

BRIDGTOWN PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting.
Commencing 7.00pm, Wednesday 15th September 2021.
At Bethel Church, Union Street, Bridgtown.**

Present:

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

John Stanley.
Bern Knicien.
Charlotte Plant.
Martyn Buttery.
Martyn Brown.
Nicola Brown.
Chris Maddox.
Mandy Cook.
Sue Heath.

Public Participation.

Charlotte Plant reported to the Council that a number of business proprietors in Bridgtown wanted to declare a vote of No Confidence in Cllr Bob Eccleston.

A member of the public asked if an additional defibrillator could be purchased to cater for residents near the Hotel complex. It was explained that either a grant could be applied for, or companies could choose to self-fund the purchase of the units.

1. Apologies received in writing prior to the meeting.

Apologies were received by Cllrs Matthew Freeman and Bob Eccleston.

RESOLVED: TO ACCEPT THE APOLOGIES OF THE ABOVE COUNCILLORS.

Apologies were also accepted from the Clerk to the Council.

2. Declaration of Interests on Agenda Items and considerations where appropriate

No Declarations of interest were made.

3. To approve the Minutes from the meetings held on 21st July 2021.

3.1 Bridgtown Annual Parish Meeting

It was proposed by Cllr Snape and seconded by Cllr Kruskonjic and agreed to approve the minutes.

3.2 Bridgtown Parish Council Meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr Snape and seconded by Cllr Kruskonjic and agreed to approve the minutes.

RESOLVED: MINUTES WERE APPROVED.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes.

No issues were raised,

RESOLVED: NOTED

5. Councillor Vacancy – Update on the current situation.

Following the resignation of Maureen Freeman, Cannock Chase District Council had received notification that ten residents had requested an election to take place to elect a new member of the Parish Council. It was noted the election would take place on the 21st October 2021 at The Bethel Church.

It has been noted the cost of the election will cost the Parish around £3,000, which will be withdrawn from the earmarked fund. However, this sum together with funding for the general election of approximately £1,700 would have to be budgeted for when considering the precept.

Notification of the impending election has been made on social media, the Parish and District Council websites and both noticeboards.

RESOLVED: NOTED

6. Chairman’s Report.

Cllr Val Jones reported.

Bridgtown & District History Society & The Parish Council

- Ma Pardoe Blue Plaque – On the 21st August a ceremony took place to celebrate the life of “Ma Pardoe” a famous Bridgtown resident. Members of the family and the History Society gave presentations and photos were shown of the family tree, her life and work she did in Bridgtown and the wider community. The Parish Council has supported various initiatives including the blue plaque that was unveiled in Ma Pardoe’s honour. The unveiling ceremony took place together with short speeches from the family, Cllr Doug Smith, Chair of Cannock Chase District Council, Cllr Val Jones, Chair of Bridgtown Parish Council and the History Society.
- Members of the Parish Council who have joined the History Society attended the AGM on 1st September at the Bethel Church. The society welcomed the addition of the four new members and emphasised that younger people needed to be involved so the history and legacy of Bridgtown would not be forgotten. Local historian Derek Middleton has offered to provide the Parish Councillors with a virtual tour of the notice boards some of which have been supported by the Parish Council and erected across Bridgtown depicting famous residents or events.

Community Safety Hub

- As a result of the escalating vandalism at Bridgtown Memorial Gardens, a referral has been made to the Community Safety Hub, which consists of representatives of all the agencies responsible for all aspects of community safety including the police. PCSOs have been making visits to the park whilst on their patrols during the day. However, it appears the attacks are taking place under cover of the dark and the park does not have lighting. The outcome of the referral so far is as follows.
- The community safety hub lead has advised that the Police are to request PCSO patrols until 22:00 (the latest possible) and the local sergeant to consider a more formal patrol strategy.
- A crime prevention officer to conduct a survey of the location to ascertain if there is anything that could be done from a design perspective to abate the issues.
- Continue to report any incidents on 101 or the Staffordshire Police webpage to ensure that they are aware of the frequency of the issues – this in turn will enable more police resources to be diverted to the location, increasing the likelihood of the perpetrators being apprehended.

- The situation will be reviewed at the next Community Safety Hub meeting and a report provided to the Chair of Bridgtown Parish.

Bridgtown Primary School

A proposal is to be considered by the Parish Council to grant money for Bridgtown Primary School to purchase large wooden planters in which to grow vegetables. This idea was originated by Sue Heath, of the Bridgtown's residents and a talented gardener. The school has responded enthusiastically to Sue's idea as this will provide the schoolchildren to grow their own vegetables and in doing so to learn about the cycle of plant life. Sue will be presenting this at the September Parish meeting.

