath, 1 cut (47.28) plus VAT (79.94) - (Total bill 479.61); Grass cutting in July – Village Hall, 2 cuts (191.70); Closed Burial Ground, 1 cut (47.28); Stockwell Heath, 2 cuts (63.04) plus VAT (60.41) - (Total

		bill 362.43)	£842.04
ii)	2025	M B Contracts – Removing fallen tree by brook bridge and strimming footpaths by side of brook for duck race, further down footpath and footpath to Rugeley (200.00) plus VAT (40.00)	£240.00
iii)	2026	Alison James – Clerk’s salary, August (356.93) Home working expenses, 4 weeks, 6 July – 9 Aug less 1 week on leave (16.00); Reimbursement for bank payment to magazine delivery girl made on 31 July for August delivery (20.00);	£392.93
iv)	2027	Vision ICT Ltd – Website hosting & support, Oct24 – Sep25 (134.38) plus VAT (26.88)	£161.26

(Total of payments at b) above is £1,636.23)

All payments above were ratified.

- c) To approve the following payments for September:
- | | | | |
|------|------|--|---------|
| i) | 2028 | Alison James – Clerk’s salary, September (356.93)
Home working expenses, 4 weeks, 10 Aug – 6 Sep (16.00); Reimbursement for bank payment to magazine delivery girl set up for 28 August for September delivery (20.00); | £392.93 |
| ii) | 2029 | HMRC – Payroll taxes, Q2, July - Sept | £295.19 |
| iii) | 2030 | TGM – Grass cutting in August – invoice expected after issue of agenda | t.b.c. |
| iv) | | Petty cash – Cllr N Parry – Green dog poop bags for village dispensers (9.92) plus VAT (1.99) | £11.91 |

(Total of new payments for approval at c) above is £700.03 plus TGM invoice t.b.c.).

Payments above were approved where amount specified, with TGM invoice to be approved by email once received.

It was noted that 2 complaints had been received regarding TGM not clearing up satisfactorily after cutting hedge or grass, with cuttings being left on graves. This matter would be discussed at the next BGC meeting, suggested to be held just before the October PC meeting (**Clerk** to consult other Committee members and arrange).

9. Planning Matters

- To note any applications received and make observations to the Planning Authority: None notified by time of issue of agenda or since.
- To report on any recent decisions of the Planning Authority: None notified by time of issue of agenda or since.

10. Highways, Footpaths and Open Spaces

- To report on new issues or progress and agree any action required:
 - Flooding and highways maintenance - Drain near bridge on Bellamour Way; Hollow Lane – NT had received an email from SCC stating that they had cleared the drain near the bridge and their photo attached confirmed it was the correct one. Drain further down Bellamour Way had also been cleared but success should be assessed when it has rained heavily.
 - SCC flood resilience projects – **Clerk** had chased up LDC for a response to the suggested project to resolve the underlying issue on Hollow Lane. No reply yet received so to monitor.

- iii) Road closures – any further issues – Several further closures listed under Correspondence. Various works had been done on Colton Rd and A51 and fortunately, as Richard Cox had indicated at the last PC meeting, the closures were not as long as the road signs had originally suggested. However, some line marking still needed to be done that might necessitate further closures.
- iv) Grass cutting programme and overgrown verges – Clerk had obtained maps from LDC of the areas they were originally contracted by SCC to cut. However, LDC had indicated they use their discretion on what to cut and when. It appeared that the bank opposite the school, which is one of those highlighted on the maps, had been missed when the other verges nearby were cut. However, after safety concerns were raised, LDC had cut it.
- v) Pavement on High St near Littlehay Manor – emails from parishioners – 2 emails and photos had been received, showing how overgrown that stretch of pavement is. Previous reports to SCC had not resulted in any action as low priority for them. **NT** to prepare an advert for a village handyperson to do this sort of work in future. **Clerk** to contact contractor to ask if he can cut that area soon, with offer to meet with NP or NT if clarification is needed. The recent fallen branch over the brook was removed by contractor as a priority on instruction from GE as it was causing a hazard for drivers.
- vi) Improving the appearance of the parish and any jobs for parish handyperson – dealt with under v) above.
- vii) Litter picking – GE had suggested this item for the agenda following comments on the village Facebook site. PC considered litter was not a particular problem at the moment. It had been bad in the spring but SCC had sent their staff to litter pick on Colton Rd. It was agreed to leave this item on the agenda to monitor (**Clerk**).
- viii) Bridleway issues reported by parishioner on 31st July - NP had replied to say that PC would help if it could. It would probably be SCC's responsibility but Clerk had sought further clarification from the parishioner and not received any reply. An issue with a gate would need to be taken up with the landowner.
A few parishioners had mentioned the state of the footpath alongside Colton Rd. This was cleared a couple of years ago by SCC but has deteriorated again. Unfortunately, it is unlikely to be treated as a priority by SCC.
- ix) Issue of speeding in the village raised by parishioners - Proposed purchase and installation of speed detection device – NP reported technical issues with this type of device which are still being worked on.

