

CODSALL PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES

**Council Meeting held in the Council Chamber,
South Staffordshire Council, Codsall
on Wednesday 8th September 2010 at 8.00pm. following Planning**

PRESENT

Parish Councillors Mrs C Millar (Chair), Mrs M Barrow, R Etheridge, Mrs E Forster, P Kenyon, L Stovin, **District Councillors** Mrs P Campbell, J Michell, Mrs S Oatley, **County Councillor** R Marshall,

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs Chapman, Holland, Ewart, Owen and Walls.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Limited to 2 minutes per speaker and 15 minutes overall.

Chairman Councillor Christine Millar invited members of the public to speak, but in the first instance asked residents who wished to speak about the Wheel Field to allow residents who had not spoken at the previous meetings to air their views and those who had spoken previously and wished to say something else would be allowed to do so providing that Public Participation was not unduly extended.

Mrs Jill Gollins a member of the 'Friends of the Wheel Field', spoke briefly and advised the meeting that she was a dog owner and the Wheel Field was the only field in the area without restrictions for dog users. Mrs Gollins also advised the meeting that she has visited the Wheel Field between 6am and 10am and recorded approximately 94 regular users during this period.

Mr Christopher Cunningham advised the meeting that he was a regular user of the Wheel Field and that his property overlooks the field. Mr Cunningham advised that he was continually being surprised at the wild life that he sees on the field including owls, many birds and insects including wild bees which he believed are a protected species. Mr Cunningham believed that the introduction of a lawn area to a large proportion of the field could possibly disturb and destroy the wildlife in that area and asked that this be considered by Councillors.

Mr Stephen Skinner then spoke advising the meeting that a survey had been undertaken and according to their statistics 210 people

regularly use the field and on speaking to these people 208 wish to see no degradation to the field what so ever. Mr Skinner then briefly outlined the proposal submitted by the 'Friends of the Wheel Field' which shows how some low cost improvements to the field could be made to encourage further wild life and a nature area. Mr Skinner also advised that St Nicholas First School would be interested in visiting the wild life area should it be established. Mr Skinner also advised that the History Society have provided information relating to the historic ridge and furrow system still evident on the field and also some history to the old Mount House which was demolished many years ago and overlooked this field.

Mr Stephen Wildman spoke briefly reading out a letter he had submitted to the Parish Council which reminded Councillors of the reasons for the purchases of this field over 10 years ago at the behest of residents, which was to prevent development of this field. He asked that this is fully considered in Councillors deliberations this evening. Mr Wildman also advised that a lot of time and effort had been taken to obtain facts from people in the area and that these were facts and not just hearsay.

Mr Joshua Noad spoke on behalf of the Codsall Ex-Servicemens Club bowling section. Mr Noad immediately commended the 'Friends of the Wheel Field' for their efforts, advising that the Bowling Club certainly did not wish to destroy the Wheel Field and that they too had similar interests in preservation and wildlife. Mr Noad would very much like a meeting between the 'Friends' and the Bowling Club to see if a way forward could be agreed.

Mr Noad was interrupted by adverse comments from the Public Gallery. The Chairman Councillor Christine Millar immediately stepped in and advised the meeting that should there be any further interruption and then the meeting will be suspended and that the Parish Council was here to listen to all views.

Mr Noad continued further advising the meeting that the Bowling Greens proposal was for a small area of the field and would certainly not infringe or jeopardise the main area used by dog walkers. The proposals submitted by the bowling club clearly show that the existing dog walking path is maintained.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2010 were approved following a small amendment to a typographical error. Proposed by Cllr Michell, seconded by Cllr Oatley, unanimously approved by the meeting and immediately signed by the Chairman.

5. POLICE REPORT

- a. **This was** received and noted without comment.

- b. **The** response from Inspector A Chapman re Police presence in Codsall was received and noted. The Chairman expressed regret that Inspector Chapman is to move on secondment for three months and in his absence Inspector Ian Gould will be the Lead Officer for the area. Councillor Millar hoped that we would see Inspector Chapman return as a good rapport has been achieved and it would be a loss to our area after such a relatively short time in post.

6. URGENT CORRESPONDENCE AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

- a. **A letter** from 'Friends of Wheel Field' was received and noted, this was proposed by Cllr Millar, seconded by Cllr Campbell and unanimously approved by the meeting.
- b. **Letter** from Codsall Village Management Committee re request to reconsider venue for Bowling Club this was received and noted proposed by Cllr Millar, seconded by Cllr Oatley a vote was taken:

For	9
Against	1
Abstentions	0

- c. **To discuss** the Open Spaces Committee proposal for the Wheel Field, the Chairman Cllr Millar asked Cllr Kenyon the Chairman of the Open Space Committee if he would outline the proposal for discussion this evening.

Councillor Kenyon advised the meeting that the Public Open Spaces Meeting relating to the Wheel Field clearly showed a split in opinion amongst residents with many objections to any change whatsoever, but also with a good number of suggestions for improvements to the Wheel Field.

