Minutes of a Meeting of Prees Parish Council held on Tuesday September 19 2023

at 7.00 pm in Prees Village Hall

Present were Cllrs Mrs S Short; Mrs B Finch; Mrs B Rainford; Mrs J Catterall; J Whelan; R Hirons; M Lanham and J Allen; Mrs K Sieloff clerk to the Parish Council was also present.

There were four members of the public attending and also PCSO Dave Andrew.

**130/23** **Public Session.** There were no contributions from members of the public.

**131/23 Apologies.** Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs S Jones; Mrs L Baer and P Wynn. Cllr D Ladd had indicated he would be unavoidably late.

**132/23** **For Members to disclose Pecuniary/Non-Pecuniary interests** in items on this agenda.

Cllrs J Whelan and J Allen both completed disclosures. Cllr J Allen had an interest in planning application 23/03529/FUL and Cllr J Whelan is father of a contractor quoting for work.

**133/23** The **Minutes** of the Parish Council Meeting held on August 15 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 R Hirons. All were in agreement.

**134/23** **Actions arising from the Minutes.** Nothing not included on the Agenda.

**135/23** **Community Policing Report.**  PCSO Dave Andrew attended and supplied a report of the following local incidents which occurred in August.

Burglary- x 2

RTC- x 2 Prees Heath

Vehicle Crime- x 0

Highways Incident- x 16 Prees Green, Prees Heath & Tilstock

Domestic incidents- x 1

Concern for safety- x 2 Prees Heath & Tilstock

Anti-Social Behaviour- x 2

Suspicious Circumstances – x 1 Prees

Criminal Damage – x 1

Robbery – x 0

PCSO Andrew pointed out that numbers of road accidents and burglaries have decreased. He suggested the latter was due to a gang from Wrexham having been apprehended and now awaiting trial.

**136/23 Co-option of Parish Cllr.** There were two candidates for the vacant seat, both residents of Fauls, and both were in attendance. They had both supplied letters of application to the PC, explaining their interest in joining and outlining the skills and knowledge they could bring if successful. They each now spoke to the PC to sum up their application and the cllrs had the opportunity to ask any questions they wished to. A vote was taken and the successful candidate was Mrs Rebecca Clutton. She was invited to immediately join the cllrs for the remainder of the meeting. She signed a declaration confirming that to her best knowledge she fulfilled the formal criteria for eligibility to be a Parish Councillor, and another declaring her Acceptance of Office. The remaining candidate was warmly thanked for his application and interest in the PC and he confirmed that he was happy for his contact details to be retained in case of future vacancies.

**137/23** Shropshire Council report. There was no report available.

**138/23 Planning Matters**

**Planning Applications received for consultation**

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

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

**23/03688/TPO** PROPOSED TREE WORKS: 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.

The PC resolved to support this application. Proposed by Cllr J Allen and seconded by Cllr J Whelan. All were in favour.

**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. APPLICANT: Mr And Mrs R C And A D Ford.

The PC resolved to support this application with the proviso that a condition was imposed that would ensure HGV vehicles were directed along a route avoiding the village centre. Proposed by Cllr J Whelan and seconded by Cllr Mrs B Rainford. All were in favour.

**Planning decisions received from Shropshire Council:**

**23/03217/FUL:** Sunnyside, Prees Grenn, Whitchurch, Shropshire SY13 2BL**.** Erection of general purpose agricultural building. Decision: Grant Permission.

**23/02959/FUL**: The Lighteach, Lighteach Road, Prees, Shropshire SY13 2DR. Proposed conversion of an existing barn into residential storage and formation of gravel driveways to existing plots 2, 3 and 5.

Decision: Withdrawn.

**23/03182/FUL**: Manor House Cottage, The Pinfold, Prees, Shropshire SY13 2ES. Installation of a concrete slab and plastic bunded tank. Decision: Grant Permission.

**23/03312/FUL**: Katrina Kitchens, Prees Green, Shropshire SY13 2BN. Proposed treatment plant drainage system. Decision: Grant Permission.

