



## High Offley Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting Held at 19:30 hours on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021, outside Woodseaves Village Hall.

### **Councillors Present.**

E. Halls; D. Turpin; S. Celecia; R. Hockenhull; M. Smith; M. Turvey and Staffordshire County Councillor Mark Winnington, together with the Clerk, S. Ridgewell and five Members of the Public.

### **Public Open Forum.**

Members of the public spoke about the alleged contravention of the weight restriction on Dicky's Lane by the drivers of Large Goods Vehicles; the alleged speeding of vehicles on Dicky's Lane and High Offley Road; a possible additional car park at Woodseaves C of E Academy, Dicky's Lane and the proposed Baby and Toddler Group. All contributions were noted for further discussion under the relevant Agenda items or the next meeting.

### **21/063: To Receive Apologies and Record Absences.**

Apologies were received from P. Mason and Stafford Borough Councillor, P. Farrington.

### **21/064: To Receive and Consider the Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting Held on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021.**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record.

### **21/065: To Note any Declarations of Interest.**

Councillor Halls declared an interest, as a Parent Governor at Woodseaves C of E Academy, in Agenda items 21/071 & 21/074.

### **21/066: To Receive an Update on the Willowcroft Bus Shelter.**

The Clerk confirmed to council that the bus shelter had been installed on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June. Councillor Turvey stated that payment for the shelter had been confirmed.

### **21/067: To Receive an Update on the Post Box at Grub Street.**

The clerk informed council that he had raised an Enquiry (210511-008759) with the Royal Mail Customer Services, but had not received an explanation about the status of the postbox from them. As a result, the Clerk said he had visited the Royal Mail's Stafford Depot on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup>

July to request an update, which was subsequently received from a Royal Mail employee, during the early afternoon of Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> July. The substance of this update was that the post box had been temporarily removed due to it suffering damage and posing a danger to traffic. It had been stated that the Royal Mail were liaising with 'the Council' (possibly Staffordshire County Council) about re-siting the post box, but there was no update with progress.

Councillor Smith said that the pillar the post box had been fixed to, was not damaged and was set back from the road.

**Action:** The Clerk was requested to liaise with Diane Firkins at Staffordshire County Council Highways to ascertain if, indeed, the Royal Mail are liaising in respect of the post box and to continue in seeking re-installation of the post box by Royal Mail.

#### **21/068: To Receive an Update on the Flag for St. Mary's Church, High Offley.**

The Clerk reported that he had taken delivery of the flag and provided it to Councillor Turvey for him to hand over to St. Mary's Church.

#### **21/069: To Receive an Update on the Speed Signs and Speed Limit on Stafford Road.**

The Clerk updated council that he had liaised with Diane Firkins at Staffordshire County Council Highways and that the project would be around five months from completion, once High Offley Parish Council are informed that the consultation process was commencing.

In relation to the reports from members of the public during Public Open Forum, Councillor Winnington said he was in contact with Melanie Langdown from the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership and that he would seek suggestions from Melanie about how the continuing alleged offences could be addressed.

**Action:** The Clerk agreed to contact Melanie Langdown separately to make the same request.

#### **21/070: To Discuss Flooding Issues at Peggs Lane, Dicky's Lane & Shebdon.**

Councillor Winnington reported that he had met with Councillor Smith and representatives of Staffordshire County Council Highways concerning the ongoing flooding issues. Councillor Winnington said that Highways had agreed to deliver two-hundred metres of pipe to a parishioner, for installation beneath land adjacent to Peggs Lane, to allow drainage, but was unsure if this had been completed. Councillor Winnington agreed to seek an update regarding the delivery of the pipe.

Councillor Winnington also advised that the flooding at Shebdon and Dicky's Lane were issues that would take time to be resolved. In respect of Dicky's Lane, Councillor Winnington stated that investigation of the drains had revealed that surface water was draining into the sewer and that an alternative route for drainage had been referred to Amey. Councillor Winnington agreed to seek an update regarding the situation at Shebdon.

