

# BRIDGTOWN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting.

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

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

## Present:

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

## In Attendance:

Chris Gracey – Clerk

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

4 residents

## AGM

1. The Chairman Cllr. Val Jones welcomed everyone to this year's AGM & the Council Meeting.

## 2. Chairman's Report

This report covers the period of May 2021 to May 2022. The Parish Council was able to return to face to face meetings whilst adhering to government guidelines for the prevention of transmission of Covid – 19. It is worth noting that the pandemic has had an impact on the ability of both the Parish and District Councils to get things done. Government guidance is now "back to usual business" although the backlog that has accrued will take time to address.

## Appointments & Resignations

- August 2021 Cllr. Maureen Freeman date resigned as Parish Councillor
- September 2021 Janine Arm, Parish Clerk resigned after many years service to the Parish Council
- November 2021 Cllr Mandy Cook was as Parish Councillor
- November 2021 Chris Gracey was appointed Clerk to the Parish

## Business As Usual

Parish Councillors have continued to respond to complaints and concerns from residents on a range of issues from noise pollution and business operating conditions to bin collections at the Lakeside development which has been a particular issue, where after repeated calls to the developer this was reported to the CCDC environmental officer. The development was scheduled to be handed over to the district council in April 2022 however this has been delayed for at least a couple of months for reasons which will be explained in the main Parish meeting tonight.

## Grants & Proposals Awarded

- May 2021 - £15,000 CCTV & Park Renovation
- July 2021 - £1,750 Automated external defibrillator for Bethel Church
- September 2021 - Wooden planters for the school
- November 2021 - £150 Christmas event at Bethel Church
- January 2022 - £5,000 x 2 history boards for the History Society

## Main Concerns

The two main concerns for the Parish are the condition of the Park and the HGV traffic through the village. A new issue has been the arrival of a large number of Afghan asylum seekers to be temporarily accommodated in Bridgtown at the Holiday Inn.

## Parks & Open Spaces

Much of the volunteer work planned for planting and repainting was paused due the incidents of vandalism which was reported both to the Police and to the Community Safety Hub. Measures were taken by the Police to deter the vandalism and this seems to have worked to a degree as there have been no further reports to the Police in some months. Sadly vandalism is an issue not just for our Park but has been reported at almost all other Parks across the district sometimes involving large numbers of young people. The district council have now trimmed the bushes and shrubs and will repair the flower bed wall a second time although the cost this time will need to be met by the Parish. Sue Heath is ready to lead the planting and will need volunteers to support her. The play slide which volunteers attempted to paint late last year has now been inspected by the district council inspector re the wooden panels and reported that it is safe and just needs to be treated before painting. The Parish council is waiting for a quote for refresh

of the wall murals as part of the refurbishment budget.

### **HGV & Traffic Problems**

This has been a difficult & frustrating issue for the Parish, despite weight restriction signs HGVs continue to use Bridgtown as a shortcut to other destinations, causing near misses and damage to parked cars and to street furniture. It is accepted that a few HGVs will need access to make their deliveries. It is also unhelpful that Sat Nav devices fail to alert drivers of the restrictions. It was hoped that 'unsuitable for HGVs' signs could be provided by the County Council. However they have refused to support our request as they believe the weight restriction signs on all roads entering the village should be sufficient. Since the 'unsuitable for HGVs' signs have no legal standing, they cannot be enforced. The Parish Council will need to decide whether to purchase them from the CIL monies. In the meantime the chair has written to the Cannock Police Commander, Chief Inspector Victoria Downing to ask what support the police can give around enforcing the weight restriction signs which are lawful. Robust enforcement would prevent or at least reduce the number driving through illegally. This will be discussed further in the main Parish meeting.

### **KEY RELATIONSHIPS**

The Parish Council continues to grow & develop relationships with key institutions in Bridgtown.

