

BRIDGTOWN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting.

Wednesday 12th January 2022.

At Bethel Methodist Church following guidelines during the Covid 19 Pandemic.

Present:

Cllrs. Val Jones (Chair), Kevin Whittaker (Vice-Chair), Paul Snape, Bob Eccleston, Mandy Cook,

In Attendance:

Chris Gracey – Clerk

E Plimmer – resident

N Brown - resident

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No comments

THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING WAS THEN OPENED.

The Chair. Cllr. Val Jones welcomed Members, resident s & the new Clerk to the January meeting.

1. Apologies received in writing prior to the meeting.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs. Matt Freeman & Peter Kruskonjic.

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 11th November 2021

3.1 Members discussed the minutes in detail and agreed to accept the last edition of the minutes subject to the amendments and correction of removing the last sentence in minute Nr. 8.1

This was proposed by Cllr. Val Jones(Chair) seconded by Cllr. Kevin Whittaker(Vice-Chairman), and carried to approve the minutes.

RESOLVED: MINUTES WERE APPROVED.

3.2 It was reported by a member that the November draft minutes had been posted on social media. This was not the action of the Parish Council as the draft minutes are only posted on the official Bridgtown Parish website and then replaced by the approved minutes once they have been approved at the following Parish meeting.

The “Transparency Act for Smaller Authorities 2005” requires by law that minutes must be published within 28 days following each meeting. The Act does not apply to authorities over 25,000 and therefore does not apply to CCDC nor the SCC. As Bridgtown Parish has a meeting every two months the Parish is required to publish the draft minutes before they have been formally approved at the following meeting. Once the draft minutes have been published on the Parish website they are in the public domain where they can be accessed and reposted by any member of the public.

It was confirmed that in order to comply with the Transparency Act the draft minutes would continue to be posted within 28 days of the meeting. Once they are compiled by the clerk following the meeting, approved as draft by the Chair, distributed to Members for their consideration they will then be uploaded to the website. This was **AGREED**

RESOLVED: Noted

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

4.1 None

RESOLVED: NOTED

5.0 Chairman's Report.

5.1 The Chairman read out her report (SEE APPENDIX 1) - and discussed various items.

The Chair commented that item 13. Finance should be discussed after this item, as there were many important issues to discuss, this was agreed.

6.0 Consideration of reports received from the PCSO.

6.1 The PCSO report had been submitted and was noted with the following comments.

- The PCSO's report noted that there had only been one incident of ASB and three incidents of vehicle crime recorded in Bridgtown over the last month. The comments from the PCSO's on the incident of anti-social behaviour was the use of electric scooters along East Street & Hampton Street, the use of electric scooters has increased recently, as they had been purchased as Christmas gifts, without checking on the correct legislation as regards use and where they should be used. Vehicle crime has risen due to the time of year, motorists should either remove items or conceal them out of sight and ensure their vehicles are locked regardless of the length of time left.
- An additional PCSO Suki Mander is now on the area joining Laura Bainbridge on shift 2, which will be an asset, as she has 15 years experience in the Cannock area.

RESOLVED: NOTED.

7.0 District Councillor's Report.

7.1 In his absence, District Cllr. Peter Kruskonjic submitted his report:

Lakeside Boulevard Bins – Environmental Health have been made aware of the issue and have all the contact details for the property developer. Should there be a reoccurrence of the bins not being emptied please let me know and I will get Environmental Health to contact them on behalf of the parish.

Broad Street Car Park – Further to the application made to purchase the car park and to build additional housing on the site in Broad Street, I have emailed the planning officer at CCDC to express my objections to the proposal. I have highlighted the ongoing parking issues around Bridgtown what effect such a development would have on the village. Additional traffic, even more on road parking due to the reduction in off road parking spaces and no parking for shoppers using the local businesses. The development would have a significantly negative impact on the village.

JP Alloys – The company has now relocated from Bennick Trading Estate and Virage Park to Cedar Park, Avon Road, Cannock.

8.0 County Councillor's Report

8.1 County Cllr. Paul Snape commented on the following:

PCSO's powers are being reviewed.

Mobile traffic enforcement - Cllr. Paul Snape will look into this as regards HGV's driving through the village area, snagging up the roads and causing damage to street furniture.

Cllr. Bob Eccleston commented on the increased numbers of HGV's driving through the village, Members discussed additional suitable signage to advise drivers that the infrastructure of the area is unsuitable, Cllr. Paul Snape will explore the signage.

9.0 Recreational Areas.

9.1 The Leighton Memorial Garden - Cllr. Bob Eccleston commented on planting a mature tree in the Leighton Memorial Garden under the Queen's Green Canopy project, the Chair advised that permission will be required from Tom Walsh CCDC.

