

Hammerwich Parish Council Minutes

17 April 2024

Date: 17th April 2024 (Wednesday)

Time: 7:00pm

Venue: WI Hall, Hammerwich

In attendance:

Councillors Greenway (Chair), King (Vice-chair), Grundy, Mears, Preece, Taylor, Smith, Ubhie, Wasdell, Thomas

Also in attendance:

Councillor David Smith from Staffordshire County Council (SCC)

Councillor Janice Silvester-Hall from Lichfield District Council (LDC)

2 Representatives from Staffordshire Parish Council Association (SPCA)

9 Members of the Public (among which 1 co-option applicant)

Clerk:

Vivien Wang

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Leung of LDC.

Noted and accepted.

2. Declarations of Interest

Chair and Cllr Wasdell declared an interest relating to the grant application from Gardening Guild.

Cllr Mears declared an interest relating to planning application 24/00387/FUL.

Cllr Ubhie declared an interest that he is the owner of the property that affected by the flooding on Ashmall/Meerash Lane.

Cllr Grundy declared an interest relating to LDC, husband's business asked to do work on behalf of the Council.

Noted

3. Approval of the minutes of 20 March 2024

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 20 March 2024 was approved.

4. Matters Arising

Nil.

Noted

5. To fill vacancies on the Council by co-option

The Council voted unanimously to co-opt Mr. Steven Thomas as Councillor to represent Triangle ward. Cllr Thomas moved to Councillors' seats and participated in meeting discussion after accepting the office.

Noted

6. Chairman's Announcements

Chair reported that she has attended a very informative meeting at the Staffordshire Playing Field Association.

Noted

7. County/District/Police Reports

Councillor D Smith (SCC)

The County Report was moved to before Item #5 as Cllr D Smith will leave early due to other meeting commitments.

- Cllr Smith reported that SCC Highways objects to the planning application 24/00359/COU due to the foreseeable overflow of traffic to Barracks Lane. Highways is proposing a traffic light to be installed.
- Regarding the enquiry from resident on Hall Lane, Cllr Smith has asked the resident to contact him instead of the SCC Cabinet Member. He said the issue on Hall Lane should not be confused with the issue on Meerash Lane. He also requested Cllr Taylor to walk away from this issue to avoid confusing the matter.

(Cllr D Smith left the meeting at 7.13pm)

Councillor J Silvester-Hall (LDC)

Cllr J Silvester-Hall provided updates on the progress of obtaining Public Space Protection Order for Burntwood Bypass and the liaison with Network Rail on Leisure Greenway. She also updated that the request to display the HM The King's portrait at WI Hall has been passed on.

She has also spoken to Network Rail regarding installing a depth gauge at the bridge on Hall Lane and was told that it is a Highways matter. **Chair has requested the communication to be forwarded on for HPC to further work with SCC.**

Cllr King has asked for opinion from Cllr Silvester-Hall whether he should attend the call-in meeting for the industrial development at Walsall Council. Cllr Silvester-Hall supported HPC to attend.

(Cllr J Silvester-Hall left the meeting at 7.29pm)

Noted.

8. Planning Applications

The Council has no objection on the following planning applications:

- 24/00323/FUH – 10 Blackthorne Avenue
- 24/00387/FUL – Warren House, Veterinary Centre, Lichfield Road
- 24/00415/FUH – 8 Lawnswood Avenue
- 24/00420/FUH – 98 Hospital Road
- 24/00422/COU – Ashmoor House, Hall Lane

24/00313/FUH – 152 Overton Lane: The Council is concerned about the impact of development to the drainage/sewage. The Clerk to request detailed information on the sewage and ask for extension of deadline.

24/00359/COU & 24/00360/ADV – Former Arnold Clark Automobiles Ltd, Walsall Road: **The Council is highly concerned about the negative impacts on local traffic and road safety that this application will bring, especially to Barracks Lane. The Council has agreed to request call-in for this case.**

Two members of the public from Barracks Lane were present and Standing Order was removed to allow them to speak regarding this application.

The 2 residents from Barracks Lane spoke at the meeting to share their opposition to this application. They said accidents happened on Barracks Lane at least once a month while lots of them were not reported, so the data on file is not reflecting the true situation. In their opinion Barracks Lane is such a narrow road that residents are already struggling to pull-out from their driveways, it cannot take in more traffic from the development.

