**Minutes of the Prees Parish Council Meeting held on 16 December 2024 in Prees Village Hall.**

Present: Cllrs Mrs S Short; Mrs J Catterall; Mrs B Finch; Mrs L Baer; R Hirons; J Whelan; J Allen; Dr J Redgate; M Lanham and P Wynn. Also present were four members of the Public and the clerk Mrs K Sieloff.

**182/24** **Public Session.**

A local resident attended to voice her concerns about inconsiderate parking in the Village, particularly on Mill Street from the crossroads, on Shrewsbury Street and outside Prees Primary School.

The Chairman of Whitchurch Walkers, Malcolm Monie, attended to voice his objection to the proposed closure of Footpath 26. He emphasised that it is an important link in the wider network of footpaths.

Cllr Mrs S Short advised that both these matters were on the evening’s Agenda for discussion.

**183/24** **Apologies** had been received from Cllrs Mrs B Clutton; Mrs S Jones and D Ladd.

**184/24** **For Members to disclose Pecuniary/Non-Pecuniary interests** in items on this agenda. There were none.

**185/24** **Minutes** of the Parish Council Meeting held on November 18 2024 (previously circulated) were agreed to be a true record. It was proposed by Cllr R Hirons that they should be signed and this was seconded by Cllr Mrs J Catterall. All were in favour.

**186/24** **Actions arising from the Minutes** (which are not included on the Agenda.) Cllr J Whelan asked the clerk to contact the dept at SC in charge of deciding new street names and numbers to advise that mis-delivering of mail was being caused by confusing new addresses. (The PC has not been consulted, to date, about the road-names to be used on the new development.) Clerk to follow up.

**187/24** **Community Policing Matters.** The PC had received the lastest edition of On The Beat. There was no additional report available and no police officer in attendance.

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**188/24 Shropshire Council Report.** Cllr P Wynn’s report made the following points

* The new Whitchurch leisure complex with its swimming pool, dance-floor, café etc, will be open by Easter.
* The future of the Civic Centre is still to be decided. It may be possible to just replace the roof (at £4m the cheaper option.)
* Budgetary concerns are causing deep and on-going problems for Shropshire Council.
* Cllr Wynn was cautiously optimistic that a solution to Prees Primary School’s parking problems and the churchyard’s lack of burial space may be on the horizon. He could not currently say more.

**189/24** **Planning Matters**

**Current planning applications for consultation**

**24/04527/FUL**:Application for continued siting of two poly-tunnel structures. Hough Cottage, Weston-Under-Redcastle, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 5LR. Applicant: Mr S Powell.

The Parish Council resolved to support this Application. This was proposed by Cllr J Whelan and seconded by Cllr M Lanham. All were in favour.

**24/04569/PAAFC**: Change of Use from agricultural building to flexible commercial use under Schedule 2; Part 3, Class R. Brades Farm, Brades Road, Prees, Whitchurch, Shropshire SY13 2DX. Applicant: Mr and Mrs R C and A D Ford.

The Parish Council resolved to support this Application. This was proposed by Cllr J Whelan and seconded by Cllr M Lanham. All were in favour.

**24/04336/FUL**: Proposed erection of ancillary outbuilding for a swimming-pool; wc/wet room; changing room; plant room and entrance lobby that acts as glazed link to existing outbuilding. Meadow View Manor, Lighteach Road, Prees, Shropshire SY13 2DR. Applicant: Mr and Mrs Holder.

The Parish Council was concerned that no noise assessment was mentioned although the proposed plant room would be very close to the neighbouring property. The Parish Council resolved to support the Application as long as the Planning Officer was sure that there would be no intrusive noise generated. Proposed by Cllr J Whelan and seconded by Cllr J Allen. All were in favour.

**Planning decisions received from Shropshire Council.**

**24/03924/FUL**: The Hawthorns Farm, Prees Green, Whitchurch SY13 2BP. Proposed replacement farm building. Decision: Grant Permission.

**24/04059/FUL**: 6 Sandford, Whitchurch, Shropshire SY13 2AW. Proposed extensions, interior alteration works, detached garage and new drainage systems. Decision: Grant Permission.