9.2 War Memorial - No comments

9.3 Memorial Park & Gardens in Union Street – Included in the Chair’s report, see appendix 1

9.4 Bridgtown Friends of Bridgtown Park - No update available

RESOLVED: Noted

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

None present - apologies received from Sue Heath.

10.0 Planning:

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

10.1 Applications for Consideration

CH/21/0339 – Amended approve plans Erection of 2 Two storey buildings to create 3 flats, 3 garages, 1 cycle store & associated works (resubmission of CH/15/0385 33 North Street Cannock WS11 OBB - Objections - overdevelopment of the site, parking issues and concerns about the access for emergency services.

10.2 Applications Approved/Rejected by District Council.

None received

RESOLVED: NOTED

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

11.1 Incoming –

- SPCA Bulletin emailed to council 18th November 2021
- SPCA AGM details emailed to council 22nd November 2021
- SPCA amendment to documents issued for the AGM emailed to council 22nd November 2021
- CCDC News roundup emailed to council 29th November 2021
- CCDC details of consultation on proposed alcohol restriction in various areas emailed to council 29th November 2021
- CCDC details of tree planting emailed to council 1st December 2021
- SPCA Bulletin emailed to council 3rd December 2021
- CCDC cancellation of Christmas Carol Concert emailed to council 16th December 2021
- SPCA Bulletin emailed to council 20th December 2021
- CCDC News roundup emailed to council 20th December 2021
- CCDC Season’s greetings emailed to council 21st December 2021
- SPCA Bulletin emailed to council 27th December 2021
- SPCA Bulletin emailed to council 30th December 2021
- CCDC News Roundup emailed to council 8th January 2022
- CCDC views on the new strategy homes for the private sector emailed to council 8th January 2022
- SPCA Bulletin emailed to council 10th January 2022

11.2 Outgoing - None

RESOLVED: ALL RELEVANT POST HAD BEEN CIRCULATED AND NOTED.

12.0 Accounts (This item was discussed after item 5 for this meeting only)

12.1 Payments for Approval

Date	Payee	Cheque Nr.	Amount	VAT	Approved/declined
12.01.22	Bethel Methodist Church donation towards the cost of Christmas presents	0102056	150.00	-	approved
12.01.22	C E Gracey Clerk’s salary Nov £106.73 Dec £159.87 Jan £159.86)	0102057	426.46		approved
12.01.22	HMRC Clerk’s PAYE Nov,Dec & Jan less credit on account £57.03)	0102058	49.37		approved
12.01.22	Bethel Methodist Church (Hall hire 12/01/22)	0102059	20.00		approved

RESOLVED: Authorisation of the accounts presented for payment totalling £645.83 was agreed proposed by the Chair seconded by Cllr. Bob Eccleston and carried.

12.2 Consideration of the Current financial situation of the Council.

The Financial statement 1st April to 31st December 2021 was presented and agreed. The clerk confirmed that the General Reserves at 31st December 2021 are £1,403.89

12.3 Consideration of infrastructure projects update

It was noted that there was currently £41,110.84 in the CIL Grant fund. The Parish Council had five years to spend the grant or it would have to be returned to the District Council for them to allocate on projects in the Cannock District. It was noted that £15,000 had being earmarked for Park and Garden improvements, including installation of CCTV and New Litter Bins. This would leave a balance of £26,110.84 to be spent by 2025/26.

12.4 Consideration of any grant funding application opportunities.

As included in the Chair's report, the Council were successful in attaining a grant of £5,000 from the Welcome Back Fund, this is European funding and it's criteria is based upon being used for resident based activity to assist in encouraging people to resume normal life following the pandemic and getting out and about. The awarded monies will be used for an Artisan Market, Self watering planters, barrier planters & celebration bunting. A small task group will be compiled by the Chair to manage the funds and the events.

12.5 Consideration of any Grant applications Received – none received

12.6 Consideration of budget requirements for 2022-23 Precept - The clerk presented the Budget for 2022-23 and outlined the constraints of the expenditure for the forthcoming financial year. As we still are awaiting an outstanding invoice for election expenses it was agreed to clear this debt by using monies from the 2021-22 budget allotted to garden maintenance, and making up the balance by using monies from the reserve account, also in the budget for 2022-23 earmark an amount for forthcoming elections from the reserve account. This would reduce the reserve account from £7,556 to £2,756, the balance of the reserve account to be held untouched for the foreseeable future. Members considered the figures for the precept 2022-23 & discussed a proposed increase of 3.8% inline with inflation, the budget & precept were proposed by Cllr. Paul Snape seconded by Cllr. Bob Eccleston and carried.

RESOLVED: To accept the Budget 2022-23 & Precept figures.

