

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF LAPLEY, STRETTON AND WHEATON ASTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN STRETTON COMMUNITY HALL ON THURSDAY 3 APRIL 2008 AT 7.30 PM.**

**Present:** Mr T E Noblett in the chair  
Mr M Fox  
Mrs S Gould  
Dr M Kennedy  
Mr A Monckton  
Mr H Stiles  
Mrs D Wildman  
Mr R Wright (late)

**Apologies** Mrs B Cox  
Mrs E Morgan-Williams  
Mr P Timson  
Mr R Wright (late)  
PC M Smith

**231. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, Mr. Noblett was elected to take the chair.

The Chairman introduced Debra Bate to the meeting as the newly appointed Clerk.

**232. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mr. Stiles, Mr. Wright, Mr. Noblett and Dr. Kennedy declared an interest in Lapley & Wheaton Aston Village Hall Committee request to purchase tables.

**233. POLICING MATTERS.**

PC Smith had sent his apologies and no report was available. It was noted that PC Smith is on secondment until 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008 but would continue to serve the parish. PCSO Price has returned to work and is currently on part-time office duties until he has fully recovered from his injury.

**234. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

No report was available.

**235. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 6 MARCH 2008**

The minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council of 6 March, copies of which had been previously circulated, were approved and signed.

**236. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.**

**Oil Drums, Electricity sub-station opp. Village Hall.** The Clerk had contacted Central Networks to remove the oil drums.

**237. TO CONSIDER STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS MATTERS**

**A5 Stretton** Following the site meeting County Highways had inspected the site with Highways Project Manager and felt that stand alone improvements would be difficult and preferred to review a much larger section of the A5 which would involve improvements such as sign de-clutter and replacement and a review of the current lining. The Clerk reported that the SIDs (Speed Information Device) will return in

June 2008 to the A5 in Stretton on the Telford side of The Bell as well as at the Ivy House junction to gather data.

**Canal Bridge, Long Street** A letter has been received from County Highways stating that they agree that the entrance point is narrow but that this forces traffic to slow or give way. As they have no recorded incidents at this location it would be difficult for them to justify the costs of either a footbridge or priority system.

**Footpath Resurfacing** Work has started on Broadholes Lane and is expected to last 3-4 weeks. Once completed, work will start to resurface the pavements on Fentonhouse Lane. Mrs Gould asked if work could be done to improve the pavements in Stretton, on the A5 in particular as they are in a poor state of repair. The Clerk will report this to Highways.

**238. TO FURTHER CONSIDER PROPOSAL TO PERMANENTLY GATE PUBLIC FOOTPATH 7, WHEATON ASTON**

The results of the survey were tabled. Forty replies had been received. Slightly more than 50% were in favour of gating the path. Many concerns were expressed as to how the gating would be achieved.

Comments made in the public participation session reflected these concerns. The matter was discussed and it was felt that the design of gate that is proposed by Staffordshire County Council is key to a formal discussion and decision. The Clerk had written to the County Council after the last meeting, requesting this information but it had not been received. It was agreed to defer a decision until the information on the design of the gate is received and the police have been consulted. It was suggested that a public consultation ought to be carried out. The chairman expressed the meeting's disappointment in Staffordshire County Council's handling of the issue which continues to cause a great deal of distress to many residents.

**239. TO CONSIDER MATTERS OF PARISH MAINTENANCE**

**Stretton War Memorial and Surrounds** Mrs. Gould reported that the old posts had been removed and would be replaced when there was next a period of dry weather. The chains were currently being repainted. It was intended to erect fencing at the rear of the memorial and plant holly bushes in front of it. Resin is also needed at the base of the wall. It is planned to replace the current step with a ramp. A quote had been received from ALK Renovations and Services and was accepted by the Council. The Clerk is to write to ALK and authorise the work to be carried. Mrs Gould stated how pleased she was with the good involvement and support from residents in Stretton with regards to the War Memorial.

**Quotation to repaint goalposts, Marston Road field** A quote has been received from Gavin Lowe to repaint the goalposts. The Clerk was awaiting a revised quote to include the painting of the seat as well, however this had not arrived in time for the meeting. The Council approved the original quote providing it included painting the section of the posts underground.

**Summer planting in Wheaton Aston** No quotes had been obtained to date.

**Spring Clean** Two families turned out for the litter collection/spring clean in Lapley. The Wheaton Aston Spring Clean is due to take place on 26<sup>th</sup> April. Mr. Stiles offered his apologies. It was noted that the Best Kept Village competition judging starts on 1<sup>st</sup> May. Arrangements to judge the children's posters were discussed.

**Lapley Green** It was reported that the posts on Lapley Green were damaged. A verbal quote had been received from AFEB Ltd to replace the posts and chain which were beyond repair. It was agreed to defer a decision until the next meeting. The Clerk is to obtain a written quote.