- **Bridgtown & District History Society**

There is a strong connection with the Society & the Parish Council has been pleased to fund history boards & plaques along the heritage trail. The Chair along with Cllrs. Eccleston & Kruskonjic are also members of the Society and attend their meetings and presentations. The Society have just elected a new co-chair following the sudden death of the much loved David Williams and past headmaster of Bridgtown Primary School. The Parish agreed a proposal put forward by Derrick Middleton to fund a plaque to be mounted on the school wall. It was supported by the school who felt it would set a precedent for all other headmasters of the school.

The Parish Chair and the Chair of the District Council Cllr. Doug Smith were honoured to speak at the erection of the Ma Pardoe blue plaque ceremony. The Chair and other members also attended the unveiling of the Wooton family History Board.

- **Bethel Church**

The Parish continues to work with the church through Jan Burns and has funded a small grant for the traditional Christmas Event with practical support from Cllr. Eccleston and the local resident who played Santa. The Parish also funded an Automated External Defibrillator which has taken some time for the parts to arrive. It is now complete and will be fixed to the exterior of the church as soon as possible. The free life saving training sessions can then be organised.

- **Bridgtown Primary School**

The Chair has previously approached the school to ask what support the school needed, having heard that the school was short of computers for the children who do not have access to one at home. However Cannock Soroptimists were already donating those so Parish support was not needed. The Parish did fund 4 large wooden planters for the children to understand the benefits of growing their own plants. This is led by Sue Heath. Further information will be made available in the main Parish meeting.

- **Army Reserve Centre**

The Parish is keen to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with RMP Provost Coy 116. The Chair approached the Unit and Captain John Bailey has delivered a presentation on their role in peace & war time to the Parish Council. He led the RMP detachment parade at the remembrance Sunday being the first time they had done this. Last night the Parish Council were hosted by the Unit given a tour and listened to serving members about their roles and commitment to the Unit.

### **Welcome Back Fund(WBF) & Queens Jubilee**

The Parish was successful in obtaining a £5,000 grant from WBF which is a European Fund initiative. The criteria was very restrictive. However 3 items were agreed by Parish Council and approved by fund managers. This included, An event co-ordinator to organise the Artisan Market at the Bridgtown's Social Club, self watering Planters and two large boxes of street party items for the Queen's Jubilee. Further benefits were made to those Parish Councils who had obtained the grant which had been reserved for the Queen's Jubilee celebrations. This includes cup cakes, chocolate lollies, commemorative coins and a huge sliced cake. This was followed by a Beacon to be lit on the day of the celebrations June 3<sup>rd</sup> for 2-3 hours to signify the event of her Majesty's coronation anniversary. Further update in the main Parish Meeting.

### **Asylum Seekers in Bridgtown**

In November the Parish Council were informed

THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING WAS THEN OPENED.

The Chair. Cllr. Val Jones welcomed Members to the meeting.

### **1. Apologies received in writing prior to the meeting.**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Paul Snape

**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 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

3.1 Members discussed the minutes in detail and agreed to the minutes subject to the amendments and correction.

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

**RESOLVED: MINUTES WERE APPROVED.**

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

4.1 Cllr. Mandy Cook commented on a query from a resident regarding the £8 per year included in her council tax and wanted to know what the money was spent on. The clerk will check last years 2020-21 accounts and compile a breakdown and forward it to members.

**RESOLVED: NOTED**

### **5.0 Chairman's Report.**

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

### **6.0 Consideration of reports received from the PCSO.**

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

- Anti-social behavior – 1 incident Price Street (Next to McDonald's Cannock Town Centre)
- Theft of vehicles – 3 (Newhall St – Walsall Rd – Virage Park)
- Theft from vehicles – 4 (Spring St. – Chenet Way – Hampton Green – Beecroft Rd )
- Theft of Motorcycle – (Earlswood Way) - later received in Willenhall stripped down, identified by chassis number

County Line Intensification Week – The PCSO's will be running a county lines intensification week in March, where we will be proactively targeting gangs involved, and I will be in a few of the local high schools talking to the students about the signs to watch out for, and how they may find themselves involved in county lines & the dangers they could be exposed to. This should always be a focus, however it means we will have patrols assigned solely to targeting those involved for the week, and not be dispatched elsewhere. Hopefully there will be an update for the next meeting.

