

COLTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING, WEDNESDAY 1st APRIL AT COLTON VILLAGE HALL

PARISH ASSEMBLY MEETING/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FROM 7.15PM UNTIL 7.45PM

No questions or issues were raised on the evening and none had been received by councillors or by email or social media.

BUSINESS AGENDA

1. To note attendance and receive apologies for absence

In attendance were councillors Noel Talbot (NT), Garren Edwards (GE) and Richard Monbiot (RM) and Clerk Alison James. Apologies had been received from Cllr Nigel Parry (NP) and County Cllr Janet Higgins (JH). JH said that she would continue to pursue the various highways issue and would attend the May meeting. 1 member of the public observed the meeting. GE and RM proposed and seconded that NT chair the meeting.

2. To receive declarations of interest - None

3. To approve minutes of the meeting held on 4th March

Minutes were approved and signed by NT.

4. Chair's Announcements

NP had been promised that a quote for costs for the festive lighting, previously discussed on site, would be supplied to him in time for the May PC meeting.

5. Payments

- a) To note the following payments approved last meeting for March:
- i) EP64 with payment date of 13 March:
TGM – Additional road gritting on 5 dates
in January (487.50) plus VAT (97.50) £585.00
 - ii) EP65 with payment date of 13 March:
M.B. Contracts – Removal of tree fallen over
Hollow Lane (70.00) plus VAT (14.00) £84.00
 - iii) EP66 with payment date of 13 March:
Colton Village Hall – Room hire for January to
April PC meetings £60.00
 - iv) EP67 with payment date of 26 March:
M Barlow – Delivery of April parish magazine £20.00
 - v) EP68 with payment date of 31 March (date corrected from agenda):
Alison James – Clerk's salary, March (382.83);
Home working expenses, 4 weeks, 7 Feb – 6 Mar,
(16.00); PC mobile top up to EE on 20 Feb (10.00)
Mileage expenses for Apr25 to Feb26, 91 miles
for 13 attendances @ 45p/mile (40.95) £449.78
 - vi) EP69 with payment date of 31 March:
HMRC – Payroll taxes for Q4, Jan-Mar
consisting of taxes (314.63) and Employer NI
(48.32) £362.95
 - vii) EP70 with payment date of 13 March:
K Foster – PC donation towards cost of memorial
snowdrops planted in village and purchased from
Boston Bulbs £75.00

Total of payments approved was £1,636.73. In addition, Lloyds bank charges of £4.25 were debited on 17 March.

- b) To approve the following payments for April:
 - i) EP71 with payment date of 10 April:
 - SPCA – Subscription for 2026/27 including NALC membership £351.60
 - ii) EP72 with payment date of 10 April:
 - J Flint – Tidying and clearing vegetation at side of High St and at War Memorial £350.00
 - iii) EP73 with payment date of 24 April:
 - M Barlow – Delivery of May parish magazine £20.00
 - iv) EP74 with payment date of 30 April:
 - Alison James – Clerk’s salary, April (382.83); Home working expenses, 4 weeks, 7 Mar – 3 Apr, (16.00); BGC Clerk salary, 1 Jan – 31 Mar (137.50) less tax (27.50) £508.83
 - v) Cheque 000003 dated 1 April:
 - Cash – Petty cash top up £50.00

The work at the side of High St and at the War Memorial was discussed as, although improved, they are still somewhat green with moss. It was questioned whether it is worth repeating in future or whether the scope should be extended to other weeds along the road. Also, whether pressure washing at the War Memorial might be possible and more effective.

The payments listed were all approved and the cheque subsequently signed.

6. Planning Matters

- a) To note any applications received and make observations to the Planning Authority:
 - i) 26/00126/FUL – Rydal Estate, Colton Road, Colton – Erection of industrial building (Class B2) and associated works – No issues raised.
- b) To report on any recent decisions of the Planning Authority:
 - i) 25/01579/COU – Stables off Jonghams Lane, Hamley Heath Barn, Jonghams Lane, Hamley Heath – Conversion, alteration and extension of stable block to form 1 dwelling - Refused

Clerk reported the recent receipt of notice of an appeal lodged. Councillors had not raised any objections to this application. LDC’s grounds for refusal were somewhat surprising including that the location required a car, which was deemed not sustainable development.

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 reasons for flooding, Hollow Lane drainage and any further correspondence with SCC FAIR team; flooding on Admaston Rd and Newlands Lane –
 SCC confirmed they had been out to Hollow Lane on 16th March, the date previously notified, but could not find the puncture in the pipe, although it had been seen on camera previously. The outlet pipe had however been cleared previously, which should remove the danger of serious flooding. GE reported that Sonja from the FAIR team had met the owner of one of the fields near the culvert and brook and he was in the process of clearing out ditches on his land. Sonja was also going to try to contact another landowner to see if further work could be done on an adjacent field.
 - ii) State of roads – Stoneyford Lane and Newlands Lane – JH had previously reported that Highways were to attend to carry out

temporary repairs on Stoneyford Lane. This was done but the road is still badly in need of more work and permanent repairs.

