

HAUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Suzanne Potts

www.haughton-staffs.org.uk

[Email:clerk@haughtonpc-staffs.org.uk](mailto:clerk@haughtonpc-staffs.org.uk)

MINUTES.

Minutes of the meeting held Friday, 10th September, 2021, at 7.00p.m at Haughton Village Hall.

Attendees: Cllr. M. Allen. Cllr. G. Anslow. Cllr. P. Prokopa. Cllr. I. Sunley. Cllr. S. Taylor. Cllr. D. Warbrick. Clerk to the Parish Council - S. Potts.

Public Open Forum: Three members of the public were present, two were applicants for the vacant Councillor position – both told the meeting that they were attending to observe the proceedings. Additionally, a third member of the public attended the meeting to raise concerns about speeding vehicles on the A518. Councillor Sunley detailed some of the measures that had been put in place and also gave details about the 40mph buffer zones that are currently under consideration.

1. To receive apologies and accept and record any reasons for absences.

Councillors Sutherland and Staffordshire Police tendered apologies. The apologies were accepted.

2. To receive any Declarations of interest in the following agenda.

None received.

3. To receive and confirm the minutes of the meetings held on Monday, 26 July 2021.

The minutes were proposed, seconded and approved as a true and accurate record.

4. To receive any reports from Borough, County Councillors, Clerk and PCSO.

Clerk submitted a report on the activities of the summer recess and the decisions taken. It included updates on the Annual Parish Meeting, the two benches being painted by the Aspire Group young people, the distribution of survey comments, the external audit, Haughton sign on Station Road, the purchase of a text book for Clerk's CiLCA course, illuminated signage for Haughton's Christmas lights, Stafford Borough Council's Community awards and Stafford Borough Council's Parish Forum.

Clerk is to seek at the request of Council, a price for illuminated warning signs which could be used to warn traffic entering the village of the increased number of pedestrians during the Christmas lights period. This price should be passed to the organiser's of the lights with a suggestion that they may consider taking up the quote. The Haughton Christmas lights is not a Parish Council organised activity.

5. To consider planning matters, including planning decisions, notifications of appeals. Updates on the following:

Planning Application Reference 21/34722/HOU Willowdene, Rectory Lane, Haughton and
Planning Application Reference 21/34220/OUT Land Adj. The Cottage, Church Eaton
Road, Haughton.

Both applications are showing on the Stafford Borough Council planning portal as
'awaiting decision'.

6. To consider matters of finance including:

a). To approve expenditure:

Due to the timing of this meeting being early in the month as the Annual Meeting has taken the usual 4th Monday date there were no accounts to approve. September expenditure will be approved at the next Parish Council meeting.

b). To receive financial reports:

As above.

Councillor Sunley told the meeting that he had lodged a complaint with Lloyds Bank over their handling of the request to update signatories, namely to transfer internet access from previous Clerk to new clerk. Lloyds have accepted they have an 'I.T. issue' and have offered to pay Haughton Parish Council £150 in compensation. Councillor Sunley requested Council's permission to raise two payments for £1 in order to test the system and ensure it complies with Financial Regulations. Council agreed for this to take place.

7. To discuss Highways, footpath issues including those requiring reporting.

a) Highways.

The Council instructed Clerk to write to the Staffordshire County Council (Highways) requesting a 20mph zone outside Haughton's Primary School. The Council request that this should be funded through the County Council's Highways budget. An update was given to the meeting on the site visit with Mark Keeling (Staffs County Council) and Councillor Winnington which took place on 20th August. The conclusion of the meeting was that final decisions would be made regarding which speed control measures would be implemented on the A518 following the Annual Parish Meeting on 27th September.

Correspondence received from Staffs County Council following an application submitted by the Parish Council to fit two bike racks in the space next to the phonebox advises that a licence to dig is required and for the contractor to be registered with the County Council. Clerk will liaise with Mark Keeling who has suggested that the County Council may be able to assist with the fitting. Clerk and Cllr Taylor to arrange the fitting of the two other bike racks outside the shops.

b) Footpaths.

Clerk updated Council on a site visit which took place earlier that day with Paul Rochfort, Principal Rights of Way Officer, at Dale Common to look at Footpath 9 and also initiate with Staffs County Council the potential for establishing a volunteer group to assist with Rights of Way maintenance.

A number of measures were discussed including a new finger post sign, some thicket clearing, and the installation of two bridle gates along with the taking of a pragmatic approach to the missing footbridge. On speaking to the landowner, Mr. Tom Busby it was established that the footbridge has been missing since 1971 but access to the footpath can be continued by a very slight variation by following the course of the brook until it meets a farm gate. By passing through this farm gate and then a second one the footpath is then relocated. Mr. Busby advised that walkers have been taking this option for 50 years and he gave consent for this in 1971 to the then Council of the time.

