

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF LAPLEY, STRETTON AND WHEATON ASTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN WHEATON ASTON VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2008 AT 7.30 PM.

Present: Mr R Wright in the chair Mrs E Morgan-Williams
Mrs B Cox Mr T E Noblett
Mr M Fox Mr H Stiles
Mrs S Gould Mr P Timson
Dr M Kennedy Mrs D Wildman
Mr A Monckton

In attendance PC M Smith
Apologies Cllr R Roberts

188. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No declarations of interest were received.

189. POLICING MATTERS.

The Police report of incidents in the preceding month was tabled. PC Smith reported that thefts from motor vehicles were increasing, as were anti social behaviour calls particularly from the Spar and Church area. A vehicle speed check in Stretton had resulted in eight tickets being issued and further checks would be held in Stretton and Wheaton Aston. PCSO Price was still signed off work. The rescheduled drop in would be held on 18 February from 7pm in the Village Hall.

190. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 10 JANUARY 2008

The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council of 10 January, copies of which had been previously circulated, were approved and signed.

191. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

Grant Aid 2008/09 – South Staffordshire Community & Voluntary Action. A letter of thanks had been received for the pledge of grant aid for 2008/09.

Flicks in the Sticks Initiative. The first film shown on 22 January had been sold out. The second would take place on 19 February with the film ‘Elizabeth’.

Parish Newsletter. Members were reminded about items for the next Parish News due to go to print the following week.

Retirement of Dr Turner. A card would be available to sign at the next meeting.

192. FINANCIAL STATEMENT TO 31 JANUARY

The monthly financial statement, which had been previously circulated, was approved.

193. REQUEST FOR GRANT AID WHEATON ASTON FESTIVAL 2008

A letter requesting grant aid towards the 2008 Festival along with a statement of the previous

year's accounts had been circulated. There was some discussion about whether the Festival could become self-financing and the level of support received from local businesses. It was agreed to defer the request to the next meeting and, in the meantime, the Clerk was asked to ascertain the budgeted number of ticket sales and ticket prices for 2008.

194. REQUEST FOR GRANT AID THE SAMARITANS

A letter requesting grant aid, along with an extract from the Annual Report and Accounts including acknowledgment of the support from parish councils, had been circulated. It was agreed to award a grant of £50 under s.137 of the 1972 Local Government Act.

195. YOUTH AND PLAY AREA MATTERS.

a) **Meeting arranged by David Kidney MP.** Reported that David Kidney had arranged a local meeting for people interested in youth and play matters in the parish to take place on 14 March in the Village Hall at 4 pm. These details were noted. A letter had been received from Rolf Levesely, CEO South Staffordshire Council, stating that the Community Services Manager, Katie White, would be happy to be involved in any local meetings and development of a local strategy.

b) **BMX track provision.** The meeting arranged with the youth group had been cancelled. A letter had been circulated from the Council's insurers with details of their requirements in order to be able to extend the public liability insurance cover to include such facilities. PC Matt Smith was to find out more information prior to another meeting being arranged.

196. REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR.

Cllr Wright reported that the District Council's element of the Council tax would rise by 3.9%, partly due to a reduction in government grant. The Audit Performance report had awarded South Staffordshire two stars.

197. PLANNING MATTERS.

a) Planning applications.

It was agreed to return the following applications to the Planning Department with the following comments:

07/01358/FUL no objection
08/00015/FUL no objection
08/00018/FUL no objection
08/00022/FUL no objection
08/00024/FUL no objection
08/00025/FUL no objection
08/00028/COU no objection
08/00039/FUL no objection
08/00064/FUL no objection

It was noted that several of the applications were re-submissions of applications previously refused. The Planning Department had advised that, in order to meet the government's

required turn round time for dealing with planning applications, they no longer entered into discussions over applications which did not meet planning requirements, but refused them and subsequently the applicant could resubmit.

b) Planning decisions. A list of decisions received since the last meeting was tabled.

198. MATTERS OF PARISH MAINTENANCE.

a) Quotations for grounds maintenance 2008. Details of quotations received to date were tabled. AFEB had also supplied figures for removing cuttings by raking. It was felt that this was necessary for some areas but that it would have a major impact on the 08/09 budget. Mr Hodgkins was away so had been unable to quote. Mrs Gould reported that Mr Knight had indicated that he was prepared to undertake the Stretton Memorial work at no cost and Mrs Everitt was prepared to plant and maintain the planting areas in Stretton at no cost. South Staffordshire Council had quoted for the areas they had maintained in 07/08.