It was said that the National Highways has “no objection” to this application. The residents said that was because Barracks Lane was not regarded as a “Highway”, for it is not even a B or C road.

24/00368/FUL – (Section 73) – High Ash Grange, Meerash Lane: This is an application to remove the restrictions from a planning application formerly granted in October

2023. Applicants of this case were present and Standing Order was removed to allow them to speak for this application.

The applicant said the description of this case was misleading as they are just applying to remove some restrictions not all. He said the operation has been in situ for 15 years without restrictions while two professional noise surveys have been done to prove the noise level is within national guidelines. He explained that they have a contract with DEFRA to offer instant response to avian flu, therefore an all-time access to the site is essential. In response to Cllr J Smith's question, the applicant confirmed that the number of vehicles operating on-site will remain the same even if the restrictions were lifted.

Cllr Mears expressed her view that the Council should not allow removal until the restrictions were in effect for 12 months.

Cllr Wasdell proposed to have a named vote for this application:

- Support: Cllr Preece, Thomas, Smith, Ubhie, King, Grundy, Greenway
- Against: -
- Abstain: Cllr Wasdell, Taylor, Mears

The Council resolved to support planning application 24/00368/FUL – (Section 73).

Noted

9. Speedwatch

30mph repeater at Hospital Road: No reply from SCC Highways so far. Cllr Taylor will check with Safety Road Partnership on whether the contact personnel is still in position.

SID damage: Still waiting for the contractor to install for HPC for free. **The Council agreed to ask LDC to install if still no update by next Council meeting.**

Noted

10. Highways and Footpaths

Depth gauge at the bridge on Hall Lane: Further to the update from Cllr Silvester-Hall in agenda #7, the Council will contact SCC on the installation instead of Network Rail.

Meerash Lane Flooding: Dye test has been done by STW. Cllr Taylor will request report to be sent to Chair.

Councillors are concerned about flooding that caused by various blocked drains within the parish. **Chair agreed to raise the issue to SCC, and the Council would hire private service if the action from SCC is years away.**

Cllr Mears proposed including drain clearance in Precept planning and to be included in ground maintenance services. This idea is supported by the Council.

Noted

11. Parks and Open Spaces

Oakfield Park new equipment

Cllr Taylor reported that on-site meeting was held with the involvement from LDC (Gary Brownbridge), play equipment supplier, Cllr King and herself. LDC has suggested the ideas of football pitch and open hut in the parks.

The supplier has quoted £84,000 for a range of equipment. Cllr Taylor said funding options need to be explored, while the Council has confirmed only grant options will be considered (no loans).

Chair shared that the Council had conducted a survey in year 2022 for resident feedback on gym equipment in the park. 41 responses received (out of 330 sent) with 27 support, 11 against and 3 abstain. The response rate was low, and no comment has been received from the main business (G. E. Collis & Sons) who sited adjacent to the Oakfield Park.

Standing Order was then removed to allow input from Mr. Victor Kelly, the representative from SPCA. He suggested HPC to explore UK Share Prosperity Fund which supports projects on health & wellbeing, and parks & open spaces. He also recommended HPC to approach Staffordshire FA for support on football pitch creation.

Disclaimer to footpath near Ridgeway School: No update so far. Cllr Mears offered to help. Chair thanks her and said will contact her if help is needed.

Noted

12. Moving Council related emails and website to Gov.uk domain and website update

For enhanced security and professionalism, Councillors agreed a dedicated Gov.uk e-mail address to individual members are preferred. The Council was presented with 3 quotations from Cabinet Office approved registrars.

The Council resolved unanimously to: i) move Council e-mails and website to Gov.uk domain, which include migrating Clerk's current email account and creating individual e-mail accounts for all Councillors; and ii) have new website design in Gov.uk standards. The Council approved the cost of £200.00 per year for this project to be handled by Parish Online.

Noted

13. Update on churchyard transfer

The representatives from St. John The Baptist Church, Hammerwich were present and Standing Order was removed to allow them to speak to the Council for this matter.

Mr. Kelly from SPCA advised that the church is responsible to do the health & safety assessment of the churchyard. The representative from Church said they rate the condition of churchyard as "fair state", while Cllr Taylor disagreed and commented it should be rated as "poor".