#### **21/071: To Consider Making a Grant to the Woodseaves Parent & Toddler Group.**

Council heard from two members of the public who were seeking £800 in funding for the formation of a Baby & Toddler Group to be run at Woodseaves Village Hall. Councillor Turvey said that monies previously granted to the Youth Club and budgeted for could be utilised as a

contribution. The Clerk confirmed that the Youth Club had previously received £190 from council for the Youth Club, which was currently not in operation due to the pandemic. Councillor Winnington offered to share information regarding Staffordshire County Council grants with the members of the public, if they contacted him via email. Council requested that the Clerk explore the possibility of any further contribution being made by High Offley Parish Council. The representative of the Baby & Toddler Group provided a copy of their Safeguarding Policy to the Clerk for review.

**Resolution:** Council unanimously agreed to grant £190 to the Baby & Toddler Group, if the review of the Safeguarding Policy by the Clerk was considered satisfactory.

**Action:** The Clerk agreed to review the Safeguarding Policy and explore the possibility of any further contribution being made by High Offley Parish Council.

#### **21/072: To Acknowledge a Request from the Staffordshire Parish Councils Association.**

The Clerk informed council that a general request from the Staffordshire Parish Council's Association (SPCA) had been made on 27th May, to the effect that any requests for information from the SPCA, or the National Association of Local Councils, **must** be made via either the Clerk, or the Chair and this was acknowledged by all councillors present.

#### **21/073: To Consider Making a Grant to Two Parishioners for First Aid Training.**

The Clerk stated that he had received a request from Alison Horton, Clerk to Adbaston Parish Council, for council to consider making a grant to fund first aid training for two parishioners. It was questioned what benefit there would be to the wider community by making such a grant.

**Action:** the Clerk agreed to liaise further with Alison Horton to ascertain what, if anything, the parishioners would be offering to the wider community within the parish.

#### **21/074: To Discuss the Concept of a School Car Park.**

Councillor Turvey reported that he had been contacted by a parishioner who was considering offering land for sale to High Offley Parish Council, with a view to it being utilised for additional parking at Woodseaves C of E Academy. Councillor Turvey stated the possibility had been explored to some extent previously, by Councillor Smith himself, but the potential cost to High Offley Parish Council may be prohibitive.

**Action:** Councillor Turvey to liaise further with the parishioner concerned to ascertain if there was any likelihood of such a project moving forward with council's assistance.

#### **21/075: To Consider Adoption of Revised Standing Orders.**

Councillors had been sent the draft document in June to allow sufficient time for thorough consideration of the contents. Both Councillor Turvey and Councillor Halls requested that the maximum tenure of the Chair's office be four years. There were no other requested amendments.

**Resolution:** Council voted unanimously to accept the revised Standing Orders once the amendment to the Chair's maximum tenure was made.

### **21/076: To Consider Adoption of Financial Regulations.**

Councillors had been sent the draft document in June to allow sufficient time for thorough consideration of the contents.

\* **Note:** Councillor Halls had previously requested that the months identified for setting and considering the budget be amended, in addition to requesting amendment to the review of banking arrangements. There were no other requested amendments. Albeit that council voted unanimously to accept the Financial Regulations, the requested amendments were not shared, in error. Consequently, the Financial Regulations warrant further consideration at the next meeting.

### **21/077: To Consider Adoption of a Revised Code of Conduct.**

Councillors had been sent the draft document in June to allow sufficient time for thorough consideration of the contents.

Councillor Halls requested that the onus on the individual with pecuniary interests be highlighted and that it be clarified that the Monitoring Officer was located at Stafford Borough Council. There were no other requested amendments.

**Resolution:** Council voted unanimously to accept the revised Code of Conduct, once the requested clarifications were made in respect of Pecuniary Interests and the Monitoring Officer.

### **21/078: To Consider Planning Applications.**

a) 21/34426/HOU; Hargwyn, Newport Road, Woodseaves.

There were no objections to this planning application.

### **21/079: To Discuss Public Rights of Way Issues and the PRow Group.**

Councillor Halls updated council on progress with the PRow Group, stating that there are now around twenty volunteers. The group has had a meeting via Zoom, Councillor Halls said, and the group's aims and objectives had been agreed.

### **21/080: To Discuss Highway Issues.**

a) Damage to the Woodseaves Sign on Stafford Road

The Clerk said this fault had been reported on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May (reference 4240664).

b) Driver Behaviour on Stafford Road, at the Junction with Dicky's Lane.