**24/03691/VAR**: Prees Primary School, Cross End, Prees, Shropshire SY13 2ER. Variation of Condition No 1 attached to planning permission 14/03928/VAR dated 16.10.24 to allow for retention of demountable unit for further ten years. Decision: Grant Permission.

**190/24**  **Parish and Parish Council Matters.**

**Local Parking issues.**

The Chair brought this matter forward on the Agenda, to avoid detaining the resident who had attended to voice her concerns.

Cllr Mrs S Short gave an assurance that the Parish Council is doing everything it can to tackle the inconsiderate parking that causes concern in the Parish. Although progress is slow, there are glimmers of hope in that there is a possible solution for Prees school parking on the horizon and Lower Heath School also is pursuing a plan to provide more parking.

Cllr M Lanham observed that offensive reactions from parents challenged about inconsiderate parking at Prees School bring the School into disrepute, and in his opinion the Headteacher should tell those parents that their behaviour is unacceptable.

It was noted that the Walking Bus is no longer operating, which results in more cars at pick-up and drop-off times.

Cllr Lanham asked whether it might be possible for more children to use the free bus from Higher Heath, rather than be brought individually by their parents.

Cllr Mrs Short observed that it looked as though she needed to meet with the Head of Prees School again to talk these matters through.

Cllr R Hirons observed that the parking at Prees School was a very long-standing problem. He suggested that the PC could consider paying for the process of having the zigzag lines made enforceable. The clerk was asked to find out how much this would cost.

Cllr Mrs Short suggested that she lead a small group to discuss all the current parking issues and report back at the January meeting. Cllr J Allen proposed this as the way forward and this was seconded by Cllr Mrs J Catterall. All were in favour. Cllr Mrs J Catterall volunteered to be part of the group.

**Future of the Youth Shelter.**

The clerk confirmed that there had been no planning application when the Youth Shelter was erected. This had been confirmed by John Patrick. Mr Patrick had also, in conversation with the Chair, suggested that if the Youth Shelter was demolished, a fitting way to deal with the inscriptions and drawings commemorating the lives of the two young men who had died tragically, would be to have artwork professionally photographed and then these displayed in the Village Hall. Clerk to research options and costs. Cllrs Mrs Short and Mrs J Catterall to endeavour to meet with the young men’s parents.

**Bank closures in Whitchurch**

Cllr Mrs S Short noted that most banks have closed their branches in Whitchurch. She asked Cllr P Wynn whether there was any chance of Whitchurch having a bank ‘hub’ in which different banks would be represented in the town on a rota, as is the case in some towns and cities now. Cllr Wynn promised to ask the question.

**Government domain address needed for PC**.

All cllrs present said they would be happy to have an individual email address attached to a government domain address, solely for PC-business use. Clerk expressed appreciation to Cllr J Redgate who had agreed to help her navigate through the prescribed procedures.

**Footpath 26: consultation on proposal to extinguish it.**

Cllr M Lanham reminded the meeting that this path had been in existence for hundreds of years. It was not currently in great shape as it badly needed new furniture, but this was on the list to be tackled as soon as possible by the Prees walking group with the support of the Footpaths team from SC. The path provided a safe walking route between Prees village and Mick’s Mill. Cllr Lanham advised that the two legal tests that are applied when extinguishment of a path is considered are firstly whether it will be used and secondly whether there is a duplicate path. Cllr Lanham argued convincingly that the answer to the first question is ‘Yes’ as experience of the walking group had shown that once footpaths were properly cleared and furnished, people used them, and to the second, No. He explained that Footpath 27 cannot be considered a duplicate path as following it involves walking along the B5065 which has a speed limit of 60 mph with two blind bends which necessitate crossing the road five times. Path 27 is three-quarters of a kilometre longer than Path 26 and it is not safe.

Cllr Lanham proposed that the PC object strongly to the proposed closure. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs L Baer and all were in favour. Clerk to draft objection and pass to Cllr Lanham for approval before sending it to SC.

**Playground Matters**

The clerk reported that despite several attempts by email and phone, she had been unable to secure a response from SC Playgrounds Team concerning the new equipment expected for the playgrounds in the New Year. She would pursue the matter.

