

## **COLTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING, WEDNESDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER AT 7PM AT COLTON VILLAGE HALL**

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

Parishioner: Attended to seek update re speeding issues and overgrown hedge on Bellamour Way. Also raised concerns about safety on Bellamour Way at school drop off and pick up times and suggested that the yellow lines ought to be extended to the Closed Burial Ground. Concerned about visibility for cars travelling from the village towards the bridge due to all the parked cars and about lack of supervision of road crossing.

NT explained that PC had agreed with school and PCC that parents could park on the road by the church and walk across. It was thought to not be as unsafe as it used to be. However, it was agreed that **Clerk** should raise concerns again with the school and ask for a reminder to be given to parents, as it was the beginning of a new school year. Also to request that any cars being left all day should be parked off Bellamour Way.

Parishioner had spoken to a police officer who agreed that the overgrown yew hedge on Bellamour Way was an obstruction.

NT said it was for SCC to take action and this had been raised with County Cllr Janet Higgins.

Another parishioner asked if there was any knowledge about reports that fields around the village had been bought for gravel extraction.

No one had any firm knowledge of this.

Third parishioner followed up an email by attending to make a request to PC for a donation towards snowdrops to be planted on the verges in memory of Tony and Judy Winter, to mark their contribution to the community over many years. Also to ask if PC had any hi viz jackets which could be loaned for the planting. Highways had been asked for permission but not yet given any response.

One cllr suggested a plaque as a better permanent memorial but others disagreed and parishioner said that the Winter family supported the idea of snowdrops, particularly as Tony had been the instigator for the daffodil planting.

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

### **BUSINESS AGENDA**

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

In attendance were councillors Noel Talbot (NT), Garren Edwards (GE), Richard Monbiot (RM) and Nigel Parry (NP), District Cllr Keith Vernon (KV) and Clerk Alison James. NT acted as chair. (After the meeting an email was found to have been received that afternoon giving apologies from County Cllr Janet Higgins due to illness). 3 members of the public attended for Public Participation and 1 observed the main meeting.

#### 2. To receive declarations of interest - None

#### 3. To approve minutes of meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July - Minutes were approved and signed by NT as chair.

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

#### 5. Payments

- a) To confirm the final details of all payments approved at the July meeting:

- i) EP20 with payment date of 28 July:  
G Barlow – Delivery of August parish magazine £20.00
- ii) EP21 with payment date of 31 July:  
Alison James – Clerk’s salary, July (370.96)  
Home working expenses, 3 weeks, 7 June –  
4 July excl.1 week leave (12.00); Payment to  
magazine delivery girl set up for 26 June to  
replace cancelled electronic payment (20.00);  
Reimbursement for set of 4 colour XL printer  
cartridges ordered 24 June (55.08) plus VAT  
(11.02); BGC Clerk salary for 1 April - 30 June  
(137.50) less tax (27.50) £579.06
- iii) EP22 with payment date of 16 July:  
Cllr N Parry – Reimbursement for Festival rubbish  
bag stand/holder for Festival (32.97) plus VAT  
(6.59); Bouncy castle hire (60.00); Various items  
and prizes for dog show (70.73) £170.29
- iv) EP23 with payment date of 16 July:  
Trent Grounds Maintenance – Grass cutting in  
May – Closed BG, 2 cuts (96.00), Village Hall,  
1 cut (97.29), Stockwell Heath, 2 cuts (64.00),  
Heathway footpath, 1 cut (48.00) plus VAT  
(61.05) £366.34
- v) EP24 with payment date of 16 July:  
Colton Village Hall – Hire of hall for Festival on  
28 June, 10am – 10pm £210.00
- vi) EP25 with payment date of 16 July:  
Cllr N Talbot – Reimbursement for payment to  
band for Festival evening performance £400.00
- vii) EP26 with payment date of 16 July:  
J Flint – Clearing weeds and tidying area  
around Village Hall and play area on 27 June £30.00
- viii) EP27 with payment date of 16 July:  
Stafford Morris Men – Festival dancing £80.00
- ix) EP28 with payment date of 16 July:  
Print & Digital Ltd – Signs for Festival car  
Parking (60.00) plus VAT (12.00) £72.00
- x) EP29 with payment date of 16 July:  
Cllr G Edwards – Reimbursement for batteries  
for Festival microphone (11.67) plus VAT (2.33) £14.00

(Total of all approved payments at item 5 a) was £1,941.69)

Additionally, Lloyds Bank began service charges, with £4.25 debited on 21 July.