**Gate repair at Lapley Church** Mr. Fox reported that the repairs to the gate at Lapley Church had now been completed. The Clerk informed the Council that a letter of thanks had been received from Lapley with Wheaton Aston PCC.

**240. TO CONSIDER YOUTH AND PLAY MATTERS INCLUDING REPORT OF DAVID KIDNEY MP MEETING**

A letter from David Kidney MP about the meeting held in March was circulated along with an excerpt from David Kidney's speech in parliament about Neighbourhood Policing, in which he mentioned Wheaton Aston.

The meeting held with residents and senior representatives from various agencies discussed play issued in Wheaton Aston and specifically Primrose Bank. It was reported that there were some very positive outcomes. Lottery funding was suggested and it was reported that Wheaton Aston is included in the District Council's play strategy. The representative from the Beth Johnson Housing Association had indicated that the open space at Sowdley Green could be considered as a play area to relieve the pressure on Primrose Bank. The Youth Forum is due to meet on 17<sup>th</sup> April where the issues such as the BMX track would be discussed.

It was agreed to set up a working group to develop a play strategy for the parish so that facilities would meet the needs of the whole community. The Clerk is to write to all of the agencies that attended David Kidney's meeting to ask them to send a representative to sit on the working group. The Clerk is also to write to the police to ask them to keep an eye on Primrose Bank especially regarding anti social behaviour. The clerk will write to local residents asking them to nominate a representative.

**241. TO RECEIVE PROGRESS REPORT – RECRUITMENT OF NEW PARISH CLERK**

Debra Bate had been appointed and was formally introduced to the council.

**242. TO RECEIVE FINANCIAL STATEMENT TO 31 MARCH 2008** The financial statement to 31 March 2008 and budget for 2008/09 was circulated. The end of year accounts will be presented at the May meeting. It was reported that the Brewood car scheme grant was to be paid from revenue and £1000 had been moved from reserves to balance the budget. The statement and budget were approved.

**243. TO CONSIDER REQUEST FROM LAPLEY & WHEATON ASTON VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE TO PURCHASE ADDITIONAL TABLES**

A letter and accounts from the Village Hall Committee were circulated. It was reported that there was £550 remaining in the budget for the village hall from the last financial year and this could be used to pay £480 for the new tables. This was agreed.

**244. TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR**

Cllr Wright reported that the Wheaton Aston Post Office had been saved from closure. Seisdon and Codsall Wood are recommended for closure. The District Council share of the Council Tax is to rise by 3%, one of the lowest increases in the country.

**245. TO CONSIDER PLANNING MATTERS**

a) The Planning Applications received were discussed and the following comments made to the planning department.

08/00234/COU Rookery Farm – No objections

08/00282/AGR Hurst Farm – No objections

08/00313/FUL 3 Coach Gardens – No objections

b) A list of planning decisions received since the last meeting was tabled. It was noted that application 08/00114/FUL at Mileford Cottage had been withdrawn.

**246. TO FURTHER CONSIDER A BAN ON ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN DESIGNATED AREAS OF THE PARISH**

An article will be put in the summer newsletter asking residents for their views. The police are to be consulted. The clerk will circulate a report on Perton's application and Mr. Roy Wright will obtain information from the District Council's legal department on the procedure.

**247. TO PROGRESS ADDITIONAL BUS SHELTER**

Residents of possible areas will be surveyed before the next meeting.

**248. TO RECEIVE REPORT OF MEETING \_ SUMMER HOLIDAYS PLAYSCHHEME COMMITTEE**

Mr. Noblett reported that a meeting had taken place and that the Play Leader, Louise Barton had proposed 5 locations for trips: Conkers; Hoo Farm; Think Tank Museum; Black Country Museum and Birches Valley Centre at Cannock Chase. 3 sessions of SUSSED activity will also be provided by the parish council between 5<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> August in the village hall. Staff and salaries have been agreed. Costs are yet to be finalised. Parents will be able to register their children on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

**249. TO CONSIDER ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

It was agreed to leave the public participation session as it is. Councillors felt that it was wrong to put a time constraint on the session as residents would be disappointed if they had attended but hadn't been able to speak. Members of the public can approach councillors to put items on the agenda. For special issues that would be likely to require a lengthy discussion it was agreed that the meetings could start earlier or extraordinary meetings could be held.

**250. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER MEETINGS**

Mr. Noblett reported that he had attended a Trustees meeting of the Recreation Ground Charity. They had discussed health & safety and fire safety. Some clubs had been fined for lack of procedure and an expert had been invited to their next meeting. The bar account has been separated from the charity account in line with the new law. The end of year account showed a £21k turnover with a £1250 loss. The small profit made over the previous 3 years means that they are breaking even. They are considering decking and railing for the area overlooking the cricket field.