It was agreed to accept AFEB's quotation for all the areas they maintained in 07/08 except the Marston Road field, and to seek an alternative quotation from the County Grounds team who currently maintain the school playing fields. The quotes to collect cuttings by raking would be accepted for the churchyard and cemetery areas on an 'as and when necessary' basis. To accept South Staffordshire Council's quotation for the areas they had quoted for. To contact Mr Hodgkins on his return and to accept his quotations, if they were broadly in line with the costs for 07/08 for the areas in Lapley and Wheaton Aston which he had maintained last year.

b) Repairs to gate and fencing, Marston Road field. A quotation of £170 to replace the gate and repair the fencing had been received and was accepted.

c) Quotation to repaint goal posts, Marston Road field. This was deferred to another meeting.

In addition the following points were discussed:

d) Repairs to gate post, Lapley cemetery. The new post was in place and it was understood that the gate would be re-hung the following weekend. Mr Fox passed on thanks from the PCC for the work.

e) Repairs to wall, Lapley Green. Reported that these repairs were in hand.

f) Sheep worrying. Mr Fox reported that Mr Brooks had raised this problem with him and had fixed 'keep dogs on leads' footpath signs sourced by the Clerk to stiles and marker posts. The police had also been advised of the problems.

199. HOUSING NEED SURVEY AND QUESTIONNAIRE FORMAT

It was agreed that a Housing Needs Survey should be undertaken and the draft questionnaire, which had been previously circulated, was accepted. The Clerk would advise South Staffordshire Housing Association accordingly.

200. STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAY MATTERS.

A site meeting was being arranged concerning the **A5 Stretton** and details would be circulated.

Leeke Way, Wheaton Aston. The Highways Divisional Manager had indicated that there was no funding for kerbing work to the verge.

Pot holes, High Street, Wheaton Aston. These were reported and would be raised with County Highways through the Clarence system.

Surfacing of pavements, Wheaton Aston. The work was noted. It was agreed to wait until completion before sending a letter of thanks.

Flooding by sub-station, Lapley Road, Wheaton Aston. It was felt that blocked drains and problems with the directional fall of the concrete plinth of the sub-station were to blame for increased frequency of flooding at this location. This would be relayed to Highways.

201. PROPOSAL TO GATE PUBLIC FOOTPATH 7 – BROADHOLES LANE TO PINFOLD LANE, WHEATON ASTON

Copies of a proposal by the County Council to gate PF7 under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act to restrict access at all times had been circulated. The proposal was discussed and the comments made in public participation were noted. It was agreed to object to the Gating Order as it was felt that gating of the footpath would not prevent access to it by determined people intent on anti social behaviour, but would restrict access by law abiding people who chose to walk through it. No details of how the gating would be achieved had been supplied but, as domestic frontages run parallel to the footpath for some distance at either end, it was hard to imagine how secure gating could be achieved. There was also concern that implementation of the order could lead to an increase in anti social behaviour as the gated footpath could provide a protected environment in which those intent on causing nuisance would not be disturbed by others walking the path as a right of way. It was felt that better policing would be more effective at reducing nuisance caused. It was noted that access would be required to the electricity sub-station at the Pinfold Lane end of the path.

202. ADDITIONAL BUS SHELTER, WHEATON ASTON.

The Clerk had arranged with the local Highways Officer for him to visit the three suggested sites and report back as to which ones were acceptable in Highways terms. The County Council offered grants of up to 25% towards the total cost of a shelter.

203. REVIEW OF LOCAL BUS SERVICES

A letter had been received and circulated stating that the County Council was reviewing local bus services. It was agreed to reply requesting a regular service for Stretton, which Mrs Gould offered to clarify locally before the closing date, and to point out that currently Stretton had no scheduled service although the data supplied suggested it had.

204. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER MEETINGS.

Climate Change meeting. Mr Wright reported that he had attended a consultative meeting at Rodbaston College about Climate Change.

Lapley & Wheaton Aston Old Peoples Welfare Committee. Mrs Morgan-Williams reported that the Leisure Club had recently had a speaker from the District Council on Climate Change.

Future of Wheaton Aston Surgery. Dr Kennedy reported that whilst attending a retirement lunch for the Brewood and Coven PC clerk he had been advised by Cllr Roberts that the doctors had no intention of withdrawing surgery facilities from Wheaton Aston.

205. CORRESPONDENCE.

A list of correspondence received since the last meeting had been circulated. The principal items were:

South Staffordshire Council

- a) **Promote your event for free.** Details had been received of how local organisations could promote events on the District Council web site and on the county 'Enjoy Staffordshire' site.
- b) **Election recharge and vacancies.** Details had been received of how the charges for the 2007 elections would be levied on parishes. Uncontested wards would be charged at £44.13 per ward. An invoice had since been received for three times this sum for the three parish wards and was included in the payment of accounts. The District Council also intended setting up a page on its web site for parishes to list any vacancies.
- c) **Parish District Liaison Meeting.** Details of the next Liaison meeting on 25 February had been circulated. The topics included an Overview of the Direct Services portfolio, Fire Risk checks, and Climate Change in South Staffordshire.
- d) **National Bus Pass.** Posters and leaflets had been received about the new scheme. In South Staffordshire travel tokens would still be available.
- e) **South Staffordshire Housing Market Assessment 2007.** A copy of the Report had been received and circulated. It would be a topic at a future Parish District Liaison meeting.

South Staffordshire Community Safety Partnership. An invitation had been received both for Councillors and members of the public to attend a Face to Face event on Community Safety at District Council Offices on 22 February from 11 am to 1 pm with lunch to follow.

Staffordshire County Council

- a) **Community Footpath Initiative 2008/09.** Application details had been received for this year's scheme. The closing date was 31 March.
- b) **Countryside Events.** Details of the events organised in February had been received and circulated.
- c) **Watchdog scheme.** Details of the Communities First Scheme which included Staffordshire Watchdogs had been received and would be circulated.

Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association. Details had been received of county wide focus group meetings on Climate Change, the Fire and Rescue Service 'nominate your Fire hero' initiative, reminders about future training sessions on Internal Audit and Risk Management, Project Management, and Organising Consultations. The Clerk had details if anyone would like to attend.

Wheaton Aston Junior Youth Club. A report of recent activities had been received from the Junior Youth Club along with a letter of thanks for the Council's support.

Wolgarston High School Spring Term Newsletter. A copy had been received and circulated.

206. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS.

Resolved to make the following payments.

Sunfield Electrical Contractors	Christmas lights work	2115.00
Lapley & Wheaton Aston Village Hall	Rent for quarter to end Dec 2007 plus electricity consumed by Christmas	£102.30 230.12

	lights £127.82	
South Staffordshire Council	Election 2007 recharge	132.39
R Cox	New Fingerpost Sunnybank	350.00
South Staffordshire Council	Grounds maintenance 3 rd quarter	194.57
Staples UK Ltd	Stationery	10.99
Community Council of Staffordshire	Best Kept Village Competition entries and posters	45.55
Mrs M Kennedy	Salary January	549.13
Post Office	PAYE & NI January	51.11
Staffordshire County Pension Fund	Pension contributions January by BACS	108.97
Cash	Petty cash account	98.37
The Samaritans	Grant aid	50.00

207. ANY OTHER MATTERS OF REPORT.

Oil Drums, Electricity sub-station opp. Village Hall. Dr Kennedy expressed concern that there were four drums of insulating oil stored at this sub-station in poor condition infringing environmental legislation. The Clerk would raise this with the appropriate authorities.

April 2008 Meeting. Mrs Gould reported that she had booked Vernon Lodge School as the venue for the April meeting.

Waste Incinerator, Stoke on Trent. Mr Wright reported that he had visited the incinerator at Stoke which was similar to the one proposed to be built at Four Ashes. He considered that vehicle movements were the greatest problem as there was no obvious air or smell pollution.

208. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC.

To resolve that, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded from the meeting and they are instructed to withdraw.

209. PROGRESS REPORT – RECRUITMENT OF NEW PARISH CLERK

Members were updated about the progress to date. It was agreed to re-advertise the vacancy.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.20 pm.

Signed.....
Date 06 March 2008

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

Several members of the public attended. The following matters were raised:

- a) **Inter Parish Games competition 2008.** Mr Thompson gave details of this year's competition. The first games would be played in February. He appealed for players and organisers to come forward. The Chairman thanked him for all he done in the past for the competition and supported the appeal. An item would be placed in the next Parish Newsletter.
- b) **Gating of Public Footpath 7.** Mr Thompson spoke in support of the Gating Order and gave details of the nuisance and damage householders adjoining the footpath had suffered.
- c) **Democracy of the Council.** Mr Ford asked about the democratic representation of the Council. He was given details of the election process and referred to the Returning Officer at the District Council if he had further queries.
- d) **Wheaton Aston Festival.** Mrs Holton and others spoke in support of the application for grant aid towards the Festival, which was in its ninth year. The not for profit event brought benefits to the village shops and pubs. The Craft Fair was a free arena with activities and displays. There would be displays of local arts and crafts. The only entrance charges were for the concerts.
- e) **Attack to man and dog on canal towpath.** Mr Collins reported that his dog had recently been attacked by a pack of loose dogs on the canal towpath towards Church Eaton, and he had suffered injuries in rescuing the dog. The police had been informed but as yet no follow up contact had taken place. PC Smith was present said that he would follow this up.
- f) **Phase two construction, Old School Court, Wheaton Aston.** Mr Barnsley reported that the site was being entered illegally and damage caused. Cars in Mill Lane had also been vandalised. He had asked the Housing Association to consider night time security.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and invited them to remain and listen to the meeting.