12.7 Approve Internal Auditor for 2021-22, Members agreed to use the same person that was used in 2020-21.

12.8 Consideration of CILS Money Expenditure – The Chair outlined two items for consideration:

A History Information Boards as part of the heritage trail as compiled by Bridgtown & District History Society, to commemorate the Wootton Family, on North Street at a cost of £2,500

Cllr. Paul Snape commented that a second history information board could be considered and purchased from the CILS money,

A commemorative plaque in respect of the Late Head Teacher of the school David Williams at a cost of £450, both proposals were proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr. Kevin Whittaker(Vice-chairman) and carried.

13.0 Highways Issues

13.1 No reports from County Council regarding any Highways issues – Members discussed the damaged barriers along North Street.

14 Data Protection

14.1 No comments

15.0 Items for Information or Future Agendas - None

16.0 Date of Next Meeting.

16.1 It was agreed that the next meeting would be Wednesday 9th March 2022, the Chair thanked everyone for their

attendance and the meeting closed at 8.35pm.

RESOLVED: NEXT MEETING: 9th March 2022

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

APPENDIX 1

Bridgtown Parish Council Chairman's report 12th January 2022
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1. Lakeside Boulevard Bins

The property developers were contacted by the Chair with regard to the issue of the bins not being regularly emptied and reminded them there needed to be a schedule which residents could rely on. In view of the number of occasions this had occurred Cllr. Kruskoniic was asked to report this to an environmental health officer. This is covered in his Ward Councillor report.

2. Queen's Green Canopy - www.queensgreencanopy.org

This national tree planting initiative is to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee year and to also assist with the carbon reduction agenda. Individuals and communities can become involved and the saplings are free for communities and groups from the Woodland Trust. A commemorative plaque can be purchased to mark the planting.

- The Chair contacted the District Council to enquire whether they had any plans for this and whether the Parish Council could "piggyback" onto them and to explore permission to plant on district owned land. The council are in the process of implementing a plan for planting 4,000 trees in the district as part of the Climate Change Project and do not have the resources to be involved in all the planting initiatives and support for maintenance etc. However the officer is happy to support the Parish in this who would need to identify where the planting is proposed.
- Further Information attached on the Queen's Green Canopy.

3. Asylum Seekers

A private meeting was held 18th November between Parish Councillors, Senior Police Officers and District Council Officers to seek assurance regarding any incidents involving asylum seekers. There was a misconception that Police would leave security entirely to Serco. At this meeting councillors were given assurance that in addition to the 24 hour Serco security staff based in the hotel the Police would respond to any incidents reported to them in the same way as for any other incident. The public were urged to report any incidents using the normal channels to the Police rather than Facebook. Cllrs Eccleston and Cook volunteered to act as a local contact point for residents.

- The Chair had a meeting with the Serco Project manager to agree on local contact and to advise on local voluntary organisations. Serco have requested that their staff based at the hotel are not contacted as this does not fall within their roles. Instead any issues should in the first instance be reported to the project manager. Weekly multiagency meetings are continuing.
- "Support Staffordshire" and the Salvation Army are working with Bethel Church and other support organisations dedicated to supporting asylum seekers and refugees. A plea has been made for donations of men's clothing and shoes as many of them only have the clothes they were wearing.

4. Bethel Church Xmas Event

The annual Bethel Church Xmas event led was held on 3rd December and proved as usual to be a great success. The Parish Council provided support to Bethel Church with a grant of £150 to purchase Xmas presents for the children. Thanks to Cllr Eccleston and to the resident who played Santa for their roles in the event. The event was attended by the Chair and Cllr Kruskonjic.

5. Bridgtown Memorial Gardens

The painting of the slide in the Play area of the Park did not go ahead as the volunteers found that on closer examination the wooden panels needed replacing and would not be helped by painting. The Chair has contacted the district council officer for Parks and Spaces who has agreed to have the panels replaced and the wall repaired for the second time in the Spring.

6. Welcome Back Fund(WBF)

The WBF is a second tier of the Back to Business Fund for businesses. This money from the European Regional Fund has specific criteria set by the WBF funders and is focused on the public to celebrate a return to normal business. At short notice the Parish Council was allocated an indicative budget of £5,000 against which proposals could be put forward for consideration by the funders. Among the restrictive criteria were conditions that items had to be completed by the 31st March, could not be infrastructure, nor anything that was already planned or the responsibility of the parish, district or county councils. Three Initial proposals put forward by councillors (History Board/Street furniture/Broad Band for Bethel Church) were rejected however, three others supported by the majority of councillors were accepted. These were, an artisan market, planters, flags and street bunting. Two of the rejected proposals can be addressed through the CIL monies and the History Board forms one of the CIL proposals tonight. A small task group will be formed by the Chair to oversee this the Regional Fund Proposals.