

MINUTES of the Meeting of Brocton Parish Council held at Village Hall, Old Acre Lane, Brocton on Wednesday 6 September 2017 commencing at 7.30 pm.

Present: Cllr R Bates (Chairman), Cllrs Miss J Perry, R Middleton, L Goff, Cllr Mrs L Smith, L Lee and Borough Cllr F Finlay.

47/17 APOLOGIES Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr J Francis.

48/17 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

The Chairman adjourned the meeting and declared the public session open. 4 members of the public were present.

a. An enquiry regarding the Cannock Chase Management plan was made and the Chairman advised that nothing further had been heard since the last meeting held on 9 August 2017. Further update will be available after the workshop, which Cllr Goff is attending on 14 September 2017.

b. An expression of interest was received from Mrs Bethan Smith for the vacant position of Parish Councillor. Mrs Smith advised she was employed as a Teacher at Loxley Hall School and had lived in the village for 3 years. Cllr Middleton proposed that Mrs Smith be co-opted onto the Parish Council. This was unanimously agreed by all Councillors present. The Chairman invited Mrs Smith to participate in the meeting.

49/17 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS Cllr Mrs L Smith declared an interest in item No. 53/17, Planning Applications prior to the discussion of the item. Cllr Mrs L Smith did not review the planning application or offer any comment.

50/17 MINUTES Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 July 2017 were approved and signed as a correct record. It was agreed that Appendix A would be added to the website and inserted into the Minute Book as a formal record of the public section of the meeting.

51/17 MATTERS ARISING

a. 39/17a – Cllr Middleton advised that the adhesive recommended by Wicksteed was expensive and that it was possible to get a suitable adhesive locally. Cllr Middleton agreed to visit Evode and will complete the work on the safety tiles as soon as possible, but that it will need a dry day. No objections to this were raised.

b. 39/17b – Clerk to email the contract received from BT to all Councillors so that a decision can be made regarding adoption of the phone kiosks. Clerk to contact the SPCA to enquire if any advice can be offered regarding the content of the contract, particularly in relation to seeking independent legal advice. Clerk advised that BT have not been in contact regarding the removal of the phone kiosks for some time.

Cllr Lee suggested including an article in the Paperchase – looking for volunteers to take on management of the kiosks. Clerk to progress this. Ownership will remain with the Parish Council if the decision to purchase them is made.

c. 40/17 – Developing a Community Based Approach. Chairman advised that consideration needs to be given as to how this is taken forward for Brocton. Cllr Finlay advised that he could not identify how the Parish Council will be affected by this from Stafford Borough Council. It was agreed that input is needed from Cllr Francis in order to establish how the Parish Council will be affected by this from Staffordshire County Council. Clerk to add to Agenda for next meeting.

Cllr Goff suggested that an allowance be made for this in the next budget, so that a contingency fund could be built up in readiness. Cllr Middleton supported this suggestion. All present agreed to allow for this when discussing the budget for 2018/19.

Cllr Finlay referred to the Civic Amenity Visits and advised that SBC are losing money on these, the actual cost of these visits is double what is passed onto Parish Councils. Grant from Central

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Government will cease in 2020 and SBC are one of only a small number of Borough councils that pass the concurrent grant onto Parish Councils.

d. 44/17b – Clerk advised that the Business Select Instant Access Account (Deposit Account) has now been closed and all funds transferred into the Community DirectPlus Account. The sweep charge of £30.00 was applied to the Account on 5 July 2017.

e. 46/17h – Chairman advised that the HiVis Vests have arrived.

52/17 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a. 17/26901/HOU Bracondale, Chase Road, Brocton. Extensions and alterations to existing semi-detached house.

The above application proposal was reviewed and considered. No objections or concerns were raised.

53/17 PLAYING FIELD

a. Regular Inspection Visits – The meeting received a written report of routine visits to the playing field by Mr J Sulway. No problems were identified. The Chairman thanked Mr Sulway for his time.

