

## BLITHFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Ordinary General Meeting dated 07.03.2024

**Present:** Cllr Peter Atkins (chairman), Cllr Anthony Vernon (vice chairman) Cllr Phyllis Massey, Cllr Kevin Massey, Cllr Stan Hulme, Fiona Shipley (clerk),

Cllr Jacqui Jones (ESBC)

Nicola Birch, John and Barbara Hyde, Paul Riley (from the parish)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**24.03.01 Apologies: for Absence:** Cllr Philip Atkins (SCC) Cllr Bev Ashcroft (ESBC), Cllr Vicki Gould (ESBC),

**24.03.02 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting** held on 11.01.2024 were circulated to the councillors in advance, approved and signed.

**24.03.03 To receive declarations of interest by members in respect of items on the agenda.** Cllr Kevin Massey is also on Village Hall Committee.

**24.03.04 Matters Arising from the Minutes** There were none.

#### **24.03.05 Clerk Update**

a) Robert Pettiigrew, chief executive of the SPCA has now left the organisation and existing staff are providing cover until a replacement is found.

b) Each parish is entitled to an A3 framed photograph of King Charles 111 which the clerk will apply for. It was agreed it would be hung in the village hall.

c) A newsletter has recently been circulated.

d) Defibrillator training – members of the parish were asked to let the clerk know if they were interested in a training session, in the newsletter. No one has been in contact so far.

The defibrillators both need new batteries at a cost of £205 each plus VAT. They last 4 -5 years. Future budgets will reflect this value along with the cost of replacement pads.

e) Litter picking – Cllr Kevin Massey will organise this. The parish council have the necessary public liability insurance as long as a risk assessment is carried out. ESBC will supply equipment and collect the bags of rubbish by arrangement.

f) The following dates were confirmed for future meetings 9 May 2024, 4 July 2024, 5 September 2024, 7 November 2024, 9 January 2025.

**24.03.06 Public Participation.** The meeting was made aware that the large sign on the B5013 as you enter Admaston from Rugeley notifying The Borough of East Staffordshire is badly faded and crooked. The clerk will report this and ask for it to be replaced.

A resident of Dapple Heath reported repeated issues of rats chewing the fibre optic cables in the Dapple Heath telephone exchange. This has resulted in frequent loss of service. Eventually Sir Michael Fabricant MP was contacted and the problem appears to have been resolved for the moment.

**24.03.07 Upgrade of Broadband in the Parish** - The clerk is now in touch with Paul Chetwin at Staffordshire County Council. He reports the following:

*'There is a national program underway to upgrade the ageing copper network to a full fibre network, to ensure services will be fit for the future. It is anticipated that 80% of the premises will be upgraded by the commercial operators such as Openreach, Virgin Media O2, City Fibre et al, where it is considered commercially viable to do so. To date over 75% of premises across Staffordshire currently have access to gigabit capable services, and 56% have access to a full fibre network, up from 2% in 2018. It is anticipated that 85% of premises will have access to a gigabit capable service by 2025, and the remaining premises by 2030.*

*Please be assured that the Gigafast Staffordshire team at Staffordshire County Council are fully aware of the areas that have yet to benefit from any upgrade activity, including the numerous social and economic impacts that have been highlighted. The team will seek to make sure no-one is left behind and will continue to advocate on behalf of the residents and businesses of Staffordshire.'*

The clerk understands from a different source, that we are likely to hear in April, if Admaston is to be upgraded soon.

**24.03.08 To receive oral report from Borough and County Councillors.** Cllr Jacqui Jones had nothing relevant to our parish to report, as we have no play equipment.

**24.03.09 To receive Chairman's reports** Nothing to report.

**24.03.10 Police and crime** The SPCO will no longer be providing reports as routine. These can be obtained on-line at <https://www.staffordshire.police.uk/>

Reported Crimes for Needwood from the Website

November 2023	26	8	6	18
December 2023	30	10	5	4

The clerk and chairman attended a meeting in Admaston village hall on 17 January 2024 at which the police and crime commissioner and 2 members of the police force were present to discuss the increase in rural crime in the area.

**24.03.11 Speeding Cars and Motorbikes.** The clerk has done some research into SID signs for the parish and it is not thought that there is a suitable site for them within the parish.