**Rubbish dumped in the brook on Station Road**

Rubbish including discarded furniture is being dumped in the brook on Station Road. The clerk is endeavouring to find out who owns the parcel of land, as it will be the land-owner who is responsible for the clean-up work. It is not SC land.

**Parish waste bins.**

Cllr Mrs B Finch advised that the rubbish bins outside Jackies Shop and the Premier need replacing with larger ones, also the ones in both playgrounds. Clerk to find costs. Clerk has already reported the missing bin that needs replacing on Church Street.

**Recent flooding and storm damage**.

Cllr Mrs S Short told the meeting that Dan Whelan, local tree surgeon, had voluntarily and in his own time worked during the recent weekend of gales to remove fallen trees to make local roads passable. She wanted the Parish Council’s grateful thanks to be put on record. Cllr Mrs L Baer proposed that a letter of thanks should be sent to Mr Whelan, and this was seconded by Cllr Mrs B Finch. All were in favour. Clerk was also asked to ensure the matter is recorded on Facebook.

**191/24 SALC.**

It was noted that the SALC meetings, held in Wem, now always clash with the PC meetings. Clerk was asked to obtain the schedule of the SALC meetings for the next few months in the hope that cllrs would sign up to attend one on a rota basis, instead of attending the concurrent PC meeting.

**192/24 Accounting Matters**

* Cllr R Hirons proposed that the following accounts should be paid. This was seconded by Cllr J Allen. All were in favour.

Accounts for payment December 2024

K D Sieloff salary December 2024 + 8 months back-pay of increase to 1.4.24 753.23

HMRC PAYE 97.00

Clerks expenditure 13.11.24 – 10.12.24 33.95

Prees Baptist Church (donation) 500.00

North Salop Wheelers (donation) 500.00

Higher Heath Village Hall (donation) 200.00

Royal Legion Poppy Appeal (donation) 60.00

SLCC (clerk’s annual membership) 150.00

Pimlotts (November Lengthsman visits x 2) 320.00

Pimlotts (November : Playgrounds and Whitchurch Rd) 212.00

Scottish Power (1.11.24 – 1.12.24) 206.12

George Shipton (mole catcher) 95.00

Prees Village Hall Trust (hirings x 3 July/August/September 2024) 75.00

 Total £ 3,202.30

Clerk’s expenditure 13.11.24 – 10.12.24.

*BT line rental contribution December 2024: £ 12.50.*

*Petrol: one trip to notice-boards November Agenda etc: 8 miles @ 45p per mile = £3.60.*

*Stamps:3 x second class stamps @ 85p = £2.55*

*Black printer cartridge:£15.30.*

Total = £33.95.

* Budget 2025-26

Cllr Mrs Short advised that the Budget group would meet again in early January, and the draft Budget would be presented to the PC for approval in the January meeting.

**193/24** **Housekeeping**.

* Large number of dead (shot) pheasants dumped in ditch in Wood Lane. Clerk has reported to SC.
* Hazardous amount of mud on Mickley Road caused by farm vehicles. Clerk has reported to SC.

**194/24** **Facebook.** Cllr J Whelan reported that there is concern expressed concerning the forthcoming closure of Whitchurch Road to finish electricity connection to the Community-led building development. (See below.)

**195/24** **Correspondence.**

* Details of Whitchurch Road closure received. The works by Scottish Power Engergy Networks will facilitate completion of electricity connection to the Community-led building development. During earlier works a culvert on Whitchurch Road was found which necessitated reassessment of route and method of works. A road closure on Whitchurch Road between the crossroads and the bus-stop will be in place 13th to 19th January 2025. A diversion will send vehicles down A49 via Shrewsbury Street.

 It was agreed there are no alternatives to the diversion suggested. Clerk to contact SC to ensure bus-stops will be relocated as before.

**196/24 Items for next Agenda**. Parish waste bins-Government domain for PC- Parking issues-Playground matters-Budget 2025-26.

The meeting was closed at 8.30 pm.

Signed……………………………………………….. Dated………………………………………………