

MINUTES of the Meeting of Brocton Parish Council held at Village Hall, Old Acre Lane, Brocton on Wednesday 1 November 2017 commencing at 7.30 pm.

Present: Cllr R Bates (Chairman), Cllrs R Middleton, L Goff, Cllr Mrs L Smith, Cllr Mrs B Smith, Miss J Perry (arrived at 8.45pm).

73/17 APOLOGIES Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr J Francis and Cllr L Lee.

74/17 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

The Chairman adjourned the meeting and declared the public session open. 4 members of the public were present. The following matter was raised:

- a. An update on Cannock Chase was requested. Cllr Goff advised that there has been no further developments since the last meeting. Staffordshire County Council has just issued the Minutes from the Workshop held on 14 September, which will be made available on the Parish Council website. There is also an update included in the Paperchase, which will be delivered within the village shortly.

Public session closed at 7.35pm.

75/17 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS There were no declarations of interest.

76/17 MINUTES Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 October 2017 were approved and signed as a correct record.

77/17 MATTERS ARISING

a. 60/17a – Clerk advised that the matter of speed signs and the broken barrier on Brook Lane had been reported to Steve Archer, Ranger Service, and was still waiting an update regarding the speed signs. Cllr Middleton confirmed that the barrier repair was now complete. No further communications had been received regarding the re-surfacing of Brook Lane by residents. Cllr Goff commented that Brook Lane is categorised as a Category A Right of Way. Cllr Mrs L Smith commented that the Parish Council may be able to challenge this classification. Cllr Middleton stated that he still believes the correct classification is a BOAT (Byeway Open to All Traffic). Cllr Middleton is still pursuing this matter with Staffordshire County Council (SCC) and recently contacted Debra Bailey and is still awaiting her response. Cllr Middleton advised of a precedent that had been set in Kinver, where SCC were involved and residents contributed to the re-surfacing costs.

b. 60/17b – Cannock Chase - it was noted that Minutes had now been issued by SCC. Matter ongoing.

c. 61/17a – Website. Clerk advised that Nigel Ferguson is working on this and has confirmed he will use information already on the current website, i.e. Minutes & documents; Cllr information; Village information; Associations & societies; Brocton Village Hall; History and Local attractions. However, will need the following: Financial documents; news items; logo/crest – which the Clerk will provide. In addition the following are required: gallery images (ones on current website are too small); a few good quality large images for the headers and some useful links. Cllr Goff agreed to provide some photographs to the Clerk and the Clerk will look into providing some links. Finally, details of the hosting login details are required and it was agreed by all that the Clerk would email Cllr Lee in relation to this and Cllr Mrs L Smith would raise it with him when she delivered the Paperchase.

d. 64/17a – Phone kiosk adoption. Chairman signed the contract and Clerk will progress adoption.

e. 69/17c – Internal audit. Clerk advised that Alan Siddons has confirmed he is willing to act as Internal Auditor for the Parish Council, however, he has not been formally appointed to this role as there is still some outstanding information required from Staffordshire Parish Council

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Association, which is being followed up. Clerk will keep the Parish Council updated accordingly at the appropriate time.

f. **72/17iii** – Chase Crescent. Chairman advised that the broken kerbs had been reported.

78/17 PLANNING APPLICATION

a. **17/27236/HOU** – 33 Pool Lane, Brocton.

Demolition of existing flat roof extension and building new single storey extension with pitched roof over garage – existing garage.

No objections or comments made, Clerk to advise Stafford Borough Council accordingly.

79/17 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. Cllr Mrs B Smith commented that the rubber matting within the playing field is very slippery from moss and is concerned that children may fall as a result. Chairman asked Mr Sulway to investigate and report back his findings to the next meeting.

b. **Re-seeding of goal mouth** – Clerk advised that TGM had been approached to provide a quote for this work, which has not been received yet. However, advice from TGM was that it was too late now for this work to be carried out and it was best left until March or April 2018. Clerk to provide details of TGM's quote at next meeting, assuming it has been received. Chairman reminded Councillors that £100 had been allocated in the current budget for this work.

c. **Horses on footpath** – Chairman advised that this matter is not within the scope of the PSCO to deal with, it has to be dealt with at Police Officer level. Chairman has established that there is no fixed penalty for this and the only way the matter can be dealt with by the Police is for the offenders to be caught with their horses on the footpath and then be taken to Court. This will not happen, as the Police do not have the resources to spare for this matter. Cllr Middleton commented that not all horse riders use the footpath and feels it unfair to apply this to all horse riders. Chairman commented that he does not believe there is much more that can be done. A discussion took place about fencing off the footpath, which was not the favoured approach, so all agreed to no further action at present.

Chairman instructed Clerk to inform [REDACTED] resident accordingly and for a further article to be inserted into the next Paperchase, as a reminder to horse riders.

d. **Picnic in the Park** – a discussion took place, alternative ideas were suggested, however, it was agreed that there appears to be a distinct lack of interest in the event and consideration was given to putting the event on hold whilst the impact upon the finances of the Parish Council are known. Cllr Middleton proposed the event be postponed for next year and all present agreed, the matter will be reviewed again in the future.

80/17 DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH

a. Clerk referred to email sent to all Councillors on 23 October 2017 and advised that SCC has launched a period of consultation, named Highways and Rights of Way – Your Choices. The consultation is live until 25 December 2017. The email also provided details of the statutory responsibilities of SCC. The Councillors confirmed their recognition that SCC does not have the finances to deal with many of the services that it used to and that things are going to change, with more responsibility falling to Parish Councils. Cllr Goff commented that if the appearance of the village is to be maintained then the Parish Council needs to decide what it is willing to take on.

