

## **COLTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING, WEDNESDAY 4<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2025 AT 7.30PM APPROXIMATELY (TO FOLLOW BURIAL GROUND COMMITTEE MEETING STARTING AT 7PM) AT COLTON VILLAGE HALL**

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

Street cleaning was discussed and District Cllr Keith Vernon was asked to find out which team/person is responsible at LDC and when they visit.

Parishioner: After recent accident near Colton Lodge there was a lot of glass left on the road and pavement. Asked how to get it removed.

Garren Edwards suggested reporting via the My Staffs app.

There was further discussion about vehicle speeds on B5013 and the number of accidents. PC has no responsibility for highways but it was agreed that **Clerk** should email County Cllr Janet Higgins restating concerns after another major accident and asking what can be done.

Parishioner: Asked for an update on the proposed device to record speeds on Bellamour Way.

Nigel Parry said that the company now have a working prototype and so he is hopeful of getting one in place soon.

### **BUSINESS AGENDA**

#### **1. To note attendance and receive apologies for absence**

In attendance were councillors Garren Edwards (GE), Richard Monbiot (RM) and Nigel Parry (NP), District Councillor Keith Vernon (KV) and Clerk Alison James. 3 members of the public observed. Apologies were received from Cllr Noel Talbot (NT) and County Cllr Janet Higgins (JH). RM proposed and NP seconded that GE chair the meeting.

#### **2. To receive declarations of interest - GE – item 5 a) vi); RM – items 9 and 13 a)**

#### **3. To approve minutes of Annual Meeting and main PC meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May**

Minutes were approved and were signed at the end of the meeting by the Chair.

#### **4. Chair's Announcements - None**

#### **5. Payments**

##### **a) To approve the following payments:**

- |      |   |         |
|------|---|---------|
| i)   | EP14 with payment date of 26 June:  |         |
|      | G Barlow – Delivery of July parish magazine   | £20.00  |
| ii)  | EP15 with payment date of 30 June:  |         |
|      | Alison James – Clerk's salary, June (370.96); Home working expenses, 3 weeks, 17 May – 6 June (12.00)   | £382.96 |
| iii) | EP16 with payment date of 30 June:  |         |
|      | HMRC – Payroll taxes for Q1 Apr – Jun, consisting of Tax (305.72) and Employer NI contributions (41.63) | £347.35 |
| iv)  | EP17 with payment date of 11 June:  |         |
|      | J Flint – Clearing weeds and general tidy up of area around Village Hall and play area                  | £100.00 |
| v)   | EP18 with payment date of 11 June:  |         |
|      | K Squires – Internal audit 24/25  | £155.00 |

- vi) EP19 with payment date of 11 June:  
Cllr G Edwards – Reimbursement for dog  
poop bags (8.99) and Festival banner (45.83)  
plus VAT (9.17) £63.99

(Total of new payments above for approval is £1,069.30)

Regarding EP17, the contractor was unhappy at having to wait for payments to be approved at a meeting. As he had done further work at the Village Hall again that day and presented a further invoice for £30.00, it was agreed to treat that as an urgent payment and amend EP17 to include that additional amount.

Also, as the contractor would be working fortnightly until end September and PC would not be meeting in August, PC approved in principle payments of up to £240 to be made for that period. RM would confirm when work had been done so payments could be set up and authorised then ratified at a subsequent meeting.

## 6. Planning Matters

- a) To note any applications received and make observations to the Planning Authority:
- i) 25/00645/CL – Old Wood Farm, 6 Blithbury Road, Colton – Certificate of Lawfulness (Existing): Confirmation that planning permission 23/01184/COU has been lawfully implemented  
It was agreed that this was a decision for LDC to make depending on their criteria so PC would offer no comment.
- b) To report on any recent decisions of the Planning Authority: None received by time of issue of agenda
- c) To hear any update on planning application for Moreton Brook Solar Farm off Lea Lane in Blithfield parish (East Staffs Borough Council ref. P/2024/00696) and any feedback from Stowe-by-Chartley PC on meeting about concerns for all the solar farms in planning – There had not yet been any feedback on the outcome of the meeting nor from JH about SCC's approach to solar farms in light of Reform's stated policy. **Clerk** to seek update from Stowe-by-Chartley PC.

## 7. Highways, Footpaths and Open Spaces

- a) To report on new issues or progress and agree any action required:
- i) Flooding and highways maintenance including SCC investigations on Hollow Lane flooding and flooding by brook bridge – GE reported that a team from SCC had turned up to do investigatory work on the culvert under Bellamour Way. They now have better local knowledge and had managed to clear some drains too. However further investigation is needed underneath Bellamour Way, which will require the road to be closed. Standing orders suspended temporarily to enable parishioner to explain that a ditch, on land adjacent to the PLT land on Hollow Lane, had been dug out to prevent water draining over the PLT land and on to the road there. On the other side of Hollow Lane a landowner had dug a ditch to take water on to his field to try to reduce flooding on the road and by the houses. **Clerk** to email SCC for a progress report.
- ii) Items raised by parishioner discussed under Chairman's Announcements at January meeting – State of Newlands Lane and potential clearing of ditches; Potholes on Moor Lane; Request to HS2 to maintain its hedges – Some limited repairs may have been done and someone has cut part of the hedge but main concerns have not been addressed. **Clerk** to raise this and other issues with JH in advance of her attendance at the July meeting to enable her to make prior enquiries.

