



Minutes

Meeting of the Parish Council

Monday 9th November 2020 at 7 pm online

Present: Councillors Turley (Chair), Biden, Hilderley, Payne, Toon and Wright

In attendance: Mrs Jones (Clerk) 4 members of the public

The meeting was held remotely as permitted under The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Open Forum

A resident raised concerns about the state of Brickhouse Lane, stating that intensification of use of farm vehicles had caused erosion of the surface and damage to the verge and hedge along the Sportsfield and asking about possible solutions. The road surface had been repaired in the Spring but was now showing damage again. The Chair explained that some of the issues caused by the farm traffic had been raised at the last meeting and reported to Staffordshire County Council Highways, although they had not visited the village promptly enough to see these at first hand. The farm had been contacted to arrange a meeting, so far without success. They were not doing anything illegal, and traffic movements had improved soon after they were contacted. The resident said that as the hedge was on land leased by the Parish Council the farm should be asked how they intended to put right any damage.

Another resident reported on the help for elderly residents that was being offered during the second lockdown. Flyers had been delivered to most properties making everyone aware that help was available, such as collecting prescriptions and providing a weekly call or visit from a local buddy to those who were shielding. It was also hoped to provide a small Christmas gift. The Chair said that the Parish Council would do all that it could to help and would donate a sum if required. The 3 organisers and the 40 or so volunteers were providing a fantastic service and were warmly thanked.

Two residents had observed the meeting as they were interested in village matters.

1. To receive apologies for absence

Cllr Wright had apologised for work reasons, and Cllr Gilbert had also apologised. The apologies were approved.
The District Councillors had been unable to attend due to another meeting.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest

None received.

3. To approve the Minutes of the meeting of 12th October 2020

The Minutes were approved and would be signed at the next face to face meeting.

4. To receive the Clerk's Report

The planned closure of Chetwynd Bridge on the A513 would not take place, although there were likely to be some short closures next Spring to do the repairs.

Elford Boys Football Club had kindly provided new nets for the Parish Council's goals for village children to use.

Birmingham City Council had informed the Parish Council of thinning work to trees in The Avenue, some of which had protection orders.

The Clerk had attended a training session on funding run by the SPCA, and the SLCC Virtual Conference which had been very informative.

During lockdown the Post Office would remain open as it was an essential service, the playground would stay open although the outdoor gym had been closed, and the taxi service had been put on hold.

Resolved: Approved

5. To consider planning applications

New applications: 20/00357/FUH The Bungalow, Church Road, single storey rear extension and front porch, no objection.

20/00917/FUH, 20/00918/LBC, The Orchard, Brickhouse Lane, single storey extension to form garage, no objection

Update on applications:

19/01707/FUL Elford Social Club, demolition and erection of housing. Planning had been contacted for an update but there was no further information. Some tidying of the site had taken place.

20/00989/OUT Land at The Shrubbery, outline application for 25 houses. No progress

Resolved: Approved

6. To receive an update on traffic within the village

Various actions taken since the last meeting were discussed. An offer had been made to the Bridgen family to meet to discuss the concerns raised at the last meeting, but they had not yet responded positively. The levels of traffic had improved, but it was still hoped to arrange a meeting to improve dialogue on issues and request that residents be informed of dates of increased movements in the future. Highways had been contacted and would repair the bollards. Highways had suggested contacting Lichfield Planning who had replied it was not a planning matter. Birmingham City Council had been contacted and had recently visited the farm, although the outcome was unknown; they would be informed of matters discussed at the meeting.

Resolved: Approved

7. To consider progress on the Sportsfield Leases

The Clerk and Chair had discussed the Leases with the original solicitor who would now progress the matter. The final versions should be available for signing soon.

8. To consider tree planting at the Sportsfield

The Woodland Trust saplings would be delivered shortly, and the school would then be contacted to discuss the arrangements for planting.

9. To consider Christmas event in Elford

The Parish Council would promote the Christmas lights event on December 12th and contact various groups in the village, Cllr Payne would circulate information. It was agreed to order a new set of lights and a Christmas tree would be obtained for the Village Hall.

Resolved: Approved

10. To consider canoe platform at the Picnic Area

The Clerk would contact the representative of British Canoeing to discuss the progress of the scheme, which was now being progressed. A safety ring would be requested and the Parish Council could arrange for a picnic table at the area. Various permissions were to be obtained, and it was hoped to install the platform next year.

11. To consider playground maintenance

The playground had been treated with biocide and Cllr Payne would check it, then if necessary the contractor would be asked to inspect it and consider if the treatment had been successful. Following lockdown regulations the outdoor gym had been closed, the playground remained open with social distancing rules in place. The Annual Inspection Report had been received; Alan had been asked to make minor adjustments recommended. There were signs of rot on several wooden planks and these would be monitored. In the long-term replacement of the equipment would need to be considered and considerable fund raising would be required.

12. To consider appointment of Internal Auditor

The appointment of Toplis Associates as Internal Auditors was approved.

Resolved: Approved

13. To receive questions and reports from Councillors

Cllr Toon expressed his concern that children visiting the Christmas lights display along The Avenue could encounter dog waste which was a problem on the grassed area and a health and safety issue. Far too many dog owners let their pets off the lead there and did not clear up after them. Increased signage would help and the Clerk would contact Environmental Health at Lichfield District Council for advice on the wording of signs. Cllr Biden said there was a £1000 fine for this offence and a few irresponsible owners spoilt it for everyone, enforcement was difficult.

Cllr Toon also asked whether hand sanitiser should be available at the playground; Cllr Payne commented that responsible parents should ensure that they sanitised their children's hands and supervised them at the playground.

Cllr Payne suggested that the Parish Council make a donation towards a Christmas gift for the vulnerable if required and Cllrs were in principle in agreement. He also suggested sending thanks in a Christmas card to those who organised this help, Cllr Turley would arrange this.

Cllr Payne reported that the school was currently closed and everyone involved was self-isolating for two weeks due to COVID-19.

Cllr Turley had represented the Parish Council at a virtual wreath laying recorded for Remembrance Sunday by the Mease Valley Churches.

14. To receive correspondence

SPCA bulletins

Lichfield District Council news items, shared on the website and Facebook page; information on funding, lockdown information. Draft Events and Festivals policy consultation, Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report consultation.

15. To receive a financial report

The bank reconciliation was given: Current account £8273, Playground account £9,400, Taxi account £1,750

Receipts; rent for 5 years from Cricket Club £25, for 2 years from Football Club £10 plus interest on savings accounts £9.57 and £0.65

The half year Internal Audit had been arranged online.

Information had been received on the precept from the District Council, this should be requested by January 2021.

The draft budget would be prepared for discussion at the next meeting. The Auditor had advised increasing reserves to an acceptable level to cover contingencies.

Resolved: Approved

16. To consider authorising schedule of accounts for payment

The Clerk had circulated the invoices.

Payments: M. Jones, salary, reimbursement of expenses £351.96; HMRC £80.40; A. Robey, handyman work and materials £81; R.W. Harcombe, grounds maintenance £125; A. Cox, mowing, The Avenue, £70; Bennetts, taxi hire £145.20; Elford Village Hall, Post Office room rental September & October £108; Modus, playground herbicide application £300.

Resolved: Approved

17. Date of next meeting:

14th December online at 7pm (Zoom)

The meeting closed at 20.25 pm.