Cllr. Mandy Cook commented on an incident that took place on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2022 with some youths that had hired a room at the hotel, they were causing a nuisance & the police was called, this incident is not on the report, the clerk will query this with the PCSO.

**RESOLVED: NOTED.**

### **7.0 District Councillor's Report.**

7.1 District Cllr. Peter Kruskonjic submitted his report:

- An arranged meeting with County Cllr. Paul Snape, Highways Officer Mark Keeling, Cllr. Bob Eccleston to determine the location of HGV signage .
- Planning application CH/21/0039 at the Forge - refused

### **8.0 County Councillor's Report**

8.1 None

## 9.0 Recreational Areas.

9.1 The Leighton Memorial Garden - Cllr. Bob Eccleston commented on the proposed rose flower bed, to be planted in the Spring with David Austin roses, advice will be given on planting & maintenance, and a plaque to be installed to commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, proposed by Cllr. Bob Eccleston seconded by Cllr. Mandy Cook and carried. A budget of £200 was agreed proposed by the Chair seconded by Cllr. Kevin Whittaker and carried. Cllr. Bob Eccleston commented that the second area would be planted in late Spring with summer bedding plants and donations from the school of sunflowers.

9.2 War Memorial - No comments

9.3 Memorial Park & Gardens in Union Street – No comments

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 applications have been circulated to Councillors for comment.

### 10.1 Applications for Consideration

CH/22/0023 Single storey rear extension @ 65 Watling Street Cannock WS11 0BL – no objections.comments

CH/22/0027 Make alterations & improvements to the Northern, Central & Southern car parks at Wyrley Brook Retail Park Vine Lane Cannock WS11 OXF – no objections / comments

CH/22/0029 Two storey side extension with rear single storey extension @ 124 Walsall Road Cannock WS11 0JB – no objections/comments

22/CH/0039 Change of use on 1<sup>st</sup> Floor from office/historical centre to one residential apartment @ 264 Stumble Inn Walsall Road Cannock WS11 0JL – objections impact on the previous survey, concerns about parking issues

### 10.2 Applications Approved/Rejected by District Council.

21/CH/00339 Erection of Nr.2 2 storey building to create 3 flats, 3 garages @ 33 North Street Bridgtown – Refused

**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 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022
- CCDC News round-up emailed to council 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022
- SPCA Bulletin emailed to council 4<sup>th</sup> February 2022
- CCDC News round-up emailed to council 4<sup>th</sup> February 2022
- SPCA Bulletin emailed to council 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022
- SPCA Bulletin emailed to council 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022
- CCDC details of Bloomin Cannock Chase Competition emailed to council 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022
- SPCA Bulletin emailed to council 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022

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
23.02.22	Bethel Methodist Church (Hall hire 23/02/22)	0102060	20.00		approved
23/02/22	HMRC Clerk's PAYE February & March 2022)	0102061	80.00		approved
23/02/22	C E Gracey Clerk's salary February	0102062	319.70		approved

	£159.85 March £159.85)		
<b>TOTAL</b>			£419.70

RESOLVED: Authorisation of the accounts presented for payment totalling £419.70 was agreed proposed by the Cllr. Kevin Whittaker(Vice-Chairman) seconded by Cllr. Matt Freeman and carried.

12.2 Consideration of the Current financial situation of the Council - The Financial statement 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022 was presented and agreed. The clerk confirmed that the General Reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022 are £758.06

12.3 Consideration of infrastructure projects update – No comments

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

12.5 Consideration of any Grant applications Received – None received

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

Members discussed the planned expenditure for a history board, the details of which will be confirmed by the History Society, the clerk has tried to contact Derrick Middleton, who is unavailable at this time, she will try and contact John Davy or Bob Bevil regarding the details and the ordering of the board. A second history board was discussed & agreed to purchase proposed by Cllr. Bob Eccleston seconded by Cllr. Kevin Whittaker(Vice-chairman) and carried.

Commemorative plaque to the Late David Williams, the clerk will contact the school for permission to erect the plaque and also for information on the length of time that he was a teacher at the school.

