Minutes of a Meeting of Prees Parish Council held on Tuesday July 18 2023

at 7.00 pm in Prees Village Hall

Present were Cllrs Mrs S Short; Mrs B Finch; Mrs S Jones; Mrs J Catterall; R Hirons and M Lanham. Mrs K Sieloff clerk to the Parish Council was also present. There were three members of the public attending as well as PCSO Graeme Baines.

**099/23** **Public Session.** There were no contributions from members of the public.

**100/23 Apologies.** Apologies were received from Cllrs J Whelan; Mrs B Rainford; Mrs L Baer; D Ladd and P Wynn.

**101/23** **For Members to disclose Pecuniary/Non-Pecuniary interests** in items on this agenda. There were none.

**102/23** **Minutes** of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on May 16 2023 (previously circulated.)

**103/23** **Actions arising from the Minutes.** Nothing not included on the Agenda.

**104/23** **Shropshire Council Report**. There was no report available.

**105/23** **Community Policing Report.**

PCSO Graeme Baines attended to deliver the following report.

*RTC on the B5065 near to Cruckmoor Lane junction. One car in hedge. No injuries.*

*Wanted male arrested and detained for court (domestic incident.)*

*Vehicle parked on Fire Station. No tax or MOT. No authority to remove as on private land (belongs to Shropshire Council.)*

*Scooter stolen from Prees. Keys were left in. Not yet recovered.*

*Report of assault in Shrewsbury Street.*

*Incident resulting in Cars being damaged and driver failing to stop.*

*Fire reported at Platt Farm. Police attended to manage traffic. 3 workshops and a couple of vehicles involved in the fire, but fortunately no one hurt.*

(Cllr J Allen joined the meeting at 7.10pm.)

Questions addressed to PCSO Baines:

1 Are local police addressing problems caused by the assembly of motor-bikes locally on Thursday evenings?

PCSO Baines assured the Parish Council that officers are attending The Raven for educational purposes to encourage safe and considerate riding.

2 Are there accident black-spots in the Parish?

PCSO Baines responded that he felt that Sandford was the worst area for accidents, with maybe five fatalities in his 17 years of local service.

Cllr R Hirons asked whether it was possible for the PC to be given information about accidents, in order to build up a picture of the most hazardous areas. PCSO Baines offered to provide a report following a collision and the PC agreed that this would be very helpful.

PCSO Baines reminded the meeting that there is useful information on burglary prevention on Neighbourhood Matters. He was thanked for attending the meeting.

**106/23** **Planning Matters**

**Planning Applications received for consultation**

**23/02578/FUL**: Erection of single storey front and two storey rear extension, conversion and extension of out-building to provide garden room and erection of domestic garage. 9 Sandford, Whitchurch, Shropshire SY13 2AW. Applicant: Mr Anthony and Mrs Sarah Clarke.

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

**23/02801/FUL**: Erection of single storey rear extension (revised scheme.) Tobar Tigh, 3 Birchwood Grove, Higher Heath, Whitchurch, Shropshire. Applicant: Mr And Mrs Chadwick.

The Parish Council resolved to support the Application. Proposed by Cllr R Hirons and seconded by Cllr Mrs S Jones. All were in favour.

**For Information Only:**

**23/02998/FUL:** Application for Lawful Development Certificate for the proposed erection of detached outbuilding incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling house. 5 Hightrees, Moreton Say, Market Drayton, Shropshire TF9 3SE. Applicant: J Cooper.

The Parish Council noted the Application.

**Planning decisions received from Shropshire Council:**

**23/01995/FUL**: Proposed extension and garage. Tobar Tigh, 3 Birchwood Grove, Higher Heath, Whitchurch, Shropshire SY13 2EX. Decision: Refused.

**107/23** **Parish and Parish Council Matters**

**The Square, Prees**.

Response from Helen Morgan MP. The PC had heard from Mrs Morgan that she had been told by Shropshire Council that Enforcement officers would be intervening. Matter to be on PC’s September Agenda.