With regard to the volunteer working group, due to ongoing Covid-19 concerns, group volunteering is not currently encouraged by the County Council. It was proposed that this be revisited in 2022 and a meeting with the Volunteer Groups Support Manager could then be arranged.

Council approved for the above to take place and for Clerk to liaise with Mr. Rochford on the elements which will be carried out by Staffs County Council.

Clerk to request a price from local contractor to clear a broad path through the thicket behind the finger post, the neighbouring landowner has offered to maintain the clearing once it has been opened up.

Various email correspondence in relation to Footpaths / Rights of Way from Parishioner A. Hopper, previously circulated to Councillors via email were noted and acknowledged.

The Connecting Communities through Walking initiative from Stafford Borough Council and whether Haughton would benefit from taking part is to be deferred to a future meeting following more research.

8. To receive report from Councillors/Clerk on:

a) Park. Cllr. Taylor delivered the Park Warden's report to the meeting. The hedge has been cut by the farmer but unfortunately some damage to the edge of the brook in Grassy Lane has been caused by the tractor. A further two pales of the fence had been removed by vandals. Park warden to be asked to remove the plastic sleeves from the whips as and when he is able to.

b) Football Pitch. Clerk has approved two linings of the pitch, one to mark out the pitch at the beginning of the season and the second to go over the lines at a later date.

Clerk advised Council that she had raised the issue of the Parish Council seeking acquisition of the playing field with Cllr. Sutherland.

Council agreed unanimously for the acquisition of the playing field from the Stafford Borough Council to be pursued as soon as practicable and ask that Cllr. Sutherland pursue this on behalf of Houghton Parish Council and report back with any developments.

9. Parish Councillor vacancy – closing date for applications was 3rd September 2021. Council approved for Personnel Committee to conduct interviews with candidates as soon as practicable and make recommendation for appointment to full Council.

10. Council approved for the Parish Council website to host individual email addresses for Councillors following guidance issued by SPCA concerning data protection.

11. Dog gloves, the decision on the future use of dog gloves following Parish Survey was deferred to the October meeting. A four month supply has been purchased and these have been in use since early August and should last up to and including November.

12. The Council considered an email request from former Councillor A.Hopper for the approved June minutes to be amended to include the reason for her resignation. The Council did not consider that the minutes were inaccurate as no omission or errors had been made and the reasons for Councillor Hopper's resignation from the Parish Council had not been discussed at the June meeting and as a result did not form part of the minutes. The council concluded that the minutes accurately reflected the meeting, all Councillors voted unanimously in favour of the minutes as previously accepted.

13. The Procedures Review Working Group have commenced reviewing the Parish Council's policies. This is an annual legal requirement for the Parish Council.

14. One additional cut of the grass has been authorised by Clerk after the end of August, Council agreed for a further two cuts to take place this year bringing the total to fifteen cuts.

The grass cutting contract is in its final year of three. Clerk gained Council's approval to seek quotations for a new three year contract. The contract for Grassy Lane, footpath style strimming, football pitch etc will be brought together into the main quotation document for verges, Village Hall, park etc but the additional elements will require individual pricing for budgetary purposes. The number of cuts required for the new contract was agreed as fourteen minimum per year.

9.00pm – Standing orders suspended as the two hour time limit had expired. Council voted to continue with the meeting.

15. Ideas are sought from Councillors for next year's budget discussions. Ideas to be brought to October meeting and to include broad costings. A meeting of the Finance Committee will take place in November.

16. Allimore Green visits have been confirmed with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust - Tuesday 28th June at 2.00pm and Thursday 30th June at 6.30pm.

17. Correspondence has been received from Village Hall Secretary, Sue Beatty, thanking the Parish Council for the provision of a cycle rack. Peter Skelson has completed the re-varnishing of the Parish Council Notice Board, this has been carried out at no cost to the Parish Council. Clerk has written a letter of thanks to Peter. Additionally the Village Hall Deeds are now in the possession of the Haughton Parish Clerk for safekeeping.

18. Council considered and approved new contract for Clerk, S.Potts to reflect her permanent appointment from 1st August 2021 along with a clawback agreement in respect of the cost of the CiLCA course. Both were duly signed by the Chairman and Clerk.

19. Defibrillator training sessions will be held at the Bell Public House on Saturday 25th September and Saturday 16th October – both sessions to start at 10am. Training will be provided by Gnosall First Responders.

20. The date and time of the next meeting was confirmed. The meeting will follow the conclusion of the Parish Meeting, Monday 27th September 2021.

21. Meeting close 9.36pm