

Parwich Parish Council

A meeting of Parwich Parish Council was held on Wednesday, 25 February 2015 at 7.30 pm in Parwich Memorial Hall.

Present: R Bunting, C Healy, M Harrison, J Bennett, M Gerard-Pearse, the clerk, Mrs S Hampson, five members of the public and two police officers.

Part 1 – Non-confidential information to consider the following agenda items:

15.2.1 Apologies/Councillors' attendance register

Members present duly completed the attendance register. Apologies had been received in advance of the meeting from Mrs N Linnell.

15.2.2 Declaration of personal/pecuniary interest of councillors

There was no need by any member present to complete an entry in the register.

15.2.3 Minutes of the previous meeting and items from the minutes, minutes of the previous planning sub-committee.

The minutes of the previous meeting had been forwarded to members in advance of the meeting, had been displayed on the Blog and in the shop. The planning sub-committee had not met since the previous meeting. It was acknowledged that members had discussed and concluded at the previous meeting not to hold a public meeting regarding Pump Hill. This had been omitted from the minutes.

Resolved: The minutes were otherwise approved as a true record of proceedings and signed by the chairman, Mr Bunting

15.2.4 Public speaking

One of the water course wardens reported that she had made contact with Severn Trent Water Authority (STWA) regarding responsibility for clearing vegetation from the water course in Parwich and provided the parish council with a copy of an email from STWA. STWA's responsibilities are to ensure that surface water which outfalls into a ditch are clear to that point only, not downstream of that position. STWA ensures that an outfall would be accessible and free of vegetation. The water course warden stated that STWA had advised her that responsibility lies with the riparian land owners. The water course warden acknowledged the faithful work of the other water course warden.

The other watercourse warden had advised members of the parish council, prior to the meeting, of his intention to resign from the position of watercourse warden. He reported that he had received a call from the officer at Derbyshire County Council (DCC) who claimed to have left telephone messages with the clerk and Ms Healy. Neither Ms Healy nor the clerk had received any telephone messages; however, emails from DCC had been forwarded to the members. Monies have been set aside for equipment etc. The watercourse warden provided a new form in case obtaining equipment is pursued.

Ms Healy reported that she was very sad that the resident would be standing down as watercourse warden and thanked him for everything he had done and any work he may still undertake in the future as a volunteer. The water course warden suggested putting a request on the Blog to encourage interest in becoming a flood warden.

Resolved: Ms Healy to relinquish her role as link between the parish council and the watercourse wardens.

Resolved: To utilise posters to encourage interest in the vacant flood warden position.

Resolved: Watercourse management will continue to feature on some future agendas.

Another member of the public attended the parish council meeting to report information from the public meeting called by the Blog Team regarding Pump Hill which he had attended. A summary of the public

meeting had been also been reported on the Blog. The member of the public's opinion was that the public meeting called by the Blog Team was called without democratic mandate, as only the parish council has the democratic mandate to make decisions on behalf of the parish. He stated that it is not the place for a minority of residents to 'agree' what the parish council should or should not do in a non mandated meeting.

He went on to say that, in his opinion, the minutes of the public meeting on the blog were not an accurate record of proceedings at the public meeting. The chairman of the public meeting, County Councillor Spencer, had made numerous positive references to the open and transparent transactions of the parish council and that the parish council was acting correctly and following due procedure. Councillor Spencer had also said that the parish council does a very useful job which is often thankless and the parish council members form a very proactive and hard working council but these references were not included in the notes on the blog. The member of the public hoped that Councillor Spencer would check the Blog Team's minutes and not endorse them, as they are neither valid nor accurate. He advised that 7 people had offered to look after Pump Hill but he cautioned parish council members from joining in voluntarily.

He further reflected on the worst aspects of both the calling and management of the public meeting. In the resident's opinion, the organisers of the meeting had behaved disgracefully by encouraging numerous references and comments regarding members of a local family who were not present. The organisers had called into question the ability of these people to maintain the land. The resident's opinion on this sort of behaviour was in complete contrast to the manner in which the parish council conduct their meetings.

Another resident stated that, in his opinion, the Blog Team had the right to call a meeting if they wished to.

15.2.5 Items from public speaking

Resolved: to place watercourse management and watercourse wardens on the next agenda (as referred to above).