**Hazardous highway situations around our local Primary Schools**

1. It was agreed that the photograph received of massed parked cars on Lacon Street at school pick-up time was extremely concerning.
2. Response from Schools’ Chief Executive if available: none yet received.
3. Advice re school parking from Clive PC reported that the most effective action they had been able to find was to organise a Walking Bus manned by volunteers. The PC noted that although Prees school had once operated a Walking Bus, this was no longer operating. It was also noted that a 52-seater coach brings school pupils from Higher Heath to Prees every day. Discussion ensure about the possibility of getting the Walking Bus going again. Cllr Mrs S Short said that once she had heard from the Chief Executives she would like to go and talk to the Headteacher at Prees about the matter. The possibility of having two joining points for the route (the Village Hall car park as well as the Fire Station) was mooted and also the possibility of the Walking Bus starting at Whitebrook Meadow. It was thought that if a team of volunteers could be formed, each participant would only have to contribute once a week.
4. Proposed siting of vehicle speed monitor for Lacon Street. Cllr D Ladd and the clerk had walked along Lacon Street and settled on an appropriate siting for the latest vehicle speed monitor.
5. Clerk was asked to write to Shropshire Council and ask again that the yellow zigzag lines outside Prees School should be made enforceable.
6. Report from school governor at Lower Heath School. Unfortunately this was not available for the meeting.

**Other Highway Matters**

Footway obstructed on Lighteach Road (email received from concerned parishioner.) The clerk had made a visit to check, and this matter has been remedied.

**Lengthsman.**

Cllr Mrs S Short has found three grounds maintenance companies who are interested in quoting for the lengthsman tasks. She has shown a representative from one of the companies around the parish and has plans to do the same with a second company. She hopes to end up with three quotations.

**Vacancy for Prees Parish Councillor following sad loss of Cllr Rob List**.

Clerk advised that she has taken the first step, which was to advertise a Notice of the Vacancy allowing a group of electors to call an election if they so wished. The closing date for that period is August 2 2023 and after that the Parish Council must co-opt a new cllr to fill the vacancy as soon as is reasonably and practically possible. The co-option process is a fairly informal one, although there are a set of criteria for candidates which have to be adhered to. The intention will be to invite qualifying applicants to the September meeting to meet the Parish Council. If there is more than one candidate, votes will be cast to determine the preferred one, and that person will be invited to join the Parish Council immediately.

**Community-Led Build**, Whitchurch Road. A progress report supplied by Wrekin was read out by Cllr R Hirons and made the following points:

* All plots are started and progressing well. It is expected that all plots will have roofs on by September and the majority will have first phase carpentry, mechanical and electrical installations by then too.
* Currently service connections are being arranged, which is a slow process with road closures, permits etc required.
* Innovative energy saving features include

1. Solar panels on all homes. Nineteen of them will have batteries enabling the storage of surplus electricity.
2. A system whereby residual heat from used shower water can be captured and re-used to heat more water.
3. A Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery System which extracts and re-uses heat from stale kitchen and bathroom air before it leaves the building.
4. Thermal envelope (ie insulation of walls and floor) has been considerably improved from original plans to enhance the retention of heat and the prevention of its loss.

Cllr Hirons also reported that Charlotte Prince from Wrekin will be leaving the project to go on maternity leave shortly, and Steve Swann will therefore be picking up the reins again in her absence.

Cllr Lanham expressed his disappointment that no public meeting about the build has yet been held.

**Improvements to playground facilities**. Clerk reported that there is to be a meeting of interested parishioners with the Playgrounds Group of cllrs during the first week of August, in the Village Hall, to collect suggestions for improvement to the Prees and Higher Heath play spaces. She asked for authorisation to book the Hall for a couple of hours at the Parish Council’s expense. This was proposed by Cllr M Lanham and seconded by Cllr Mrs J Catterall. All were in favour.

**Review of PC documents**. Cllr D Ladd had been unable to attend to lead discussion on his proposed alterations to the Risk Assessment, so this was carried forward.

The clerk, following previous discussion with the Chair, suggested that the method for reviewing the PC’s documents should be changed to make it less onerous for individuals, and that a document (or two, if brief) should be reviewed by the whole PC each month on a rolling programme. The clerk would circulate the relevant document(s) each month. All were agreeable to this. Clerk to circulate Risk Assessment and Code of Conduct for August Agenda.

**Consideration of grants and submission process**. Responses had been received from Fauls PCC and North Salop Wheelers. Several cllrs felt that more detailed information of the benefits provided to local residents would be helpful.