- b) To ratify the following payments for August, agreed by email (but some original August payment dates had to be put back due to online authorisation issues):
- i) EP30 cancelled (Delivery of September magazine paid instead by Clerk and being reclaimed with her September salary and expenses)
  - ii) EP31 with payment date of 2 September:  
Trent Grounds Maintenance – Grass cutting in late May, June and July (2 invoices) – Closed BG, 5 cuts (240.00), Village Hall, 4 cuts (389.16), Stockwell Heath, 2 cuts (64.00), Corner by vicarage, 1 cut (25.88); Bridge to B5013, 1 cut (74.54) plus VAT (158.73) £952.31
  - iii) EP32 with payment date of 2 September:  
Cllr N Talbot – Reimbursement for wine gift as thank you to person arranging free trailer for Festival band performance (10.83) plus VAT (2.17) £13.00
  - iv) EP33 with payment date of 2 September:  
Vision ICT Ltd – Website hosting and support, Oct 25 - Sep 26 (146.47) plus VAT (29.29) £175.76
  - v) EP34 with payment date of 2 September:  
Colton Village Hall – Hire of hall for 4 meetings, Apr - Jul £60.00
  - vi) EP35 with payment date of 29 August:  
Alison James – Clerk’s salary, August (370.96)  
Home working expenses, 5 weeks, 5 July – 8 Aug (20.00); Reimbursement for mobile phone top up on 8 Aug (10.00); Reimbursement for first and second class stamps (13.76) £414.72

(Total of all payments at item 5 b) is £1,615.79)

Additionally, Lloyds Bank service charges of £4.75 were debited on 19 August.

It was noted that the full list of July and August payments was included on the agenda to confirm all payment details following some date changes, due to difficulties in authorisation on time on the Lloyds banking system.

- c) To approve the following payments for September:
- i) EP36 with payment date of 25 September:  
G Barlow – Delivery of October parish magazine £20.00
  - ii) EP37 with payment date of 30 September:  
Alison James – Clerk’s salary, September, after National Pay Award (382.83); Net back pay for Apr - Aug (59.36); Home working expenses, 4 weeks, 9 Aug – 5 Sep (16.00); Reimbursement for payment to magazine delivery girl on 28 Aug for September issue (20.00) £478.19

- iii) EP38 with payment date of 30 September:  
 HMRC – Payroll taxes for Q2, Jul – Sep,  
 consisting of taxes (323.53) and Employer NI  
 (54.99) £378.52
- iv) EP39 with payment date of 25 September:  
 St Mary’s Church – PC contribution to printing  
 of parish magazine in 2025 £1,485.00  
 (subject to approval at item 9)

(Total of new payments for approval at item 5 c) is £2,361.71, subject to confirmation).

Payments EP36-EP38 were approved here, with EP39 approved later at item 9.

## 6. Planning Matters

- a) To note any applications received and make observations to the Planning Authority:
  - i) 25/00866/FUH – Newlands Cottage, Newlands Lane, Blithbury, Rugeley – Extension and alteration of dwelling house – Deadline for comments to LDC has passed. Response of no comments submitted.
- b) To report on any recent decisions of the Planning Authority:
  - i) 25/00693/FUH – 27 High Street, Colton – Demolition of existing front and rear conservatories, construction of porch, extensions to the front and rear and construction of a pitched roof over existing garage - Approved
- 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 further developments regarding solar farms in planning – Clerk reported that the Moreton Brook solar farm had received ‘Conditional approval’ from ESBC, with various surveys and reports required by the conditions.

## 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 of culvert under Bellamour Way and Hollow Lane drainage – These issues had been discussed with 2 representatives from SCC’s Flood Resilience team at a constructive meeting immediately prior to the PC meeting. It was agreed that a summary of that meeting should be included in the parish magazine, as of interest to the wider parish (**Clerk**, pending receipt of promised summary from SCC officer).
  - ii) Items raised previously by parishioner – State of Newlands Lane; Request to HS2 to maintain its hedges – Clerk had contacted HS2 again and more recently followed up by re-sending the original email.
  - iii) Improving the appearance of the parish including discussions about mowing policies and responsibilities – LDC had provided an old map of the areas they were originally asked to cut on behalf of SCC, within the 30mph speed limit boundary, but it was unclear how accurate it is. SCC are thought to cut the grass verges on roads with higher speed limits. PC has asked TGM to cut some verges including the verge from the brook bridge to B5013 Colton Road. It was agreed that clarity was needed of all responsibilities, ideally shown on a map (**Clerk**). This would be required for PC to draw up a better specification and seek quotes for its grass cutting next year.

- iv) Speeding issue in the village raised by parishioners and speeding on Admaston Road and recent accidents – Any progress with purchase/installation of electronic monitoring device, potential SCC speed surveys or other action; Meeting being arranged by County Councillors with Deputy Police Commissioner to discuss on site on 12<sup>th</sup> September – GE will represent Colton PC at the meeting, which will also include the local MP and other local parish councils. GE suggested that there should be a speed limit of 40mph from Fogg Cottages to Bellamour Corner and a 50mph limit thereafter, with average speed cameras. PC agreed to support this proposal.
- v) Overgrown hedges on Bellamour Way and on Heathway – Bellamour Way hedge raised previously with Janet Higgins to pursue.
- vi) Suggestion from parishioner for priority road sign at brook bridge – also passed previously to Janet Higgins to pursue.
- vii) Issue of missing public footpath sign on Staffordshire Way near Park Barn Farm at Stockwell Heath – Clerk had reported this to SCC Rights of Way online but not had any response as to any action to be taken.