15.2.6 Pump Hill (excluding confidential aspects associated with this item)

Mr Gerard-Pearse reported that the item was progressing and a letter from the solicitors has been received formalising matters. Information is still being collected and there is a legal process to follow. Further information regarding valuations and legal information would be discussed in the confidential section.

15.2.7 Items of account, clerk's salary

Cq 1236	Parwich Memorial Hall	Hire costs	£15.00
Cq 1237	S Hampson	Monthly salary	£232.00
Cq 1238	S Hampson	Reimbursement of expenses	£14.30
Cq 1239	Potter and Co Solicitors	Professional fees (Pump Hill)	£210.00 (VAT £35)

15.2.8 Highway and footpath issues, monitoring of village grit bins

A pot hole, previously reported and repaired near "Springfields", is in need of urgent repair again. Previous repairs have not lasted.

Resolved: Clerk to report the pot hole again to DCC.

Mr Harrison reported an area presenting difficulties to an elderly couple in the village. The lane concerned is now totally unsuitable for wheelchair access. Access to the property in question is required at all times by carers.

Resolved: Clerk to contact DCC to establish responsibility for the lane and any course of immediate attention that may be provided.

Mr Harrison further reported that the grit bin towards Town Head may be missing. The parish council only has responsibility for one grit bin on Kiln Lane; the responsibility for all other grit bins rests with DCC. Mr Harrison advised that the parish council's grit bin remains half full.

Resolved: Confirmation regarding the bin which may be missing will be sent to the clerk.

15.2.9 Planning applications and planning sub-committee

No new planning applications had been received since the previous meeting.

15.2.10 Budget and precept items for 2015-16 including playground items

The members gave careful consideration to items of expenditure for the forthcoming year. The parish council has precepted in previous years a sum to enable some reserve funds to accumulate, to purchase new playground items, as playground items are very expensive to purchase. The parish council had also donated a sum to cover the buildings and contents insurance for Parwich Memorial Hall during the previous financial year (approximately £1,600). The Memorial Hall committee had contacted the clerk shortly before the meeting regarding the buildings insurance for the forthcoming year. The clerk had made enquiries with the parish council's insurance provider but on initial responses, the cost to insure the buildings was greater than estimated by the Memorial Hall committee. Land registry costs for the forthcoming year were also taken into consideration in the budget along with all other general administration costs and income. This included the clerk's salary, mowing contractor's costs and income from parish rents. From precept documentation, election costs for Parwich parish council could be over £700.

Resolved: Mr Bunting suspended the meeting to allow a resident to provide a statement regarding the registration of land at Nethergreen. The resident advised that all persons previously connected with this land and the merger of common land with parish council land are now deceased. The gentleman was thanked for his input.

Resolved: To reconvene the meeting.

Resolved: To consider playground items at the next meeting

Resolved: Mr Harrison to carry out some research on playground items to enable an informed discussion to take place at the next meeting.

Resolved: Precept for 2015-2016 to be £8500 including the grant of £156 from DDDC (precept figure to be £8,344 excluding the grant). This figure represents a decrease from the previous year of £1,000 (approximately 10.5% reduction).

Resolved: Clerk to complete necessary precept documentation and forward to DDDC immediately after the meeting to include £1,501 for reimbursable expenditure to offset mowing costs.

Resolved: Parwich Memorial Hall insurance to be placed on the next agenda.

15.2.11 Correspondence and communication

Resolved: The minutes of the parish council meetings will now only be placed in the village shop and on the Parish Council's own website, as soon as it becomes available. Agendas will be placed on the parish council noticeboard and in the shop.

Subsequent to an item raised in public speaking in January, the clerk had contacted Western Power regarding telegraph poles in the village. Western Power had confirmed that there is no plans for any further undergrounding work in the village but the company is currently undertaking the removal of LV poles behind Flaxdale House and the BT exchange building; new LV mains cable has been laid in the road and services transferred.

Resolved: The parish council members did not consider the pursuit of the removal of telegraph poles and underground work to be the responsibility of the parish council.

Resolved: Clerk to advise the originator of the enquiry accordingly.

Correspondence and communication also included a further enquiry from the same resident about transport in Parwich requesting a visit from a councillor residing in Parwich.

