

COLTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING, WEDNESDAY 1st OCTOBER AT 7.30PM APPROXIMATELY (TO FOLLOW A 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) – No members of the public in attendance.

BUSINESS AGENDA

1. To note attendance and receive apologies for absence

In attendance were Cllrs Noel Talbot (NT), Garren Edwards (GE) and Richard Monbiot (RM), District Cllr Keith Vernon (KV) and Clerk Alison James. Apologies received from Cllr Nigel Parry (NP). NT was voted to chair the meeting. County Cllr Janet Higgins (JH) had not sent specific apologies but had asked previously to be contacted with any issues.

2. To receive declarations of interest - None

3. To approve minutes of meeting held on 3rd September – These were approved and signed by NT as chair.

4. Chair's Announcements - None

5. Payments

a) To confirm the following payments approved 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

(Total of payments approved was £2,361.71. Additionally, Lloyds bank service charges of £4.25 were debited on 19 September).

b) To approve the following payments for October:

- i) EP40 with payment date of 28 October:
G Barlow – Delivery of November parish magazine £20.00
- ii) EP41 with payment date of 17 October:
CPRE – Annual membership to November 2026 £29.00
- iii) EP42 with payment date of 17 October:
SLCC – Annual membership for Clerk to 30 September 2026 £150.00

- iv) EP43 with payment date of 17 October:
Trent Grounds Maintenance – Grass cutting in August - Village Hall, 1 cut (97.29); Closed Burial Ground, 2 cuts (96.00); Stockwell Heath, 2 cuts (64.00) plus VAT (51.45) £308.74
- v) EP44 with payment date of 31 October:
Alison James – Clerk's salary, October (382.83); Home working expenses, 4 weeks, 6 Sep – 3 Oct (16.00); Burial Ground Clerk salary, Jul-Sep (137.50) less tax (27.50); Reimbursement for 2 year McAfee LiveSafe Unlimited Devices subscription to 12 Sept 2027 (97.49) plus VAT (19.50); Reimbursement for PC poppy wreath & delivery (20.41) plus VAT (4.08) £650.31
- vi) EP45 with payment date to be agreed:
Alison James – Purchase of new PC Clerk's laptop and any related software and IT support (t.b.c.)

(Total of payments 5 b) i) to v) for approval is £1,158.05)

Payments EP40 to EP44 were approved as listed. EP45 was considered later at item 13 d).

6. Planning Matters

- a) To note any applications received and make observations to the Planning Authority: None notified by time of issue of agenda
- b) To report on any recent decisions of the Planning Authority: None notified 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 further developments regarding solar farms in planning – No further updates and PC agreed this item should be taken off the agenda (**Clerk**).
- d) To consider any action regarding storage containers noticed on Colton Road near Fogg Cottages – A parishioner had asked a report to be made to LDC to establish whether the storage containers had planning permission, as they were apparently being advertised for use. Councillors said that if the parishioner was concerned, they should report themselves (**Clerk** to notify). **KV** offered to look at the containers when next passing in daylight.

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, Hollow Lane drainage and potential community meeting to co-design flood mitigation – The originally proposed date the following week was not possible as the Village Hall was booked and it subsequently became clear that the Church Room would not be suitable for the size and scope of meeting proposed by SCC. A revised date in November was suggested so **Clerk** would check Village Hall and SCC officer availability. SCC officer had offered to deliver letters to residents on Hollow Lane and Bellamour Way and an article should be included in the November parish magazine (**Clerk with SCC**)

- ii) Items raised previously by parishioner – State of Newlands Lane; Request to HS2 to maintain its hedges – As HS2 were not engaging at all, it was suggested this item should be taken off the agenda (**Clerk**). A comment was made about a road closure at Moor Lane but this was for pole replacement and not related to HS2.
- iii) Improving the appearance of the parish including clarifying mowing responsibilities – Councillors suggested that a map, showing which areas are cut by which authority, could be produced using mapping software advertised in an email from SPCA once the new PC laptop had been set up. **Clerk** to check, as she had not picked up on this.
- iv) Speeding issue in the village raised by parishioners and speeding on Admaston Road and recent accidents – Update re electronic monitoring device and other alternatives such as SCC speed survey or other action for Bellamour Way; Outcome of meeting arranged by County Councillors with Deputy Police Commissioner to discuss B5013 speeding held on site on 12th September – GE had attended meeting on behalf of Colton and had summarised the outcome in an email to councillors. Attendees were Dave Robertson MP, the Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, a local PCSO, County Cllr Janet Higgins and other local county councillors, representatives from Blithfield PC and Abbots Bromley PC and representatives from Highways. GE had put forward Colton's agreed proposal for reduced speed limits and average speed cameras on B5013. Police said they required further evidence but ironically cannot do mobile speed detection in a van on that road as speeds are too high. Ownership of the car park at the reservoir is to be checked to see if it might be possible to install speed humps at the entrance. GE said it was disappointing that no particular action was agreed from the initial meeting, although a follow up meeting is to be held in January which **GE** said he would attend.
- v) Overgrown hedge on Bellamour Way – Highways response to parishioner's report – Parishioner had been notified that SCC had sent an enforcement letter to the landowner. PC said this item should be taken off the agenda now as in hands of SCC (**Clerk**).
- vi) Suggestion from parishioner for priority road sign at brook bridge – previously raised with JH.
- vii) To agree arrangements for additional road gritting in the parish for the coming winter – Councillors had a WhatsApp group last winter to agree at short notice when gritting was needed. It was thought that NP had been instructing TGM and they had done a good job. **Clerk** to notify TGM, confirm contact details and check the price per occasion.