(Cllr D Ladd joined the meeting at this point.)

**Other planning matters**

Perceived anomaly concerning planning decisions on land bordering Prees Industrial Estate.

Cllr M Lanham expressed surprise that the planning application (22/03342/FUL) for 14 houses on the land at the front border of the Industrial Estate was refused planning permission because of the possible noise intrusion from the business activity on the industrial estate, whereas five bungalows (22/03298/FUL) similarly close to the industrial estate obtained planning permission.

Cllr P Wynn to be approached to see what he could find out about this apparent inconsistency.

Clerk to check if a noise assessment was done on the five bungalows site.

**139/23** Parish and Parish Council matters.

**The Square, Prees**.

Cllr D Ladd reported that he has been advised an offer has been accepted on the site.

**Primary Schools Traffic hazard**.

**Prees**: Cllrs Mrs S Short, D Ladd and P Wynn reported that they had met with Headteacher Mrs Brayford; School governor Mr P Hodge and PCSO D Andrew. The reinstatement of the Walking Bus had been proposed as an effective and workable solution to the problem of so many cars around the school premises at pick up and drop off. The idea of coning off the triangle at the War Memorial, twice a day, to prevent people parking there, had also been mooted. Cllr P Wynn to endeavour to have the zigzags made enforceable.

Clerk to put an item in the Venture asking any volunteers willing to help with the Walking Bus to contact the School.

**Lower Heath**: Cllr Mrs Short’s meeting with the Headteacher had unfortunately been cancelled just a few minutes before by the arrival of Ofsted inspectors.

Solar-powered vehicle speed monitor to be erected outside Industrial Estate

Cllr D Ladd and clerk to liaise to tackle this task.

**Lengthsman**.

Cllr Mrs S Short proposed that Pimlott’s lengthsman services should be trialled for one year, with one full day a fortnight worked, at an annual cost of £4,160. This was seconded by Cllr Mrs R Clutton. All were in favour.

Cllr Mrs Short said she would be happy to manage the lengthsman’s work-schedule. She will bring the draft contract for the Parish Council’s discussion and approval at the next meeting.

**Timber posts at Higher Heath playing-field car park**.

It was agreed that in the interests of longevity, the three failed timber posts should be replaced with concrete bollards, with a view to eventually replacing them all. Clerk to purchase concrete bollards and not more than £100 each ex VAT, (installation will be extra.) It was resolved that £2,000 should be put at the clerk’s disposal to enable her to replace timber posts as they fail, with concrete bollards. Proposed by Clllr D Ladd and seconded by Cllr R Hirons. All were in favour.

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

The Project Board awaits confirmation of the date for the Time-Capsule burying ceremony on site.

**Playgrounds Committee**

The group plans to meet in early October and will have more to report at the October meeting.

**Review of Risk Assessment**.

It was resolved that the following actions should be taken to address concerns identified by review of this document as follows.

* *Risk identified in storage of paper documents*. Very few paper documents are stored, everything is on the PC laptop which is backed up regularly onto a separate hard drive. Storage of PC documents on the Cloud is not recommended by NALC. Fire-proof safe to be purchased in which back-up drive and any valuable paper documents can be stored.
* *Business Continuity Plan needs to identify possible use of Zoom/Teams (when legislation allows) when face-to-face meetings not possible ie during pandemics.* Clerk to amend document.
* *Can anyone else access PC laptop if clerk indisposed?* Clerk to pass details of password etc to Chair in sealed envelope.
* *Council Records: is there an online storage solution*. (See first point above.)
* *Should Council records be made more widely accessible to PC members/risk attached with access available only to clerk?* NALC advises against: records should be available to cllrs on a need-to-know basis.
* *Election costs provided for?* £5000 set aside in Allocated Reserves in case electors called an election at time of cllr vacancy.
* *Playgrounds. Should we add which formal checks take place by accredited inspectors?* Clerk to amend document.
* *Conflict of interest: do cllrs know which interests they have to declare?* On accepting office, clerk ensures that he or she completes a declaration of interests which the clerk then passes to the Monitoring Officer at SC. This declaration of interests is also on the PC website. Additionally at every meeting cllrs are given the opportunity to declare any interest they might be thought to have in any item on the Agenda.

