

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

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

85/17 APOLOGIES Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr J Francis and Cllr Mrs B Smith.

No contact was received from Cllr F Finlay (SBC).

Chairman and all present observed a minute's silence in memory of Mrs Joan Moore, who sadly passed away recently. Mrs Moore was previously a member of the Parish Council and was a well-respected member of Brocton community and village, who will be missed. Cllr Lee thanked the Chairman for observing the minute silence in memory of Mrs Moore.

86/17 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

The Chairman adjourned the meeting and declared the public session open. 3 members of the public were present, no matters were raised

The Chairman closed the Public session.

87/17 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS There were no declarations of interest.

88/17 MINUTES Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 November 2017 were approved and signed as a correct record.

89/17 MATTERS ARISING

a. 79/17a – Mr Sulway advised that he had removed the moss on the safety tiles from under the multi play climbing frame with a paint scraper. It was suggested that the tiles could be jet washed, Cllr Lee suggested the use of Algon, which kills off moss and algae. Cllr Middleton agreed to tackle this in the Spring with a pressure washer, when the weather will be better. Chairman referred to observations made by Clerk regarding this piece of equipment when the quarterly inspection was carried out, who had stated that the equipment was looking old and tired, however all Cllrs felt it was appropriate to clean off the moss and algae from the equipment/tiles and they would then be fine. Cllr Middleton commented that the equipment purchased was of good quality and therefore should last for quite some time.

b. 60/17a – Clerk advised that no response had been received from Steve Archer, Ranger Service regarding the speed signs for Brook Lane, despite being chased numerous times. Cllr Middleton enquired if speed was still an issue on Brook Lane and Cllr Miss Perry confirmed it was. It was agreed this matter be deferred to the next meeting and the Clerk will chase Steve Archer again for a response.

c. 64/17a – Chairman advised that the contract for the purchase of the 2 phone kiosks had been signed by BT and the removal of the telephony is pending, the Clerk will be advised by BT when the work has been completed. A resident has expressed an interest in being involved in the project to determine the use of the kiosk, following the Paperchase article, the Clerk is waiting to see if there is any further interest. This will need the support of the Cllrs also.

d. 69/17c – Clerk advised that the information has now been received from the SPCA and will, therefore, make the necessary arrangements to appoint Alan Siddons as internal auditor for the Parish Council.

e. 84/17iii – Clerk advised that no interest had been received in the Best Kept Village competition, therefore, this will not be progressed.

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90/17 PLANNING APPLICATION

a. 17/27338/LBC – Brocton Hall Golf club. Installation of handrails into existing steps of front entrance porch. The above application proposal was reviewed and considered. No objections or concerns were raised. Clerk to advise Stafford Borough Council accordingly.

91/17 PLAYING FIELD

a. Regular Inspection Visits – The meeting received a written report of routine visits to the playing field by Mr J Sulway. The Chairman thanked Mr Sulway for his time. See item under Matters Arising 89/17a.

b. Re-seeding of goal mouth – it was agreed by all that the area in front of the goal mouth in the playing field be re-turfed. The quote provided by TGM was accepted and the Clerk was requested to inform TGM to carry this out as soon as conditions allowed, before the end of March 2018. Cllr Middleton requested the Clerk inform TGM to spike the turf in order to hold it in place and the Chairman advised of the need to fence the area off to allow the turf to embed in fully.

92/17 DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH

a. The current consultation for Highways and Rights of Way – Your Choices was discussed and the Clerk will complete the electronic response accordingly based upon the discussion and responses agreed. Cllr Goff queried if Parish Councils have the same rights as SCC, to deal with Rights of Way matters? Cllr Middleton advised that SCC will be very wary what they will actually allow Parish Councils to do.

b. It was agreed to invite the Rights of Way Officer to attend a future Parish Council meeting. Clerk to arrange.

93/17 VILLAGE HALL

a. It was agreed to defer discussions on the Village Hall to a special meeting, which will be held in January 2018. Clerk to identify suitable date w/c 8.1.2018 and inform Cllrs accordingly.

94/17 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 – 30 November 2017	£246.24	Nil	£246.24
Gillian Davies	Home working allowance	£17.33	Nil	£17.33
Gillian Davies	Mileage expenses for November	£16.20	Nil	£16.20
Gillian Davies	Clerks expenses	£517.77	£103.55	£621.32
	Total payment			£901.09
Gillian Davies	Salary from 1 – 31 December 2017	£246.24	Nil	£246.24
Gillian Davies	Home working allowance	£17.33	Nil	£17.33
Gillian Davies	Mileage expenses for December	£5.40	Nil	£5.40
	Total payment			£268.97
Information Commissioner	Data Protection Registration	£35.00	Nil	£35.00
British Legion Poppy Appeal	Poppy Wreaths	£50.00	Nil	£50.00
SPCA	Local Councillor training course invoice – 14.11.17 VAT Training course invoice – 20.11.17	£40.00	Nil	£40.00

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b. Hours of duty for Clerk – Chairman proposed an increase in the hours of duty for the Clerk from 8 hours per week to 10 hours per week from 1 April 2018. This is in recognition of the fact that the Clerk has regularly been working more than the current contracted hours of 8 hours and also as the Clerk will now take on the responsibility for the website it seems reasonable and appropriate to approve an increase. Also the previous Clerk did not have the responsibility for the website, so the Clerk will be taking on new tasks as a result. Cllr Goff urged caution that the Parish Council did not want to appear solely to exist to pay the Clerk. Cllr Mrs L Smith seconded this proposal and all other Cllrs present agreed to the increase in hours, with the exception of Cllr Lee who abstained.