When the Open Spaces Committee met they were aware that a proposal from the bowling club was likely to be forthcoming and on that basis proposed (in principle) the way forward should the Ex-Servicemen Club present their request which has indeed subsequently been received.

Councillor Kenyon advised the meeting of the possible benefits and the opportunity being presented by the Bowling Club proposal in that improvements could be made to the Wheel Field which would benefit all residents with the costs being met by the Bowling Club. These improvements could not be carried out other wise as there is simply no funding available and in the current economic climate and spending restrictions there is unlikely to be any for the foreseeable future.

In order to make in abundantly clear to members, the Chairman asked the Clerk to read out the full details of the Proposal from the Open Spaces Committee, including all of the attaching

conditions. The Chairman then invited Councillors to express their views.

Councillor Roger Etheridge advised the meeting that in his view the Wheel Field should be retained as a Public Open Space with minimal maintenance as it has been for a considerable number of years. Councillor Etheridge advised the meeting that the present position relating to consideration to improvement was only brought about by an Audit carried out by South Staffordshire District Council at the behest of Central Government. This survey was not at the request of the Parish Council, but the Parish Council has had to bear the brunt of the criticism of the Audit Report which has upset local residents. This has also occurred at a time that the Ex-Servicemens Bowling Club is seeking a new site and has further inflamed the local residents and split the community.

Councillor Etheridge acknowledged that the old Ridge and Furrow Cultivation System can be seen during winter months but is barely discernible when walking the field and certainly in his opinion nothing like the original ridge and furrows when the field was being cultivated, where the height between the ridge and furrow would have been quite substantial. With this in mind he did not believe it remained of significant historical interest.

Councillor Lewis Stovin advised members that, as they know and the public knows, he has been trying to help the Bowling Club find a new site for their bowling green and whilst initially believing the Wheel Field could offer a suitable location he has after very careful and lengthy consideration come to the opinion that the Parish Council does not have the legal or moral right to allow this green open space to be used for what is in real terms is use by a private club and restricting the areas use to the majority of Codsall residents. Councillor Stovin therefore is of the opinion that the Wheel Field should remain fully in the public domain.

Councillor Etheridge asked to make a further comment relating to the purchase of the field which he believed could mean forfeiting the field to the previous owners if certain changes were made or development allowed, but asked the Clerk to comment for clarity sake.

The Clerk advised that there were certain restrictions through covenants placed on the field by previous owners but that did not stop the Parish Council from seeking to overturn these covenants or seek permission within the covenants should the Parish Council deem it appropriate, there could of course be heavy cost implications.

Councillor Kenyon advised the meeting that in his view he did not believe that the use or agreement for use of the Bowling Club would represent a change in ownership. Councillor

Kenyon again advised of the opportunity for the village for improvements to the field at no cost to the community and he believed that this opportunity should be explored and not lost.

Councillor Michell advised the meeting that the Parish Council was receiving a report from the Open Spaces Committee, which had been carefully considered and drafted as an 'in principle' proposal outlining the way forward and that it was not an automatic agreement for use by the Bowling Club.

Many members then spoke making suggestions on modifying the proposal and involving the 'Friends of the Wheel Field'.

Chairman Councillor Christine Millar advised the meeting that the proposal on the table was not here for modification this evening, the Open Spaces Committee have given considerable time and thought to the proposal and it would not be appropriate this evening to be pulling apart and modifying this proposal. Councillor Millar asked Councillor Kenyon if he would be prepared to propose the document as tabled.

Councillor Kenyon proposed acceptance of the document as tabled, this was seconded by Councillor Michell and a vote was taken:

For	3
Against	7
Abstentions	0

The Chairman Christine Millar, in view of this resolution, stated in future any discussion relating to the Wheel Field should be held in a Main Meeting with all Councillors able to participate and not leave the Open Spaces Committee compromised.

- d. To receive** a proposal for The Wheel Field from 'Friends of Wheel Field' and letter of support from Mr & Mrs S Wildman.

The Chairman Councillor Christine Millar advised the meeting that in her opinion that this proposal should be received but no consideration should to be given for the foreseeable future due to lack of funds.

A lengthy discussion took place with several Councillors expressing the view that they would like the opportunity to discuss this proposal at a future time.

Councillor Etheridge proposed that the proposal from the 'Friends of the Wheel Field' should be received and retained for discussion by the Parish Council at some time in the future. This was seconded by Councillor Marshall, a vote was taken and unanimously agreed by all members.