Remembrance Sunday

- It has now been confirmed that the Remembrance Sunday Parade will take place on the Sunday 7th November, the week before the Cannock parade on the 14th and is being led by the Association of the Royal Engineers.
- It is hoped that representatives from the 116 RMP Provost Company may be able to join the Bridgtown parade and the Parish is waiting for a response on this.

Ornamental Lamp Posts in North Street

- The Parish Council contacted the energy company responsible for the ornate lights on North Street following advice from the Highways Department to ask for permission to have them repainted. The lights are an important feature of the street furniture and sit alongside posts which serve to hold flower baskets which are delivered by the District Council.
- The company has now responded that the lamp posts are due for replacement in April 2022 and this will be discussed at the meeting.

Defibrillator Update

Cllr Jones announced that following a successful grant application, a defibrillator would be purchased and situated outside the Bethel Church. Training would be made available to businesses, residents and councillors and would take place at the Bethel Church.

RESOLVED: NOTED.

7. Consideration of reports received from PCSO's

It had been reported that Bridgtown Park has been visited by patrol officers out of hours on numerous occasions, with an unmarked vehicle also used. There had been reports of shoplifting in the town centres.

RESOLVED: NOTED.

8. Recreational Area

8.1 The Leighton Memorial Garden.

No issues arose not already covered in Agenda item 9.

8.2 The War Memorial.

An update regarding the Remembrance Day service had been given in the Chairman's report

8.3 Memorial Park & Garden.

8.3.1 Update regarding CCTV in the Park.

Ongoing discussions are taking place regarding the CCTV project in terms of permissions and project costings

8.3.2 Update on the current position with vandalism at the park and gardens

The issue with the vandalism has been reported to the community hub and the situation is being monitored. Ongoing discussions are taking place regarding the CCTV project in terms of permissions and project costings.

RESOLVED: NOTED.

Adjournment of the meeting to receive the reports of ‘Friends of Bridgtown Park’.

RESOLVED: It was agreed the meeting would be adjourned to receive local community group reports.

9. Consideration of reports from Leigh Jarratt and Sue Heath on issues arising on Friends of Bridgtown Park.

Sue Heath gave an update on the planting of project taking place in conjunction with Bridgtown Primary School.

Leigh Jarratt didn't attend meeting, so no update was available regarding the painting of the park play area

RESOLVED: NOTED.

The meeting was reconvened.

10. Planning.

All planning issues have been circulated to Councillors for comment. No comments for note have been received within the deadline.

10.1 Applications for consideration.

10.2 Applications Approved/Rejected by District Council

RESOLVED: NOTED

11. Correspondences

Incoming

Outgoing

RESOLVED: ALL RELEVANT POST HAD BEEN CIRCULATED AND NOTED.

12. Accounts.

12.1 Accounts for consideration.

Janine Arm - Clerk pay for two months (188.02 per month) August and September.	£376.04
Staffordshire Pension Fund 'SCC Superannuation fund	£62.14
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Janine Arm - Clerk Expenses - postage/mileage + HMRC £1.60	£7.98
Bethel Methodist Church Hall Hire	£20.00
Mazers LLP - AUDIT	£288.00
Came and Company - INSURANCE -	£760.49
TOTAL Expenditure	£1,576.79

RESOLVED: Authorisation of the accounts presented for payment totalling £1576.79 was agreed.

12.2 Consideration of the current financial situation of the Council.

It was agreed that the accounts presented as below, represented an accurate summary of the Council's accounts as of the last bank statement received.

BRIDGTOWN ACCOUNTS TO DATE 2021- 2022

INCOME			Annual Budget	Variance	%	EXPENDITURE		
	£	YTD £					£	YTD £
Precept		3,810.81	7,500	-3,689	51%	1 HMRC		3.20
Interest		0.19	2	-2		1 CLERKS PAY		750.68
VAT						2 Staff Pensions		248.56
Grants						3 Miles/postage		10.81
CIL PAYMENTS		20,333.89	20,333	1		4 Office		61.98
						5 Insurance		
						6 Leighton Memorial, War Memorial and Park		
						7 SPCA		
						8 Stationary		
						9 Room Hire		40.00
						10 Chair Allowance		500.00
						11 Audit		80.00
						12 S137		
						13 Training including SLCC contribution		
						14 Miscellaneous		
						Contingencies - Election		
						Contingencies. Park and Memorial Garden		8.03
						EXPENDITURE AGAINST GRANTS		
						VAT		225.89
						Expenditure against CIL		1,067.50
						Sub Total		2,996.65
SUB TOTAL		24,144.89	27,835.00	-3,690	87%	U/P CHEQUES FROM 2020 - 2021 ACCOUNTS TOTAL		2,996.65
TOTAL		24,144.89						