Chairman advised that a comment from a resident had been received regarding the contractor cutting the hedges when children are using the playing park. This matter was discussed and it was unanimously agreed that the Clerk would inform the contractor of the comments made by the resident. It was further agreed that the contractor's risk assessment should cover this, however, the Clerk will confirm and pass any comments received from the contractor onto the resident.

b. Quarterly Inspection – Chairman enquired if the area in front of the goal net should be re-seeded. It was generally considered that the ground was too hard to take seed at present and would need to be dug up. Cllr Lee enquired about artificial turf? Chairman asked if general refurbishment of goal mouth could be investigated by John Sulway and findings reported back at a future meeting.

Chairman advised that the refurbishment of table/benches, with wooden slats, will be completed over the coming months by a volunteer.

c. Picnic in the Park 2017 – Chairman asked for comments on this year's event. It was generally agreed that the turnout this year was poor, in comparison to previous years. Cllr Lee commented that he was not sure if this was as a result of the abandonment of invitations or had the event simply ran its course?

Cllr Mrs B Smith commented that the fact that the event is mid-week may affect it as not many can attend mid-week. Cllr Lee stated that Wednesday is the only day the village hall is available. There were some people driving through the village but perhaps they did not stop due to the lack of parking?

Cllr L Smith commented that the weather was good this year. Cllr Goff enquired if it was the best use of the Parish Council's funds?

Cllr Lee stated that a community event is a nice idea and that money ought to be put aside in the budget for this. All present agreed to give some thought to ideas for the event for next year.

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It was agreed by all present to donate £25.00 to the brownies as a thank you for their continued support. Clerk to action. It was also agreed by all present for the Clerk to establish, by discussion with retired Clerk, the gifts that were purchased last year for the football coaches and for the same gifts to be purchased again. Clerk to action. Costs to be refunded to Clerk via Picnic in the Park expenses at the next meeting.

54/17 PARISH COUNCILLOR VACANCY

a. Item dealt with under **No. 48/17b.**

55/17 WEBSITE

a. Cllr Lee advised that he uses Namesco to host the website – which has become somewhat cumbersome of late. The website has a lot of content and the annual audit files are big files. Internet speed within the village is a problem.

It was agreed that the Clerk would approach SCC, IT department and enquire if SCC offer any hosting support for Parish Council's. Also, Clerk to approach SPCA and enquire if they can offer any recommendations on hosting companies.

Cllr Finlay left meeting at 8.30pm.

56/17 FINANCE

a. **Accounts for Payment** - The meeting approved payment of the following accounts:

Paid to:	Details:	Net Amount	VAT	Total Paid
Gillian Davies	Salary from 1 – 31 August 2017	£246.24	Nil	£246.24
Gillian Davies	Home working allowance	£17.33	Nil	£17.33
Gillian Davies	Mileage expenses for July & August	£37.80	Nil	£37.80
Gillian Davies	Clerks expenses	£36.38	£4.33	£40.71
Three Fish Sign Company	Dog sign for playing field (previously paid chq 200781, 26.7.17)	£45.00	Nil	£45.00
Stafford Borough Council	Paperchase – issue 47 (previously paid chq 200780, 20.7.17)	£91.97	Nil	£91.97
The Best Fun Ltd	Bouncy castle – Picnic in the Park (previously paid chq 200782, 2.8.17)	£164.00	£32.80	£196.80
Trent Grounds Maintenance	Grass cutting Nos 8 & 9, Annual cut of playing field hedge	£440.50	£88.10	£528.60
Grant Thornton	External Auditors	£100.00	£20.00	£120.00
Cheshire Society of Local Council Clerks	SLCC Cheshire Branch Conference	£30.00	Nil	£30.00
Face in a Crowd	Face painting – Picnic in the Park	£70.00	£14.00	£84.00
Robin Bates	HiVis Custom Printed Vests x 12	£49.44	£9.96	£59.40

b. **2016/17 Audit** – Chairman advised that confirmation had been received from Grant Thornton that the external audit had been successfully completed.

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c. Pensions Regulator – Clerk informed all present that all responsibilities on the Parish Council had been met and formal confirmation has been received from the Pensions Regulator.

d. Training for Clerk for budget planning – Chairman advised all present that the Clerk had requested agreement to meet with a retired Clerk in preparation for the budget planning for 2018/19. The Chairman reminded the Councillors that this is the area that the Clerk has limited knowledge of and as she was not in post when last year's budget was set, she is already at a disadvantage. For the Clerk to meet the retired Clerk for training, this would incur a cost of £25.00 per hour. All present agreed to the Clerk arranging this training accordingly.

