

These Minutes are subject to verification at the next meeting of the Parish Council

Bagnall Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting Tuesday 12th January 2010 Moorlands Village Hall, Bagnall

Present

Cllr Peter Adams, Cllr Andrew Batson, Cllr Frank Hayes, Cllr Peter Lawley, Cllr Dave Pearson

In Attendance Roger Miller (Clerk) and 8 members of the public

10.1 Apologies

Cllr Ken Simpson, Cllr Sybil Ralphs

10.2 Minutes

After correcting a reference to SMDC to read Staffs CC, minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record of the December 2009 meeting.

10.3 Matters Arising not on the Agenda

08.120 Playing Field

Presentation of an analysis of parishioners' views, expressed in response to an article in the parish newsletter, had been arranged for the February meeting of the Parish Council. Results already known point towards strong support for action to safeguard the playing field. The Parish Council continued to seek the best way to achieve this. As previously noted, it regarded the key to success as finding £30,000 purchase money. The Clerk had established that a charity could be established, using a model Charity Commission constitution, if it would help to do so. No further action on that was to be taken until prospects of success without were clearer. No response had been received from Staffs CC to a letter from Cllr Hayes that had included an enquiry about possible sources of finance and the Clerk had so far not identified any attractive mortgage possibility. He would use the Clerks' network to make further enquiries. In addition to fund raising ideas already discussed, the possibility of extracting value from some small parcels of land, former quarry sites on the Parish asset register, to contribute to a playing field purchase fund was considered, as was establishment of a monthly local draw (commonly known as a 100 club). It was necessary next to establish the precise extent of the land parcels (which were only generally delineated on the parish map) as well as any restrictions on their use.

An offer had been made by a local solicitor to speak to the Parish Council about using the law to secure the playing field for the long term use of local people. It was accepted and an arrangement made for Councillors to receive a briefing on 28th January so that its conclusions could inform debate at the February meeting.

09.56 Trees on the Green

It had emerged that one of the quotations received had not been based on the information circulated to all other prospective tenderers. The Clerk was to correct this and present again the result.

09.66 Survey

It was reported that Ruth Reeves would attend in February to present the results of the local survey, including attitudes to the playing field, already mentioned.

10.4 Finance

(i) External Audit

A clean external audit report for the year 2008-09 had been received and would come to the February meeting.

(ii) Payments

It was expected that final lengthsmen invoices for the year would be presented in February

(iii) Budget

An assessment of the likely 2009-10 year end position and commitments during the following year made it clear that some increase in precept must be requested to maintain valued local services. Total expenditure of £6954 was agreed, funded in part by a precept increase from £5,600 in '09-'10 to £6,200 in '10-'11. Because the total budget is relatively small, an increase of only £600 would appear as a stiff percentage. In order to make it clear to parishioners on what money is spent it was resolved to put the most recent externally audited accounts on the website and a summary on the notice boards. A formal discussion opportunity would arise at the AGM in May.

It remained unclear whether an increase in housing in the parish in recent years, in particular following construction of Bagnall Heights, had actually lowered the precept impact on each household despite a rise in the total. The Clerk was to investigate further.

10.5 Planning Applications

There were no new applications for consideration

The December 2010 minute expressing concern about the changes piecemeal development could bring about in the village elicited a request from a parishioner for clarification. Did the Parish Council think that planning rules were being wrongly interpreted or inadequately enforced? Had the Parish Council a rooted objection to any particular kind of permitted development and what opportunities existed for those not members of the Parish Council to influence what had emerged as a long term debate? Was this a general aesthetic concern that transcended planning considerations? Councillors responded that they were not setting out to judge or question planning decisions or enforcement and should not be characterised as hostile to any particular form of permitted development. The matter had been included in a planning discussion because it arose from continual questions about, and sometimes public objections to, developments that were or might be subject to planning consent not necessarily because they were individually objectionable but because the cumulative effect could have just the sort of effect that planning laws existed to control. A recent, unsuccessful, attempt to get a planner to walk round the village was designed to establish more clearly where the boundary between legitimate planning and more general environmental considerations might lie, especially in conservation areas and in relation to the green belt. As to channels of representation, the Parish Council welcomed individual comment and public presence at meetings.

10.6 Footpaths, Highways and Maintenance

09.110 Memorial

The Clerk had not found the record of the original establishment of the White memorial. It was thought that a more thorough examination of minutes for 1992 might yield results.

09.112 Parish Online Maps

Enquiry at SMDC had revealed that only five responses to a prospective online map service, including that from Bagnall, had been received by Christmas. If take-up were not significantly higher, it was difficult to see how it could be funded. The responsible officer expected to clearer by the end of February and had promised to report back.

(i) Snow

Strong representations were made in favour of clearing and gritting in time of lying snow not just the main road but also the bus route and especially the area where schoolchildren congregate to catch the bus. It was also noted that local efforts to help were frustrated by grit bins half filled or left empty in

the months leading up to the most likely season for snowy weather. The Clerk was asked to take these matters up.

(ii) Notice Board

Foul weather had seriously damaged the notice board opposite the church. Two councillors had put repair in hand.

(iii) Old Mill Lane

Property owners who have for some time maintained a triangle of public land at the top of Old Mill Lane reported that much damage would become apparent after the snow cleared and asked whether parish funding might be available to set it right. There are no parish funds for that purpose and it was a matter best referred directly to Staffs CC Highways department.

(iv) Use of Footpaths

An owner of land next to a footpath wished to emphasise that any discussion of what landowners do to paths must be balanced by a recognition of what irresponsible users do to the interests of those whose land public paths pass through or by. He reported obdurately irresponsible dog owners who allowed their dogs to trouble his horses and instances of assault when he had remonstrated with them.

10.7 Environment

(i) 09.95 Beat The Cold

It was reported that the Beat the Cold leaflets referred in some passages to the wrong parish but the intention was clear.

10.8 Correspondence

Minutes of the December meeting of the Parish Assembly.

Staffs CC notices about gritting (main roads only) and salt use.

Community Council of Staffordshire notice of 2010 best kept village competition, together with application forms – noted.

Community Council of Staffordshire invitation to list village festivals and events in 2010 with a promise of publicity if so listed.

10.9 Other Business

The meeting closed at 9.25pm

Signed..... Chairman

Date.....