

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BILLINGSLEY PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1ST MARCH 2023 AT CHETTON VILLAGE HALL AT 7:30PM

Present: Cllr S Bates (Chairman), Cllr S Crawford-Thomas, Cllr A Johnson, Cllr A Jones, Cllr S Yates

In Attendance: C Maclean (Locum Clerk)

Members of the Public: 1

Police: 1

03.01 WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

03.02 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

From: Shropshire Cllr R Tindall.

03.03 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None

03.04 POLICE

Cllr S Bates welcomed PCSO Jacqueline Fletcher to the meeting.

PCSO Fletcher advised Councillors that there was nothing the Police could do in terms of the Cape of Good Hope site as this was outside their jurisdiction. They will respond to calls where disturbance or vandalism is involved, as recently evidenced.

In terms of improving safety at the site, the Parish Council was best served by approaching Shropshire Council. The suggestion of the Parish Council writing to the site owner and advising of concerns, with proposal to refer the matter to Shropshire Council was considered worth progressing.

On the question of speeding through Billingsley, PCSO Fletcher advised that checks are periodically undertaken, using the Cape of Good Hope car park. The force attempt to undertake these monthly.

In terms of crime, there was little to report. PCSO Fletcher advised that her data related to Billingsley only.

Councillors noted that there had been a recent incident of domestic oil being stolen and PCSO Fletcher advised that it was important to ensure adequate measures were taken by householders to prevent unauthorised access.

On the topic of suspicious vehicles, PCSO Fletcher advised that it was important to report these, either by email or calling 101, as these were followed up. A previous report had resulted in the vehicle owner moving on from the parish.

On the impact of Smartwater, there was no information to provide as this was maintained by the Smartwater team.

Councillors noted that the Police Community Charter priorities were due to be updated and these would be advised to the team handling these.

Councillors thanked PCSO Fletcher for her report and time. PCSO Fletcher expressed her thanks and left the meeting at 7:45pm.

03.05 PUBLIC SESSION

Mrs J Parker advised Councillors that she was resubmitting an application for the change of use of Holiday Cottages to residential dwellings at Castle Keep and Castle Meadow, Middleton Scriven. Councillors were advised that following the refusal of the first application, Mrs Parker had employed fresh agents to review the application and comments and provide a fresh case for submission to Shropshire Council.

Councillors noted that details of the resubmission had yet to be received and therefore they were not able to comment on the documentation until sight of these were obtained.

Councillors noted that a meeting of the Council would be required if the Parish Council wish to respond to the resubmission.

Mrs Parker thanked Councillors for their time in considering this matter.

03.06 BROWN CLEE MEDICAL PRACTICE

Councillors agreed that in view of the level of public interest, this item be moved up the agenda and discussed with the member of the public present.

Councillors noted the concerns that had been raised by the Patients Participation Group of Brown Clee Medical Practice in relation to the timing of departure of the GPs from the practice with no sign of replacements. Whilst this would take place over a period of time, concerns were being expressed over the recruitment and logistical challenges now being faced by the practice.

Councillors noted that one key area of concern related to the buildings occupied by the practice, in that the GP partners did not wish to continue owning these and face the liabilities that came with the properties.

It was noted that the Patients Participation Group is still at an early stage of formation and attempts were being made to spread the message, gather support and membership to the group to assist in finding solutions to the premises challenges and recruitment of new GPs. Councillors considered the channels to gather support and spread the word. It was noted that the first meeting of the group was scheduled to take place on 6th March to discuss and agree next steps.

Mrs Parker expressed her thanks to Councillors and left the meeting at 8:17pm.

03.07 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4TH JANUARY 2023

Proposed by Cllr A Jones, seconded by Cllr S Bates and it was resolved the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th January 2023 be adopted and that the Chairman sign these as a true record.

03.08 MATTERS ARISING FROM 4TH JANUARY 2023 MINUTES

Councillors noted PCSO Fletcher's comments in relation to the perceived lack of speed checks within the parish.

03.09 SHROPSHIRE COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Councillors noted that due to the absence of Cllr R Tindall no report had been provided. Cllr S Bates noted that Cllr R Tindall's mailbox auto response suggested he was catching up on a large volume of emails. Councillors expressed their sympathies to the recent health issues experienced by Cllr R Tindall and were pleased to note that his convalescence was complete. Councillors shared concerns over the perceived lack of focus from Cllr R Tindall to the parish. Discussions were held over how the parish could be best represented and it was agreed that the Locum Clerk undertake investigations to see how Cllr R Tindall is now best able to represent those interests. If physical presence was not possible, a written report would be acceptable.

