WERRINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD MONDAY 8TH APRIL 2024

AT WERRINGTON VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT

Cllrs B Hughes (Chair), J Morrison (Vice Chair) (arrived 7.05pm)

Cllrs P Nixon, J Fryer, K Griffiths, S Hill, C Brownsword, D Brindley, L Ibbs, P Brown, N Meakin

Z Grindey (Clerk), G Keiher-Knapper (Deputy Clerk)

County Cllr R Ward

Also in attendance was District Cllr P Hughes

APOLOGIES

Cllr D Normington

There were 7 members of the public present.

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.00pm

Cllr K Griffiths stated that further to matters discussed at the last meeting, he has now clarified that parking can be considered as antisocial behaviour.

001/24 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A resident raised the issue of planning application SMD/2023/0565. It was agreed to consider making a late submission.

A resident raised the condition of Eaves Lane, near to Kerry Hill Farm, and asked if the Council were aware of any update from Amey regarding the work required. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the Council had not received any update from Amey or the Highways Department. County Cllr R Ward stated that he was aware of a forthcoming road closure but was unsure if this was to carry out the work.

A member of the Bowling Club informed the Council that young people were getting into the Bowling Green through a gap at the back, from the copse, and requested that the Council install new fencing to prevent this. It was agreed to consider this.

A resident raised the issue of the amount of water on Chatsworth Drive. This has been reported to the relevant authorities but keeps getting passed around with nobody accepting responsibility. Cllr J Fryer reported that this had been investigated previously. Cllr R Ward agreed to speak to Cllr J Fryer about the issue and the Deputy Clerk agreed to share the report she had received.

A resident stated that they had requested a copy of the audit and annual accounts which had not been received. The Deputy Clerk stated that she had responded to the request, informing the resident that this was available on the Council's website. The resident stated that they wanted a hard copy. The

Deputy Clerk informed them that this would be chargeable, as set out in the audit requirements. The Clerk explained how the auditing of local councils works, what information is available, and about the Exercise of Public Rights.

A resident raised the issue of the planning appeal for a Sustainable Energy Battery Storage facility at Armshead Farm (APP/B3438/W/23/3335922). Cllr P Brown explained that he has been monitoring the application and that the Council would consider commenting on the appeal. The Deputy Clerk stated that Checkley Parish Council have appealed against a similar application in their area and suggested working together with other local parish councils as this is an issue affecting many areas in the Staffordshire Moorlands. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would contact other councils to see if there was any interest in working together.

A resident made a public declaration that they are holding the Parish Council responsible for the health and safety of people using the bottom end of Meigh Road Playing Fields. They feel that the ground conditions, being very wet and muddy, are not safe and that the area should be completely closed off, including the bottom entrance onto Meigh Road. Cllr J Fryer stated that this has been an issue in this area for many years, and that the Council has previously spent money trying to remedy it. Cllr R Ward recommended that the Council have an independent health and safety inspection carried out. Cllr K Griffiths stated that the Council would investigate further.

Cllr D Brindley reported that he had heard a rumour that a petition for a vote of no confidence in the Parish Council was circulating in the village. A resident stated that he was aware of the petition, however he was not aware of any alternative to the current Council being put forward.

002/24 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cllr R Ward provided an update. Potholes on Leek Road are due to be filled during the school summer holidays. £286m has been made available for a transport plan. Unemployment in the area is currently at 2.9%. Approval has been given for six new children's homes to be built. Staffordshire County Council will continue to provide free holiday activities and lunches for those in receipt of free school meals.

003/24 APOLOGIES

Apologies from Cllr D Normington were not accepted.

004/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

005/24 REGISTER OF INTERESTS:

Councillors were reminded to maintain their register of interests.

006/24 ACCURACY OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the following meeting were reviewed for accuracy.

a) Minutes of the meeting held 11th March 2024

Cllr J Morrison proposed that the minutes be approved. This was seconded by Cllr C Brownsword and carried.

007/24 ACTION PLAN:

The action plan was reviewed and updated.

It was agreed that confirmation would be sought from the developer of the new housing if they had removed the bus shelter, who gave permission for this and where will the new one be sited.

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the MUGA meets the criteria for the new S106 funding.

Cllr K Griffiths reported that there is no edging to the tarmac at Meigh Road car park where it joins the track to the shed. It was felt that this could fall away in the summer months. Cllr J Morrison stated that she would ask Jeff Farrington to advise.

It was agreed that all new projects will have a lead Councillor allocated. Lead Councillors will be discussed and allocated at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May.

A discussion was held regarding the lack of presence by the local PCSO, and that they no longer attended Council meetings. This matter would be raised by the Chair and Cllr K Griffiths at their meeting with the Chief Inspector.

Cllr K Griffiths proposed writing to the property on Meigh Road to request that the hedge overgrowing onto the park is cut back to the boundary. This was seconded by Cllr L Ibbs and carried with 5 abstaining.

Cllr N Meakin left the meeting 8.30pm-8.35pm

008/24 ACCOUNTS:

The following were reviewed:

a) March accounts (circulated via email)
b) April payment schedule (circulated via email)

Cllr J Morrison proposed that the March accounts and the April payment schedule were approved. This was seconded by Cllr P Nixon and carried.

009/24 STAFF REPORTS:

a) The Clerk provided an update.

