

COLTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING, WEDNESDAY 7th JANUARY AT 7.30PM APPROXIMATELY (FOLLOWING 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 matters raised.

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) and Clerk Alison James. 1 member of the public observed. Apologies were received from County Cllr Janet Higgins. NT was proposed by NP and seconded by GE to chair this meeting.

2. To receive declarations of interest - None

3. To approve minutes of budget discussion meeting and main meeting held on 3rd December – Minutes were approved and signed by NT as chair.

4. Chair's Announcements

It was noted, for budget purposes, that 3 nights of gritting had been arranged so far on the preceding Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

5. Payments

a) To confirm details of the following payment for December, agreed after discussion at later December agenda item:

- i) EP56 with payment date of 15 December:
St Mary's Church – PC contribution to cost of mowing Pedley's Croft 2025 £200.00

(Total of payments approved for December was £1,222.12. In addition, Lloyds bank charge of £4.25 was debited on 19 December)

b) To approve the following payments for January:

- i) EP57 with payment date of 27 January:
M Barlow – Delivery of February parish magazine £20.00

- ii) EP58 with payment date of 30 January:
Alison James – Clerk's salary, January (382.83);
Home working expenses, 4 weeks, 6 Dec – 9 Jan,
less 1 week's annual leave (16.00); Burial Ground
Clerk salary, 1 Oct – 31 Dec (137.50) less tax
(27.50); Reimbursement for 2 black XL printer
Cartridges (36.93) plus VAT (7.39) £553.15

- iii) EP59 with payment date of 16 January:
Colton Village Hall – Room hire for Sept – Dec
PC meetings plus SCC FAIR Community meeting £75.00

- iv) EP60 with payment amount and date to be confirmed:
Colton Village Hall – Tidying of flower beds etc.
in summer/autumn (Invoice under query)

Total of payments to be approved was £648.15 plus 1 payment to be confirmed.

Payments EP57, EP58 and EP59 were approved as listed. RM had raised queries about the invoice for EP60 with the VPMC treasurer and it appeared the invoice included

charges for other maintenance items not to be covered by PC. Corrections will be made and a new invoice issued in due course so EP60 was not approved. Clerk had received the previous day the invoice from Lichfield District Council for the annual play area inspection, with payment 'due on receipt'. An additional payment EP61 for that invoice (£90.00 including VAT) was therefore approved, as it had previously been agreed that the PC would cover the inspection cost as usual.

6. Planning Matters

- a) To note any applications received and make observations to the Planning Authority: None received by time of issue of agenda.

However, 2 applications had been received the previous day and circulated to councillors, with the deadline for comments in late January, before the next PC meeting. No comments were made on the first application for extension and conversion of stable block to 1 dwelling off Jonghams Lane. However, the second application was a Prior Notification for the conversion of a large agricultural building into 6 dwellings at Malt House Farm on Newlands Lane, opposite the top of the High St. Concerns were raised about the state of the road, the volume of traffic and flooding in the vicinity. PC agreed that those concerns should be registered with LDC (**Clerk**).

- b) To report on any recent decisions of the Planning Authority:
- i) 25/01344/FUH – 6 Martlin Lane, Colton – Timber framed porch over existing side entrance and a new rooflight to the rear of the property – Approved
 - ii) 25/00866/FUH – Newlands Cottage, Newlands Lane, Blithbury – Extension and alteration of dwellinghouse - Approved

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 - Outcome of Community Meeting with SCC FAIR team on 11th November and further SCC work and licence agreement – Clerk had circulated a copy of the draft licence to councillors, who confirmed they were happy with the maintenance commitments being made by PC (which are to step in if landowner was unable to check and clear the trash screen). Licence was signed by NT on behalf of PC and **Clerk** would send to SCC, with one copy retained for PC records and another copy to be given to landowner.
It was noted that there had been heavy rain and flooding by the brook bridge a couple of weeks previously but the flood water had receded quickly. There had been no problems at Hollow Lane, Moor Lane or Newlands Lane then, so combined actions appeared to have been successful on this occasion. Also, SCC or LDC's road sweeper had been clearing drains on Bellamour Way in the last day or so, which was good.
 - ii) Any works to suggest for remaining Divisional Highways budget available from County Cllr Janet Higgins – Nothing raised.
 - iii) Improving the appearance of the parish including clarifying mowing responsibilities – **GE** would be contacting handyman in due course for works on High St etc., as agreed at the December budget meeting.

Some comments had been made by parishioners wishing for better lights on entry to the village at Christmas. **Councillors** to consider,

Speak to church and look into costs. **Clerk** to add item to next agenda.

