

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF LAPLEY, STRETTON AND WHEATON ASTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN WHEATON ASTON VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 6 MARCH 2008 AT 7.30 PM.**

<b>Present:</b>	Mr R Wright in the chair	Mrs E Morgan-Williams
	Mrs B Cox	Mr T E Noblett
	Mr M Fox	Mr P Timson
	Dr M Kennedy	Mrs D Wildman
<b>In attendance</b>	Cllr R Roberts	
<b>Apologies</b>	Mrs S Gould	Mr H Stiles
	Mr A Monckton	PC M Smith

**210. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Mr Noblett declared an interest in planning application 08/00157/FUL and left the meeting when the application was discussed. He took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

**211. POLICING MATTERS.**

PC Smith had sent his apologies and no report was available. It was noted that PC Smith's appointment as Neighbourhood Officer for the parish had been made permanent.

**212. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

Cllr Roberts tabled a report. He gave details of the County Council's budget proposals for 2008/09. The County's share of the council tax would increase by 4%. He also gave a report of the A5 Stretton site meeting, and a meeting he had attended about the Waste to Energy proposal at Four Ashes. He would be attending the meeting with David Kidney MP on 14 March.

**213. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 7 FEBRUARY 2008**

The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council of 7 February, copies of which had been previously circulated, were approved and signed.

**214. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.**

**Request for Grant Aid the Samaritans.** A letter of thanks had been received for the grant.  
**Housing Need Survey.** The survey had been sent out by the Housing Association. The covering letter in the Chairman's name had raised some concern and the Chairman reported that he had not known this was to happen. The Clerk apologised for approving the letter. It was clarified that the Survey was purely to find out local need and no site had been designated nor planning process started. South Staffordshire Housing Association was the driving force.

**Proposal to Gate Public Footpath 7 – Broadholes Lane To Pinfold Lane, Wheaton Aston.** The comments made in public participation were noted. A letter from the County Council asking the Parish Council to withdraw its objection was tabled. The reply date had been extended to 4 April to allow the matter to be an agenda item at the next meeting.

It was agreed to ask the County Council to provide details of how exactly the footpath would be gated, how access would be possible to the sub station, and for details of the offence which would be committed if the footpath was accessed once closed. It was also agreed to survey householders in the vicinity of the path for their views. A draft letter would be emailed for approval.

**Oil Drums, Electricity sub-station opp. Village Hall.** The Clerk had raised this with Highways and was waiting for contact details.

**April 2008 Meeting.** It was reported that Mrs Gould had booked Vernon Lodge School as the venue for the April meeting. The Chairman reported that it was hoped to take a photo of the Council. Unfortunately Mrs Cox and Mrs Morgan-Williams were unable to attend and gave their apologies.

## **215. FINANCIAL STATEMENT TO 29 FEBRUARY**

The monthly financial statement, which had been previously circulated, was approved. A VAT refund of £12,888 had been received for the period 1 April to 31 December 2007. The refund was high due to expenditure during the year on the youth shelter and play equipment.

## **216. REQUEST FOR GRANT AID WHEATON ASTON FESTIVAL 2008**

The Festival organisers had supplied additional information which had been circulated, along with details of previous grant history to the Festival, and detailed financial information about the Council's grant awards and expenditure, which the Festival Committee Chairman had requested. The request was further discussed and as more detail was required the Chairman suspended the meeting for a discussion with the Festival representatives present.

The organisers clarified that the tickets for concerts and camping were priced similarly to other festivals but it was necessary to be competitive. High calibre artists were expensive but ticket sales met these costs. It was the free events which included children's activities, dance workshops and displays, all provided under cover which the grant would support.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting and after further discussion it was agreed to award a grant of £750 to be paid in the new financial year.

## **217. YOUTH AND PLAY AREA MATTERS.**

**Meeting arranged by David Kidney MP.** Several members hoped to attend the meeting on 14 March. It was hoped that someone would be present from the Beth Johnson Housing Association as they managed Sowdley Green. An article in the recent South Staffordshire Review was noted which reported working with a Housing Association in Perton to put play facilities in place for young people.

## **218. PROGRESS REPORT – RECRUITMENT OF NEW PARISH CLERK**

Reported that following the re-advertisement of the post applications had been received and it was hoped to interview in the coming week.

## **219. REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR.**

Cllr Wright reported that the District Council's share of the Council tax would increase by 3%. The Council collected council tax on behalf of all the authorities on the South Staffordshire bill and had a very high collection rate. Travel tokens would be issued in Wheaton Aston on the morning of 3 April in the Village Hall. The Council had been surveyed about Post Offices in the District and had replied including the Wheaton Aston Post Office as one which should be retained.

