

BRIDGTOWN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting.

Wednesday 29th March 2023

At Bethel Methodist Church

Present:

Cllrs. Val Jones (Chair), Matt Freeman, Peter Kruskonjic, Bob Eccleston, Mandy Cook,

In Attendance:

Chris Gracey – Clerk
7 residents

The Chair welcomed Councillors, residents and Officers from CCDC to this month's council meeting, the last meeting of 2022-23 and Cllr. Val Jones last meeting as the present Chairman.

The Officers from CCDC presented the proposal to refurbish Laburnum Park consultation, they outlined the funding and the sources of the funding approved by CCDC and reported that the consultation would include going in to local schools to engage in physical consultation. Leaflets have been distributed to all the neighbouring housing with details of the consultation and how they can comment.

Cllr. Mandy Cook asked if future refurbishment and maintenance covered Bridgtown Park, Officers commented that they would be willing to discuss maintenance of the park at suitable date with council.

The Officers closed the presentation and left the meeting at 7.30pm along with 3 residents who had attended because of the presentation.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION -

Two persons from the Nursery in Bridgtown reported that HGV's driving through the village area along the slip road from Walsall Road to Bridges end, she said the road was narrow and she questioned the condition of the barrier wall, feeling it was possibly unsafe and being the barrier across the nursery playarea, she felt this was dangerous and was concerned about the safety of the children. Members discussed the HGV vehicles travelling through the village area and also having the barrier checked if it was thought to be unsafe, it will be reported to Highways.

1. Apologies received in writing prior to the meeting.

Apologies were received and accepted from – Cllrs Kevin Whittaker (Vice-chairman), Paul Snape, and resident Sue Heath.

RESOLVED: To accept the apologies of above Councillors.

2. Declaration of Interests on agenda items and consideration of dispensations where appropriate.

None

3. To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th January 2023

3.1 Members discussed the minutes in detail and agreed the minutes, subject to amendments & corrections as noted in matters arising.

This was proposed by Cllr. Peter Kruskonjic seconded by Cllr. Val Jones (Chairman) and carried to approve the minutes.

RESOLVED: MINUTES WERE APPROVED.

4.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes. (Not already on the Agenda)

4.1 Minute Nr. 5.3 Should read CH/21/0339 appeal against refused planning application at 33 North Street Bridgtown resubmission of planning application CH/15/0385 Erection of 2nr. 2 storey building to creat 3 flats. 3 garages. 1 cycle store and associated work full refusal 9th February 2022

5.0 Chairman's Report.

5.1 United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

I am pleased to report that the Parish Council has been successful in obtaining approval from the District Council for the items we selected from the UKSPF. The aim of the Fund is to promote a pride in the area we live. There were a number of restrictions on what, how and where the money could be spent and a very tight timeline in which to present the requisite quotes and invoices. Congratulations to our Parish Clerk, Chris Gracey, for her hard work in ensuring the Parish was able to take full advantage of this opportunity to the benefit of our residents.

The items approved and purchased from the Capital section of the fund are:

- Coronation Bench – the location for this needs to be determined
- Christmas lamp post lights – this includes fitting, maintenance and storage
- Waterproof Public Address System
- Bounce Back Net for the Memorial Gardens and Play Park to prevent balls going over wall into neighbouring properties

Kings Coronation Celebration – Saturday 6th May 11am – 5pm Bridgtown Social Club

All Parishes were advised that the costs for the Kings Coronation Celebrations must be funded from the revenue part of the grant available to the Parish Councils. Bridgtown has engaged Bescot Promotions to deliver and manage the event which includes:

- Free Bouncy Castle and face painting
- Craft stalls
- Hot Food and Cake stalls
- Live Band, CCRFM Road show, Entertainer,

- Steward, first Aiders, Security, Promotions and event management included
- Commemorative coins and lollies
- Bunting & Party decor

Parking Issues in East Street

Parking issues in the lower end of East street has been a perennial problem. As there are no parking restrictions in force there, Clear Streets are unable to provide enforcement only where there is a legal restriction such as yellow lines. The Parish Clerk has contacted the owners of Gerrards, the autobody shop to make them aware of resident concerns of their cars being parked in the street, however they have explained that customers using other businesses in that area also park there eg nursery and the gym. The Police have previously advised that unless the parking is illegal they do not have a power to act. However the Chair has contacted the new Police Inspector to inform him that cars were parking on the pavement at junctions which is illegal and he has promised to send officers at different times of the day to assess the situation.