**24.03.12 Attempted Theft of Admaston Telephone Box** –On 23 February 2024 there was an attempted theft of the telephone box in daylight hours by one man pretending to be from Western Power. An eagle eyed residents and Cllr Stan Hulme managed to avert this and although the telephone box was removed from its plinth the theft was prevented. National Grid were called to deal with the exposed live electric cable and various other members of the council and parish helped remove the telephone box into safe storage. The clerk has reported the incident to the insurance company.

The clerk will write on behalf of the council to all those who helped during this incident.

Some discussion was had about the vulnerability of the phone box so close to the B5013 following the attempted theft and vandalism in 2022. The clerk will do some research into the possible re-siting of the phone box close to the pump on School Lane. Some thought will also be given to securing it in a better way to the ground.

**24.03.13 D-Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 6 June 2024.** The parish council will not light a beacon and the village hall will organise an event on 8 June 2024.

#### **24.01.14 Planning**

a) New

b) Pending

c) Decisions

P/2023/01358 Reduce height by up to 1-1.5m, reduce lateral growth to nearest suitable growth points, crown lift lower branches by up to 4m of one Beech tree T1. Location: Blithfield House, School Lane, Admaston, Staffordshire, WS15 3NH Grid Ref: 404931 323390 NO OBJECTION

P/2023/01379 Felling of 3 Leyland Cypress trees Location: Blithfield Hall, Uttoxeter Road, Admaston, Staffordshire, WS15 3NL Grid Ref: 404474 323943 NO OBJECTION

P/2023/00410 Location: Blithfield Forge, School Lane, Admaston, Staffordshire, WS15 3NH Reduce the crowns of two Yew trees by 25% and prune lower branches by 25% (A1 of TPO 60) WITHDRAWN

P/2022/00738 St Stephens Hill Farm, Steenwood Lane, Admaston, Staffordshire, WS15 3NQ Grid Ref: 406074 323038 Prior Approval for the conversion of existing barn to form a dwelling. PERMITS

d) Proposed planning application for Moreton Brook Solar Farm by Aura Power south of Newton. No application has been received. The parish council will keep a watching brief on this matter.

#### **24.03.15 Highways and Lengthsman**

- a) Booth Lane Potholes – the ones close to Clover Cottage have been filled in, in a haphazard fashion. A resident of The Booth has a plan to re-dig a roadside ditch adjacent to his field to reduce water run off on to the road.
- b) Newton Lane Pothole – sign erected seem to indicate that work is due to be carried out week beginning 18 March 2024 here.
- c) Newton Hurst Lane Road Surface – the clerk has reported a ½ mile stretch of road close to Newton Hurst Farm and Stansley Wood.
- d) Grit bin – Rectory Farm - it is understood these are serviced once a year in the autumn. The chairman would like a shovel in each one. The parish council will have to supply these if required
- e) General poor state of roads in the parish – the clerk has written twice to Richard Rayson in the Highway Division of the County Council regarding the state of the roads and other highways related issues. No reply or acknowledgement has been forthcoming. She will now bring this to the attention of County Councillor, Cllr Philip Atkins. Parish councillors and members of the public feel strongly that the County Council have a duty to maintain the roads.
- f) School Lane, Admaston – replacement of verge posts – these have been reported.
- g) Newton phone box – re-paint – on the lengthsman’s list.

**24.03.16 Finance**

a)

Payment type	Item	Amount
SO 28.12.23	Fiona Shipley – Parish Admin	£220.65
Chq 586	Fiona Shipley	£24.95
SO 29.01.24	Fiona Shipley – Parish Admin	£220.65
A/c Balance 29.01.24	A/c 054 £3341.93	A/c 575 £5033.96

b) The asset register for 2023 – 2024 was ratified.

**24.03.17** To discuss any other business including items on the agenda for the next meeting.

The chairman of the Admaston Village Hall committee outlined plans for improving the toilets and updating the booking system and website. They are applying for a Community Regeneration Grant and require an endorsement for their application from parish and borough councillors. All are happy to support.

The Chairman mentioned that the BBC programme Any Questions are looking for suitable venues, and wondered whether Admaston Village Hall meets the criteria required?

There will be an election on 2 May 2024 for a Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

**24.03.18** The date of the next meeting is Thursday 9 May 2024

The meeting closed at 7.57pm