- iv) Speeding issue in the village raised by parishioners and speeding on Admaston Road – Any update re electronic monitoring device for Bellamour Way; Further meeting arranged by County Councillors with Deputy Police Commissioner to discuss B5013 speeding on 9th January; Any response from County Cllr Janet Higgins re Neighbourhood Speed Check Initiative – Meeting on 9th January at Admaston Village Hall had been postponed due to forecast bad weather but would presumably be rearranged. An email had been received from County Cllr Janet Higgins about roads nominated for the Speed Check Initiative. Whilst somewhat unclear in wording, it appeared that the whole of B5013 from Rugeley to Admaston would be included.

8. To consider any further information regarding Remembrance Sunday responsibilities and practical arrangements - Further information had been sought from a parishioner and a response was expected soon.

9. Correspondence

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

- a) SCC – Road closure notice for entire length of Moor Lane from Wednesday 18th February for 3 days but no more than 5 days for highway improvement works (Email, sent to magazine editor and will be posted on residents' Facebook page) – **Clerk** would post information about this and another road closure notice for Newlands Lane on the residents' Facebook page soon, together with documents from the FAIR flooding meeting.
- b) Staffordshire Moorland District Council – Email from leader seeking support from all Staffordshire parish councils for his letter to Sir Keir Starmer opposing the Local Government Reorganisation proposals for Staffordshire (Email, circulated to cllrs) – It was thought this would have little effect and so PC decided not to respond.
- c) Severn Trent – Introduction of Community Flood Officers, including one for Staffordshire who wishes to engage about any community flooding concerns and initiatives; also storm & flooding flyer and winter newsletter (Emails, some circulated to cllrs) – GE suggested **Clerk** put the Severn Trent officer in touch with SCC officer Sonja Zmiko.
- d) Community Foundation for Staffordshire and Shropshire – Best Kept Village and Community Awards for 2026, celebrating 70th anniversary and offering further online briefings about the competition in January (Email, circulated to cllrs)
- e) SPCA and NALC – Various bulletins including new partnership with Scribe, Annual report for 2025 and employment law updates coming from Employment Rights bill (Emails, mainly circulated to cllrs)

10. Committees

To hear any update from prior Burial Ground Committee meeting – All arrangements in hand and no further funding required from PC at the moment.

11. Finance and audit

- a) 2025/26 accounts – To consider requirements and best practice to meet Assertion 10 of Annual Governance Statement including gov.uk email addresses for Clerk and councillors and gov.uk website domain – GE had watched the webinar previously attended by the Clerk on this topic. There is

some urgency to arrange a gov.uk email address for the Clerk by the end of the financial year because of the 2025/26 audit requirement. Clerk had contacted the company who are offering to arrange a free Clerk gov.uk email but was concerned that the address they set up might not be the one that PC wanted to use longer term if the current PC org.uk website had to move to a gov.uk domain. Also, there is at least one other Colton Parish Council in England so it was important not to clash. **Clerk** to contact current website provider Vision ICT about costs and issues in moving to gov.uk domain and email addresses and also to ask for information about website traffic and an accessibility audit.

- b) To consider any further suggestions as to how recently received CIL money could be spent – No ideas currently so money to be earmarked for a later time.
- c) 2026/27 accounts - To confirm and sign precept request form to be submitted to LDC by 22 January – NT signed form so **Clerk** to submit.
- d) Arrangements for grounds maintenance in 2026/27 - Frequency of cuts in Closed Burial Ground – This had been discussed during the preceding Burial Ground Committee meeting. Whilst important that it still looked cared for and tidy on entry to the village, it had been agreed that the frequency of cuts could be reduced, with more importance placed on maintenance in the Open Burial Ground.
- e) To hear any update on banking including adding R Monbiot for internet access to Lloyds account and closure of NatWest accounts – **RM** would try to pursue this again in the next couple of weeks.
- f) To consider any update on arrangements for agreed donation for memorial snowdrops to be planted in village and licence to plant from SCC Highways – Clerk had checked the draft licence before Christmas and raised concerns that the wording suggested SCC expect the PC to take over mowing of the relevant verges. Clerk had then received a copy of the maps of the 3 proposed planting verges and parishioner had suggested Clerk raise concerns direct with SCC. PC has not budgeted for additional mowing nor does it think it should have to take these over from SCC. It was suggested that the matter was getting too involved, that purchase and planting would be required soon and that instead the snowdrops should be planted on non-Highways land e.g. on Pedley's Croft, by the church. **Clerk** to contact parishioner.

12. Other Parish Council matters

- a) To hear any update on future arrangements for maintenance of the parish defibrillators – **Clerk** to put on next agenda as no conversations held over the Christmas period.

13. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 4th February at 7pm

Meeting ended at 8.25pm.