03.10 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr S Bates referred Councillors to her report provided earlier in the day and which is set out in Appendix I.

03.11 CLERK'S REPORT

The Locum Clerk advised there no items to comment on as these were covered by agenda.

03.12 BYND LANE, BILLINGSLEY

Cllr S Bates advised Councillors that she, along with Cllr A Jones and the Locum Clerk met with an engineer from Shropshire Council Highways to review the condition of the Lane. It was agreed that the best solution for repairs would be a full resurfacing of the lane, but in view of capital cost restrictions, the only short-term solution was to have it patched. The engineer noted that previous patching had quickly been eroded and view was that parts of the lane are dangerous to cyclists.

The engineer suggested the work would include the provision of a road sweeper to clear debris from the surface and a gully sucker to clear the drains in an attempt to prevent surface water speeding the erosion process.

The patching was scheduled to be undertaken in early course and Councillors noted the intention of the Parish Council to put a note through the doors of the householders on the lane advising of shared concerns over the condition and attempts to see effective repairs undertaken.

The engineer had advised that where damage had been experienced to vehicles due to the condition of the lane, claims can be submitted to Shropshire Council, although it was not expected that these would be addressed promptly. This point would also be communicated to residents.

Councillors considered escalating their concerns and it was agreed that these be shared with the cabinet members for highways at Shropshire Council.

03.13 THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE SITE

Councillors considered an approach to the owner of the site advising of concerns over the condition and safety of the site.

Councillors agreed that a letter be sent advising that if no attempt was seen to address concerns, the Parish Council would refer the matter to the relevant enforcement officers at Shropshire Council, which has also been done.

03.14 COUNCILLOR VACANCY

- (i) Councillors noted with regret the resignation of N Gennard from the Council.
- (ii) The Locum Clerk advised Councillors that the relevant vacancy notice had been posted. Following advice from Shropshire Council that there was no call to hold a bye-election, the relevant co-option advertisement would be posted. Councillors considered possibilities of spreading the word to persons who may be interested in joining the Council.

03.15 CORRESPONDENCE

The Locum Clerk advised that there was no other correspondence to be considered that had not already been covered in the Agenda items and in distribution of bulletins through SALC and NALC.

The Locum Clerk noted that SALC planned to cease forwarding some of the correspondence. If Councillors wished to receive these, it was noted that they needed to register their interest with the relevant parties.

Cllr S Bates advised that she was also receiving the advices from SALC. It was agreed that the Locum Clerk contact SALC to have the link removed.

03.16 ENVIRONMENTAL MAINTENANCE

- (i) **Lengthsman's Duties at War Memorial:** Cllr A Jones advised Councillors of his meeting with the Lengthsman at the war memorial. There was discussion on the level of maintenance that should be undertaken and Councillors were advised by the Lengthsman that he no longer wished to undertake the maintenance work.

Cllr A Jones advised that he would continue with the maintenance that he previously undertook. Focus would be on the grass and hedge.

Councillors noted that the fence required repair and painting.

- (ii) **Lengthsman Contract and Insurance Cover:** Councillors noted that a draft contract had been provided to the Lengthsman but no feedback had been received to date. Clarification was also required on the Lengthsman's level of public liability insurance cover. It was noted that attempts would be made to complete the contract and confirm the insurance cover.

03.17 FINANCIALS

- (i) **Report on Current Finances:** the Locum Clerk advised Councillors on level of funding currently maintained within the bank accounts.
Current Account: £3,906.17
Savings Account: £198.38
- (ii) **Authorisation of Payment of Costs in Delivering Council Services:** Councillors noted that payments required to be made to the following parties:
 - a. N Oliver for £575.00

b. N Oliver for £80.00

It was agreed that payment be made on these invoices.

- (iii) **Defibrillator Pads:** Councillors noted advice had been received that the pads for the Glazeley defibrillator would expire at end of March. An invoice would be provided on replacement of these.
- (iv) **Village Hall Hire:** Councillors noted the proposal by the Village Hall Chairman that payment can be made for either six months usage or twelve. The Locum Clerk would refer seeking an invoice covering six months.
- (v) **Bank Account Authorised Signatory Changes:** Councillors discussed the addition of additional authorised signatories to the Council's accounts.

