Minutes of a Meeting of Prees Parish Council held on Monday 18th December 2023

 at 7.15 pm in Prees Village Hall

Present were Cllrs Mrs S Short; Mrs B Finch; Mrs J Catterall; Mrs L Baer; R Hirons; M Lanham; J Allen and P Wynn. Mrs K Sieloff, clerk to the PC, was also present. There were no members of the public attending.

**174/23** **Public Session.** There were no contributions from members of the public.

**175/23 Apologies.** Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs S Jones; Mrs R Clutton; J Whelan and D Ladd.

**176/23** **For Members to disclose Pecuniary/Non-Pecuniary interests** in items on this agenda.

There were none.

**177/23** The **Minutes** of the Parish Council Meeting held on November 2023 (previously circulated) were agreed to be a true record. It was proposed by Cllr R Hirons that these should be signed and this was seconded by Cllr J Allen. All were in agreement.

**178/23** **Actions arising from the Minutes.** Nothing not included on the Agenda.

**179/23** **Community Policing Report.**  Cllr Mrs S Short read out the report supplied by local Police. It was noted that the level of detail included in the report had increased, for which the PC was grateful, but it wondered if communication channels could be further improved to ensure that the PC could be more proactive in protecting parishioners from harm. Cllr Mrs Short said that she was scheduled to meet with PCSO David Andrews in January, and would discuss this matter with him.

It was noted that many older people do not access the internet for local information but rely on other communication channels.

**180/23 Shropshire Council Report.** Cllr Wynn’s report made the following points**.**

* There has been a spate of farm burglaries in the wider local area
* Shropshire Council had to make savings of £54.1m for the new financial year (2024-5.) It has so far managed to make cuts of £40m. The Social Services spend increases by 10% every year.
* Cllr Wynn has been told of cemeteries locally that have been very successfully ‘re-used’ once full.
* The parking situation at Prees School remains unresolved with the proposed closing-up of the triangle by the War Memorial lacking support.
* The parking situation at Lower Heath School appears a bit more hopeful. There is to be another meeting of involved parties in January.
* The Shrewsbury North-West Relief Road scheme ,which will connect Churncote roundabout on the A5 with Battlefield on the A49, has been approved subject to conditions. It will cost £140m.

**181/23 Planning matters**

**23/04977/FUL**: Proposed pitched roof to rear, increase rear dormer, internal alterations.

Heathfields , 99 Twemlows Avenue, Higher Heath, Whitchurch, Shropshire. APPLICANT: Mr and Mrs Adam and Michelle Galluzzo.

The Parish Council resolved to support this application. Proposed by Cllr R Hirons and seconded by Cllr J Allen. All were in favour..

**23/05166/FUL**: Erection of agricultural building for calf housing. Wood Farm, Armoury Lane, Prees, Whitchurch, Shropshire. APPLICANT: Mr And Mrs D And S Cope.

The Parish Council resolved to support this application. Proposed by Cllr Mrs B Finch and seconded by Cllr Mrs L Baer. All were in favour.

**Planning decisions received from Shropshire Council:**

23/04384/FUL: Stone For Less Ltd, Church Farm, Fauls, Whitchurch, Shropshire.
Proposal:  Change of use of farmstead to storage and distribution (B8 use) of garden paving slabs (extension of a further 5-year temporary period.) Decision: Grant Permission.

23/04441/FUL: Former Anvil Cafe, Sandford, Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 2HY
Proposal:  Proposed Redevelopment of Site of Former Transport Cafe to provide new cafe and facilities building with associated landscape works, trailer and car parking and servicing areas. Decision:  Refuse
23/03238/FUL: The Beeches, Lower Heath, Prees, Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 2BT
Proposal: Proposed Demolition of Existing Conservatory, Proposed Single storey side and rear extensions to include balcony with glass balustrade. Decision:  Grant Permission

23/04703/VAR; Miami Cottage, Weston Under Redcastle, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY4 5LR
Proposal:  Variation of condition 2 (approved drawings) attached to planning permission ref 11/03321/FUL to increase the approved garage size. Decision:  Refuse

**182/23 Parish and Parish Council Matters**

**Parish Cllr vacancy.**

The meeting was reminded that the closing date for applications was 7 January 2024 with applicants to attend the meeting on 15th January with the intention of co-opting then.

**Parking at local Primary Schools**.

Prees: Cllr Mrs Short advised that she is to meet with PCSO David Andrews in the early part of January to discuss his ideas. Cllr Mrs Short also hopes to meet with the Headteacher at Prees in the New Year.