Traffic Management in Bridgtown

At the previous Parish Council meeting it was proposed that the council purchase a number of Speed Indicator Cameras (SIDs) which could be used at specific locations in the Parish where speeding was a concern. Permission has been given by Highways for their use. The Parish Council will need to confirm their location although the cameras are mobile and can be moved to other locations where speeding is felt to be an issue. The Map below sets out the locations across Bridgtown of the legally enforceable signs which include HGV Weight Restriction signs, the Advance notice signs that vehicles are approaching a restricted weight area and the 20 mile restriction signs. The effectiveness of the traffic management system is dependent on enforcement and residents are advised to continue to report vehicles breaching the restrictions to the Police. The Parish Clerk will also write to the firm to make them aware that their drivers are breaking the law.



Police Community Engagement Initiative

The Parish Council welcomes the fact that the Police are currently exploring how best to increase their engagement with local residents to enable them to more easily raise concerns or issues. This could involve both online and a Face to Face session. Residents will be notified when the Parish Council know more.

Anti social Behaviour

Sadly some anti social behaviour has emerged with damage to the one of the concrete sections of the mural wall with some graffiti also noted. The damage will be reported to the Police and to the District Council for repair and for removal of the graffiti.



Asylum Seekers

The Parish Council is not aware of any recent incidents the PCSOs will be attending tonight. The District Council has asked Support Staffordshire to work with other organisations to provide activities and socialisation for the asylum seekers to reduce the potential for unrest in the Holiday Inn and any antisocial behaviour.

Last Parish Meeting for 2022 – 2023

This will be the last Parish Council meeting for 2022 – 2023. All councillors will need to seek re election if they wish to serve on the new Parish Council which will be formed following the May elections. The Parish Council thanks the residents of Bridgtown for their support during their tenure of office.

6.0 Consideration of reports received from the PCSO.

6.1 Two PCSO attended the meeting and read out the report for the previous month:

Vehicle crimes 6 - 5 of which were on Progress Business Park, 1 on East Street – some of these crimes were theft from the vehicles and one was a theft of a vehicle.

Anti social behaviour – 1 at East Street public order offence,

Criminal Damage – Graffiti on Walkmill Lane

Cllr. Bob Eccleston reported 3 incidents of criminal damage to various flag poles in the Parish, all reported to the police but not showing on the report, PCSO commented that this is being dealt with by the Investigation Dept and is going through a procedure.

7.0 County Councillor's Report

7.1 In Cllr. Paul Snape's absence he has forwarded his report:

Item 6. I have no information that would be of any assistance to those present. As County Councillor, we are given very little information, what I can say, is that the Leader of the County Council, Mr Alan White and the CEO Mr John Henderson had a recent meeting with the Home Secretary in Westminster to discuss such issues across the whole of Staffordshire. The matters affecting Cannock and Bridgtown were rightly discussed. I do not believe any matters were finally resolved but the Home Secretary was told of the views of residents who such matters affect most directly. As soon as I get an update I will let councillors know. Of course this will not be until after the May elections.

Item 7. I have had recent discussions with very senior Staffordshire Police Officers as what I see as the lack of policing across the whole of my division Cannock Town which includes Bridgtown. The lack of a visible presence is seen by all and regularly commented to me. The Staffordshire Policing Model was amended 9 months ago, since then we seem to have even less officers on our streets which can not be allowed to continue. I will continue to fight for a greater police presence.

Item 14. Highways Issues – Drains – gullies – This matter has never been reported to me as the county councillor. I have not seen any evidence of flooding in the parish, I have seen evidence of surface water, where drains have been slower than usual for the water to disperse, I have not seen any blocked drains, however if there are any can you please report them on the My Staffs App, raise a reference number and pass that number onto me, and I will follow it up.

