

# CODSALL PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES

Council Meeting held in the Parish Chambers,

Station Road, Codsall

on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at 7.00pm. following Planning

Two members of the public present

**PRESENT: Parish & County Councillor:** B Holland (Chairman);

**Parish Councillors:** Mrs V Chapman, Mrs K Ewart, T Jeavons, S Jenkinson, I Kenyon, Mrs C Millar, Mrs A Morrison and P Wright;

**Parish & District Councillors:** Mrs M Barrow, J Michell

In the absence of the Chairman Cllr Spencer, the Vice-Chairman Councillor Holland acted as Chairman during the meeting.

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillors Cain, Loftus, Spencer and Walls.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION**

None

**3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

**4. MINUTES**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019 be approved and signed as a true record.

**5. POLICE REPORT**

**5.1 Crime figures for Codsall & Bilbrook** – crime figures for Codsall & Bilbrook for 2018 were **received and noted.**

**5.2 Police Report** – There was no written report provided for this evening. Councillor's said residents should be encouraged to report minor crime and Anti-Social Behaviour using 101 as the crime figures do not seem to represent what crime residents are saying has happened, therefore some crime might be taking place unreported. Some Councillors felt that residents are put off from phoning 101 because of how long it takes to get through to an operator.

Cllrs Barrow & Chapman advised the meeting that the Safer Neighbourhood Team is looking into how long people have to wait on the telephone when using 101. Cllr Barrow advised the meeting that a new PCSO, PCSO Tom Evans has joined Codsall & Bilbrook together with PSCO Louise Jones and hopefully we should see them around the village more.

## 6. URGENT CORRESPONDENCE AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

**6.1 Parish Council Committees - A Review of Terms of Reference** – terms of references for the Standing Committees of the Parish Council were considered.

Councillor Holland advised the meeting that he had only been advised just prior to the meeting that he had to chair this evenings meeting and unfortunately is not aware of how Cllr Spencer was going to lead the agenda item.

Councillor Holland then went onto say that the Standing Committees have no formal Terms of Reference, however, he thought that the Open Spaces Committee had one.

The Clerk advised the meeting that none of the Standing Committees which includes the Open Spaces Committee have any Terms of Reference except for the Village Hall which states that the Parish Council assigns one representative.

Cllr Holland advised that this meeting is discussing the numbers of members and the make-up of the Standing Committees but not what the Committees do, as it for the committees to choose, and that any number of Councillors wishing to sit on the Council is fine as they have views.

The Clerk advised the Council that is not the norm for councils to have more than 8 members sitting on committees, the Open Spaces Committee has 11 members. Previously the Open Spaces had between 5-6 members, but over the last few years the Committee has increased in size with a number of councillors sitting on the Open Spaces Committee, Finance Committee & Business Plan Committee as well as being active members of Codsall Community Group and although the community group is independent to the council, it is involved with the council's open spaces so it does have a close connection with the council.

The Clerk went on to brief members of a past incident with the village hall, when lines became blurred, and the council was sued, and although this happened a good many years ago it came about because a large number of council members were also on the Village Hall Management Committee and decisions were made on behalf of the council but not at a formal council meeting, and that is why there is a restriction of one council representative on the VHMC which is the normal practise for parish council's to do, in order to show a clear and distinct separation in decisions being made.

The Clerk also informed the meeting that she had consulted with the SLCC's legal team as well as with the Staffordshire Parish Council's Association and read out the email received from Staffordshire Parish Council's Association – "the present situation does appear to have the potential for the incidence of unwelcome issues surrounding authorisation and accountability.

I agree that your proposals for the 'separation of powers', and the clear distinction between the roles of the Community Group and the Council's Open Spaces Committee, would indeed be beneficial and I trust that the Council will agree to their implementation.

All council's decisions should be transparent and accountable".

Councillor Holland felt that we should defer the discussion to another meeting – the Clerk advised the meeting that the appointment of Committees takes place at the Council's AGM and that any changes need to be discussed in March allowing for the AGM in May in accordance with the Councils Standing Orders.

Councillor Millar informed that she had not fully appreciated the number of Councillors now on the Open Spaces Committee, as she has unfortunately not been able to attend the last meeting and can understand that lines could become blurred on who has agreed what at which meetings.

Councillor Barrow said that councillors do not turn up, the commitment is not there, they need to be proactive, it is the same few people doing everything, anyway all decisions are reviewed by full council.

Cllr Holland advised that the committees have no standing authorisation, members could declare an interest.

The Clerk advised the meeting that issues arising are not to do with adhering to the Code of Conduct and members declaring an interest, but it is to do with governance, accountability and transparency.

Cllr. Ewart suggested a possible limit of 6 members.

Cllr Holland said that the Council have to take offence that we are not trusted to declare an interest, but the council could consider options which Cllr Holland relayed to the Council:

- Declare an interest if members felt they need to
- Councillors could request for dispensation
- If the meeting is not quorate to refer the item to the main council or defer the item to the next meeting
- Limit the number of groups, but this will disfranchise members

Councillor Holland then went on to say that the committees need to set dates, many members are not able to attend, as meetings are organised at the last minute. The dates should be fixed.