11.To discuss accounts and conclusions from wash up meeting on the Colton Summer Festival in June and plans for future

Wash up meeting was held and there was general support for trying to organise another event in 2025 but on one day rather than over a whole weekend. NP reported that unfortunately the VHMC had advised that it could not support the Festival again with free hire. In the last few years large sums of money had been spent on the new boiler, car park surface, lighting and recently solar panels. PC would need to book and pay for hire as a resident. PC may also need its own Public Liability Insurance. **Clerk** to circulate copy of existing PC insurance schedule to **Cllrs** to check cover there. PC approved **NT** to confirm booking of band for 28th June 2025 at cost of £400 and **RM** to confirm Village Hall had been booked for that date. Another organising meeting to be held in early October.

12. To discuss ideas to raise profile of PC on social media and with younger generation

Follow up on draft Engagement Plan circulated by Noel Talbot – NT said his daughter had been too busy to do further work on this for PC due to school holidays.

13. Correspondence

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

- a) SCC Highways – Road closure by Trent Valley railway bridge overnight from 10pm on Friday 30th August to 5am on Saturday 31st (Email, details put on Facebook)
- b) SCC Highways – Road closure notice for 16th - 18th September for Hollow Lane for tree maintenance works (Email, circulated to cllrs and magazine editor)
- c) SCC Highways – Temporary road closure notice from 14th October for 2 days up to 5 days, on Blithbury Road from Hadley Gate to junction with B5013 Colton Rd for highways drainage works (Email, sent to magazine editor)
- d) SCC Highways – Temporary road closure notice for 28th October, potentially until 1st November, on Blithbury Rd from junction with B5013 Colton Rd for 200m for gas service works (Email, sent to magazine editor)
- e) SCC Highways – Temporary road closure notice affecting Blithbury Rd, Hollow Lane and Stoneyford Lane but not clear when or where! (Email)
- f) LDC – Invitation and then minutes of Parish Network meeting on 24th July for parish councils to exchange views/discuss common issues, as a replacement for the Parish Forum (Emails, circulated to cllrs)
- g) VHMC – Agenda and request for PC representatives for Colton Village Hall AGM on Thursday 26th September at 7.30pm (Email, circulated to cllrs) – **Clerk** to email VHMC Chair confirming that NP has resigned due to another commitment and that RM will become PC representative.
- h) SCC – Information about development of its new Communities Strategy and online sessions held in August with town and parish councils (Email, circulated to cllrs)
- i) SCC – Information about re-opened Climate Action Fund (Email, circulated to cllrs)
- j) SPCA/SCC – Information about meeting in Stafford on Weds 20th September, 1pm-3pm approx., to discuss strategic approach for Local Transport Plan (Email, circulated to cllrs) – **Clerk** to submit PC comments
- k) SLCC Staffs branch – Draft list of contractors used by member councils, to be added to and recirculated on ongoing basis, to help others seeking alternative suppliers to approach for quotes (Email)
- l) CPRE – Newsletter including details of 'Making effective planning representations' webinar for parish councils on Tues 24th September 6-8pm
- m) SPCA – Various correspondence including new County Officer, possible action re rural speed limits, Local Transport Plan, proposed changes to Planning system and NALC survey on community safety initiatives (completed by Clerk) (Emails, mainly circulated to cllrs) – It was noted that the new Government might be more positive than its predecessor about the possibility of allowing remote meetings.

14. Committees

To note any update from the Burial Ground Committee – October meeting to be arranged, if possible, as discussed under item 8 (**Clerk**). **Clerk** to supply draft to **NP** to prepare an advert for new BGC parishioner members.

15. Finance and audit

- a) To hear any update on banking arrangements – Further issues recently, with some bank statements not being received since Clerk's address updated. NatWest are still not accepting applications from existing customers for their Bankline for Communities online banking system. Bankline for businesses offers the required dual authorisation but would cost £20 per month, which is hard to justify for the small number of payments the PC makes. **RM** to check with VHMC treasurer about their use of Lloyds and **Clerk** to find out about other options used by PCs including Unity Trust Bank. PC to consider a proposal to move to an alternative bank at its October meeting (**Clerk**).
- b) To review draft Model Publication Scheme for Colton – Internal auditor recommended the PC prepares a document outlining the information it publishes and when. Clerk had circulated a draft based on the Information Commissioner's Office guidance and adopting the format of another council's document but adding some extra explanation. PC approved that version so **Clerk** to upload to website.

16. Parish Council matters

- a) To review the tree inspection report and agree any follow up action required – It was agreed at the previous meeting that councillors would study the report in more detail in order to agree how best to proceed. There was nothing urgent or unsafe but work was suggested on 2 lime trees before the next survey due. **Clerk** to ask contractor for a quote for those 2 items and if it was under £100 he should be instructed to go ahead. Comments on birch tree near burial ground to be passed to PCC (**Clerk**).
- b) To agree arrangements for renewing the grazing licence – A slightly increased fee had been agreed when setting the budget for 2024/25, which was notified to the licensee at the time. **Clerk** to confirm with licensee and contact agents for updated licence.
- c) To discuss future arrangements for PC mobile – Mobile is outdated and not a smartphone, so Clerk tends to use own mobile for ease. Provider had threatened to disconnect due to lack of use and number of calls received is low. Purchase of a smart phone is probably too expensive to justify and no councillors could offer a redundant phone. The need for the mobile was questioned and it was suggested that emails or website should be the primary methods for contact. PC agreed that **Clerk** should stop publishing the mobile number in documents & emails etc. to see what happens, though old service and handset could be retained for occasional use.

17. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 2nd October at 7pm

NP offered apologies for the November meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm.