Minutes of a Meeting of Prees Parish Council held on Monday 20th November 2023

at 7.15 pm in Prees Village Hall

Present were Cllrs Mrs S Short; Mrs B Finch; Mrs J Catterall; Mrs S Jones; R Hirons; M Lanham; J Allen and D Ladd. There was one member of the public attending and also Mrs K Sieloff, clerk to the PC.

**162/23** **Public Session.** There were no contributions from members of the public.

**163/23 Apologies.** Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs L Baer; Mrs R Clutton; J Whelan and P Wynn.

**164/23** **For Members to disclose Pecuniary/Non-Pecuniary interests** in items on this agenda.

There were none.

**165/23** The **Minutes** of the Parish Council Meeting held on October 16 2023 (previously circulated) were agreed to be a true record. It was proposed by Cllr Mrs B Finch that these should be signed and this was seconded by Cllr Mrs J Catterall. All were in agreement.

**166/23** **Actions arising from the Minutes.** Nothing not included on the Agenda.

**167/23** **Community Policing Report.**  There was no Police report available. Cllr J Allen reported that there had been shoplifting activity at Holly Farm garden centre which he had reported to the Police.

**168/23** Shropshire Council report. Cllr P Wynn had emailed a report making the following points:

* Shropshire Council currently has garnered £30m of the £52m it needs.
* Cllr Wynn has heard from a stone-mason friend that old grave-yards can sometimes be re-used after removal of head-stones.
* He has discussed the matter of Heathgates Crossroads with an officer at SC who is of the opinion that they are not too much of a hazard. Cllr Wynn will pass on reports and any photos of accidents that the PC can provide to him.
* There is to be a meeting on Friday at Lower Heath School to re-open discussion about Grocott land being offered for a car park

**169/23 Planning Matters**

**Current planning applications for consultation**

**23/04656/VAR**: Variation of Condition No. 1 attached to planning permission 15/05307/REM dated 06 January 2017 (plots 45 - 60 inclusive) Former Grocontinental / Skylarks, Heathwood Road, Higher Heath, Whitchurch, Shropshire. Applicant: Grocott Developments (Higher Heath) Limited

The Parish Council noted the application but had no further comment to offer, on the assumption that SC planners would deal with the matter appropriately.

**23/04441/FUL**: 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. Former Anvil Cafe, Sandford, Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 2HY. Applicant: Mr Paul Archer.

Concerns were expressed by cllrs concerning the scale of the proposed operation and the consequent noise (including that from refrigeration units) and lighting, and the view that there was insufficient screening proposed. There was also concern about the lack of information about where the servicing area was to be and its proposed hours of operation.

The PC resolved to object to the application. This was proposed by Cllr R Hirons and seconded by Cllr Mrs S Jones. All were in favour.

**23/04703/VAR**: Variation of condition no. 2 (approved drawings) attached to planning permission ref 11/03321/FUL Date of Decision: 22/12/2028 to increase the approved garage size. Miami Cottage, Weston Under Redcastle, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY4 5LR. Applicant: MR W Tudor.

It was resolved to support this application. This was proposed by Cllr R Hirons and seconded by Cllr M Lanham. Five were in favour and three abstained.

**23/04624/FUL**: Erection of a building for private horse-riding practice and associated works, to include change of use of land. (Resubmission of Application Ref: 23/00910/FUL.) Land To The South Of, Nook Lane, Weston Under Redcastle, Shropshire. Applicant: Mr P Sutton.

**23/04384/FUL**: Change of use of farmstead to storage and distribution (B8 use) of garden paving slabs, (Extension of a further 5-year temporary period.) Storage Land and Premises at Church Farm, Fauls, Whitchurch, Shropshire. Applicant: Mrs J List (Church Farm, Fauls , Whitchurch , SY13 2AU)  
It was resolved to support this application. Proposed by Cllr R Hirons and seconded by Cllr Mrs B Finch. All were in favour.  
FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

**23/04589/AGR**: Erection of replacement general purpose agricultural building. Broadhay, Broadhay Lane, Lower Heath, Prees, Whitchurch. Applicant: Mr & Mrs E Appleby.

The Parish Council noted this application.  
**Planning decisions received from Shropshire Council:**

**23/03096/FUL**: Park Coppice Farm, Lower Heath, Prees, Whitchurch, Shropshire, SY13 2BQ  
Proposal:  Two storey extension adjoining the side and front elevations and a single storey entrance hall to the rear elevation (description amended.) Decision:  Grant Permission  
**23/03606/COU:** 24 Whitchurch Road, Prees, Shropshire SY13 2DG.Application under Section 73a of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 for change of use of land to residential curtilage. Decision: Grant permission.  
**Other planning matters**

Previous Industrial Estate planning applications. Further information from clerk.

The clerk reminded the meeting that another body had expressed interest in building Affordable houses on the site at the front of the industrial estate but it was yet to be seen whether there would be further need once the houses on the new Whitchurch Road development had been allocated.

**170/23 Parish and Parish Council Matters**

* The PC had been disappointed to receive the resignation of Cllr Mrs Barbara Rainford, whilst understanding her reasons for standing down. All agreed that she would be much missed for her kindness, knowledge and experience.

The period in which members of the parish could call an election to fill the vacancy would finish on 24 November, and after that the PC would be required to co-opt a new member as soon as reasonably possible.

* Hazardous traffic situations around our local Primary Schools: update from Cllrs Mrs S Short and D Ladd.

With regard to Lower Heath School, Cllr Mrs Short reported that she is to have a meeting with the Operations Director and the Facilities Manager from the Academy to reconsider the offer of car-parking space at the edge of Andrew Grocott’s field for a peppercorn rent.

Concerning Prees School, Cllr Mrs Short and Cllr D Ladd said they would be meeting with one of the local PCSOs who was offering an idea for the solution of the problem of parking around the War Memorial. Cllr Mrs Short thought it was likely that she would be in communication with the Headteacher Mrs Brayford again.

The clerk was asked whether she could find out if the Minutes of meetings of the School’s Board of Trustees were in the public domain.

* Lengthsman. Cllr Mrs S Short reported that the Lengthsman had tidied up Church Street, in preparation for the Remembrance Day services at the War Memorial, the Tuesday before, and the following day would be operating in Higher Heath.
* Community-Led Build, Whitchurch Road. Report from Meeting held 14.11.23. It was reported that the completion of the homes will now be June 2024 rather than February 2024 as hoped. The delay is largely due to Scottish Power’s unexpected requirement for a new sub-station. This will have cost implications which will be met by Wrekin Housing Trust. There is also a requirement for new sewers to be installed in the access road.

There have also been alterations to the specification of the heating systems installed: the contract with Hawk specified air-source heat pumps but for various reasons these are to be replaced by solar-powered radiators which use all the solar power available and then switch to mains electricity. They are cheaper to run than air-source heat pumps. In addition the wall insulation has been upgraded, and nineteen of the homes will have a battery to store surplus solar energy produced. (The other homes are unable to be fitted with one as their orientation is not appropriate.) All homes will be provided with a charge point for electric cars.

A cllr reported that he had heard rumours in the parish that all the new homes had already been allocated! This was certainly counter to anything the Project Board understood. The clerk was asked to advise Steve Swann of the rumour and ask him to put the record straight.

* Improvements to playground facilities. Update from Playgrounds Group. Cllr R Hirons to lead.
* Aspirations/Grants/Donations.

Cllr Mrs S Short advised that she wanted the PC to consider grants and donations at the current meeting, and for Aspirations to be on the December Agenda after the Budget group have met on the 29 November.

The applications for grants/donations from the PC were considered as follows.

1. Prees School had requested an unspecified contribution towards the installation of a exercise track. Several of the cllrs had reservations about this matter and it was unanimously decided that more information would be requested about the venture and the matter would be carried forward to the December meeting.
2. Higher Heath Village Hall had requested a donation to cover the cost of the installation of a new water boiler (£500.00) Several cllrs expressed reservations about this as they believed that HH Village Hall is in possession of considerable funds. It was unanimously resolved not to make the donation at this point in time.
3. Prees Junior Football Club had requested £500.00 for coach training and equipment. The clerk had taken advice from SC and now reminded the meeting that if awarded, this money could not legitimately come out of Neighbourhood Fund. The PC unanimously resolved to make the payment, which would be met from other resources.
4. The Bowls Club had applied for £300 to buy equipment that would encourage younger players to join. Again, the clerk reminded the meeting that this money was not deemed by SC to be an appropriate spend of Neighbourhood Fund. The PC unanimously resolved to award the £300.00 from other resources.
5. Prees Village Hall had applied for £5,800.00 to continue the refurbishment of the Hall. It was agreed that this award could be made from Neighbourhood Fund. The PC’s unanimous decision was to award it.
6. Prees Baptist Church had applied for £1000.00 to fund an upgrade of the existing kitchen facilities. It was generally felt that it would be helpful to see a quote for the proposed work and it was unanimously decided that the matter should be carried forward.

* Concerns about future Broadband provision for Higher Heath. Response received from Helen Morgan MP’s office, encouraging all North Shropshire homes to register interest with Freedom Fibre, who have the contract with Project Gigabit which is funded by the Government with the aim of delivering full fibre connectivity to thousands of hard-to-reach homes in North Shropshire. Registering with Freedom Fibre will boost the chance of local investment. Contact is [www.freedomfibre.com/connected](http://www.freedomfibre.com/connected) Clerk to relay this information to the concerned resident in Higher Heath.
* Streetlamps.

1. Cllr Mrs Short reminded the meeting that the process of converting the remainder of the Parish Council’s streetlamps to LED was due to start in the first week of December and to be completed hopefully by the end of the first week in January 2024.
2. She is talking to Highline about the possibility of using solar lamps to enhance the current provision of lighting of footways and will bring further information to the Parish Council.
3. Need for additional streetlamp on Station Road. Cllr M Lanham was sure that only a mains-supplied streetlamp would be effective here. Clerk to arrange a meeting on site with an officer from Shropshire Council who could advise, assess the viability of a new installation and approve the site. It was acknowledged that enhancing the streetlamp provision in the Parish would be a legitimate spend of Neighbourhood Fund.
4. Cllr Mrs Short will speak to Highline Ltd to hopefully hasten their completion of the inventory which we need in order for Shropshire Council to consider us for supply of electricity through their suppliers.

* Local concerns about current activity at Twemlows Wood. The clerk confirmed that she had made an enquiry about the current planning status of the area, and had provided SC with a map showing the area defined, as requested by them. She awaits a further response.
* Consultation received from Shropshire Council on proposed new Public Spaces Protection Order to penalise dog-fouling. Cllrs were asked to respond individually.
* Posts/bollards at Higher Heath playground. Clerk explained the complications of having the failed timber posts replaced by concrete bollards. It was unanimously resolved to use timber replacements. Clerk to contact the company used before and ask them to complete the work if the price is reasonable.
* Parish Council social: Christmas Curry to be arranged in Whitchurch for January. Clerk to circulate possible dates.
* Housekeeping matters to report?

Streetlamp out in Prees Village Hall car park. Clerk to sort.

* Any potential hazards/risks to report?

Clerk to report evening joy-riding on Manor House Lane to local Police.

* Facebook: nothing to report.

**171/23 SALC.** Nothing current to report.

**172/23 Accounting Matters**

*Accounts for Payment November 20 2023*

Cllr R Hirons proposed that the following accounts should be paid and this was seconded by Cllr D Ladd. All were in favour.

£

K D Sieloff salary November 514.94

HMRC (PAYE) 21.80

K D Sieloff (expenditure11.10.23-14.11.23) 69.33

Groundforce Landscape Ltd (works October 2023) 264.22

Scottish Power (streetlight energy 1.10.23- 1.11.23) 409.56

Total 1279.85

Added late (Previously-approved )

Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal (purchase of wreaths/donation) 100.00

Prees Parochial Church Council (donation for churchyard maint) 300.00

Fauls Parochial Church Council (donations for churchyard maint) 100.00

North Salop Wheelers (donation) 400.00

2179.85

Clerk’s expenditure 11.10.23-14.11.23

*BT line rental contribution November 2023: £ 12.50*

*Petrol:1 x trip to noticeboards (Notice of Vacancy) 8 miles @ 45p per mile =£3.60*

*Fire-proof document safe: £51.73*

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

Total = £69.33

Report on progress with draft Budget 2024-5.

Cllr Mrs Short reported that the Budget Group had had a good meeting and had a further one planned on 4 December. Recommendations for the Budget would be circulated before the December meeting.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022-23. Further information from clerk. On enquiry to the external auditor the clerk was told that although 30 days had correctly been set for the public rights of scrutiny of the unaudited accounts, she had not allowed at least one day’s notice between the approval date of the AGAR and the start date of the public rights period and for this reason assertion 4 of the 2023-4 AGAR must be answered ‘No’.

**173/23 Correspondence.** Nothing outstanding.

**Items for next Agenda:** Burial Ground-Parish Map-Chairman Board update-Duration of meetings

Meeting was closed at 10pm.

Signed…………………………………………………… Date……………………………………