## **220. PLANNING MATTERS.**

### **a) Planning applications.**

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

08/00114/FUL no objection but to recommend a condition that occupancy of the 'granny annexe' should be restricted to members of the immediate family of the occupiers of Mileford Cottage

08/00157/FUL to raise concerns about the possible over extension of the property and the effect on neighbouring properties

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

**Birchenease, Ivetsey Road, Wheaton Aston.** A copy of an anonymous letter to the Planning Department had been received. It raised concerns about developments at Birchenease including the frontage fencing design. As the Council had previously raised this point with the Planning Department it was agreed to follow up this letter and ask the Planning Department for their comments.

## **221. MATTERS OF PARISH MAINTENANCE.**

**a) Quotations for grounds maintenance 2008.** Reported that Mr Hodgkins had retired. It was agreed to award the work at Lapley Green and St Mary's Church to AFEB. With regard to the summer planting in Wheaton Aston it was agreed to approach other contractors and see if they would be interested.

The County Grounds team had quoted to maintain the Marston Road field on an annual basis but as this figure was significantly in excess of 07/08 expenditure at the field, it was agreed to ask AFEB to continue to do the work. However, they would be asked if they could cut frequently and rake if necessary to prevent large quantities of cuttings lying on the field.

**b) Quotation to repaint goal posts, Marston Road field.** This was deferred to another meeting. A quotation to treat the seat at the top end of the field would also be obtained.

**c) Community Footpath Initiative 2008/09.** It was agreed to make an application for a grant to replace the stiles on the footpath over the bridge at the rear of the Lapley and Wheaton Aston Recreation Ground with kissing gates. Mr Noblett offered to draw up the information for the Clerk to submit. The closing date was 31 March.

**d) Judging of Best Kept Village Posters.** It was hoped to arrange this during the month and the Chairman would visit the schools in April to present prizes.

**e) Spring Clean – Wheaton Aston.** The date was confirmed as Saturday 26 April.

## **222. CONSIDERATION OF CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL BAN IN DESIGNATED AREAS OF THE PARISH**

The Chairman suggested that an alcohol ban in certain areas of Wheaton Aston, such as the Village Centre, Primrose Bank play area, and Marston Road field could assist the police in dealing with problems. It was agreed to look at this further and in the meantime to ask the Police their view.

**223. STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAY MATTERS.**

**A5 Stretton Site meeting.** Several members had attended the meeting along with a Councillor from Brewood and Coven PC, County Cllr Roberts and three officers from County Highways. It had been accepted that a problem existed and Highways had agreed to review the section of road. They confirmed that it did not meet the criteria for double white lines.

**Traffic issues at canal bridge entrance to Wheaton Aston.** It was suggested that pedestrian safety would be improved if a footbridge could be installed adjacent to the road bridge over the canal, and consideration be given for priority to traffic either entering or leaving the village. These points would be referred to Highways Department.

**224. ADDITIONAL BUS SHELTER, WHEATON ASTON.**

A reply had been received from Highways that the sites in Long Street opposite the Greenhill Lane junction, and Ivetsey Road may be suitable for a bus shelter but opposite the Paper Shop was considered too narrow. The next step was to consult with householder in the vicinity of these two locations and ascertain their views.

**225. NOTIFICATION OF PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION ORDER RE PUBLIC FOOTPATH 16**

Copies had been circulated of the formal notification of the diversion of footpath 16 and this was noted.

**226. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING.**

The date for the Annual Parish meeting was agreed as Monday 28 April at 8pm in the Village Hall.

**227. REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER MEETINGS.**

**Lapley & Wheaton Aston Village Hall Management Committee.** Several members had attended the recent meeting. The Committee intended to approach the Parish Council for assistance to purchase some new tables. They had considered purchasing some more chairs but the new chairs were bulkier than the old ones and more difficult to store. The Committee had agreed to try and damp proof the storage cupboard used by the Old People's Welfare Committee. The Committee was to advertise for people interested in taking on the Hall Secretary and Booking Secretary roles.

**Community Safety Partnership Face to Face Event.** Mrs Wildman reported that the open meeting was about solutions to crime and disorder in the area. The Partnership was looking to engage young people in specific projects to develop ownership. There was also a speaker on distraction burglary.

**Police meeting.** Unfortunately the meeting arranged by PC Smith in the Village Hall had not been well attended. It was suggested that as PC Smith was permanently assigned to the

parish it would be helpful if a place could be found for him locally to book on. This would be further considered.

## 228. CORRESPONDENCE.

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

**Request for a copy of the Council's constitution.** Mr Ford had made the request and been supplied with a copy of Standing Orders. The questions he tabled under public participation were noted and would be circulated. The Chairman offered to draft a response.

### **South Staffordshire Council**

**a) Free Sussed Sessions.** The District Council had written to advise that they had secured funding for each parish council in the District to have two free Sussed sessions in the summer. The Parish had to provide a venue and the District Council would do all the administration. It was agreed to accept the offer.

