

COLTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING, WEDNESDAY 1st JULY AT 7.30PM AT COLTON VILLAGE HALL

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

Parishioner 1: Pointed out that the bank opposite the school is overgrown, having not yet been cut this season, which reduces visibility especially for children crossing the road. Verge further down opposite the end of Reading Room Drive also needs cutting. Also the drain opposite the end of School Lane is blocked.

Clerk to check map of grass cutting responsibilities but thought it would be LDC to cut and, if so, would follow up with them.

NT encouraged parishioners to report online to SCC, using What3words to specify location.

Parishioner 2: Back in 2017 had brought to PC's attention the entrance to Jonghams Lane going onto or off B5013 and had requested signage for a concealed entrance, as there is a limited visibility splay for drivers exiting the lane due to the bends. On 22nd May, there had been a motorcyclist fatality, which could perhaps have been avoided with better signage. The police have since organised for vegetation to be cut back from existing signs, as they agree it is a dangerous entrance. Given the current speeding issues on B5013, there need to be signs or road markings to slow down traffic or a lower speed limit.

NT said that the B5013 straight approaching the bends was one of the locations requested for a speed survey. Parishioner 2 commented that a speed survey had been carried out some years ago, which concluded that there were not a significant number exceeding the 60mph limit. However, speeds near 60mph are not appropriate in those bends.

JH had been told that SCC could not find suitable locations for speed devices. GE said he was frustrated, as were the County Cllrs, by the lack of action since last September's meeting between the County Cllrs, MP, Police and Highways, to discuss the speeding and gatherings at the reservoir. It was agreed that pressure should be applied to Highways about the speeding issues and the Jonghams Lane exit, by writing to officers and the Cabinet member for Highways, Peter Mason. **JH** would take issues forward and would see if she could pay for a sign from her allocated budget.

(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 Nogel Parry (NP), County Cllr Janet Higgins (JH) and Clerk Alison James. 2 members of the public observed. No apologies had been received. GE proposed and RM seconded for NT to chair the meeting.

2. To receive declarations of interest – None declared.

3. To approve minutes of the meeting held on 24th June – Minutes were approved and signed by NT.

4. Chair's Announcements - None

5. Payments

a) To confirm the following payments approved for June:

i) EP82 with payment date of 29 June:

M Barlow – Delivery of July parish magazine £20.00

- ii) EP83 with payment date of 30 June:
 Alison James – Clerk’s salary, June (382.83);
 Home working expenses, 7 weeks, 9 May –
 26 Jun (28.00); Renewal of Microsoft 365
 subscription to 9 May 2027 (84.99) £495.82
- iii) EP84 with payment date of 30 June:
 HMRC – Payroll taxes, Q1 Apr – Jun (314.63)
 and Employer NI contributions (48.32) £362.95
- iv) EP85 with payment date of 30 June:
 TGM – Grass cutting in March, April and May –
 Village Hall, 2 cuts in May (200.42); Closed Burial
 Ground, 6 cuts in March – May (296.64);
 Stockwell Heath, 2 cuts in May (65.92) plus
 VAT (112.59) £675.57

Total of payments approved is £1,554.34. In addition, bank charges of £5.12 were debited on 19 June.

b) To approve the following payments for July:

- i) EP86 with payment date of 27 July:
 M Barlow – Delivery of August parish magazine £20.00
- ii) EP87 with payment date of 31 July:
 Alison James – Clerk’s salary, July (382.83);
 Home working expenses, 1 week, 27 Jun –
 3 Jul (4.00); BGC Clerk salary, 1 Apr – 30 Jun
 (137.50) less tax (27.50) £496.83

Total of payments for approval is £516.83.

July payments were approved. **Clerk** to set up for **Councillors’** online authorisation.

c) To approve the following payments in principle for August (as no council meeting to be held), with final details to be circulated to councillors by email and ratified at September meeting:

- i) Clerk’s salary and expenses for August
- ii) Parish magazine delivery for September issue
- iii) Trent Grounds Maintenance for June, and possibly July, grass cutting

These potential payments were noted.

6. Planning Matters

a) To note any applications received and make observations to the Planning Authority:

- i) 26/00601/FUH – Wall End Barn, Bellamour Lodge Farm, Colton Road, Colton – Erection of detached double garage (Deadline for comments has passed. Response of no objections or comments submitted)
 - ii) 26/00678/FUH – 102 High Street, Colton – Single storey front and rear extension to form new living space and kitchen plus relocation of garage doors (Deadline for comments has passed. Response of no objections or comments submitted)
 - iii) 26/00693/FUL – Land at Colton Rd, Colton – Erection of horticultural building and polytunnel for the propagation, cultivation, storage, packaging and dispatch of herbs, salad crops and ornamentals
- Deadlines for comments had passed and no objections had been raised.

b) To report on any recent decisions of the Planning Authority:

- i) 26/00126/FUL – Rydal Estate, Colton Road, Colton – Erection of industrial building (Class B2) and associated works – Approved
 - ii) 26/00444/FUH – Wharf Cottage, Bellamour Lane, Colton – Demolition of two existing conservatories, erection of two new side extensions, addition of a new entrance/porch and internal alterations - Approved
- Approvals noted.

- c) To hear any update on site works including trees felled at 8 Williscroft Place - District Councillor Keith Vernon (KV) had been contacted and had spoken to Planning, who were to send an inspector. Nothing further heard since so **Clerk** to ask KV for an update.

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 update from SCC FAIR team; flooding on Admaston Rd and Newlands Lane – Nothing further reported.
 - ii) State of roads – Stoneyford Lane and Newlands Lane – Notice had been received for repairs on Stoneyford Lane (see Correspondence). There had previously been a notice for repairs on Newlands Lane towards Blithbury but it was not known if this had happened.
 - 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 including meeting proposed for 4 September; Any further information from County Cllr Janet Higgins re Neighbourhood Speed Check Initiative and Staffs Safer Roads Partnership – see Public Participation.
 - iv) Removal of fallen tree on footbridge over brook – This had quickly been arranged by PC, which would need to pay contractor's bill in due course.
 - v) Footpath issues raised on Martlin Hill and towards Rugeley/Rydal Estate – These issues were discussed during Chair's Announcements at the meeting on 24th June. Clerk had contacted a parishioner for information and a reply was awaited.
 - vi) Improving the appearance of the village – Councillors wanted handyman to do some more work, to tidy the right-hand side of High St and possibly near the wall in the Open Burial Ground. However, paying the handyman promptly was an issue, as he had previously objected to waiting for approval at a meeting. **GE** to obtain a quote and discuss payment arrangements with handyman and **RM** to see if payment could be made by VHMC for PC reimbursement later.

8. Correspondence

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

- a) SCC – Audit of grit bin provision and potential new arrangements, with reply requested from PC by 31 July on any PC provision (Email, circulated to cllrs; Clerk to reply) – Clerk did not think PCC had ever made any additional provision, with existing bins having been provided by SCC at the end of Manor Way and on Hollow Lane. **Clerk** to reply, also notifying that the bin at Manor Way was damaged.
- b) LDC – Email asking if Colton play area is to be included in their annual play area inspection schedule (Clerk has replied yes.)
- c) SCC – Road closure notice for Stoneyford Lane on Weds 8 July for highway repairs, with diversion via B5014 Uttoxeter Road and Blithbury Road (Email, to be posted on Colton Residents Facebook page)
- d) SCC – Road closure notice for B5014 Uttoxeter Road, Blithbury on Weds 29 July for pole replacement works (Email, to be posted on Colton Residents Facebook page)

- e) SCC – Road closure notice for Hollow Lane on 31 August (Bank Holiday Monday apparently) for highway repairs, with diversion via Blithbury Road and B5013 Colton Road (Email, to be posted on Colton Residents Facebook page)
- f) SCC – Road closure notice for Pipe Lane, Pipe Ridware on 1-3 July for highway repairs (Outside parish but discussed at a PC meeting some months ago) (Email)
- g) Member of public – Blithfield fishing to be closed by South Staffs Water (Email) – Clerk had passed on to Blithfield PC, after some difficulties with the original email being undelivered. It was thought that some Colton parishioners might be affected but there was little than PC could do.
- h) LDC – Information about the new food waste recycling collections and invitation to briefing webinar on 30 June (Emails)
- i) SCC – Celebrating Differences campaign, focusing on Inclusive Travel (Email)
- j) Staffordshire Search and Rescue Team – Update on purchase of drone and equipment for searches, following PC donation (Email, circulated to cllrs)
- k) SPCA and NALC – Various bulletins including no forthcoming legislation to enable remote/hybrid meetings, removal of requirement to publish a councillor's home address, advice on keeping minutes safe by sending to county archives, free West Midland Clerks' Away Day on 29 June (Emails, some circulated to cllrs) – **Clerk** checked that councillors did not object to their address being published on the PC website or in the magazine but would redact from Registers of Interests in due course.

9. Committees

To hear any update from the Burial Ground Committee – Inspections and topple testing had been rearranged from the evening and carried out in the afternoon and the meeting postponed in the absence of any urgent issues. The headstone for potential repair was found laid flat in the Closed Burial Ground so **Clerk** would pursue with relatives and church. 10 headstones in the Open Burial Ground were considered to need attention, as capable of being toppled by an adult (but not by a child). **Clerk** to draft a letter to be sent to relatives and check against previous inspection and what was followed up then. **Clerk** to ask parishioner members if they would be available for a BGC meeting before the October PC meeting.

10. Finance and audit

- a) 2025/26 accounts – To hear update on submission of Certificate of Exemption for Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26 to external auditors Mazars and upload of required information for transparency onto PC website – Clerk reported that Certificate had been submitted and acknowledged before 30th June deadline, all required information put on PC website and AGAR and Electors' notice put on noticeboard.
- b) 2025/26 accounts - To note the ongoing period for the Exercise of Electors Rights, running to Friday 7th August – Noted.
- c) 2025/26 accounts – To consider any follow up required to report from internal auditor Kim Squires, including IT policy and Data Audit – To be pursued by **Clerk**, as noted at meeting on 24th June.
- d) To note the renewal of PC annual insurance with Gallaghers from 1st June – Noted.

- e) To note HMRC increase in tax free car mileage allowance from 45p per mile to 55p per mile backdated to 6 April 2026 and to request approval for the higher rate to be claimed by Clerk – **Clerk** to get clarification on advice note from SPCA before making request.
- f) To hear any update on banking including adding R Monbiot for internet access to Lloyds account – **RM** said he believed he now had online access so it was suggested he try to authorise the July payments.
- g) To review first draft of revised risk assessment policy – Clerk had prepared a first draft based on the Doveridge PC document provided via RM but was unclear why it was considered better than the previous Colton version. RM commented that the highest risk was the number of councillors and that others were all low risk and that a simple document was preferable. **Clerk** to produce a further version for comment on that basis.

11. Other Parish Council matters

- a) To hear update on arrangements for maintenance of the parish defibrillators including potential purchase of exterior cabinet – NT said that he had taken over responsibility for checking the defibrillators every 8-10 weeks from a former councillor. A request for funding for the exterior cabinet had been made to JH, who said that she could offer £250 from her funding allocation. **Clerk** to complete an SCC Community Fund application.
- b) To hear any update on parishioner request for lights in the village for Christmas and potential costs – Quote received from a contractor had been passed to PCC but PC thought it unreasonably high. Matter would be left with PCC, with PC having offered to make a contribution if PCC wished to pursue any improvements.

12. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 2nd September at 7pm (No meeting in August)

Meeting ended at 8.35pm