- e. Request** for a Grant from Perton & Codsall Utd F.C, following a brief discussion Councillor Stovin proposed a grant of £200, this

was seconded by Cllr Marshall and unanimously approved by the meeting.

f. South Staffs Council

- i. **Consultation until 27th September re: Revised Supplementary Planning Document: Green Belt and Open Countryside (Dwellings) Policy Guidance Received and noted.**

g. Staffordshire County Council

- i. Letter from Philip Atkins Leader of the Council
Received and noted
 - ii. Recycling – Help set the rules
Letter from Cllr Tim Corbett Chairman Planning Committee
Received and noted
 - iii. Electoral Review of Staffordshire 2010
Invitation to Briefing 15th September, County Building, Stafford
Received and noted. The Clerk advised that we were encouraged to send a representative, Councillor Robert Marshall advised that as the County Councillor representative he will be in attendance and will bring the information back to the next Parish Council meeting.
- h. To receive** a letter from Mr Gavin Williamson M.P.
Received and noted

7. ACCOUNTS

- a. **A report** on Council Finances for year to 30th July & 31st August 2010, approval proposed by Councillor Campbell, seconded by Councillor Kenyon and unanimously approved by the meeting.
- b. **To receive** and approve schedule of payments to 8th September 2010. The Clerk went through the payment schedule advising of the various items, including payment of the renewed footbridge on Oaken Drive Field which had been completed and blended in extremely well to the setting. Approval proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Oatley and unanimously approved by the meeting.

Councillor Kenyon wished to comment on seeing the payment for the plants and hanging baskets he wished to record on how well the hanging baskets displays looked this year and particular the planters on the entrance to the village and elsewhere and he commended the workmen on their excellent maintenance and nurturing of these displays, this was unanimously endorsed by all members.

- c. i. **The Audit** Commissions External Auditors Certificate. Was received, which gave a clean bill of health to the Parish Councils financial records .
- ii. **To receive**, approve and authorise signature of Parish Council Accounts for year-end 31st March 2010. The Clerk explained that as a result of receiving the external auditors certificate, the Parish Councils accounts for the year ended 31st March could now be formally signed following formal approval by the meeting, approval proposed by Councillor Michell, seconded by Councillor Marshall and unanimously approved by the meeting.
- iii. **The payment** of Audit Commission Fee for £550 plus VAT. (already paid), was approved, approval proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Etheridge and unanimously approved by the meeting.
- d. **To approve** the gating of the 3 main entrances to Wheel Field and 2 kissing gates for resident access, for security and prevention of unauthorised vehicle access, at an approx. cost of £2500.00 + VAT. Approval proposed by Cllr Millar, seconded by Cllr Kenyon and unanimously approved by the meeting.

8. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

A written report from County Councillor Robert Marshall.

Compulsory Spending Review (CSR) will be published on the 20th October. The aim of the County Council is to save £20 million each year over the next 3 years. This will result in savings of £120 million over the next 3 years. In short hard decisions will have to be made.

Questions are being asked of County Council on the second High Speed Rail Link from London to Birmingham.

I will be attending a meeting shortly with a Highways Officer to show him numerous (very bad) bits of pavement.

9. CODSALL VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- a. The minutes of V.H.M.C. meeting of the 21st June 2010 and attaching reports were received and noted
- b. **Capital Grants & Loan Scheme** – South Staffs Council Request for additional grant support confirmed to District Council The Clerk after consultation with the Chair confirmed support to District Council during the summer break, formal approval proposed by Councillor Etheridge, seconded by Councillor Marshall and unanimously approved by the meeting.

10. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

A written report from District Councillor Robert Marshall was received this evening.

Capital programme so far this financial year; £364,895 has been spent out of a budget of £5787,110.

Performance Indicators for the year 09/10 overall look good so far these being:

Adults participating in targeted health programmes exceeded its target by 100%.

The number of affordable homes delivered was 93 against a target of 75

The numbers of anti social behaviour have fallen by more than 10%.

The major disappointment was that the number of working days lost to sickness absence went up from 6.95 days to 8.8 days. This is still below the national average.

11. Other Correspondence

- a. **St Nicholas** Parish Church – Christmas Tree Festival -
to consider participation
Cllr Matt Ewart to outline and if approved request formation of a subcommittee to implement.
In the absence of Cllr Matt Ewart this evening the Chairman differed this item to the next Planning Meeting on the 22nd September.

- b. **Staffordshire County Council**
 - i. “Staffordshire Unites” – Strategic Plan 2010-2015
Received and Noted

 - ii. **Local Government Pension Scheme 2008 – Statement of policy concerning exercise of discretionary functions.**

To review and confirm that Codsall Parish Council Policy Statements are the Policy Statements, including Discretionary Powers, as approved by Staffordshire County Council from time to time.
Unanimously approved by the meeting.

 - iii. **To receive** notification of “emerging” draft Waste Core Strategy.
Document can be viewed on;
www.staffordshire.gov.uk/e-consultation
Comments can be made on or before 1st October 2010.
Received **and noted**

- c. **Community Council of Staffordshire**
Invitation to A.G.M. and receive Annual report 2009-10
A.G.M. 7.30 p.m. 23rd September, Haling Dene Centre, Penkridge
Received and noted, no one is able to attend.

- d. **Staffordshire Playing Fields Association**
 - i. **Invitation to A.G.M. and receive Annual report 2009-10**

A.G.M. 2.00 p.m. 20th October, Wildwood, Stafford.
Received and noted, no one is able to attend.

ii. **To formally approve** Annual Subscription of £15, approval proposed by Councillor Michell, seconded by Councillor Millar and unanimously approved by the meeting .

NEXT MEETING
13th October 2010