Minutes of a Meeting of Prees Parish Council held on Tuesday October 16 2023

 at 7.00 pm in Prees Village Hall

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

One Minute of Silence was observed to remember the recent passing of Ray Grocott who had been a good friend and generous benefactor to the Parish.

**145/23** **Public Session.** There were no contributions from members of the public.

**146/23 Apologies.** Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs S Jones; Mrs B Rainford; D Ladd and P Wynn.

**147/23** **For Members to disclose Pecuniary/Non-Pecuniary interests** in items on this agenda.

There were none.

**148/23** The **Minutes** of the Parish Council Meeting held on September 19 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 Mrs B Finch. All were in agreement.

The minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 4 October 2023 were also agreed to be a true record. It was proposed by Cllr J Whelan that they should be signed and Cllr Mrs J Catterall seconded this. All were in favour.

**149/23** **Actions arising from the Minutes.** Nothing not included on the Agenda.

**150/23** **Community Policing Report.**  There was no Police report available.

The Parish Council noted that there are reports of tractors being stolen in the area, although not actually within the Parish.

Cllr J Allen also reported that there had been another road accident at the Heathgates Crossroads. This was a collision between a car and a lorry. Fortunately there were no bad injuries. Shropshire Council has been made aware.

Cllr Allen also mentioned problems being caused on the roads by mud displaced by harvesting activity. Farmers are under an obligation to clean up the roads to make them safe but this is not always done very promptly. (See more under Housekeeping item below.)

**151/23** Shropshire Council report. Cllr P Wynn had emailed a report which was read out. He reported that he continues to work to solve the current problems caused by the traffic at dropping off and pick-up times at both our local Primary Schools. He is in communication with local land-owners and is hopeful that some private land at each site may be found to provide car parking to alleviate the strain.

**152/23 Planning Matters**

**Planning Applications received for consultation**

**23/03891/FUL**: Application under Section 73a of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the change of use of land for the siting of 8No. caravans (1No. part time residential and 7No. welfare units), use of existing building for out of season caravan storage, erection of welfare facilities with Bio-Disc, improved entrance and new agricultural building in conjunction with the management of rearing of game birds.

Land North Of Game Bird Rearing Units, Manor House Lane, Higher Heath, Whitchurch, Shropshire. Applicant: Cheshire Game Supplies.

The Parish Council noted that the current application addresses all Shropshire Council’s previous reservations.

It was resolved to support this Application, but with mention to be made of the fact that the PC looks forward to the site being tidied as abandoned vehicles currently make it an eye-sore. This was proposed by Cllr R Hirons and seconded by Cllr M Lanham. All were in favour.

**Planning decisions received from Shropshire Council:**

**23/03237/FUL:** Erection of glazed link to join existing granary to the existing dwelling, two-storey rear extensions, single-storey side extension and internal remodelling. Waverley, Nook Lane, Weston-under-Redcastle, Shrewsbury SY4 5LP.

Decision: Grant Permission.

**23/03753/PAAFC** : Change of use from agricultural building to use class B8 (storage and distribution) under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R - Agricultural Buildings to flexible commercial use (resubmission)

Brades Farm, Brades Road, Prees, Whitchurch, Shropshire.

Decision: Prior Approval Required and Approved.

**23/03529/FUL**: Proposed relocation of office car park access. Highbury Poultry Produce Ltd, Highbury Poultry Farm, Manor House Lane, Higher Heath, Whitchurch.

Decision: Grant Permission.

23/03688/TPO: Reduce 1 limb by 3 metres to provide clearance for working chimney from 1no. Beech protected by The North Shropshire District Council (Drumcote, Heathwood Road, Prees) TPO 1981 (Ref. NS/00055/81.) Fairholme, Heathwood Road, Higher Heath, Whitchurch, Shropshire.
Decision:  Grant Permission
**Other planning matters**

Update on matter of perceived anomaly concerning planning decisions on land bordering Prees Industrial Estate. The clerk reported she could find no record of a noise assessment as part of the determination of 22/03298/FUL (the development of five bungalows behind the flats on Shrewsbury St.)

