

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON THE 4TH APRIL 2023
AT CHURCH EATON VILLAGE INSTITUTE

PRESENT: Parish Councillors Mrs S. Dodd (Vice Chair), Messrs P. Bailey, J. Gibbs, A. Lloyd, D. Massie, S. Moore (Chairman), Stafford Borough Ray Sutherland and five members of the public and the Clerk, Mrs D. Key.

APOLOGIES: These were received from Parish Councillor A. Brown, Stafford Borough Councillor and Staffs County Councillor, M. Winnington,.

MINUTES: The minutes from the previous meeting held on the remotely on the 3rd May 2022 were proposed by Councillor Dodd as being a true record, seconded by Councillor Gibbs. All were in favour.

MATTERS ARISING: There were no matters arising from the previous Parish meeting.

OPEN FORUM: Was not required on this occasion.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

The following report for the period May 2022 to April 2023 was read out by the Chairman.

“At the Parish Council meeting in May 2022, I was re-elected as Chairman and Councillor Dodd was re-elected in the role of Vice Chair. The co-option of Mr. Alex Lloyd into the vacant Councillor position was completed in June.

The Parish Council met twelve times in the year, all meetings were held in the Village Institute. The Annual Parish Meeting was combined with the May 2022 Parish Council meeting. The Parish Council is funded by an annual precept, raised as part of the Council Tax. For 2022-23, the precept was approximately £6,000. A donation from Bradford Estates and some small credits gave a total budget of nearly £7100.

The village Play Park is managed by the Parish Council and Councillor Lloyd kindly volunteered to take on the weekly inspections. Two new trees, a Crab Apple and a Rowan were planted in May by former Councillor Mrs K. Reeves, as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative. They were regularly watered through the summer, and I am pleased to see that they are now becoming established. The Play Park railings at the entrance had become somewhat neglected with multiple layers of peeling paint. These were stripped back to metal and re-painted, in June.

The annual Play Park equipment safety inspection was conducted in August and Sportsafe UK Limited identified a number of problems requiring remedial work. Following a quote of approximately £2500, a small working party of Parish Councillors performed the remediation work and the safety certification was successfully obtained, saving the Parish approximately £2400.

The Parish Council organised a Defibrillator Awareness session from Eccleshall Community First Responders at the Institute in July. This started with an informative talk, sharing information about the defibrillators and their use. Then attendees were

able to practise the use of defibrillators and CPR techniques on some training dummies.

Arrangements were made for Gnosall First Responders to take on the regular checking of our four Parish defibrillators and this has been working well. CU Medical issued a software upgrade recall against three of the Parish defibrillators. This was actioned and all three units have been fitted with new battery packs. We have optimised our approach to defibrillator pad management as these have a limited operational life and need to be replaced before their expiry date.

The Parish Council funded two, Saturday morning Civic Amenity refuse collections from The Royal Oak car park. The first, in October was well used. Unfortunately, a problem at the Borough Council resulted in a no-show at the March collection. This is being re-arranged for May.

The state of repair of our local highways remains an issue for parishioners. A problem with subsidence in Common Lane was raised in Open Forum, at the June meeting. The Parish Council reported and escalated this with County Council Highways. Emergency repairs were completed within a week. I am pleased to see that other long-standing issues were also addressed in the year, including the collapsed verge on Sweetplace Lane, the flooding issues at the entrance to Little Onn Hall, and the missing 30mph sign on the Gnosall Road.

The Parish Council and parishioners use the County Council online reporting tool to alert Highways about potholes and drainage problems. Reported damage is inspected, recorded, assessed for urgency, and allocated to an appropriate work queue. There will be a lead-time before non-urgent damage is repaired, but I encourage everyone to use the County Council online reporting tool, when there is a problem that needs to be addressed.

The Parish Council is a standard consultee for Borough Council Planning applications in the Parish. The Parish Councillors continue to review and comment on all applications, with the scope of comments restricted to planning-relevant matters. Parishioners submitting a planning application or with concerns about applications that have been made, are welcome to make representation to the Parish Council in the Open Forum Agenda item of the monthly Parish Council meetings. This happened on two occasions in the year and, together with input from the Parish Councillors, Borough Councillors Sutherland and Winnington were able to advise the parishioners both times.

The Stafford Borough Council Local Plan 2020-2040 defines the vision for future development and sets out planning policies. Consultation on this was completed in 2022 with Church Eaton Parish classified as Tier 5, not designated for development.

Following our work in co-operation with County Council Highways, Severn Trent Water and the County Council Flood Team last year, we have been monitoring the village flooding issues, taking input from local residents. I am pleased to report that so far, there hasn't been a repeat of the flooding issues, suffered historically.

Councillor Brown has undertaken a thorough review of the Parish Council's income and expenditure. This covered the day-to-day running costs as well as our medium and long term commitments such as the Play Park and the Defibrillators. His financial

forecast allows us to identify funds that need to be carried forward, to cover future committed expenditure that falls outside the annual cycle. This analysis formed valuable input when setting the Parish Council precept for 2023-24. The increase of 9% was mainly due to costs incurred for defibrillator maintenance, and equates to a monthly increase of fifteen pence for a Band D property.

The small authority exemption certificate was obtained in advance of the annual audit, governance and accounting statements were prepared and the audit was completed in June. We are grateful to Les Beattie for his running of the Parish Council payroll for payment of the Clerk's fees.

In the year, the Parish Council has supported various initiatives, including the village Christmas tree, hanging basket competition and the window refurbishment at the Village Institute.

Costs incurred by the Parish Council include: hire of the Village Institute for Parish Meetings, Defibrillator Awareness, and Speedwatch; grass cutting; playground safety inspection; materials for playground repairs; plants for the village troughs; council insurance; Staffordshire Parish Council Association membership; and the Clerk's fees, as well as a range of other minor expenses.

The churcheaton.org.uk web site provides a public source for Parish Council information and guidance, in conjunction with the village noticeboard. I encourage parishioners to download the myStaffs smartphone app and use it to interact with Borough and County Council.

My thanks go to our Clerk to the Council, Mrs Diane Key who was greatly missed when unable to attend a number of Parish meetings. Her organisation, guidance and diligence remain invaluable to the Parish Council and she provided detailed and accurate information, throughout this year.

I would like to express my thanks to the current team of Parish Councillors, for their contributions and work over the last 12 months and with the imminent election for places on the Parish Council, I wish the best for each candidate.

Looking forward to the next twelve months, the Parish Council hopes to be able to replace some of the decommissioned Play Park equipment, and will continue to monitor progress on the telecommunications mast to be installed at Woolaston Lane. Civic Amenity visits have been organised for October and (subject to confirmation) May.

That completes my report for the year 2022-23".

Simon Moore,
Chairman, Church Eaton Parish Council.

The meeting ended at 7.45pm.