**b) Notification of intent to prune tress in Conservation Areas.** Notification had been received of the intention to undertake work at Church Farm, Wheaton Aston and Orchard House, Lapley, both within Conservation Areas.

**c) Assorted press releases.** Several press releases had been received and would be circulated including one about Wheaton Aston's Table Tennis team's success, and the Flicks in the Sticks.

**d) Inter Parish Games schedules.** Posters of the schedules had been received and would be circulated and displayed.

### **Staffordshire County Council**

**a) Pension Fund.** Information had been received of changes to the contribution rates for both employers and employees as of April 2008. The employer's percentage would increase to 12.7% for 2008/09, to 13.8% for 2009/10, and to 15% to 2010/11. The employee's rate was to become banded based on salary.

**b) Rights of Way Improvement Plan.** A copy of the Plan had been received and was available to borrow from the office.

**Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association.** Copies of the Spring Newsletter had been distributed. The invoice for the annual subscription 2008/09 had been received and would be presented to the next meeting for payment. A services leaflet, training course updates and other information would be circulated.

**Newsletters** had also been received from the following organisations and would be circulated:

Sustainable Staffordshire, South Staffordshire Housing Association, South Staffordshire Community and Voluntary Action, and the Community Council of Staffordshire.

## 229. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS.

Resolved to make the following payments.

British Telecom	Quarterly phone account	80.10
Rentokil Property Care	Treatment of Village Hall floor	1703.75
St Mary's First School	Office rent	1100.00
John Fisher	Design & print Parish Newsletter	300.00

Mrs M Kennedy	Salary February	553.30
Post Office	PAYE & NI February	46.94
Staffordshire County Pension Fund	Pension contributions February by BACS	108.97
Cash	Petty cash account	132.09

**230. ANY OTHER MATTERS OF REPORT.**

**Finance and Forward Planning Committee.** It was suggested that the committee should meet in April. This was agreed and a date would be arranged.

**Summer Holiday Playscheme.** The Playscheme Committee also needed to meet although the Play Leader had already researched some ideas for outings.

**Fly Tipping.** Mrs Morgan-Williams reported that the District Council had recently removed rubbish from the highway on Fentonhouse Lane but they would not remove rubbish on the adjacent farm land.

**Overhanging hedges.** The issue raised in public participation was noted and it was suggested that a list of problem spots be gathered to be reported to Highways.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.40 pm.

Signed.....  
Date            03 April 2008

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

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

- a) **Inter Parish Games competition 2008.** Mr Thompson reported that two games had been played to date resulting in the parish being in first place with 34½ points, second to Wombourne with 24 points. The Table Tennis team had won and played their joker securing double points and the Dominoes team had been placed third. Cribbage and Darts would be the next games. Teams were still needed for some sports and he appealed for players and organisers to come forward. The Chairman supported his appeal.
- b) **Retirement of post lady – Mrs Simms.** It was reported that Mrs Simms would be retiring shortly and it was suggested that the Council write and thank her for her service.
- c) **Parish Council finances.** Mr Weate thanked the Council for the detailed response to his letter and suggested that the Chairman should give a report of future plans at the Annual Meeting.
- d) **Flicks in the Sticks.** Mr Weate also reported that the second film showing had gone well although feedback had requested some more comfortable chairs for the Village Hall. The Chairman reported that the Village Hall Management Committee had discussed this but that storage was a problem.
- e) **Wheaton Aston Festival.** Several people spoke on behalf of the grant aid request for the Festival and asked that the Council consider supporting the free events. Some local businesses supported the request and the benefits the Festival brought to the village. County Cllr Roberts offered to make an award from his Local Member Initiative fund of £500.
- f) **Gating of Public Footpath 7.** Several residents close to the footpath attended. Their spokesman was concerned that the Parish Council had objected to the gating proposal. The residents continually suffered damage and nuisance problems. It was explained that the Council was not sure that gating was the best solution to the problem but that they intended discussing the matter again at their meeting on 3 April as the County Council had written and asked the Parish Council to withdraw its objection and had given an extension to the response period to 4 April.
- g) **Various issues.** Mr Ford gave details of discussions he had had with some local residents and cited four problem areas which he asked the Parish Council to take action to improve. These were: parking on pavements, dog fouling of pavements, overgrown hedges and traffic speed in Wheaton Aston. He suggested a voluntary speed limit of 20 mph. He also supplied a written list of questions to the Clerk. The Chairman replied that the four points raised were all ongoing issues which the Council had raised many times with other authorities and they could all be highlighted in a future Parish newsletter. Unfortunately the Police did not see parking on pavements as a high priority.
- h) **Recruitment of replacement Clerk.** Mr Mole asked for an update of the recruitment process and when the present clerk would be finishing. The Chairman replied that following the re-advertisement it was hoped to interview applicants in the near future. The present Clerk would leave at the May meeting.

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