

# BRIDGTOWN PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting.  
Commencing 7.00pm, Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021.  
At Bethel Church, Union Street, Bridgtown.**

**Present:**

Cllrs. (Chair), Val Jones, Peter Kruskonjic, , Kevin Whittaker.

**In Attendance:**

Mrs Janine Arm – Clerk to the Council

**1. Apologies.**

County Councillor Paul Snape

**RESOLVED: NOTED.**

**2. Report of the Chairman of Bridgtown Parish Council.**

The report was given by Cllr V Jones and is attached (Appendix 1).

**RESOLVED: NOTED.**

**3. Items for Information or Future Agendas.**

There were no matters raised.

**RESOLVED: NOTED.**

**4. Open Forum.**

There were no members of the public present and no matters were raised.

**RESOLVED: NOTED.**

The meeting was then closed at 7.10pm.

## APPENDIX 1

CHAIRMAN .....

# Chairman's Report 2020 - 2021

## BRIDGTOWN PARISH COUNCIL

This report covers the period of May 2020 to May 2021. The Parish Council continued to meet on Zoom during Covid with almost 100% attendance.

### Appointments & Resignations

- January 2020 the well-respected Chair, Eddie Smith retired after 30 years' service. Ally Smith was elected to the post.  
May 2020 Cllr Bob Eccleston was co-opted on to the Parish Council into this vacancy.
- November 2020 Cllr Ally Smith resigned from the Parish and Cllr Val Jones was elected as Chair.
- January 2021 Cllr Maureen Freeman was co-opted onto the Parish Council

### Business as usual

Parish Councillors have responded to complaints and concerns from residents on a range of issues from noise pollution and businesses operating conditions to bin collections. Sometimes there is confusion in the public around which tier of local government has responsibility for addressing the problem ie Parish, District or County. The MYStaffs App is a useful tool as it ensures that the complaint automatically goes to the correct authority and provides a reference number to follow up on. Making a complaint third hand can mean the councillor going back and forth between the complainant and the responsible authority. The Parish Council also supported the Village Xmas celebrations led by Cllr Bob Ecclestone, with a grant to the Bethel Church for the Christmas gifts for the children at the Santa Sleigh ride.

### Main Concerns

Two main concerns made to the Parish Council from residents have been the condition of the Parks and Open Spaces and the HGV traffic through the village. Due to the size of the Parish (we are the second smallest in Cannock Chase) this is reflected in the Parish precept and consequentially its budget. However, The Parish Council has been fortunate in being allocated funds from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) as a result of the recent developments of Lakeside Boulevard and Walkmill Lane. This can be used to make improvements provided they meet the regulations for CIL and do not incur costly maintenance that would be difficult to meet from a limited Parish budget.

### Developments for Parks and Open Spaces: -

- **Parks & Open Spaces Survey** – A request was made to the District Council that they undertake a survey of Bridgtown Parks and Open Spaces beginning with Bridgtown Memorial Park and Gardens as a first priority. This was undertaken by Lynn Evans, Community Education Officer, Leigh Jarrett, Cllr Val Jones, Cllr Peter Kruskonjic, along with other members of the District Parks Team. As a result, a schedule of improvements was agreed which are being actioned at this time and are noted in the report from the Chair of the "Friends of Bridgtown Park" which will become a core agenda item.
- **Friends of Bridgtown Park** - Members of this newly established group also include myself and Cllr Peter Kruskonjic. It is chaired by local resident Leigh Jarrett and other members are listed in his preliminary report. Much of my time since our last meeting has been spent liaising between the Friends Group and the District and Parish Councils and working with the Chair. There will be some proposals made to the Parish Council to fund the improvements.
- **Incidences of Vandalism** – A report has been made to the Police about the vandalism to Bridgtown Park which has resulted in significant damage to the walls of the raised flowerbeds and two of the benches which are currently being repaired by the District Council at the request of the Parish Council. The local PCSO has made several visits to the Park and has reported on her findings. They will continue to visit the Park whenever they are on duty. In addition, Cllrs Val Jones and Peter Kruskonjic have visited the Park on several occasions. As a more permanent deterrent to the vandalism, the Parish Council will be proposing the installation of CCTV linked to the District Community Safety Hub which has 24hr monitoring and a direct link to the Police.

### HGV & Traffic problems

This has become a problem for Bridgtown with its proximity to the A5 with vehicles using it as a shortcut. A proposal is to be made to Highways by County Cllr Paul Snape for installation of "Not suitable for HGV" signs at critical points. Whilst it is not legally

enforceable it should provide some deterrent to HGV drivers. Request will be made for undertaking another traffic survey where it is felt to be the most problematic.

**Parish Council Website** – The Parish Council now has an official website thanks to the efforts of the Parish Clerk and Ray Smythe. This will be for official announcements and communications from the Parish and will be managed by the Parish Clerk.

**Key relationships**

The Parish Council has long key standing relationships with two Bridgtown institutions, the Bethel Church through Jan Burns from the Bridgtown History Society. The Parish is pleased to support Bethel Church and will look to Jan Burns for ways in which we can do this as the Church has been at the centre of many village events. Similarly, David Williams for the History Society.

**Next Year Projects to be working towards**

- Completion and consolidation of the renovation project for Bridgtown Memorial Gardens Park and ensure that the remaining Parks and Spaces are also surveyed for improvements
- Identify appropriate funding projects for the CIL money that benefit residents
- Increased use of the new Parish Council website and promotion of the Parish Council and its work.