c. Grass cutting contract for 2018 season – Clerk confirmed the costs that had been received from TGM. There was an increase of £165.00 on last year's costs. The Chairman commented that the cost of the hedge cutting of the playing field had increased from £90.00 to £120.00, this increase was not down to TGM but the contractor they employed to carry out the hedge cutting. It was noted by all Cllrs that TGM had kept their costs unchanged for a number of years and provided a very good service to the village of Brocton. Clerk advised Cllrs that an expression of interest had been received from Perennial Landscapes. The Cllrs considered this expression of interest but concluded that they were very happy with the service provided by TGM, despite the small increase, and therefore, wished to award the contract for the 2018 season to TGM. This was agreed by all present. Clerk to inform TGM and Perennial Landscapes accordingly.

d. Budget position to date and budget for 2018/19 – see below.

e. On line banking – Clerk advised Cllrs that the Co-op Bank required another form to be signed, which was not provided originally. It was agreed that this be signed in accordance with the mandate and the Clerk will progress this as required with the Co-op Bank.

f. To consider and approve Application for Funding under Transparency Code - Clerk shared details of the Application that Cllr Mrs L Smith and the Clerk had completed, following a meeting with a representative from NALC. The Parish Council were eligible to claim for the cost of the new website; training associated with this; costs for extra hours worked by Clerk in association with this; purchase of a laptop/software as well as reimbursement for the printer purchased in November 2016. The total amount that will be claimed is £1,472.30. All Cllrs confirmed their agreement to this application being submitted. Clerk to progress accordingly.

95/17 CORRESPONDENCE

a. Letter from Parish of Berkswich – details previously shared by Clerk on 30 November 2017. Cllrs confirmed their agreement to support the request for a donation, to renovate and update the exterior notice boards of Holy Trinity Church, Baswich; St Thomas' Church, Walton on the Hill and All Saints Church, Brocton. Cllr Lee proposed a donation of £50.00, this was seconded by Cllr Mrs L Smith. Clerk to contact the Parish and clarify who to make the donation payable to and once this has been established a cheque will be issued accordingly.

b. Letter from Fundraiser at Katherine House Hospice – Chairman referred to a letter received from David Middleton – fundraiser at Katherine House Hospice. Cllr Middleton declared an interest, as this was his son, which was acknowledged. Mr Middleton wants to meet as many people in the community as possible to inform them of the work that is done at Katherine House Hospice and it was agreed, therefore, to invite him to speak at the Annual Parish Meeting to be held in April 2018. Clerk to arrange.

96/17 VILLAGE MATTERS

a. Speed limit between Brocton & Milford/Interactive speed signs – Clerk advised that Cllr Francis had met with Richard Rayson, SCC, who is looking into speed limit reductions. Clerk advised of initiative shared by Matthew Ellis, PCC, for the purchase of interactive speed signs, in partnership with Berkswich Parish Council. Cllr Lee was not sure of how useful these would be

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and felt that the best method of reducing speed was through the Community Speedwatch Group. Cllr Goff enquired if there was any funding available, Clerk advised this was unlikely, however, if both Parish's worked together the cost would be less. Cllr Middleton commented that the larger proportion of the cost should be met by Berkswich as the greater area of the Milford to Brocton Road was in the Parish of Berkswich. It was agreed to register interest, which had to be done by 15 December, and see what happens next. Clerk to action accordingly.

b. Annual Parish meeting speaker – see item 94/17b.

c. Broadband update – Chairman advised that work is progressing. Cllr Mrs L Smith commented that she believes the work should all be completed by the end of December 2017.

d. Manor Farm and Dewick site – Chairman advised that Clerk had written to both of these regarding hedge cutting debris/litter. No response has been received by either party. Chairman will re-visit sites and provide an update at a future meeting to see if any further action is required.

94/17 FINANCE cont'd

d. Budget for 2018/19 – the Clerk presented a draft budget for 2018/19 for consideration.. This was discussed and revised as follows: website costs reduced to £100.00; £50.00 allocated to bus shelters; contingency retained at £500.00 and budget line for donations removed; urban grass cutting differential agreed at £710.00. The precept request for 2018/19 was agreed at £11,000, which would mean an increase of 3.4%. It was further agreed that the budget for 2018/19 be finalised in January, at a special meeting, to be arranged. Clerk to finalise budget paper accordingly and email to all Cllrs before meeting in January.

Items raised by Councillors

i. Rights of Way Officer – Cllr Middleton will raise the matter of Brook Lane and its classification when the Officer attends a future Parish Council meeting, with the aim of getting it re-classified as a BOAT (Byeway Open to All Traffic)

ii. Chase Crescent– Chairman advised that Highways have accepted that some of the kerbstones need to be replaced, however, as this is non urgent work it will be done when other work is scheduled to take place in the area. Chairman advised that hedges are overgrown, one resident has been spoken to and the hedge has been cut on one side of the road. Chairman to speak to the other owner, on the other side of the road, and will provide an update at the next meeting.

iii. Overgrown hedge - Cllr Middleton advised that the hedge belonging to 'The Brambles' on Sawpit Lane, opposite the playing field is over hanging the kerb. Chairman advised Cllr Middleton to raise this with Highways and email the reference number to the Clerk, so this can be added to the Minutes.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.40pm.