The representative advised that an inspection report is expected to reach PCC on 21 April, then **PCC will submit the application form to HPC at the May meeting.**

Noted.

14. Neighbourhood Plan update

The Council to review HPC Neighbourhood Plan after LDC has finalized its Lichfield District 2050 Strategy.

Noted

15. Grant application from Hammerwich Gardening Guild

Hammerwich Gardening Guild has applied for £200.00 grant to support their speaker fee of the year. The Council has voted and approved unanimously to support £200.00 grant for the organization has been offering fun activities to the community.

Noted

16. Best Kept Village Competition (BKVC)

Cllr Taylor said she has volunteered to be the judge of BKVC this year and she will bring the experience to aid the parish to prepare for the competition next year.

Cllr Taylor and Grundy will work out a proposal and present to the Council at the May meeting together with a list of expected community involvements. Cllr Mears suggested all councillors to share useful ideas or contacts to Cllr Taylor/Grundy.

Cllr Taylor advised that the Head Judge from BKVC would like to speak to HPC at the October meeting.

Noted.

17. Correspondence Report

The Clerk had reported on correspondences received and sent since the last meeting:

- Request received from a resident to install a gate near Pavior’s Road (footpath #14) due to presence of offroad motorcycles. **Cllr Taylor will contact PCSO for follow-up.**
- VAT reclaim for Nov 2023 to Mar 2024 submitted.
- AGAR documents received from Mazars (external auditor).
- HM The Kings Portrait ordered and will be delivered to Chair’s address.
- LDC advised there will be £0.00 CIL Levy for HPC between October-March 2023/24.
- Advertisements is up on website to recruit volunteers for Speedwatch. **Chair suggested to advertise in Smart Alert. She will share contact.**
- Enquiry sent to Brooklyn Farm following resident’s feedback on the overgrown of hedges surrounding the Farm on Highfields Road and Wharf Lane.
- Information about Priority Services Register for National Grid Electricity Distribution posted on HPC website.
- Enquiry about the maintenance of brick wall near 48 Warren Road was received again after a previous discussion in June 2020. The Council regards the wall as the boundary of the property while the resident presented part of the deed which didn’t specify the wall ownership. **The Clerk to seek advice from LDC regarding this matter.**

Noted

18. Accounts for payment

The statements for the Business Current Account and Savings Account as at 31/03/2024 were £19,901.55 and £8,470.31 respectively.

Councillors are asked to approve the following accounts for payment:

	Cost	VAT	Invoice No	BACS Ref# / Cheque Number
Clerks Wages – April & February overtime	£867.31	-	-	BACS # 319684533
WCAVA – payroll yearend fee 2023-24	£3.30	£0.55	4567	BACS # 41891112
Hammerwich WI Hall - venue hire for March	£38.50	-	423	BACS # 62628920
Chasewater Friends – 2024/25 subscription	£25.00	-	-	BACS #726724025
Bank Service Charges - January to March 2024	£18.00	-	-	Direct Debit on 31 March 2024
Royal British Legion – donation for D-Day 80	£30.00	-	-	Cheque #300002

Cllr D King – U-Bolt for fingerposts	£19.98	-	-	BACS #233306340
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The Parish Council are asked to note the following income:

Source	Amount	Reference
Interest	£57.68	Bank interest January to March 2024
Precept 2024/25	£30,500.00	Precept from LDC received on 17 th April 2024

The accounts for payment were approved.

The latest bank reconciliation (31 March 2024) had been presented to the full council and was approved.

A detailed budget monitor file has been shared by the Clerk.

Noted

19. Public Participation

A member of the public is concerned that the drive-thru restaurant in planning application 24/00359/COU may bring litter problem to nearby area.

A local business owner is present and expressed his interest to offer help in the BKVC. The Council is delighted about this community involvement and thanked him for the support. The Council will connect with him after meeting.

A member of the public shared her concern about the overgrown in footpath #16.

Cllr Taylor asked the representative from SPCA whether there is an issue for posting a draft minutes on website. Mr. Kelly said it OK if it is clearly marked as draft. He further said that any amendments made to an approved minutes should be fully redacted before post on website to replace the draft version.

Noted

20. Items for consideration at future meetings

Nil.

Meeting closed at 9.25pm