## 251. CORRESPONDENCE

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

**Mr Thompson's** resignation as IPG co-ordinator. It was agreed to write a letter of thanks and place an article in the summer newsletter advertising for a replacement.

**Wolgarston High School** invite to new school library grand opening Friday 18 April 10.45 am.

**Wheaton Aston Sea Scouts** request for a set up grant of £500 for purchase of life jackets for Sea Explorers. To be considered at the next meeting.

**Wheaton Aston Carnival Association request** for a grant towards this year's carnival. To be considered at the next meeting.

**Mr Palmer** letter expressing his concerns about this year's parish precept increase. The clerk would reply with copies of accounts as requested.

**South Staffordshire Council** Parish District Liaison Group Meeting Details were tabled of the next Liaison meeting to be held on Thursday 22 May at District Council offices. Topics include Community and Learning partnerships, and the Open Space Audit.

**Staffordshire County Council** Invite to Duke of Edinburgh's Award presentation evening on 24 April 7.30 pm.

**Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association** Details of forthcoming training events.

**Campaign to Protect Rural England** Letter requesting a donation. To be considered at the next meeting.

## 252. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Resolved to make the following payments.

### Accounts for Payment

NRG Group Ltd	Quarterly photocopies	12.74
AFEB Ltd	Grounds maintenance & repairs – January & February	705.00
SCC	Wheaton Aston Junior Youth Club grant second instalment	1038.75
Cash	Petty cash account	153.38
Brewood & District Voluntary Transport	Grant aid 2008/09	1000.00
South Staffordshire Community & Voluntary Action	Grant aid 2008/09	50.00
Wheaton Aston Festival	Grant aid 2008	750.00
Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association	Annual Subscription	423.00
Mrs M Kennedy	Salary March	553.07
Post Office	PAYE & NI March	47.17
Staffordshire County Pension Fund	Pension contributions March by BACS	108.97

## 253. ANY OTHER MATTERS OF REPORT

**Flicks in the Sticks** Mrs. Wildman asked whether the films in the village hall were going to continue now that funding had ceased. It was agreed to discuss it at the next agenda and decide whether the parish council should underwrite the films.

**Wheaton Aston Arts** Mrs Wildman reported that they have received a lottery grant for a projector and display boards. The drama group are planning to clear out their store room at the village hall to make room for the new equipment which will be available to other groups.

**Postal Address** As the new clerk is to be primarily office based, the postal address has been changed from Mrs. Kennedy's home address to Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston PC, c/o Staffordshire Youth Service, Wheaton Aston Youth Centre, Marston Road, Wheaton Aston, Stafford, ST9 9PQ.

**Broadband at Parish Council Office.** Broadband internet access will be installed in the near future to enable better email/internet facility and free up the phone line.

**Annual Parish Meeting** This will take place on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April at Wheaton Aston Village Hall at 8pm. There will be an official photo taken at 7.30pm to capture the retirement of Mrs. Kennedy as parish clerk.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.45 pm.

Signed.....

Date                    01 May 2008

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

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

- a) **Dog fouling** Concern was expressed about the level of dog mess in the village.
- b) **Reply to written questions** The Chairman apologised to Mr. Ford for the delay in replying to his questions.
- c) **Methods of dealing with unwanted travellers' sites** The council were questioned about their plans to prevent land being sold to travellers and how they would deal with unwanted travellers' sites. The Chairman reported that the council was unable to stop land being sold and that there were legal procedures to deal with unwanted travellers. Mr. Monckton described a few ways that local farmers had dealt successfully with travellers.
- d) **Proposed gating of footpath 7** Concern was expressed that unless the footpath is gated sufficiently there will be a tragedy. One resident produced an item from the substation that he had found in his garden. Complaints were made that the police presence is not high enough in the area. Incidents of attempted arson, trespassing and vandalism were also reported. It was suggested that the footpath isn't the problem it was those who abused it and that gating the footpath would just move the problem to a different place. Several residents bordering the footpath complained of extreme antisocial behaviour disrupting their lives. Some residents questioned what type of gate would be installed as this was key to deciding its effectiveness. The chairman assured the residents that the council would take on board their feelings when it discussed the matter in the formal meeting.
- e) **Level of crime in the parish** A Stretton resident reported that he had been the victim of crime on several occasions, that the police had failed to respond and that residents had to look after each other. Another Stretton resident recommended the neighbourhood watch scheme saying that it would notify residents of crime in their area but that it needed a new volunteer. There was disappointment that a police officer was not present at the meeting. It was noted that the recent police surgery in Wheaton Aston was poorly attended. Residents were encouraged to report all incidents to the police as resources are allocated based on reported crime.
- f) **Problems with Garden Lane getting blocked** Complaints were raised that Garden Lane regularly gets blocked. Residents were advised to use the Clarence system to report highway problems.

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