

Haughton Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

Held on Monday 24th April 2017 at 7pm in Haughton Village Hall

Present:

Parish Councillors: Cllr M Allen, Cllr D Warbrick, Cllr I Sunley, Cllr G Anslow, Cllr Tim Grattage, Cllr I Forrester, Cllr A Heath as well as L Horritt, Clerk

Staffordshire County Councillor: Cllr M Winnington

26 members of the public

1 To receive any apologies

Apologies received from Borough Councillors Ray Sutherland and Stephen Leighton

2 To receive the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 25th April 2016

The minutes of the meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3 To Welcome Karen Armitage – Chief Executive of Stafford and Rural Homes

Cllr Allen welcomed Karen Armitage who gave a presentation about Stafford and Rural Homes who provide 6000 properties within Stafford Borough. They are now 10 years old, having taken on the housing stock from Stafford Borough Council in 2006. Initially time was spent investing in the current portfolio to show that the company were investable. Following this investment has been sought and this is resulting in new buildings including the Old Stafford Library site on Friars Terrace and new flats on Hesketh Road replacing very outdated properties.

The business is moving towards digital – this means real time servicing and being able to speak to one individual about different parts of the business reducing time spent.

The members of the public had an opportunity to ask questions and view the presentation slides.

4 To receive the Chairman's Report

Cllr Allen introduced the new Clerk to the Council – Lisa Horritt who started in September 2016. He gave a summary of the work of the Parish Council in the past 12 months. Achievements included Best Kept Village preparations resulting in 2nd place, grant funding which resulted in a new website to assist in compliance with statutory requirements, grant funding for both the War Memorial and Improvements to the Playing Field.

Challenges include issues on Redfern Rise which have taken up time, speeding for which an open meeting was held in November and Partnership working which was presented by Staffordshire County Council in February. Withdrawal of services by Staffordshire County Council will impact on all Parishes and it is being queried whether volunteer groups and Parishes can work to replace these gaps in service. This will be a significant challenge going forward.

He thanked all councillors, the Clerk and Mr Mathews who maintains the play area on behalf of the Parish Council, for their input to the work of the parish council.

4 To receive reports from other councillors including:

(a) Vice Chairman's report on Best Kept Village

Cllr Warbrick began by thanking Peter Lawrence who has put a lot of effort into co-ordinating the team. He noted that the goal posts had been moved in 2016, meaning Haughton was entered into the Small Village Competition having always previously entered the large village competition. He thanked everyone for their enthusiasm so far this year. Several dates are planned for village tidy up's and these dates are available on noticeboards around the village. Areas to be targeted include the Church, the pavement in front of the Church and other areas. Sponsorship is currently being sought for 2016 and is going well so far allowing the initial purchase of plans for the village.

(b) Borough and County Councillors reports

Borough Councillors were not present

County Councillor, Mark Winnington was welcomed to the meeting by the Chairman. He noted how relevant having Karen Armitage as working in partnership has allowed improvements to services in Stafford.

He noted that money from central government is being withdrawn and will be gone by 2020. This is presenting issues with budgets within the County Council. At present Stafford and Stoke are struggling to balance the books due to social care costs including £15M which was not received from the Better Care Fund. There are difficult choices ahead including pothole repairs vs social care. These are not good choices to have to make but are required.

A question was asked about access to increased funds from business rates. These have been promised but the County Council is unsure exactly how much funding they will receive.

7 To receive questions from parishioners

Parishioners were invited to ask questions. There were questions about:

- Updating the Parish Plan
- The War Memorial and planting around it ref BKV
- The phone box which is available for adoption

There were no future questions and the meeting was closed at 8.25pm

Chairman..... Date.....