The Clerk advised the Council that all council meetings are convened in accordance to proper practise and in accordance to Standing Orders and legislation and there is also a criteria to be met, if submitting requests for Dispensation.

Councillor Chapman said that the council is fortunate to have a Clerk who is proficient and as clerk has steered the council appropriately. Cllr Chapman then went on to say that she has always taken the Code of Conduct seriously and has always declared an interest if items relating to any of the groups that she is involved in. Cllr Chapman then said that she feels that Codsall Community Group do a lot of good for the community and therefore would remove herself from the Open Spaces Committee.

Cllrs Barrow and Jenkinson then said that they would stand down from the Open Spaces Committee.

Cllr Millar said that we should not run down the committees, as a Councillor she is very mindful of her responsibilities and of what roles to take on outside of the council, which could be, or could be perceived to be, a conflict of interest or bias.

Councillor Michell advised that he had spoken with SSDC monitoring Officer. Councillor Michell then proposed that all committees be scrapped as there is a feeling that Councillors cannot be trusted not to blur lines.

Some Councillors were unhappy with the wording of the proposal. Councillor Michell wished his proposal to stand, this was seconded by Cllr Barrow, a vote was taken: for 8; 2 against and 1 abstention. Cllr Millar requested that her name be recorded as being against the proposal.

- 6.2 Replacement Bus Shelter A41** – an email from Cllr Jenkinson, requesting for Councils consideration to the replacement of the bus shelter located on the A41 near Kingswood was received. Cllr Jenkinson advised that he had been approached by a resident of Silver Poplars who had been discussing obtaining a second-hand bus shelter jointly with Perton. Cllr Jenkinson advised the meeting that he feels that we should provide a bus shelter for a bus stop that is in Codsall. Councillor Holland felt that a survey should be undertaken to establish the need and to establish the number of residents that do not drive as he felt that we should not purchase a bus shelter if no one would use it. Some councillors felt that the Parish Council should be encouraging the use of the bus service.

**Resolved** the Clerk to write to the Silver Poplars Residents Association to see how many people are likely to use the bus service.

- 6.3 Annual Subscription Renewal- Staffordshire Parish Council's Assoc** – notification renewal of annual subscription cost £704.00, was considered.

**Resolved** approval of the renewal of the annual subscription for 2019/20.

**6.4 Policies & Procedures review** – consideration was given for revisions to the following Policy documents:

**6.4.1** Risk Assessment

**6.4.2** Health & Safety Policy

**6.4.3** Public Participation

**6.4.4** Complaints procedure

**6.4.5** Reporting on meetings by members of the public

**Resolved** no revisions required, all the above Policy Documents approved and re-adopted.

## **7. ACCOUNTS**

**7.1** **Resolved** that a report on Council Finances for year to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019 be approved.

**7.2** **Resolved** that the schedule of payments to 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019 be approved.

**7.3** Confirmation by the Chairman of the authorisation of the Clerks time sheet.  
**Matter of report.**

## **8. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

A report by the Acting Chairman was received from County Councillor Spencer.

- Staffordshire County Council funding has been given to County Councillors. This can be used for gully clearance and drainage but not for potholes.
- Drains are currently being cleared. In the latest spell of heavy rains there has been flooding along Suckling Green Lane, Oaken Lanes and Dam Mill.

## **9. CODSALL VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (CVHMC)**

The minutes of C.V.H.M.C. meeting of the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019 was **received and noted.**

## **10. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

A report from District Councillors.

Cllr. Barrow reported that the SSDC's cemetery car park was causing a problem, but they have introduced an automatic barrier which is elevating issues caused by the open and closing times.

## **11. Councillors and Clerks Written Report**

- The Clerk reported that Oaken Field carpark is due to open soon. The signage has arrived and just needs to be installed.
- Councillor Barrow suggested that the Parish Council should look at an automatic carpark barrier for Oaken Field in the case of users being locked in.

**12. OTHER CORRESPONDENCE**

- 12.1 Mike Deegan Consulting** – a letter detailing support offered to Parish Council on funding bids and project management was **received and noted.**
- 12.2 South Staffordshire Council 2019 - Combined Local Elections** – briefing notes, issues number 3 and 4 were **received and noted.**
- 12.3 Breast Screening** – an email from South Staffordshire Council informing that the mobile breast screening unit was introduced back into Codsall week commencing 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019 for sixteen weeks and is located at the front of SSDC offices was **received and noted.** Councillor Barrow said use it or lose it. The mobile unit is situated at the front of the District Council offices; we need to make people aware that it is there. Cllr Morrison advised the meeting that a resident had already advised her that appointments to the end of March are fully booked.
- 12.4 Staffordshire Parish Councils Association** – bulletins dated 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019 were **received and noted.**
- 12.5 SSDC – Council News Round-up** – issues 107 and 108 were **received and noted.**

**13. HIGHWAY ISSUES**

**Concerns raised regarding Highways**

None

**NEXT MEETING**

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

[Meeting closed 8.25pm]