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Chairman advised all Councillors to review the information provided by the Clerk, before the next meeting, so that this matter can be further discussed in December.

81/17 DELEGATED POWERS

a. This matter was discussed and it was proposed by Cllr Middleton that the Clerk be granted delegated powers in line with the Note included with the Agenda. It was agreed that the Clerk will provide details, via email, to the Councillors and all are expected to respond with their comments. Quorate requirements must be met. Clerk will then inform Stafford Borough Council accordingly. Cllr Goff seconded this proposal. All other Councillors present confirmed their agreement.

82/17 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 October 2017	£246.24	Nil	£246.24
Gillian Davies	Home working allowance	£17.33	Nil	£17.33
Gillian Davies	Mileage expenses for October	£16.20	Nil	£16.20
Gillian Davies	Clerks expenses	£15.73	£0.46	£16.19
	Total			£295.96
Trent Grounds Maintenance	Grass cutting No. 14, cut/collect grass on play field; cut/strim verge on A34; strimming at Brocton Crescent & strim bank in Pool Lane	£321.00	£64.20	£385.20
SPCA	Budget Training course invoice – 16.10.17	£35.00	Nil	£35.00
Stafford Borough Council	Civic Amenity Visits – April, June & July	£312.50	£62.50	£375.00
Stafford Borough Council	Paperchase printing, issue 48	£88.18	Nil	£88.18
BT payphones	Adoption of phone kiosks	£2.00	Nil	£2.00

b. **Budget position to date and budget for 2018/19** – Clerk presented all Councillors with a budget update for expenditure up to and including 4 October 2017; details of anticipated spend up to 31 March 2018 and proposals for discussion relating to the budget for 2018/19. This paper was discussed in detail and updated accordingly. Clerk to bring updated paper, reflecting discussions, to next meeting.

c. **On line banking** – Clerk requested approval be granted to access bank statements on line, which needs to be done in line with agreed mandate. All present confirmed their approval and paperwork was duly signed in accordance with the agreed mandate. Clerk to progress accordingly.

d. **Printing charges** – Clerk advised that the period of free printing has now expired and from 20 October 2017 a monthly charge of £7.99 will be made for 300 printed pages. Clerk will pay this from her bank account and be reimbursed by the Parish Council. This was noted accordingly.

83/17 CORRESPONDENCE

a. **Parish Council Survey** – details previously shared by Clerk on 11 October 2017. Survey discussed and finalised for Clerk to send off.

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84/17 VILLAGE MATTERS

a. Speed limit between Brocton & Milford – Cllr Middleton advised he wishes to follow the matter up with Cllr Francis, so matter to be retained as an ongoing Agenda item. Clerk to remind Cllr Francis accordingly of the information required by Cllr Middleton. Cllr Middleton shared details of the requirements needed to apply for a Road Safety Grant Fund and felt these were disproportionate to the amount of funding available, he advised he would not be completing the application, at this stage, but would review in near the future. The Community Speedwatch is now up and running again, let's wait to see what impact this has on speeding through the village.

Cllr Miss Perry arrived at 8.45pm.

b. Contractors hedge cutting – Chairman advised that the landowner has been written to and the debris left by the contractor had been cleared.

Items raised by Councillors

i. Laptop - Chairman advised that laptop used by Clerk is due for replacement and was seeking approval to purchase a new laptop for the Clerk, Nigel Ferguson has provided information on the specification required and advised that a spend of £400 would seem appropriate. All present agreed to the purchase of a new laptop and agreed to an amount of £500. Cllr Mrs B Smith suggested the Clerk contact Stone Computers, who offer very good deals on refurbished laptops. Clerk to contact them to establish what they have available and discuss further with the Chairman.

ii. Best Kept Village competition – Cllr Middleton suggested that Brocton does not enter this, whilst it would be lovely if there was interest in this, he doubts there would be and the deer in the village have always been an issue. Cllr Mrs L Smith suggested waiting to see if there is any interest from the residents, following the delivery of the Paperchase and consider it then, if there is.

Village Hall representatives – Martin Green, secretary to Brocton Village Hall, was present at the meeting, along with Chris Allan, Vice Chairman of the Village Hall. Martin was attending in response to the letter sent by the Clerk, at the request of the Councillors, suggesting that a Parish Councillor attends the meeting of the Village Hall Committee on a quarterly basis. Martin advised he wished to update the Parish Council of their responsibilities in relation to the Village Hall, as he believes there is a lack of appropriate knowledge. The Parish Council is a Representative Member of the Committee of Management of the Village Hall. When the Committee of Management was first established in 1973, (prior to which it was known as the Brocton Village Institute; was founded by a Conveyance and regulated by a Declaration of Trust dated 31.12.1953) there were a total of 6 Elected Members; 8 Representative Members and 2 Co-opted Members. Over time the number of Representative Members has reduced to just 3 – Brocton Parish Council; Brocton Pre-school Group and the WI Group, with the main Representative Member being the Parish Council. The financial position of the Village Hall is very poor and if it fails it will become the responsibility of the Parish Council. Martin provided details of the Constitution, as amended on 9 February 1973, which was created in line with the Charity Commission under Section 18 of the Charities Act, 1960. A copy of this document is attached as Appendix A to the Minutes.

The land upon which the Village Hall is sited is held in Trust for the Village.

It was acknowledged by all Councillors present that the Parish Council needs to fully understand its responsibilities to the Village Hall. The use of the Village Hall needs to be promoted and it was agreed that the Clerk would draft an article for inclusion in the next edition of the Paperchase. This would be an Agenda item for the next meeting.

Minutes of Special Meeting held on 9 August 2017

Cllr Goff proposed the Minutes were approved as a correct record, this was seconded by Cllr Miss Perry. The Minutes were signed by the Chairman.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.35pm.