Fencing @ Lakeside Boulevard – Members discussed the approximate cost of the safety fencing & considered if the developer of the area would assist with the cost fully or partially. The Chair will speak to the developer.

Barriers on North Street members discussed replacing the railings like for like also comments were made to repair the existing railings in North Street and other areas. Cllr. Bob Eccleston will get a quote to repair all the damaged railings in Bridgtown, subject to permission from SCC.

Lamp posts on North Street to be repainted, members discussed the proposed colour.

12.7 Adopt the reviewed Financial Regulations – The Chair proposed adoption seconded by Cllr. Matt Freeman and carried.

**13.0 Highways Issues** - No reports from County Council regarding any Highways issues

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

**15.0 Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations –**

15.1 Covered in the Chair's report

**16.0 Welcome Back Fund – St. Patrick's Day Artisan Market – Planter Locations**

16.1 Covered in the Chair's report.

16.2 Planter Locations – Covered in the Chair's report.

**17.0 Items for Information or Future Agendas** – None

18.0 Date of Next Meeting.

18.1 It was agreed that the next meeting would be Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022, and the meeting will cover the Annual Parish Assembly, The Annual General Meeting & the Council Meeting.

**RESOLVED: NEXT MEETING: 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

**19.0** The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 9.15pm.

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

## Welcome Back Fund (WBF) Updates

### 1. Planters

The two large Amberol Self watering Planters funded through the WBF are now ready to be delivered to the Parish. Councillors and the Bridgtown History Society were canvassed for their views on the best location for them within the restrictions of the grant, however not all suggestions were acceptable to Highways. The council has however obtained permission for one to be located on the grassy area where the History Board sits on the corner of the junction between the A5 and North. Permission for the second planter to be sited at the corner of Delta Way and the A5 is being sought.

### 2. St Patricks Artisan Market – Bridgtown Social Club

The event planner has provided an update on progress on the Artisan Market. There has been a lot of interest from stall holders and she is waiting for returned forms with a couple of street food vendors for the club area outside already booked in. A banner advertising the event has been attached to the railing at the club a couple of weeks ago. The Club is booking a bouncy castle and being decorated with Irish bunting. The Guinness brewery have been approached to enquire whether they will be doing any promotions.

“Paw Patrol “ has been booked so the children can have pictures taken with them and Radio Presenter Stu Haycock as well as being the DJ for the day will be involving attendees in some fun and games

There is a Facebook event page as and when traders are confirmed and share to other groups on other social media platforms, Twitter and Instagram

Facebook link <https://www.facebook.com/events/4652146454903254> In addition posters are available for distribution for shops etc.

### 3. Queens Jubilee celebrations

Flags and Bunting have been purchased with the grant for the WBF which comprises 2 large street party packs which along with bunting has 24 large flags and approximately 500 small hand held ones. The District Council will be sending out packs and information on their preparations and support for the celebrations. Through the WBF Parishes can also place orders through the District Council for treats for their celebrations for chocolate smiley faces and cup cakes.

## CIL Proposals for consideration are:

1. **Safety Fencing for Lakeside Boulevard** – residents have raised safety concerns around the green at Lakeside Boulevard where the goalpost is located. The concern is that that there is nothing to prevent a football being kicked onto the busy road closely followed by a child . There is a high risk of an accident involving a child.  
Therefore the proposal is to use CIL monies to agree a budget to erect a safety fence. This would be similar in design to that around the play area.
2. **Street Furniture North Street** - There are three ornamental safety barriers in North Street which are badly damaged. Highways have been informed and they have advised the Parish Council that they cannot replace them like for like and that they will be the grey square structures seen throughout Cannock. In addition it will be some time before any replacements can be made. Therefore the proposal is to use CIL monies to fund replicas of the current ornamental barriers and retain the North Street design.
3. **Additional Bridgtown History Board** – the Bridgtown & District History Society have requested a further grant from the Parish Council for another History Board as part of the Bridgtown History Trail. The location is to be in front of the Bridgtown Social Club. Details to follow later.

Signed By Chairman .....

Date .....