It was resolved that these alterations should be implemented to the Risk Assessment and also that the clerk should purchase a fire-proof safe at a maximum cost of £300.00. Proposed by Cllr R Hirons and seconded by Cllr J Allen. All were in favour.

**Tree work at Brades Road playground**. (Cllr J Whelan left the room during this item as a family-member is the proprietor of one of the companies involved.)

Clerk reported that she had had two quotes for removal of two dead trees; cutting back of playground hedge and lopping of conifers on Station Road that are impacting on streetlamp. Both are from respected local companies. One was for £600 and the other for £625. It was resolved to accept the cheaper quote. Proposed by Cllr J Allen and seconded by Mrs R Clutton. All were in favour.

**Parish Council Grant applications**.

The Meeting was reminded that the closing date for this round of applications is the end of September.

**Future Broadband provision locally**

A concerned resident from Higher Heath had contacted the PC to ask what would happen to Broadband provision in that Ward following the advertised Copper cut-off deadline in December 2025.

Cllr J Whelan had taken on the task of trying to find a definitive answer to this question, but reluctantly admitted that he had ended up going round and round in circles in his research.

He had been able to ascertain that there are plans to extend the Ultrafast Fibre network to our area, but was unable to find out the timing.

Clerk to pursue the enquiry with Openreach and local MP Helen Morgan.

**Place Plan**.

Cllrs looked at a copy of the ‘old’ Whitchurch Place Plan, recording Prees PC’s historical infrastructure aspirations. Possible additions for the new Plan to be discussed at the October meeting.

**Solar footway lamps**.

The PC considered whether the current streetlamp provision could usefully be supplemented by solar lamps to increase safety for pedestrians. Suggested sites included: Manor Place; by HH playing-field; by bus-stops throughout Parish; Whitchurch Road on way to Medical Centre. Matter to be further discussed on October Agenda.

**140/23** House-keeping.

1. It has been noticed that there is often broken glass under the bridge carrying the A49, on Church Street. Youngsters are known to sit under there and throw bottles. It was agreed that clearing this up could be a task for the lengthsman.
2. Very large and deep pothole was reported in Prees Village Hall car park, just at top of entry slope. Clerk to report to SC.

(With his apologies, Cllr J Allen had to leave the meeting at this point: 9.15pm.)

**141/23 SALC.** Nothing current to report**.**

**142/23 Accounting Matters**

* Accounts to be paid September 2023

K D Sieloff salary September 514.94

HMRC (PAYE) 21.80

K D Sieloff (expenditure 9.8.23-13.9.23) 227.40

Groundforce Landscape Ltd (works August 2023) 264.22

Scottish Power (streetlight energy 1.8.23-1.9.23) 425.36

PKF Littlejohn LLP 378.00

Total 1831.72

**Late additions**

Prees Village Hall 100.00

Prees Cricket & Recreation Club (Youth Shelter ground rent) 1.00

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**Grand Total £1932.72**

Clerk’s expenditure 9.8.23- 13.9.23

*BT line rental contribution September 2023: £ 12.50*

*Annual Home As Office allowance: £4.00 x 52 = £208.00*

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

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

Total = £ 227.40

Cllr R Hirons proposed that these accounts should be paid and this was seconded by Cllr J Whelan. All were in favour.

* The clerk confirmed that Notification of the Conclusion of Audit for the year 2022-23 had been received from the external auditor. No matters for concern had been identified. Final completed AGAR documents 2022-23 were now on public display.

**143/23 Correspondence**

The Deeds for Higher Heath playing field had been passed to the clerk for safe-keeping on the retirement of the proprietor of Cheethams Solicitors.

**144/23** **Items for next Agenda**

Place Plan additions. Youth Club proposal. Remembrance Sunday.

Meeting was closed at 9.30pm.

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