Grit Bins – If they need filling, please report on My Staffs App, as we are coming to the end of the Winter season, the bins will only be refilled if we have several very cold days or heavy snow falls, the grit bins are primarily for highways usage and not for private dwellings, carparks or business premises.

Lakeside Boulevard – all of the roads are now formally adopted by Staffs CC. The speed signs will be corrected and removed from the lamp posts, where they should not have been fixed. The one sign facing in the wrong direction will be corrected.

May Elections – I will not be putting myself forward for election for the parish council in May. I have enjoyed my time as a co-opted member. My personal view is that the Parish Council should be made up of residents of Bridgtown who see the problems on a daily basis and should be involved in making things happen. As your county councillor until the elections in May 2025 I will be there to give advice and support and your intermediary with the county council, as will Cllr. Peter Kruskonjic with the district council.

In conclusion can I thank you all for your support during my two years as a parish councillor in Bridgtown, in particular our clerk Chris and Val as Chairman who both have worked tirelessly for Bridgtown and deserve much praise. I have enjoyed it although at times it has not been easy. I wish the new council from May good luck and hope that it will consist mainly of residents from Bridgtown.

8.0 Recreational Areas.

8.1 The Leighton Memorial Garden – Volunteers have been carrying out work on the garden, with Spring bulbs flowering and various plants donated by the community, similarly Summer bulbs have also been planted continuing the array of flowers.

8.2 War Memorial – As reported by a resident the memorial is in need of cleaning and possible work, the parish council aim to find out whose responsibility the memorial is and if they will carry out the work.

8.3 Bridgtown Memorial Gardens & Play Park in Union Street – The gardener continues the ongoing work at the gardens and park, he is in process of laying bark on the raised beds and borders to help reduce the maintenance required and keep the area weed free.

The Chairman reported that there has been some vandalism on the park, the recently painted murals have experienced some graffiti and also part of the wall has been smashed, this has been reported to CCDC and hopefully will be repaired shortly.

9.0 Adjournment to receive reports from 'Friends of Bridgtown Park'

9.1 None present

10.0 Planning:

All planning applications have been circulated to Councillors for comment.

10.1 **Applications for Consideration** - none

10.2 **Applications Approved/Rejected by District Council** - none

11.0 **Correspondence** – Items of correspondence received during the month are emailed to Councillors, as received and for this month included the following:

- SPCA Bulletin emailed to council 31st January 2023
- SPCA Bulletin emailed to council 27th February 2023
- CCDC News roundup emailed to council 27th February 2023
- Keep Britain Tidy 2023 campaign emailed to council 27th February 2023
- SPCA Bulletin emailed to council 8th March 2023
- CCDC details of notice of PH Licence suspension emailed to council 8th March 2023
- SPCA Bulletin emailed to council 13th March 2023
- CCDC details of election briefing emailed to council 17th March 2023
- CCDC details of election nomination forms emailed to council 17th March 2023
- SPCA Bulletin emailed to council 22nd March 2023
- SPCA Bulletin emailed to council 27th March 2023

11.2 Outgoing - None

RESOLVED: ALL RELEVANT POST HAD BEEN CIRCULATED AND NOTED.

12.0 Accounts

12.1 Payments for Approval

Date	Payee	Cheque Nr.	Amount	VAT	Approved/declined
29.03.23	Hollybush Nurseries Ltd(Bark for Memorial Gardens & Park)	102105	1200.00	200.00	Approved
29.03.23	Optimo Property Services(Painting of flower basket holders North Street)	102106	1140.00	190.00	Approved
29.03.23	SPCA (Subscription 2023-24)	102107	376.19		Approved
29.03.23	C E Gracey(Clerk's February & March Salary)	102108	337.36		Approved
29.03.23	HMRC(Clerk's PAYE February & March 2023)	102109	70.00		Approved
29.03.23	Bethel Church(Hall hire 29/03/23)	102110	20.00		Approved
29.03.23	K Punter(Gardener 9 th February 2023)	102111	40.00		Approved
29.03.23	Elan City Ltd(2 x SID's solar panels, batteries & mounting kits)	102112	5615.98	936.00	Approved
TOTAL			£7473.53	£1326.00	

Cllr. Mandy Cook commented on the bark purchased from an outside the parish supplier, supported by Cllr Bob Eccleston, both councillors did not approve the purchase or subsequently the payment.