Resolved: The clerk to thank the resident for the enquiry but the parish council has received no further information regarding bus services at this time.

As referred to in public speaking, the water course warden had informed the parish council that he would be relinquishing his role, following a difference of opinion with a riparian owner. Mrs Linnell had advised that a stretch of the water course was much narrower than in other parts and full of vegetation and whilst not presenting a problem at the moment this stretch may have the potential to be an issue in the future. DCC had forwarded emails regarding public consultation on a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Derbyshire together with further reminders of available grant monies to progress a flood management scheme. Members of the public and the parish council members considered that the success of flood management in the village lies with kind volunteers and not by money and resources.

Resolved: The parish council to put up posters to encourage a volunteer to step forward as a flood warden.

Resolved: The clerk to advise DCC of the resignation of the flood warden and to advise that the remaining flood warden is considering her position.

The appointed mowing contractor had confirmed to the clerk that he would shortly be attending a course to enable him to use appropriate weed killer in the village.

Other communication included: a report of a leak from an oil tank in the village (this is not a parish council issue but may become an Environment Agency issue), circulars from the Derbyshire Association of Local Councils (DALC) and VAT codes from HMRC to be used on VAT reclaim forms. The notice of election will be received prior to 16 March. Any eligible person who may wish to stand as a parish councillor at the forthcoming elections should visit www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk to download election material or contact the election line on 01629 761335.

Ms Healy had received an enquiry from a motorcycle club to use on 21st and 22nd August, free of charge, the former cricket field for a 2 day fundraising event for the British Legion. Members discussed this request and some reservation was expressed.

Resolved: Mr Bunting to obtain further information from the organiser regarding the club and the event prior to a decision being reached at the next meeting.

On the day of the meeting, an email had been received from a resident who had previously issued a complaint about a councillor. The email contained comments on her interpretation of how previous minutes should have read, despite not being present at the meeting. Members discussed appropriate notice for items to be discussed at parish council meetings.

Resolved: Clerk to acknowledge receipt of the email and to discuss under correspondence, at the next meeting.

15.2.12 Items for the next agenda

Watercourse management, elections, parish council website, land registry, advertisement for a toilet cleaner, playground equipment, fund raising event for the British Legion. Additional items to be compiled by the clerk.

15.2.13 Date of the next meeting

18 March 2015

Confidential information

Mr Bunting advised those present, "That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted (in respect of discussions concerning valuations and legal proceedings) it is advisable in the public interest, that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.

Resolved: Members of the public were advised to withdraw after being advised of the above statement.

15.2.14 Pump Hill

Members discussed the professional valuations received for the land at Pump Hill by the parish council and the Shields' family. These valuations were not the same, however, to invoke the legal process to establish a further valuation would involve costs to the parish council, effectively reducing the net sale proceeds. The previous owners of the land have an involvement in the legal documentation and, therefore, to the sale of the land. The cost of the solicitors' fees for the completion of the sale of Pump Hill had been received.

Resolved: Members unanimously agreed to accept a price for Pump Hill which is half way between the two valuations received.

Resolved: Mr Gerard-Pearse, Ms Healy and the clerk to liaise and serve formal notice on Mrs Shields regarding the price which the parish council would accept for Pump Hill.

Resolved: Mr Gerard-Pearse to formally instruct solicitors to follow the process to sell the land to Mrs Shields and to sign off the overage clause.

Resolved: Parwich Parish Council to request a covenant in the sale documentation for the land to remain as a garden.

Resolved: The solicitors and Mrs Shields to be advised that the parish council require the sale to be concluded prior to the end of the term of office of the present parish council.

Resolved: Mrs Bennett to attempt to find the address of the previous owners of Pump Hill and advise members accordingly.

15.2.15 Vexatious and repeated requests

In addition to the general attitude from a resident in some of the previous parish council meetings, some recent emails from the same resident have made personal references to a member of the parish council. The councillor concerned has found these comments derogatory and of concern. There has been police involvement and the police have advised the member of the parish council concerned that they will attend each parish council meeting until the end of the term of office of the present parish council. Members referred to the parish council's vexatious and repeated requests policy.

Resolved: Clerk to contact DALC regarding this situation.

The meeting was declared closed at 10.35 pm

Mrs S Hampson
Clerk
Parwich Parish Council

28 February 2015