SUMMARY :		£
Closing Balance 31/03/2021B		
MAIN COUNCIL :		
Barclays BUSINESS SAVER		7,555.38
COMMUNITY ACCOUNT		27,147.23
MINUS U/P CHEQUES		-412.00
		34,290.61
INCOME	24,144.89	
EXPENDITURE	2,996.65	
SURPLUS / DEFICIT		21,148.24
plus u/p items		
BANK BALANCE		55,438.85

REPRESENTED BY :		£
MAIN COUNCIL :		
Barclays BUSINESS SAVER		7,555.57
COMMUNITY ACCOUNT		47,883.28
UNPRESENTED ITEMS council		55,438.85
		55,438.85
EARMARKED FUNDS INCLUDED IN THE ABOVE :		
ELECTION		2,987.22
PARK AND MEMORIAL GARDENS		6,370.00
CIL PAYMENTS		41,110.84
		50,468.06

RESOLVED: TO APPROVE THE ACCOUNTS

12.3 Consideration of any infrastructure projects update.

Cllr Val Jones welcomed suggestions from the public and councillors as to what projects they would like to see in Bridgtown.

12.4 Consideration of grant funding opportunities.

No issues arose.

12.5 Consideration of grant applications received.

An application was made for funding for £500 to supply four large planters for Bridgtown Primary School for pupils to grow vegetables as part of their studies.

The Application was proposed by Cllr Snape, seconded by Cllr Whittaker and approved.

RESOLVED: A grant of £500 was approved for the purchase of planters for Bridgtown Primary School

13. Highways Issues.

Cllr Snape updated the Parish and members of the public present on the following issues:

- **Pedestrian Crossing for Watling Street, A5.**

The road comes under the jurisdiction of National Highways formerly Highways England, the project to install a crossing would cost in excess of £100,000. As there is already a pedestrian crossing in place at a previous junction, it is highly unlikely an additional one will be funded.

- **Lakeside Boulevard**

Until the 1st April 2022, the road remains under the ownership of the developer and is classed as private, so no speeding restrictions can be implemented.

- **HGV Signage**

Cllr Snape stated that the introduction of “Unsuitable for HGV’s” signage at strategic points would not achieve anything as what it is implying is that the unsigned streets are suitable. Bridgtown has no roads suitable for HGVs, even the roads that are wider are usually blocked with park cars so signage would not resolve the issue.

In respects of the speeding issue on Lakeside Boulevard, Cllr Kruskonjic has contacted SCC Highways Department to ask for permission for a fence to be erected to cordon off the play area between the walkway and the perimeter of the Mobile Home retailer. Permission has been granted on the proviso that the fence is erected in the grassed area and does not encroach into the paved area. It was agreed that the Parish Council would explore permission from the site developer before sourcing quotes from reputable companies for a fence to be supplied and fitted for the Council to consider.

RESOLVED: NOTED.

13.1 Consideration of Parish Council painting the street furniture on North Street outside of the shops.

The Parish Council has been given permission by Staffs County Council Highways Department to paint the bollards and benches.

13.2 Consideration of options of design for new street lights in North Street

After approaching EON to gain permission to paint the lampposts, the Parish Council has been advised the company is to replace the lampposts as they are past their serviceable life expectancy. They have supplied the Parish Council with a choice of designs for consideration. It was suggested that the Parish chooses the design that is the nearest to what is currently in situ and black would be the most appropriate colour as the lamp units are also black.

RESOLVED: NOTED

14. Data Protection.

The Training course for the Clerk had been cancelled due to her illness and subsequent retirement.

Cllr Jones announced the retirement of the Clerk Janine Arm. Janine had made the decision she was unable to carry on in her capacity as Parish Clerk due to ill health. Everyone expressed their sadness at her leaving the Parish but fully understood under the circumstances. The members of the Parish present at the meeting expressed their sincere gratitude to Janine for her commitment and loyal service to the Parish Council and community over 20 years. The Parish Council sends Janine all its best wishes for the future.

RESOLVED: NOTED. IT WAS AGREED TO ADVERTISE THE VACANCY ON THE CURRENT TERMS OF THE OUTGOING CLERK.

15. Items for information or Future Agendas

None noted/raised

RESOLVED: NOTED

16. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 10th November 2021 at 7.00pm MEETING CLOSED BY CHAIR

