

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 3RD JANUARY 2023
AT CHURCH EATON VILLAGE INSTITUTE

PRESENT: Parish Councillors Mrs S. Dodd (Vice Chair), Messrs A.Brown, J. Gibbs, D. Massie, P. Bailey, S. Moore (Chairman), Stafford Borough and Staffs County Councillor, Mr M. Winnington, one member of the public and the Clerk, Mrs D. Key.

APOLOGIES: These were received from Parish Councillor, Mr A.Lloyd and Stafford Borough Councillor, Mr. R. Sutherland.

MINUTES: The minutes from the meeting held on the 6th December 2022 were proposed for approval by the Chairman Councillor S.Moore and seconded by the Vice Chair Councillor Dodd. All were in favour.

MATTERS ARISING: The Chairman reported that he had submitted to the Borough Council, by hand, a letter as previously agreed with comments in relation to the Stafford Borough Local Plan 2020-2040: Preferred Options Consultation. This letter stated that the Parish Council unanimously supported the categorisation of Church Eaton Parish as Tier 5 in the Settlement Hierarchy and therefore not an area designated for new development.

Councillor Gibbs had circulated the information relating to the recent meeting at the Bradford Estates with Alexander Lord Newport and Eliza Newport.

LATE ITEMS: There were no late items.

OPEN FORUM: This was not required on this occasion.

COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH SCHEME: There was no update on the scheme other than training would commence in earnest in the spring when the weather improves. The Clerk was asked to continue to keep this item on the agenda.

CHURCH EATON VILLAGE PLAYGROUND: Councillor Lloyd had reported to the Chairman that the playground was in good condition and that he would carry out the sanding that was required to remove the graffiti when the weather improved. The Chairman reported that he had now received certification following the recent safety audit of the playground by Sportsafe. A copy of this had been sent to the Clerk and Councillor Gibbs for the website.

PLANNING: A new planning application (reference 22/36692/FUL) had been received since the last meeting for the conversion and change of use of traditional farm buildings into four dwellings at Manor Farm, Marston. Councillors agreed that this development would benefit the visual appearance of the centre of the hamlet of Marston. It would also allow the brick barns to be seen from the road, which would enhance the local character. There were however, concerns regarding the proposed visibility splays. The new, Birchmoor Lane entrance to the north of the site had a splay indicated to the north-east but failed to acknowledge the flow of traffic around the blind left-hand bend. Councillors also questioned whether the proposed number of dwellings was excessive given the overall plot size, the historic nature of these barns, and the local precedent of larger dwellings in such barns. Also the modern farm sheds earmarked to be removed are currently in active use, Councillors also raised concerns as to where this displaced activity would be relocated.

The Chairman was to formulate a response, for the Clerk to forward to the Borough Planning Department, supporting in principle the application while also highlighting these concerns.

HIGHWAYS: It was reported that the missing 30mph sign on the Gnosall Road had now been replaced. The potholes in Birchmoor Lane had been reported by the Chairman to the County Council's Highways Department. The wooden railings which had been knocked down on the bridge in Birchmoor Lane were to be inspected by the Chairman and Councillor Gibbs and appropriate action taken.

Following the completion of other repairs such as the collapsed verge on Sweetplace Lane and the long-standing flooding issue outside the entrance to Little Onn Hall, the Chairman suggested writing a letter of thanks to Diane Firkins at County Highways. This action was agreed by the Parish Council.

CIVIC AMENITY VISITS FOR 2023: There were no updates on this matter other than publicity had commenced highlighting the changes to certain items of furniture that could not be collected due to new legislation.

DEFIBRILLATORS: The Chairman reported that all of the parish defibrillators had now been returned from their recent recall and software upgrades and this had been updated on The Circuit National Defibrillator Network.

It was agreed to make a donation to Gnosall First Responders, to thank them for inspecting and maintaining Church Eaton's defibrillators. It was proposed by Councillor Gibbs and seconded by Councillor Bailey that that a £50 donation be made. With the exception of one abstention, all were in favour.

FINANCE:

Following a lengthy discussion and briefing from Councillor Brown in relation to the Parish Council budget forecasting, it was unanimously agreed that in setting the 2023-2024 Precept an increase 7% would be requested. This was a reluctant decision as the Parish Council has managed to minimise or avoid requesting an increase for many years, but given the rising costs of essential services impacting Parish Council running costs, it was considered a necessary step. This was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Gibbs. All were in favour.

Invoices had been received for the Christmas Tree for Village at CEVI for £25 This would be paid along with the hire fees for the next quarter for January to March 2023 amounting to £66.00. These were proposed for payment by Councillor Gibbs and seconded by Vice Chair Councillor Dodd. All were in favour.

CORRESPONDENCE: All items of correspondence had been forwarded to members as it had arrived including more information regarding the forthcoming Mayoral Ball which will be held on the 17th February 2023 - RSVP by the 20th January 2023. The Borough Council were also holding a Quiz Night in February on the 2nd.

Nigel Bickley was still looking at repairing the village notice board and would update the Parish Council following his inspection.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Tuesday 7th February 2023 at 7.30 pm in the Village Institute. The meeting closed at 8.45pm.