

## **BLITHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting dated 4 March 2016**

**Present:** Mr A Vernon (Chairman), Mr S Hulme, Mrs P Massy, Mr D Leech, Mr P Atkins, Mrs D Clarke (Clerk), Staffordshire County Councillor Philip Atkins and from the Parish, Mr P Riley, Mr C Watson, Mr & Mrs R James, Mr S Mcleavy

**Minutes:** Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting dated 8 January 2016 were agreed and signed. Minutes of the Special Meeting dated 4 February 2016 were agreed and signed

**The Chairman introduced Staffordshire County Councillor Philip Atkins** and a substantial number of issues were covered that have been précised as best understood on the night. Cllr Atkins opened by saying that there was an overspend this year of £5 million, mainly because Staffordshire County Council had not received the Health Grant from the Government. He also said that responsibilities were being devolved away from Central Government onto County Councils, but the money was not following, and by 2020 the County Councils will have to raise all revenue from within the county. Health provision was the greatest drain. In response to a question from the floor regarding future agricultural employment, Staffordshire County Council are attempting to generally train/direct people (particularly the young) into skilled employment. Rodbaston College was mentioned as a success story. In reply to a question regarding the state of the county's roads Cllr Atkins spoke about the improvements to the A50 trunk road and the removal of the Uttoxeter "bottleneck". He also informed us that potholes were being tackled on a priority basis according to severity and road importance. He agreed that the state of School Lane warranted work being carried out and he would look into the Steenwood Lane issue rasied by a resident. Concern was expressed from the floor regarding the amount of traffic using the narrow roads in the Parish as a "rat-run". Questions were asked regarding the congestion on all roads leading into Stafford, resulting in out-of-town shopping centres at the expense of town centre shops. Superfast Broadband was raised by Cllr Atkins and he accepted that there was a problem with reaching approximately 3% of the country (this includes Admaston) and it was likely that those areas would end up with 6G signals from satellites as a solution. He said there had been sales of redundant Staffordshire County Council properties now the new headquarters was established and these were now being put to residential and/or commercial use.

#### **Matters Arising**

Laminated cards regarding defibrillators – It was decided that these be distributed with the Spring Parish Newsletter

Local Government Transparency Code 2014 – The Chairman reported that a laptop and printer had been purchased for the sole use of the Parish Council and that a bid had been made for Government funding to cover this cost as well as the cost of setting up a website and training, but we would not know the result until the end of March

Lea Lane/Newton (Watering Pit corner) – It was reported that a letter had been sent to Staffordshire Highways regarding the destruction of grass verges due in the main to the increase in volume of traffic using the road as a “rat-run”. A reply has been received indicating that the Traffic Officer will be asked to advise on what solutions would be available.

Queen’s 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration – A free commemorative medal for Councils has been received

### **Planning Applications**

P/2015/01706 Felling of 2 leylandii trees, 4 holly trees and 3 apple trees, Middle Allotment, School Lane, Admaston – no objection from ESBC

### **Financial**

	£
Current Account	3,937.23
Deposit Account	2,129.40
Village Hall Account	284.68

### Payments Made

Mrs D Clarke, purchase of laptop & printer for Parish Council	508.99
Mr D Leech, printing of laminated defibrillator cards	45.00
Mr P Riley, keys for filing cabinet	8.95

### Payments Due

Mrs D Clarke 6 months salary to 31/03/2016	702.70
Mrs D Clarke expenses to 29 February 2016	109.73

### **Correspondence**

ESBC – Community Infrastructure Levy

Staffordshire County Council – Community Paths Initiative – Bids for 2016/2017

ESBC – Safer Neighbourhood Panel

### **Any Other Business**

Neighbourhood Plan – It was agreed that this be placed on the agenda for the next meeting

Admaston Conservation Area – Concern was expressed over the future of the conservation area and the general handling of planning applications. It was agreed that Greg Hall, Borough Councillor for Bagot’s Ward, together with a member of ESBC Planning Department be invited to attend a Parish Council meeting and explain some relevant guidelines

HS2 Update – A report by Councillor Hulme, from Colton Against HS2 Group: The Group is acting in unison with the Ridwares and Kings Bromley groups (they are directly affected by Phase 1 London to Birmingham and Handsacre) Phase 2a, as proposed, via Handsacre to Crewe will run through Blithbury, Stockwell Heath, Hamley Heath, Moreton and Ingestre. No stations anywhere in Staffordshire. All cogent business, economic and other arguments, including alleged capacity problems, dismissed out-of-hand by Government/HS2. Alternatives, costing far less, for improving rail transport for London and Northern communities (HS2 does not solve these problems) – dismissed. The intention of government is to build HS2 regardless, despite public opinion, costs and the real facts. Huge sustained impact



on all communities in our area from lorry movements, road closures, noise, dust, watercourse disruption. Rail franchises will be affected i.e. unable to run services reliably, and Cllr Hulme stated that a reduction in West Coast Main Line services will be a permanent consequence. Compensation paid to householders and landowners is derisory due to the limited extent of the official compensation zones. HS2 is a limited company, owned by the Government, with financial targets and is increasingly being seen as generating extra income to offset mounting costs, e.g. they can acquire land anywhere in the UK, not just along the line, for any development purposes. This is a strong possibility at Ingestre (Express & Star) this will happen and it could also happen in Colton. Cllr Hulme comments that it seems more MPs and the media are beginning to wake up and question whether HS2 is the right way forward and whether this is the prudent way to spend public money. Important Parliamentary Committees are waving warning flags – the Government has better alternatives, they should use them.

### **Public Questions**

Concern was expressed regarding the damage to the daffodils growing on the grass verge in Newton Hurst Lane due to hedge cutting. The parishioner responsible, who was in attendance at the meeting, gave his apologies and said he would make good any damage caused.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of Blithfield Parish Council will be the Annual General Meeting. The Annual General Meeting and an Ordinary General Meeting is scheduled for Friday 6 May 2016

Signed ..... Date .....