57/17 CORRESPONDENCE

a. Staffordshire Subsidised Bus Review Consultation - Cllr Mrs L Smith commented that, in her opinion, Option 4 was the best one for the village. Cllr Mrs L Smith agreed to complete the consultation form and send it onto other Councillors for consideration. Clerk to finalise and forward comments from Parish Council accordingly.

b. Battle of Britain Commemoration – 17 Sept 2017. No interest in attending this event was received.

c. Stafford Railway Building Society – Clerk advised that correspondence had been received regarding the annual budget confirmation requirement for FSCS eligibility. Following discussion with Chairman, Clerk has responded accordingly.

d. Cannock Chase AONB Annual Conference 2017 – Cllr Mrs L Smith and Cllr Lee expressed an interest in attending and will inform the Clerk accordingly. Event is being held at Brocton Golf Club on 29 September 2017.

58/17 VILLAGE MATTERS

a. Grass cutting – Pool Lane/Heather Hill – Chairman advised that he has recently cut this area. It was unanimously agreed that when the grass cutting contract is awarded next year that this area be included in the schedule.

b. Village Hall Committee – Cllr Goff advised that he has not attended a meeting of the Village Hall Committee as he did not receive an invite. Chairman agreed to follow this up.

c. Brook Lane – Cllr Middleton advised this is still ongoing and that he is still hoping to achieve a classification of BOAT.

d. Brick Kiln Lane – Cllr Middleton advised that the surface dressing has now been completed. Chairman advised that this item can now be removed from the Agenda.

e. Speed limit between Brocton & Milford – Cllr Middleton advised that he would like to formally reply to the information provided by Cllr Francis at the meeting held on 5 July 2017. Clerk to request copy of response provided at meeting on behalf of Cllr Middleton. Cllr Middleton stated that a speed limit/speed survey is required for traffic coming into and leaving the village.

f. Foot path on Sawpit Lane. Chairman advised that he has spoken to the PCSO and is awaiting their response, will chase this up. All Councillors believe that it is the minority of horse riders and it was unanimously agreed for the Clerk to contact the local resident to see if any photographic evidence can be obtained of horses using the footpath, for sharing with the PCSO.

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g. SCC Proposed changes to Cannock Chase – Cllr Goff confirmed all is in place for his attendance at the workshop on 14 September 2017. Cllr Miss Perry proposed Cllr Goff's submission to SCC be ratified, Chairman seconded this proposal. Clerk to inform SCC of final response of Brocton Parish Council, i.e. no change to draft submission sent on 14 August 2017.

h. Civic Amenity Visits – Chairman advised that an email had received from a resident challenging value of service. It was unanimously agreed that this was a valuable service supported by the Parish Council and that it is popular with the residents. However, the ongoing provision of this service will be reviewed in line with the budget for 2018/19.

i. Brocton Community Speedwatch – Clerk advised that this was now up and running again, with 4 new volunteers coming forward. Mr Mudway has advised the Clerk he, and some of the original volunteers, are still interested and will inform the new volunteers accordingly, as well as passing on the equipment to them.

j. Paperchase – a discussion took place about the future of this publication and whether a move to a colour document would be a good idea. Cllr Lee advised that it was not much more costly to produce in colour. The quality of the paper quality should be maintained. Cllr Mrs B Smith questioned the font being used, as she felt this was not dyslexia friendly. Clerk to follow up.

Items raised by Councillors

i. Cllr Mrs L Smith raised matter of overgrowing hedge at the vacant property (The Gables) on Chase Road, to enquire if anything can be done. Cllr Middleton advised that this is the responsibility of SCC and suggested the Clerk write to the Legal Department of SCC to inform them that the hedge is overhanging the highway and that it needs to be cut. Chairman suggested that the estate agents, Dourish & Day be advised, as SCC will pass the cost onto the owners.

ii. Cllr Mrs L Smith advised that the gullies and drains down Chase Road are blocked, Chairman advised Cllr Mrs L Smith to visit MyStaffs website and report this.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.20pm.