8. To consider any update on Colton Summer Festival including SCC Community Funding received

PC had received £500 from SCC Community Fund, courtesy of Janet Higgins, who had been thanked for this. A meeting of interested parties and councillors would be held in January to decide whether a Festival should be held in 2026.

9. To hear any further update on Parish Magazine printing and related costs

Rachel Bayliss had reported after the last PCC meeting that PCC still felt a monthly magazine and paper copy are valuable. However, it had been intended that a

colour front page should be the exception and so PCC proposed that the cover should generally revert to black and white to reduce costs. PCC would keep costs under review and reconsider at its AGM and suggested a survey could be carried out.

10.To discuss any arrangements for Remembrance Sunday including road closure and PC wreath

Clerk had received the road closure notice and passed on to Rev Lynne Dean for PCC to make the arrangements on the day. **Clerk** had also sent notice to magazine editor and would put copies on Bellamour Way noticeboards. **Clerk** had ordered a wreath for the PC online and would deliver in due course to **RM**, who agreed to lay it on behalf of PC. KV gave his apologies for Remembrance Sunday service at Colton as he would be attending the service at Lichfield Cathedral as LDC Chair.

11.Correspondence

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

- a) Email from Clerk of Kings Bromley PC – Concerns and questions about reorganisation of local policing areas in Lichfield District and Tamworth Borough to larger areas for PCSOs to cover (Email) – Colton had not been notified directly nor seen details of the reorganisation but understood it would affect our PCSOs.
- b) SCC – Temporary road closure notice for Blithbury Road, from its junction with Hollow Lane to its junction with B5013 Colton Rd, from Monday 20th October to Friday 28th November for water main renewal works (Email, details posted on Facebook residents page) – NT commented that the road closure appeared to be in place already. There would still be access out of the village via Hill Ridware.
- c) LDC and VHMC – Arrangements for annual play area inspection, now likely to be late October or November (Emails)
- d) LDC – Delivering faster planning decisions for Lichfield District (Email)
- e) LDC – Invitation to Parish Network meeting on 30th September including LDC Planning Officer Kerry Challoner to discuss general planning matters (Email)
- f) SPCA and NALC – Various bulletins including training courses on An Introduction to Artificial Intelligence and on Data Protection; SCC's proposals for Staffordshire for Local Government Reorganisation; Invitation to SPCA AGM and programme of speakers and exhibitors for all parish councils on Monday 24th November in Uttoxeter; new Health and Wellbeing Officer and a reminder about SPCA's Health and Wellbeing Toolkit for town and parish councils (Emails, mainly circulated to cllrs)

12.Committees

To hear any update from Burial Ground Committee meeting held prior to this meeting including any request for further funding – Current funds were sufficient for the foreseeable future so no funding request was made.

13.Finance and audit

- a) To hear any update on banking including adding R Monbiot for internet access to Lloyds account and closure of NatWest accounts – **Clerk** would ring Lloyds when next working at home in the daytime, to establish how to get the required security details for RM.
- b) To consider any update on arrangements for agreed donation for memorial snowdrops to be planted in village – An email had just been received from

the parishioner organising the proposed planting. SCC had said it required licences and fees for planting in its verges. Whilst PC had agreed a donation subject to appropriate SCC permission it did not think it could reasonably fund such high fees nor could it support any illegal action and so suggested that alternative areas for planting be considered e.g. the top of Pedley's Croft perhaps. (**Clerk** to notify parishioner).

- c) To consider PC arrangements for grounds maintenance in 26/27 and beyond, particularly for the burial grounds – This would be pursued subject to progress with mapping, covered under item 7 a) iii).
- d) To consider any update regarding replacement of PC laptop and software – After advice from GE, Clerk had just ordered a new laptop online at a cost of £599 including VAT. PC agreed to fund any IT support required to get it set up smoothly.
- e) To hear update on renewal of grazing licence – Licensee had suggested he would prefer a longer licence period but PC decided to continue with 1 year licence to retain flexibility. The licence was signed by councillors so **Clerk** to issue to licensee for signature.

14. Other Parish Council matters

- a) To discuss any progress with improved signage for Village Hall, raised by Cllr R Monbiot on behalf of VHMC – previously raised with JH.
- b) To consider response from Parish Lands Trust regarding nominee for PLT and role of PC representatives – Harriet Low had been put forward by PLT. PC was supportive of her joining PLT but had not received any explanation as to why there is a PC representative and what that role entails. PC would still like feedback on what is happening if the person is representing the PC (**Clerk** to reply to PLT).
- c) To consider future arrangements for maintenance of the parish defibrillators – NT had spoken to Richard Birkin, who was happy to do the next check due at Christmas. It was thought that the Dun Cow landlord looks after its machine (**NT** to check) and it was suggested that the new landlords at the Greyhound could be asked if they would maintain that one in future.
- d) To hear any update on possibility of remote or hybrid meetings for parish councils – In response to question from NP, Clerk stated that it was her understanding that the Government was supportive of the idea of remote and hybrid meetings but this would require legislation and there was nothing in train at the moment. **KV** was asked if he could check the current position.

15. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 5th November at 7pm

NP had already given apologies for that meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.30pm