It was agreed that Cllrs S Crawford-Thomas, A Jones and S Yates be added to the HSBC accounts. It was also agreed that on application to Lloyds Bank for a new account, the signatories would be Cllrs S Crawford-Thomas, A Jones and S Yates.

03.18 PLANNING MATTERS

- (i) Cllr S Yates noted that a decision had been communicated by Shropshire Council of granting permission to the proposed alterations to Dingle House, Middleton Scriven. Whilst there was no issue with what had been proposed, Cllr S Yates did not recall seeing communication of the application when it was submitted. The Locum Clerk advised that he would check on this and refer back.
- (ii) Councillors noted the comments from Mrs Jo Parker earlier in the meeting in relation to the re-submission of the application for change of use of holiday cottages to residential dwellings at Castle Keep and Castle Meadow, Middleton Scriven. From the details provided, Councillors did not believe that there were issues with the proposal, however the matter would be considered further on receipt of the application from Shropshire Council for consideration.
- (iii) Councillors considered their role as Parish Councillors in relation to consideration of applications. Councillors considered the factors relating to comments provided by residents, both supporting or objecting and how these balanced with their own views. Consideration was given to local and national policies. Councillors agreed attempts would be made to use best judgment, listen and take account of interested parties along with local knowledge. Councillors considered the option of site visits in relation to applications and agreed that attempts to do so would be undertaken where considered applicable and possible. Councillors considered what information may be available to help guide their decision making and the Locum Clerk advised that he would check national publications and refer back.

03.19 PARISH MATTERS

Cllr A Johnson raised concerns over the signage that had been used on the road to Ludlow creating impression that a major stretch of the road was closed, when in fact it was only a small section. It was also noted that there was no indication of the exact location of the closure. The Locum Clerk advised that he would raise the matter through SALC with Shropshire Council.

Cllr S Yates advised her understanding that it was due to emergency repair works being undertaken by Severn Trent.

Cllr A Johnson advised that he had observed the placing of the temporary traffic lights on Westwood Lane was due to badger activity. It was believed these lights had been in place for twelve months and enquiries on the costs of this remained unanswered.

03.20 ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA

Councillors to advise Locum Clerk of any items required for the next meeting.

03.21 NEXT MEETING DATES

Councillors noted the AGM and subsequent meeting of Council is scheduled for Wednesday 3rd May 2023.

Councillors considered the date for the annual parish assembly. It was agreed that this be held on the same date as the AGM and Council meeting but commence at 7:00pm.

The Chairman thanked everybody and thereafter declared the meeting closed at 9:42pm.

Appendix 1: Chairman's Report to Council meeting on 1 March 2023

It is with sadness that I report the resignation of Nick Gennard, Councillor for Glazeley. Even though his time with the Parish Council was short he made a valuable contribution during a time of great transition. On behalf of the Parish Council, I thank him for all he has done and wish him the very best.

Since our last meeting a number of parishioners have contacted me directly or via the clerk on a range of issues.

Several telephone conversations and emails exchanges have taken place regarding the continued deterioration of the road surface in Bynd Lane. In response to these complaints I contacted the Head of Highways directly and forwarded a detailed report and photographs outlining the conditions in Bynd Lane. I also referred to a response he had made to Philip Dunne MP last year, which was forwarded to me by a parishioner. Despite sending several follow up messages I am yet to receive a reply. However, following a telephone conversation with the South East Shropshire administrator an on-site meeting was set up between members of the Parish Council, the Clerk and the Highways Technician who was extremely sympathetic to concerns of local residents. The outcome of this meeting has been scheduled for further discussion in the forthcoming Parish Council Meeting.

Another very concerned parishioner contacted me regarding the appalling and dangerous state of the former Cape of Good Hope pub in Billingsley. She informed me that intruders were once again gaining entry into the building during the early hours and disturbing her and her family. The Police had attended one incident but the intruders had fled before they arrived. Shropshire Council have provided details of ownership of the site as held by the Land Registry. Again this is an issue that will be discussed fully by Councillors at the next meeting.

Sue Bates

March 2023

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Chairman

3rd May 2023

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