- Work to transfer to a new website is underway. The new web address will be werringtonparishcouncil.com. This may be transferred to a .gov.uk domain in the future.
- Approval has been given to remove a fallen tree under delegated authority.
- A site has been agreed for the second CCTV camera at Meigh Road park and nearby residents have been informed by letter.
- A positive meeting had taken place with the local Scout Leader. They are keen to work with the Council on any relevant future projects.
- Up to date figures were provided for the Public Works Loans Board loan.
- A new inner liner has been ordered for the damaged bin at the park.
- The new defibrillator is now up and running on the shed at Meigh Road.

b) The Deputy Clerk had previously circulated an update. Key points were discussed. It was agreed to wait until the roadworks have been completed before obtaining quotes for the Speed Indicator Sign. Approval was given for the Deputy Clerk to carry out the jet washing of the building at the sports ground.

c) Village Warden's report – Cllr P Nixon provided an update. There has been a further increase in the amount of fly tipping, especially on the car park at Meigh Road. Motorbikes/electric scooters have been seen using Meigh Road park. This has been reported to the Police.

010/24 HIGHWAYS WORKING GROUP:

The working group have not met since the last Council meeting. A discussion was held regarding the number of potholes.

011/24 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP:

Cllr N Meakin reported that the letter to the Chief Executive of SMDC is still ongoing. Cllr N Meakin raised the issue of contractors working over the bank holiday and without PPE. This has been reported to SMDC. It was reported that the rear fence has been removed from 386 Ash Bank Road and the stone wall has been damaged.

012/24 ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) WORKING GROUP

Cllr K Griffiths provided an update.

013/24 ALLOTMENTS

Cllr K Griffiths provided an update.

014/24 SPORTS GROUND

The following were considered:

a) Request to hire the venue for Murder Trial Live – ***Cllr K Griffiths proposed that this was agreed. This was seconded by Cllr J Morrison and carried.***
b) Request to use pest control to manage the issue of rabbits chewing through the nets – ***Cllr K Griffiths proposed that this was agreed. This was seconded by Cllr C Brownsword and carried with 7 abstentions.***

015/24 MEIGH ROAD PLAYING FIELDS

A discussion was held regarding the increased antisocial behaviour, vandalism and fly-tipping/littering at Meigh Road playing fields. The potential of closing the park completely in the evening was considered but not felt necessary at this time.

Cllr P Brown and the Deputy Clerk left the meeting 9.30pm to 9.35pm

Cllr C Brownsword stated that the Council need to work with young people and get them to police themselves, rather than enforcing matters.

016/24 D DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

It was reported that the Werrington Community Volunteers Group (WCVG) will be lighting a beacon and celebrating the event, with refreshments provided.

Cllr J Morrison proposed the purchase of the Royal British Legion flag. This was seconded by Cllr L Ibbs and carried with 1 against.

017/24 PROVISIONS FOR THE DISABLED

Cllr C Brownsword requested that Council meetings are recorded, audio and video, and posted on YouTube to enable access to meetings by those unable to attend in person. Quotes for the necessary equipment were provided at approximately £250.

It was reported that the only shop in the village which is accessible by a wheelchair is the Co-op. Ramps are needed to access all others. Cllr C Brownsword agreed to draft a flyer about disability grants which the Deputy Clerk agreed to drop off at local businesses.

There is a lack of play equipment suitable for use by disabled children. A discussion was held. It was reported that unfortunately, in order to access any grants for disabled friendly play equipment, numbers of disabled children in the area need to be provided to justify the need.

Other issues discussed were parking on pavements and dog mess. It was agreed to look into the possibility of putting a link to the new website in braille on the noticeboard. The new facilities in Cheadle were discussed, which could be advertised to those with a disability living in Werrington.

018/24 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

A discussion was held following the meeting earlier in the day with Hannah Barton regarding producing a Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr J Morrison proposed that the Council start the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan and engage Hannah Barton to assist. This was seconded by Cllr J Fryer and carried. It was agreed that Cllr J Morrison would lead.

019/24 PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The current method of reviewing planning applications was discussed. It was agreed that the Clerk would send weekly reports to Councillors, detailing any planning applications received in that week, along with a link to the planning portal for Councillors to access further information. Prior to the agenda being sent out for the monthly full Council meetings, the Clerk will check if Councillors wish to hold a Planning Committee meeting beforehand to discuss any of the applications received.

020/24 POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The following policies and procedures, previously circulated by email, were reviewed:

a) Dignity at Work policy – new policy
b) Complaints procedure – review of current procedure – no updates

Cllr J Morrison proposed that both were adopted/readopted. This was seconded by Cllr L Ibbs and carried.

021/24 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to consider.

022/24 COUNCILLOR UPDATES/ITEMS

Cllr P Brown provided an update regarding the planning application for a battery storage facility on Armshead Road. This application was refused by SMDC but has now gone to appeal. It was agreed that Cllr P Brown would draft an objection which the Clerk would then submit to the Planning Inspectorate. Following discussion, the Deputy Clerk agreed to liaise with neighbouring parishes regarding setting up a meeting to discuss the matter of solar farms and battery storage facilities across the local area

Meeting Closed at 10.15pm

DATE OF NEXT MEETING IS 13TH MAY 2024