- iii) Improving the appearance of the parish and any further work for parish handyperson – Nothing to report.
- iv) Litter picking – Arrangements for community litter pick – A date in early July had been suggested and LDC said they could supply litter pickers and bags but not hoops. Concerns were raised whether PC should supply hi-vis jackets and whether it had carried out an appropriate risk assessment. PC agreed that July event should be postponed. **Clerk** to make enquiries of Great Haywood and Lichfield Litter Legends about how they organise their litter picking.
- v) Issue of speeding in the village raised by parishioners – Any progress with purchase/installation of electronic monitoring device or potential SCC speed survey – Covered during Public Participation.
- vi) Overgrown hedges on Bellamour Way and on Heathway – Overgrown hedge on Bellamour to be raised again with JH. **Clerk** to contact Bromford Housing about the Heathway hedge as it was a recurrent problem that tenants did not deal with.
- vii) Suggestion from parishioner for priority road sign at brook bridge – This should be raised with JH again. NP commented that it may not now be Highways policy to add such signs.
- viii) Email of 18 May from parishioner requesting the PC adopt a 'No mow May' policy in 2026 for the verges approaching the village – Standing orders suspended temporarily to allow parishioner to supply further detail. Verges in mind were those from B5013 up to the Greyhound, on both sides and, in particular, the area below the WI trough on Pedley's Croft, where some uncommon flowers grow but have sadly been mown this year. The verge between B5013 and the brook bridge had been left and looked good with wildflowers. By delaying cutting (where safe, to maintain visibility), it would give the wildflowers the chance to grow and to seed. Some conflicting views were put forward but it was agreed that **Clerk** would ask LDC if they have a 'No Mow May' policy already and clarify which verges they cut and which are done by TGM, for further discussion.

#### 8. To discuss any further plans for Colton Summer Festival on 28 June

A further planning meeting had been held and a programme of events is in place starting with the duck race at 11am. **GE** would try to put up posters on various local village noticeboards and in pubs. **Clerk** to check if JH is able to offer any SCC funding.

#### 9. To hear update on request from VHMC for PC to fund maintenance of garden areas at Village Hall, particularly near play area

This was covered earlier under Payments.

#### 10. Correspondence

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

- a) SPCA – Various bulletins including online briefing about Local Government Reorganisation, information about Staffordshire Playing Fields Association (sent to VHMC) and request to check and update PC entry on SCC website (Emails, mainly circulated to cllrs)
- b) LDC – Next meeting of Parish Network Group on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June at 7pm at Chase Terrace Community Centre, with minutes of previous meeting (Email, circulated to cllrs)

## 11. Committees

To hear any update from the prior Burial Ground Committee meeting – The roots of the fallen silver birch had now been removed and the ground levelled and re-seeded. A suggestion had been made to dispense with the expensive bin collection and develop a compost heap with other waste to be disposed of in another way and this would be explored. No further funding had been requested from the PC at this time.

## 12. Finance and audit

- a) To receive the final report of receipts and payments compared to budget for 2024/25 and the bank reconciliation at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 – These were noted and showed an overspend of about £700, which was smaller than the budgeted overspend of about £5,500 to be taken from reserves. Total funds at end March were £32,119.
- b) To note the letter of Conclusion of Internal Audit for 2024/25 from Kim Squires and the Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25, forming page 4 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) – The AGAR page showed that all objectives for internal control were met. The covering letter drew attention to the new requirement for 2025/26 for a gov.uk email for the Clerk, which would be pursued (**Clerk**).
- c) To complete and approve the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25, forming Section 1 of the AGAR – Each assertion was considered in turn and PC agreed that they should all be answered Yes. The Statement was therefore approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk.
- d) To approve the Accounting Statements 2024/25, forming Section 2 of the AGAR – The Statements were approved and signed by the Chair.
- e) To approve the Certificate of Exemption (AGAR 2024/25 Form 2 page 3) for submission to the external auditors by 30<sup>th</sup> June – The Certificate was approved and signed by the Clerk as RFO and the Chair. **Clerk** to submit.
- f) To note the proposed Period for the Exercise of Electors' Rights – The notice would be published on Friday 6 June with the period for the exercise of public rights being the 6 working weeks from Monday 9 June to Friday 18 July.
- g) To note the transparency requirements for reports including the AGAR to be displayed on the PC website – The AGAR together with the explanation of variances and the bank reconciliation would be put on the website when the electors' rights notice was published and other financial reports would follow.
- h) To agree the appointment of an internal auditor for 2025/26 – PC agreed to appoint Kim Squires as internal auditor again. **Clerk** to write.
- i) To hear any update on banking including adding R Monbiot as additional signatory on Lloyds account and closure of NatWest accounts – The form for adding the signatory had been completed as had a form for closing the NatWest accounts and transferring all funds to Lloyds. However, NatWest had an issue with a signature not matching their records so further verification was needed.

## 13. Parish Council matters

- a) To discuss any progress with improved signage for Village Hall, raised by Cllr R Monbiot on behalf of VHMCC – This would be raised with JH again (**Clerk**).

## 14. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 2 July at 7pm