#### 8. To consider accounts and any further feedback about Colton Summer Festival

Clerk had circulated a set of accounts which showed a net cost of just under £500 and had also completed an application to SCC's Community Fund. SCC had immediately raised a query about the claim, which Clerk had answered so is waiting to hear if claim is successful. Councillors had organised a meeting the previous evening to review the Festival and talk about options for next year but it had been poorly attended. A further meeting would be organised after Christmas to see if more interest could be raised and then a decision would be taken whether to proceed or not.

#### 9. To consider request from PCC for PC to make 1/3 contribution to Parish Magazine printing and related costs for 2025

PC had agreed some years ago to make a 1/3 contribution so PC approved to pay the requested contribution for this year of £1,485 (Payment EP39, as listed at agenda item 5 c) iv) ). Whilst PC believed it was important to continue to make a paper copy available, as many did not have internet access, it had raised with PCC whether savings could be made e.g. in paper quality, reduced number of copies. PCC were due to discuss at their meeting that evening.

#### 10. Correspondence

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

- a) SCC Highways – Notice of temporary road closure order for Blithbury Road from Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> September to Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> October for fibre optic cabling works (with diversion via Hollow Lane and B5013 Colton Rd) (Email, sent to magazine editor)
- b) SCC Highways – Notice of temporary road closure order for Moor Lane, Stockwell Heath on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> October (with diversion via Sherracop Lane and B5013 Admaston Road) for pole replacement works (Email, sent to magazine editor)

Clerk pointed out that details of any road closure notices received at short notice are put on the Colton Residents Facebook group.

- c) Member of public – Email from parishioner's relative 9/7 sent also to SCC with concerns about heavy vehicles in village, suggesting weight limit and potential speeding/undue care (Circulated to cllrs) – Councillors were not supportive of any weight limit as agriculture is an important part of Colton life. Any unsafe driving could only be taken up if vehicle details were noted

at the time, though the intended electronic monitoring device for Bellamour Way could identify if there are speeding issues.

- d) LDC – Survey about local government reorganisation and options for mid and south Staffordshire (Email, circulated to cllrs)
- e) Centre for Ageing Better – Webinar on 'Introduction to age-friendly communities' on Weds 10th September, 10am-11am (Email, circul. to cllrs)
- f) SPCA and NALC – Various bulletins including Asset Transfer Overview online briefing, information about Local Government Reorganisation, current proposals and a consultation on those for Staffordshire; Flood Resilience Survey with ACRE; various training courses including Planning for non-planners and An Introduction to Artificial Intelligence; information about sending documents to the county archive; updated version of Local Councils Explained (Emails, mainly circulated to cllrs)

## 11. Committees

To hear any update from Burial Ground Committee – There had been some suggestions made to reduce the cost of refuse collection, which would be discussed further at the next Committee meeting. The latest invoice had been received from TGM so a councillor signature was required for the cheque.

## 12. Finance and audit

- a) 2024/25 accounts – To note the completion of the period for the Exercise of Electors' Rights, with no requests for access from parishioners
- b) To note national agreement of the Local Government Pay Award 25/26 for Clerk's pay, to be backdated to 1 April 2025 – This increase was included in payment EP37 at agenda item 5 c) ii).
- c) To hear any update on banking including adding R Monbiot for internet access to Lloyds account and closure of NatWest accounts – Clerk had finally received the card reader, which was given to RM but it would probably be necessary to contact the bank for other details to enable access.
- d) To consider request for donation for memorial snowdrops to be planted in village – Request had been made by parishioner by email and followed up during Public Participation. PC agreed to make a donation of £75, subject to permission for planting in the verges being given by Highways. (**Clerk** to notify parishioner).
- e) To consider PC arrangements for grounds maintenance in 26/27 and beyond, particularly for the burial grounds – This will be pursued in conjunction with agenda item 7 a) iii) and the Burial Ground Committee.
- f) To review the PC's financial regulations, in light of NALC template – Clerk had circulated a suggested version, based on the latest NALC template but had removed sections that did not apply and amended some thresholds to better suit Colton's requirements. The previous regulations document was much shorter but it was necessary to incorporate legislative requirements and other updates and therefore seemed preferable to work from the NALC template. PC approved the circulated version with some minor corrections, already pointed out by email. **Clerk** to revise and put on website.
- g) To consider any update regarding replacement of PC laptop and software – Support for Windows 10 is being withdrawn in mid-October, which would create security issues but the current PC laptop is not able to run Windows 11. Clerk had therefore investigated new and reconditioned laptops and circulated some options. PC approved purchase of a suitable laptop,

software and data transfer support up to a maximum of £1,000 and GE offered further advice if required by Clerk.

### 13. Other Parish Council matters

- a) To discuss any progress with improved signage for Village Hall, raised by Cllr R Monbiot on behalf of VHMC – Issue previously raised with Janet Higgins.
- b) To consider any response from Parish Lands Trust regarding role of PC representatives – PLT to discuss and respond after its September meeting.

**Clerk** would pursue renewal of grazing licence and also send the approved reply to the enquiry from MP Dave Robertson's office.

14. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> October at 7.30 pm approximately (to follow Burial Ground Committee meeting starting at 7pm)

NP offered apologies for the October and November meetings.

Meeting closed at 8:05pm