- iii) Speeding issue in the village raised by parishioners and speeding on Admaston Road – Any further correspondence between County Councillors, Highways and others to discuss B5013 speeding and traffic surveys; Any further information from County Cllr Janet Higgins re Neighbourhood Speed Check Initiative – County Cllrs had been looking into ownership and whether the car park at the reservoir could be closed. But it had been pointed out that it cannot be closed as it is an access road. Speed monitoring is due to be carried out by Highways but no firm dates have been received yet.
- iv) Roadside foliage on Hollow Lane – Nothing to report and to be removed from agenda (**Clerk**).
- v) Improving the appearance of the parish – To be removed from agenda (**Clerk**).

8. Correspondence

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

- a) SCC – Road closure notice for Newlands Lane (from top of High St to B5014 Lichfield Road) for 1 day but no more than 5 days from 11 May for highway repairs (Email) – It was pointed out that the road closure only covered the section from the top of High Street towards Blithbury. Whilst these repairs have been pursued by residents there, other parishioners were more affected by the poor state of the section from the top of High Street to Stockwell Heath. There is a 1-foot-deep chasm on the right hand side where water runs down. **Clerk** to contact Highways and JH to point out this section urgently needs repairing too.
- b) Staffs Search and Rescue – Request for a donation towards purchase of a drone to enable wider area searching (Email, circulated to cllrs) – After discussion, PC agreed to donate £50. **Clerk** to obtain bank details for payment. It was suggested that JH and KV might be asked to make a matched donation (**Clerk**).
- c) LDC – New dedicated online safety hub with practical advice on spotting scams, protecting your devices and data, staying safe on social media etc. (Email)
- d) SCC – Information and a toolkit to advertise the new weekly food waste collections being introduced across the county during 2026. Date for Lichfield District introduction still to be confirmed (Email)
- e) CCDC – Notice of Adoption of its new Local Plan entitled the Cannock Chase Local Plan 2018-2040 (Email)
- f) SPCA and NALC – Various bulletins including Local Government Reorganisation webinar, SPCA response to Local Government Reorganisation, Neighbourhood Governance pack, new Planning Advice service, Engaging Parliament toolkit and Staffordshire Day (1st May) events and toolkit (Emails, some circulated to cllrs)

9. Committees

To hear any update from the prior Burial Ground Committee meeting including any request for funds – Prior meeting had agreed to request £500 from PC, to ensure sufficient funds to cover the annual refuse collection bill and grass cutting until the next BGC meeting in July and this was approved (**Clerk** to arrange).

10. Finance and audit

- a) 2025/26 accounts – To note receipt of VAT claims for 2023/24 (£925.50) and 2024/25 (£884.39) on 2nd March and 11th March respectively. These claims had been made once it was clear that PC would not exceed the £25,000 threshold on annual receipts or payments, enabling exemption from external audit.
- b) To hear any update on VHMC invoice for payments for certain gardening at the Village Hall – RM had confirmed that VHMC had paid the gardener £330 for 11 visits to maintain the various flower beds. PC had already paid £160 direct to the contractor for his work to end June so the amount originally specified by PC for subsequent work had been exceeded. This was due to the weather and work continuing beyond the end of September. PC agreed to pay VHMC the £330 incurred (**Clerk or RM** to notify treasurer to raise revised invoice). For the new financial year PC set a budget of £360 for 6 months, to be reviewed at the end of September.
- c) To hear update on meeting best practice for Assertion 10 of Annual Governance Statement including gov.uk email address for Clerk – The new gov.uk email address had been set up but was not yet in full use as it needs further work to e.g. view on mobile phone and to notify the change for various accounts such as planning comments (**Clerk**).
- d) To hear any update on banking including adding R Monbiot for internet access to Lloyds account and opening new Lloyds savings account(s) – **RM** updated that his dispute with Lloyds re his personal accounts had just been resolved so he should be able to arrange access to PC online banking now. After discussion about options for savings accounts and restrictions on withdrawals for those earning more interest, PC agreed to open an instant access account (**Clerk**).
- e) To consider first draft of revised risk assessment using template from Doveridge Parish Council – **Clerk** had not found time to look at the new template so would have to defer to July meeting, when annual return work had been completed.

11. Other Parish Council matters

- a) To consider future arrangements for maintenance of the parish defibrillators including potential purchase of exterior cabinet – Clerk had asked JH whether an application could be made to the SCC Community Fund for an external cabinet and JH said she would check the eligibility criteria.
- b) To hear any update on parishioner request for lights in the village for Christmas – see Chair's Announcements.
- c) To decide whether a Colton Festival should be held in 2026 following further public meeting on 26th March – It had been decided not to hold a festival in 2026 due to difficulty finding a band. However, a date of 26th June 2027 had been fixed, with the last festival's band secured for that date.

12. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 6th May at 7pm, including Annual Meeting

GE pointed out that he would be on holiday in June so, as NP had already given apologies for the scheduled 3rd June meeting, there would not be a quorum and that meeting had to be cancelled. Clerk pointed out that a meeting was needed to approve the annual return for submission before the end June deadline, with internal audit set for 18th May. It was provisionally agreed to arrange a meeting on Wednesday 24th June, subject to checking that NP would be available, and confine it to items relating to the annual return and any essential payments (**Clerk**). The usual meeting would be held on Wednesday 1st July. Meeting closed at 8.10 pm.