Cllr Mrs S Short told the meeting that she intended to write to all local charities/voluntary agencies to remind them that the Parish Council was open to applications for funding help. She also proposed that the current suggested limit on applications to £500 should be temporarily waived as organisations are still struggling, post-Covid, and may need a bit of flexibility in how much they can apply for. Cllr Mrs Short also suggested that the closing date for applications should be the end of September, with decisions announced by the end of November.

After some discussion it was resolved that the alterations to the policy should be incorporated with the precise wording about the financial limit to read as follows:

‘Each application will be considered on its merit: the amount of grant will be at the discretion of the Parish Council, if granted this would not generally be more than £500.00 but if the scheme merits a greater amount this will be considered.’

This was proposed by Cllr M Lanham and seconded by Cllr J Allen. A majority were in favour with one against.

Cllr Mrs Short suggested that the amended grant application forms should be sent to Fauls Parochial Church Council and North Salop Wheelers, with an explanation that there had been a revision of the Parish Council’s grant-awarding protocol. Proposed by Cllr Mrs B Finch and seconded by Cllr Mrs S Jones. All were in favour.

**Whitchurch Place Plan**. The clerk confirmed that Lucy Roberts, Place Plan Officer for Whitchurch, would attend the Parish Council’s August meeting.

**Changes to local RBL Poppy Appeal arrangements.** Report from Cllr J Whelan.

**Two dead trees by Brades Road playground** need replacing by PC. Cllr J Allen offered to have a look and make suggestions. Clerk to check Shropshire Council’s stipulations for the trees’ replacement.

**Housekeeping** matters to report?

* Wrafton Terrace planting badly over-grown. Cllr J Allen advised that much of the growth is from Sycamore saplings, which need chopping down and the stumps treated with herbicide. Cllr Mrs Short said she would speak to the ground maintenance contractors about this task.

**Facebook**: Nothing currently to report.

**108/23 SALC.** Cllr Mrs J Catterall had attended the meeting held on 17th July 2023. She reported back on the following items of interest

1. Defibrillators are proving a target for thieves
2. There is funding of 2.5m available for Rural Parish Workshops
3. Ash trees are the recent species to be attacked by widespread disease.

**109/23 Accounting Matters**

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

1. Accounts for Payment July 2023

£

K D Sieloff salary July 2023 473.54

HMRC (PAYE) 16.20

K D Sieloff (expenditure15.6.23 - 12.7.23) 129.95

Groundforce Landscape Ltd (works June 2023) 264.22

Scottish Power (streetlight energy 1.6.23 – 1.7.23) 453.11

Information Commissioner (annual data protection fee) 40.00

Playsafety Ltd (RoSPA report) 291.00

Total 1668.02

Clerk’s expenditure 15.6.23 – 12.7.23

*BT line rental contribution July 2023: £ 12.50*

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

*1 x trip to internal auditor to fetch books: 26 miles @ 45 ppm = 11.70.*

*Stamps:5 x 2nd class stamps @ 66p= £3.30.*

*2 x aluminium signs for Crossroads, total cost = £86.86*

*Replacement paper cutter: £11.99*

Total = £129.95

1. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022-23. Clerk confirmed that the Return and supporting documents are now with the External Auditor. The period within which the unaudited accounts and supporting documents are available for public inspection, as advertised, ends on August 4 2023.
2. Spend Against Budget: review of first quarter 2023-24. The cllrs considered the document showing the spend against budget figures. Renewing insurance had proved more costly than anticipated and energy costs continued high, but it was agreed there were no causes for undue alarm.
3. Report of latest annual NJC non-discretionary pay-scale award for clerk from April 2022.

The clerk explained that the annual non-discretionary NJC pay award for the year starting April 202**2** had not been agreed until November 2022. She had missed the email confirming this award of an additional £1 per hour, but was now seeking authorisation to implement the pay-rise and also to pay herself the accrued 16 months of back-pay, which amounted to £752.00. Prior to the meeting the clerk had supplied supporting documents to the councillors, explaining her calculation. It was resolved to implement the pay-rise and to pay the back-pay. Proposed by Cllr M Lanham and seconded by Cllr J Allen. All were in favour.

12 **Correspondence**.

RoSPA report on the Playgrounds received. Clerk to list actions.

13 **Items for next Agenda**.

Regular item for reporting of possible hazards.

Wrafton Terrace.

Burial Ground.

Place Plan officer visit.

Roads at schools.

Playgrounds.

Meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Signed…………………………………………………….. Date………………………………………………