Lower Heath: Cllr Wynn and Cllr Mrs Short met with the Operations Director and the Facilities Manager from the Academy and had a fruitful meeting. Andrew Grocott is offering a piece of land at a peppercorn rent for parking for hopefully 40 cars and allowing pedestrian access to the School without the need to use the B5065. Mr Grocott has also some help with the necessary surfacing. The School will put up limited fencing. The project is expected to cost in the region of £25,000 but will have the added benefit of making the B5065 itself safer. The Parish Council will be approached for a donation.

Cllr Wynn advised that this scheme had all been mooted about 6 years ago, but now looked as though it could come to fruition. The proposal will be put to Shropshire Council early 2024.

**Lengthsman.**

Cllr Mrs Short reported that since starting on 7 November 2023 the Pimlott team, attending fortnightly, have been concentrating on clearing rubbish and green waste, and cleaning signs. They have been at work in Church Street; roads surrounding Higher Heath Village Hall; Shrewsbury Street and Whitchurch Road.

Manor Place from the playing-field to the bus-stop and beyond is to be tackled next and Fauls will have attention too, as well as the area surrounding the Brades Road playground (encompassing the housing development.) Rubbish and waste generated will be taken to the Whitchurch recycling centre.

The PC agreed that the flower bed at Wrafton Terrace is looking a mess and needs sorting. The clerk advised that the current grounds maintenance team are only contracted to prune the shrubs once a year. This used to happen in January each year. Clerk to check when it was last done.

**Community-Led Build, Whitchurch Road.**

Cllr R Hirons read out a report from a Teams meeting of the Project board held 12.12.23.

Scottish Power had unexpectedly insisted on the creation of a new sub-station to supply the site which had led to a delay while all the necessary agreements were sorted. (This could mean a delay of 12 weeks before work restarts.) It is hoped that the build will be completed in June 2024, but worst case scenario could be August 2024. Currently all new homes were water-tight and plastered and over half have bathrooms and kitchens installed. External progress has come on well with paths, patios and kerbs constructed. The site is being kept secure, with a human presence during the day and security cameras at night.

**Playground Enhancement plans**.

Cllr Hirons reported that he and the clerk had met with a representative from Playscape Playgrounds at HH playground to consider the placing of an aerial runway at the front of the playing field, parallel to the hedge. She recommended a 25-30m runway in the space. She is coming back on 8 January with her recommendation. Rough estimate of completed cost to be c £25,000.

Other quotes received range from £11,250 to £13,700 ex VAT.

At Prees one quote for the removal of the mound has been received £2320.00 ex VAT. The dead trees are removed and the hedges cut back.

Clerk was advised to approach A R Richards at Ternhill to see if they would be interested in quoting for the removal of the mound at the playground.

**Grants/Donations**.

* Cllr Mrs Short advised that the Prees Baptist Church has been asked to provide a quote for the works proposed to improve the church’s kitchen.
* Cllr Mrs Short has been told definitively that the Grocott Foundation is prepared to make a contribution only to the ‘Daily Mile’ surfaced track that Prees Primary School hopes to install.

Cllr Mrs Short asked the other cllrs whether they thought this venture would be a suitable recipient of a donation from the PC. In discussion, questions came up, such as

1. Is it Glebe land that the school is proposing to use? If so, does the Diocese approve?
2. Does the venture represent value for money?
3. Will it benefit the wider community or just the school-children?
4. Could the Marches Academy not fund the project out of its surplus?
* Lower Heath trip expenses. The PC had been reluctant to donate money for this purpose on the basis that not all pupils at LH school live within the parish. Cllr Mrs Short has discovered that 60% of the pupils at Lower Heath School do live within the parish. (At Prees School, the number is 75%.)
* Prees Scouts Group have applied for a donation of £342.32 so that they can buy equipment to teach the Scouts to cook in the Village Hall. This matter will be on the January Agenda.

**Future Broadband provision in North Shropshire**

Helen Morgan MP is encouraging parishioners to support Freedom Fibre who are building a fast full-fibre network across North Shropshire, to replace the copper network. They have won a government-funded Project Gigabit contract to provide a subsidised network for 12,000 hard to reach homes and Freedom Fibre will connect to a further 60,000 premises across North Shropshire. Parish Councils will be kept abreast of the work as it is rolled out.

**Parish map**

It was confirmed for the clerk that what is required is a definitive map from SC showing all the footpaths etc. To be displayed on the front of the Village Hall in a frame made of durable man-made materials.

**Streetlamps**

* Cllr Mrs Short confirmed that Highline are making progress with the conversion of the PC’s streetlamp stock to LED. The project is hoped to be concluded in February 2024.
* Cllr Mrs Short and the clerk had met with Jason Hughes from the Streetlighting dept at SC. He had advised that to maximise safety for pedestrians along Station Road, three new streetlamp installations were required on the lefthand side between the end of the pavement and the first inroad into the development. The cost of these would be approximately £9,000. He also recommended having the big hedge cut back to increase visibility and the addition of a wide painted white strip on the road to encourage vehicles to give pedestrians a wide berth. He suggested that SC could undertake and complete this work within 3-6 months.