RESOLVED: Authorisation of the accounts presented for payment totalling £7,473.53 was agreed proposed by the Cllr.Peter Kruskonjic seconded by Cllr.Val Jones(Chairman) and carried.

12.2 Consideration of the Current financial situation of the Council - The financial statement 1st April to 28th February 2023 was presented, proposed by Cllr. Peter Kruskonjic seconded by Cllr.Val Jones(Chairman) and carried.

12.3.1 Chairman's Allowance – At the last meeting a query was raised on the payment of the Chair's allowance, the clerk presented figures of other parishes that support the chairman's allowance. It was agreed that any change needed is to be agreed by the new parish council and the new Chair agreed by council following the election.

12.3.2 Frequency of Parish Meetings – At the last meeting Cllr. Mandy Cook requested that the Parish Council meeting be changed from bi-monthly to every month, it was agreed that any change in this item also needed to be agreed by the new parish council.

12.4 Consideration of infrastructure projects update – none

12.5 Consideration of any grant funding application opportunities – Nothing to report

12.5 Consideration of any Grant applications received – None

13.0 Highways Issues -

13.1 Cllr. Bob Eccleston commented on various problems, presented notes and photos on his device:

Broken bollards waiting to be replaced.
Damage to slip way from Walsall Road Bridges end.
Various blocked gullies on North Street, A5, Walsall Road all requiring work.
Damage to New Street.

These items will be reported to Highways and their generated reference numbers passed to County Cllr. Paul Snape for his attention.

Grit Bin – None of the Members know how many grit bins there are in Bridgtown or their condition. Grit bins that are provided by SCC are filled during the winter months for the use of the public highway, the locations of the existing bins will be confirmed and if required additional bins will be requested.

14.0 To receive reports from Councillors who have attended outside meetings - None

15.0 HGV Signage – North Street – New Street – Cross Street

15.1 The Chairman presented a map of the parish showing the existing signage, the council will continue to write to companies whose vehicles persist in accessing businesses through the village narrow streets causing damage to street furniture and infrastructure.

16.0 Lakeside Boulevard

16.1 Cllr. Peter Kruskonjic reported that CCDC will not adopt the park, litter bins & social housing until work identified has been carried out, this could be early 2024.

17.0 New Lamp Posts

17.1 Awaiting date for the commencement of work – Both the Chair and the Clerk have contacted EON by email an phone regarding the delay in replacing the lamp posts. Cllr. Peter Kruskonjic has raised this with Highways who are going to contact EON regarding the delay.

18.0 Council meetings Bi monthly to Monthly – Deferred until the next meeting

19.0 Car Parks in Bridgtown

19.1 Cllr. Bob Eccleston commented on the car park on Broad Street refused as an Asset of Community Value application, he asked the clerk to find out when the parish council can reapply.

20.0 Social Media

20.1 Cllr. Bob Eccleston commented on a social media course that he attended and discussed with other parish council.

21.0 UKSPF

21.1 As covered in the Chair's report. Cllr. Bob Eccleston questioned the PA System, Cllr. Mandy Cook commented on the chocolate lollies given out from the last funded event.

22.0 Items for Information or Future Agendas

22.1 Frequency of future Parish Council Meetings – Chairman's Allowance

23.0 Date of Next Meeting.

23.1 The next meeting would be Wednesday 10th May 2023 to cover the Annual Parish Assembly & the AGM before the council meeting.

RESOLVED: NEXT MEETING: 10th May 2023

24.0 The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 9.40pm.

25.0 Confidential Items – exclusion of the press and public when applicable.

Signed By Chairman
Date