

MINUTES FROM THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON THE 1st SEPTEMBER 2020

PRESENT: Mrs K.Reeves, Messrs P.Bailey, A.Brown, P.Harriman, S.Moore, one member member of the public and the Clerk, Mrs D.M.Key.

APOLOGIES: These were received from Parish Councillor and vice chair Mrs S.Dodd and Parish Councillor Mr D.Massie and Stafford Borough Councillor, Mr R.Sutherland.

MINUTES: The minutes from the previous meeting held on the 2nd April 2019 were then deemed as a true record by those present and duly signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS ARISING: There were no matters arising.

OPEN FORUM: Was not required on this occasion.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: The Chairman, Mr P.Harriman gave his annual report to the meeting for the year 2019/2020.

“As Chairman of Church Eaton Parish Council, I am pleased to present the Chairman’s report covering the last twelve months May 2019 to April 2020. The Council met on ten occasions, there were no meetings held in August 2019 and April 2020.

At the time of writing this report it is important to note that due to the Coronavirus pandemic normal Parish Council meetings have been suspended due to Government regulations. There were no meetings held in April, May or June. It is hoped that virtual meetings can be organised going forward.

Our main lines of communication with the community continue to be through minutes of meetings, personal contacts, the Parish Magazine, the website and the open forum. Given the increasing use of social media platforms reaching out to much wider audiences I believe we need to make decisions in the coming year on how we can improve our communications.

During the year complaints relating to roads in the Parish have again been highlighted as an area of concern. The Council have specifically been contacted regarding parking outside Church Eaton School, the danger of parked vehicles between the institute and the school, speeding traffic along the Church Eaton to Haughton road and the lack of pavement and speeding traffic along the Wood Eaton road. In addition, the lack of gulley cleaning in the Parish, the issue of poorly maintained roads and the resulting potholes continue to cause concern.

The school regularly remind parents of the dangers to children and adults as a result of parking at peak times and urges them to park at the Institute and walk to school. As a Council we have discussed with the County and Borough Councils potential solutions such as traffic calming, road layout alterations and speed reduction legislation. Lack of funding and having to prioritise means that we will have to cope with the situation although we will continue to monitor complaints and look for alternative solutions. Our local PCSO has been asked to contact the school to discuss issues.

As in previous years there are reoccurring issues around the poor state of the roads. Potholes, causing damage to vehicles are the commonest form of complaints we receive. There have been numerous complaints about the perceived lack of appropriate quality repairs of the roads. The Parish is in constant dialogue with Highways regarding these issues. I again urge residents to report damage to Highways through the Council website or App.

There have been particular problems in Marston where a section of road was closed for eight weeks due to flooding. A site meeting was held with residents and Councillors Mark Winnington, Ray Sutherland and Mark Keeling from Highways to discuss the issues. A group of local residents were able to locate a number of blocked and broken drains and clear the flood. Highways were then able to carry out appropriate repairs, a good example of collaboration. The ford at Apeton and Slab Lane at Little Onn have also been of concern and requiring attention.

Litter and dumping of waste materials seems to be on the increase across the Parish. I can only speculate on the cause although it has been suggested that charges introduced at the council tips for certain materials is a contributing factor. Residents can often be seen collecting litter and the Council have been efficient in removing larger amounts of tipped waste.

Planning applications have been reviewed throughout the year with comments returned to the Planning Department. We encourage applicants to attend Parish Council meetings to explain their planning proposals in person. This can be helpful in gaining a clear understanding of intentions and hopefully make the process pass smoothly. Prior to this stage it is always wise to communicate with the Borough Planning Department about a proposal before a formal application is made allowing potential difficulties to be discussed. There have been numerous complaints this year regarding the storage operation at Little Onn Airfield. There were concerns regarding vehicle routing and parking over-night on site as well as the volume of traffic.

The village playground continues to be monitored regularly throughout the year and maintenance carried out. I have received reports this year that the park is regularly used. My thanks to Parish Councillors who take it in turn on a monthly basis to carry out the monitoring and record any issues as well as completing minor repairs. Sadly, the park is temporarily closed due to the coronavirus restrictions.

John Edwards decided to step down from running the Parish website after many years for which the Parish Council offer their thanks. However, John has taken on a new venture in taking on the challenge of building the new Neighbourhood Watch membership. Jon Gibbs from Marston has kindly developed a new Parish council website.

The Parish Council was a contributor to the church Christmas tree festival which was a great success overall. My thanks to Councillor Sheila Dodd and Marston resident Jane Moore for their hard work.

Our three defibrillators in the parish thankfully have not been used. They are maintained by volunteers and regularly inspected, my thanks to all concerned.

The Council did not enter the Best Kept Village competition in 2018 and 2019 and has not entered again in 2020. However, the flower troughs will be forming part of the usual display and the hanging basket competition will continue and judged independently. We are sure that

residents will continue with their individual efforts and the High street and surrounding streets will look as good as ever.

During the year, the Parish Council has supported the school and replaced a second finger post in a traditional style, thanks to Councillor David Massie for providing transport and installation of the new post. We plan to gradually repair or replace others as funds allow.

Costs incurred by the Parish Council include, hire of the Institute, grass cutting, playground repairs, plants for the village troughs, council insurance, website upkeep and the clerk's fees as well as a range of other minor expenses.

In the coming year we will be considering plans to deal with the additional responsibilities of Parish Councils as soon as they become clearer.

The Parish Council accounts are audited annually. My thanks to Mrs Diane Key (clerk to the council) for her diligence in keeping us on track and providing detailed information at all times.

That completes my report for 2019/2020”.

Peter Harriman
Chairman, Church Eaton Parish Council

The meeting then closed at 7.35 pm.