**153/23 Parish and Parish Council Matters**

**Prospective Youth Worker** item. Carried forward.

**Hazardous traffic situations around our local Primary Schools**.

Cllr Mrs Short reported that Cllr P Wynn was investigating the possibility of making the zigzags outside Prees School enforceable. She also reported that the proposed coning-off of the War Memorial triangle has met with objections from both the PCC and the School, which feels unable to provide the necessary man-power. However alternative plans are being pursued by one of our local PCSOs.

**Lengthsman.** The proposed contract had been previously circulated by Cllr Mrs S Short. It was resolved that the Parish Council should accept it. This was proposed by Cllr Mrs L Baer and seconded by Cllr Mrs J Catterall. All were in favour. Cllr J Allen thanked Cllr Mrs Short for all the work she had put into this project.

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

Cllr R Hirons reported that a ceremony marking the burial of a Time-Capsule and involving the local Primary schools had been held earlier that day. Members of Stoke-on-Tern Parish Council, who are intending to embark on their own Community-led Build, also attended to speak to members of our Project Board. It is anticipated that there will be a November meeting of the Project Board.

Clerk to enquire if the Parish Council could have a tour of the site.

**Improvements to playground facilities**. Unfortunately, the Playgrounds Group had been unable to meet. The clerk had been told by former clerks that the mound on the Brades Road site, currently housing a slide, covers the remains of the old slide sited there. Cllrs were able to suggest a couple of local contractors who may be prepared to quote for the removal of the mound. A review by the clerk of the state of the far end of the playground suggested that that area could be cleared by a team of volunteers without too much trouble, and would considerably increase the space available for play equipment. The Playground Committee would meet before the November PC meeting and would bring suggestions and ideas then. So far, popular ideas for Higher Heath were a zip-wire and a sensory garden.

Cllr Mrs Short suggested a target of the end of the year for a proposal.

The clerk was asked to organise the cutting back of the hedges and undergrowth at Higher Heath playing-field by the contractor who had done the work before. She was requested to ask him if he would be prepared to fill the rabbit holes in the surface also.

**PC review of Standing Orders**. Led by Cllrs M Lanham and J Allen. The document had been circulated previously to give all cllrs an opportunity to review it. Cllrs M Lanham and J Allen both found the document fit for purpose and did not suggest any amendments. All cllrs were in agreement.

**Aspirations/Grants/Donations**. Cllr Mrs S Short suggested that a small group should look at the aspirations of the Parish Council and the requests received for grants and donations, and agree some recommendations to be put forward at the November PC meeting for decisions to be made then. It was resolved that the group would be comprised of Cllrs Mrs S Short; Mrs J Catterall; Mrs R Clutton and J Whelan. This was proposed by Cllr J Allen and seconded by Cllr Mrs J Catterall. A majority was in favour with one against.

**Concerns about the effect on the elderly/vulnerable of switchover from analogue to digital connection**. Cllr Mrs R Clutton spoke of her concern about widespread scams targeting the elderly which suggested to those with land-line based personal safety alarms that they needed to pay up-front in order to ensure that their alarms continue to work after the switch is made from analogue to digital telephone connection. Cllr Mrs Clutton emphasised that such claims are not true, and advised that all providers of affected alarms will be in contact with all their users to manage the transfer process. She offered to provide a Notice that the clerk could circulate as widely as possible.

**Concerns about future Broadband provision for Higher Heath**. The clerk advised that she awaited a response from Helen Morgan MP concerning this matter. She was told to delay response to the concerned Higher Heath resident until Helen Morgan’s reply was received.

**Place Plan**.

It was agreed that the PC wished to add the following to its declared infrastructure aspirations:

* Refurbishment of play areas
* Re-appraisal of speed limits
* Review of pedestrian safety around both primary schools
* Review of current street-lighting provision
* Parking provision at Railway Station.

**Streetlamps**

Clerk reiterated that the PC needs to find a new energy supplier following Scottish Power’s withdrawal from the business market. Many local councils now find buying electricity through Shropshire Council the most economic route. To obtain a quote we need to supply SC with an inventory completed by our current supplier. Clerk is still waiting for this.

Cllr Mrs Short reminded the meeting that the remaining SOX streetlamps are due to be replaced with LED in one fell swoop. She awaits notification of a date for the work.