He added that a more complete but expensive and complicated remedy for the situation would be to additionally build a narrow raised pavement along this area of Station Road, to provide a refuge for pedestrians. The cost of this was anticipated to be in the region of £30,000.

After discussion the PC resolved to pursue the purchase of three streetlamps and the installation of the protective painted white line: clerk to contact Shropshire Council to ask for a quote and proposed time-line for the work.

This was proposed by Cllr M Lanham and seconded by Cllr Mrs B Finch. All were in favour.

The clerk was also asked to obtain detailed costs of the possible installation of the raised narrow pavement.

* Cllr Mrs Short had ascertained from Highline that solar-powered lighting was suitable for additional, supplementary lighting, but not for streetlamps. She will meet with Highline in the New Year to discuss the matter and bring the information to the PC as it is agreed that there are several sites in the Parish that would benefit from some supplementary lighting.

**Potential installation of vehicle speed monitor in Lacon Street**

Cllrs Mrs Short and D Ladd had met to consider the best position for the proposed monitor on Lacon Street. A new post to hold it is required. The positioning of it has to be approved by SC Highways, but after that to speed the whole process the Parish Council can buy the pole and pay for its installation.

The clerk was asked to find the costs of this and also to ask Jason Hughes of SC if he is able to attend to approve the site for the monitor.

**Housekeeping matters to report.**

Chairmanship Board. The clerk was asked to have the chairmanship board in the Village Hall updated by the gentleman who did this work before. This is expected to cost only a nominal amount. Proposed by Cllr R Hirons and seconded by Cllr Mrs S Short. All were in favour.

**Any potential hazards/risks to report?**

Cllr J Allen reported a blocked culvert in Mickley Lane outside ‘Woodfield’. Clerk to report to SC.

**Facebook:** nothing to report currently.

**183/23 SALC.** Nothing to report.

**184/23** **Accounting Matters**

* Accounts for Payment December 2023. It was proposed by Cllr Mrs B Finch that the following accounts should be paid and this was seconded by Cllr Mrs J Catterall.

**Accounts for Payment December 2023**

 £

K D Sieloff salary December 514.94

HMRC (PAYE) 21.80

K D Sieloff (expenditure15.11.23-12.12.23) 17.60

Groundforce Landscape Ltd (works November 2023) 264.22

Scottish Power (streetlight energy 1.11.23- 1.12.23) 396.61

Prees Village Hall Trust 5800.00

Prees Cricket and Recreation Club (for Prees Bowls Club) 300.00

Prees Junior Football Club 500.00

Nathan Roberts Tree Surgery & Landscaping 600.00

 **8415.17**

 Over-looked invoice to be added (clerk’s apologies)

Pimlotts Ground Maintenance Ltd (works November 2023) 320.00

 Grand total **8735.17**

Clerk’s expenditure 11.10.23-14.11.23

*BT line rental contribution December 2023: £ 12.50*

*Petrol:1 x trip to noticeboards (Co-option/ Vacancy) 8 miles @ 45p per mile =£3.60*

*Stamps: 2 x second class stamps @ 75p = £1.50 Total=£17.60.*

* Setting the Precept for 2024-5. All cllrs had previously received copies of the proposed operational Budget. Cllr Mrs Short explained that the no of households in Band D in the Parish has increased from 1176.75 (2023/24) to 1205.58 (2024/25.) It is this number that is used to calculate individual household’s contribution to the Precept. All members of the Parish Council agreed that it is difficult to forecast future spending, especially currently. Cllr Mrs Short reminded the cllrs that the PC’s policy had historically been to approve small percentage rises each year. Last year it had been 3%, and Cllr Mrs Short asked the PC to consider the same increase this year. After discussion, it was resolved that the Precept charge per household should be increased by 3% for the year 2024/25 with the shortfall in proposed operational expenditure to be met from Reserves. Proposed by Cllr M Lanham and seconded by Cllr J Allen. All were in favour. Cllr R Hirons thanked the Finance Committee for all their work on this matter.
* Clerk sought authorisation to implement annual JMC pay-scale award for clerks 2023-4, announced November, to be back-dated to April 1 2023. It was resolved to authorise this. Proposed by Cllr R Hirons and seconded by Cllr J Allen. All were in favour.

13 **Correspondence**. Letters of thanks for donations had been received from Prees Bowls Club and Prees Parochial Church Council.

14 **Items for next Agenda**.Prees Scout Group donation application.

15. **Close.**

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