**Further consideration of solar-powered lamps.**

Cllr Mrs Short reported that she had been advised that outdoor solar powered lamps cost roughly £1500 each. She is of the opinion that there are suitable sites in the Parish where these lamps might be useful. Clerk to find where similar lamps are used, locally, so cllrs can go to see them in operation. Cllr M Lanham expressed his opinion that one of these lamps would not solve the problem on Station Road, but that a mains powered one would be necessary. Clerk to find out what SC’s policy on provision of streetlamps is.

**Remembrance Sunday November 12 2023**

Cllr Mrs J Catterall agreed to lay the PC wreath at the Prees Remembrance Service and Cllr Mrs R Clutton agreed to lay the one at Fauls. Cllr J Whelan advised he already had the wreaths.

**D-Day 80 : June 6 2024**. Eightieth anniversary of D-Day landings. Cllr J Whelan has registered the Parish Council’s support and commitment to lighting of a local Beacon on the night at 9.15pm.

**Local concerns about current activity at Twemlows Wood North.**

The PC was aware there had been police activity locally in this area. Clerk was asked to glean what information she could from the Police.

The clerk was also asked to contact Planning at SC and ask what the current planning status is of this area of land.

**154/23 Housekeeping matters to report?**

Clerk asked to report, again, the sinking road surface on Station Road, just where the 30mph limit is demarcated.

**155/23 Any potential hazards/risks to report**?

* The Parish Council was aware that local harvesting activity was causing muddy conditions on local roads. Clerk was asked to contact the Police and check the process for getting the roads cleaned up in these instances.
* Heathgates Crossroads: The Parish Council was aware that there had been another incident at the end of September with a lorry and a car in collision. Fortunately there was no serious injury.

**156/23 Facebook**: Jackie Symons has been running Jackie’s Shop for twenty years! Chair to write with the Parish Council’s congratulations and appreciation of the services the shop and post office provide to the community.

**157/23 Accounting Matters**

**Accounts for Payment October 2023**

It was resolved that the following accounts should be paid. Proposed by Cllr R Hirons and seconded by Cllr Mrs B Finch. All were in favour.

 £

K D Sieloff salary October 514.94

HMRC (PAYE) 21.80

K D Sieloff (expenditure 14.9.23 -10.10.23) 18.74

Groundforce Landscape Ltd (works September 2023) 264.22

Scottish Power (streetlight energy 1.9.23-1.10.23) 396.61

 Total 1,216.31

Clerk’s expenditure 14.9.23- 10.10.23

*BT line rental contribution October 2023: £ 12.50*

*Petrol: 1 x trip to noticeboards (September Agenda, etc) 8 miles @ 45p per mile =£3.60*

*Stamps:4 x 2nd class stamps @ 66p= £2.64*

Total = £ 18.74

**Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022-23.**

The clerk had reported at the September meeting that she had received Notification of the Conclusion of Audit for the year 2022-23 from the external auditor and that no matters for concern had been identified.

On closer inspection, she found that the external auditors had made two points, which whilst not affecting their opinion, they wished to draw to the attention of the authority.

1. The clerk was advised that she failed to make proper provision for the exercise of public rights of inspection. The clerk is surprised by this and has written asking for clarification.
2. The external auditor also advised that ‘the smaller authority should ensure that it has regard to the level of reserves held when considering future precept request.’

**Budget 2024-25**

It was resolved that a small group should meet to start looking at the Budget for 2024-5. It was agreed that the group should be comprised of Cllrs Mrs S Short; Mrs R Clutton; Mrs L Baer and J Allen. This was proposed by Cllr Mrs B Finch and seconded by Cllr M Lanham. All were in favour.

**158/23** **Correspondence**.

The clerk had received a letter from Higher Heath Village Hall Committee requesting the Parish Council’s support for minor alterations to that body’s constitution. The Parish Council was consulted as it is one of the parties to the governing lease. The letter had been circulated to all cllrs previously. It was resolved that the Parish Council was in support of the alterations and the clerk should respond to say so. Proposed by Cllr R Hirons and seconded by Cllr Mrs L Baer. All were in favour.

**159/23 Items for next Agenda**.

Budget 2024-25. Grant applications.

**160/23 Move to Exclude Press and Public**.

Cllr Mrs Short made the following Proposal:That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

This was seconded by Cllr M Lanham and all were in favour. The meeting continued in private session.