Councillor Halls stated she had received complaints from parishioners about driver behaviour close to the school, including vehicle overtaking on the Stafford Road at the junction with Dicky's Lane.

**Action:** The Clerk agreed to include a description of such behaviour in his communication with Melanie Langdown (at 21/069 above) and explore the feasibility of having double white lines at the location with Diane Firkins at Staffordshire County Council Highways.

c) Average Speed Camera Statistics.

The Clerk stated he had obtained the following data from Mark Keeling at Staffordshire County Council Highways:

Month	Notices of Intended Prosecution Issued	Top Speed (mph)
January	62	67
February	79	47
March	97	47
April	92	46
May	69	58

- d) Councillor Turpin reported that there continued to be an issue with the drivers of Large Goods Vehicles travelling to Premier Foods in Shebdon, along a route that included low bridges underneath which they were able to fit, despite ample signage. Councillor Smith added that this continued to be a problem, despite several attempts to address it previously.

**Action:** Councillor Smith agreed to draft a letter for the Clerk to send to Premier Foods in an effort to prevent future danger to road users.

#### **21/081: To Consider Finance Matters.**

- a) Preceding Expenditure.

The Clerk reported that the payments authorised previously had been made in respect of Printer Cartridges; Web Hosting; Flag & Chair's Course.

- b) Payments Requested:

**Resolution:** The following payments were unanimously agreed:

- i) Auditor Gift: £16 (reimbursement of Clerk);
- ii) Stamps £12 (reimbursement of Clerk);
- iii) PRoW Maps £12 (reimbursement of Clerk);
- iv) Information Commissioner's Office Data Certificate: £40;
- v) BHIB Insurance Renewal: £241.32 (no change from previous year);
- vi) Web Domain Name Renewal: £14.39 and
- vii) Planning Course attended by Councillor Halls: £30.

- c) Update Regarding Online Banking and Income from Complaint.

The Clerk reported that High Offley Parish Council finally had the facility to bank online and that a complaint made to Lloyds Bank had resulted in a compensation payment to High Offley Parish Council of £171.

d) Update on the Annual Governance & Accountability Return.

The Clerk reported that the Annual Governance & Accountability Return had been submitted successfully and the notice period for the Exercise of Public Rights had now expired.

#### **21/082: Declarations of Pecuniary Interest.**

Further to the request made at the Annual Meeting on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and in a subsequent email to councillors, the Clerk requested that all councillors that had not already done so, review their Registered Interests and respond accordingly.

#### **21/083: To Request Items for the Next Council Meeting Agenda.**

In addition to regular items and the aforementioned items that warrant further discussion at the next meeting, the Clerk stated that he would add an item concerning Her Majesty, The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations next year and requested that councillors give consideration to the involvement of High Offley Parish Council in this historic event.

#### **21/084: To Confirm the Time and Date of the Next Council Meeting.**

The date on the next meeting was agreed as Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021, to be held at Woodseaves Village Hall.

Councillor Smith expressed his frustration that meetings could no longer be held via video conferencing, despite an apparent rise in infections and hospital admissions due to Covid-19.

**Action:** Councillor Smith agreed to draft a letter for the Clerk to send to the Local Government Association about the issue.

**\* Members of the Public were Excluded Whilst Confidential Matters are Discussed.**

#### **21/085: Staff Matters.**

a) Councillor Halls reported that she had met with Councillor Turvey and the Clerk to discuss the Clerk's six-month probation period and review. Councillor Halls reported positively on the Clerk's performance and recommended that the Clerk remain in post.

**Resolution:** The Clerk's continued employment with High Offley Parish Council was unanimously agreed.

b) Councillor Halls recommended that the Clerk's pay be increased to SCP 7, back dated to May. Councillor Turvey stated that the pay scales were likely to change shortly which would also apply to the Clerk's pay for April to May.

**Resolution:** The proposed increase in the Clerk's pay was unanimously agreed.

c) The Clerk reported that his unadjusted pay for April to June was £614.40p and that adjustments to his pay would be included in the next pay period (July-September).

**Resolution:** The Clerk's pay was unanimously agreed.

d) The Clerk requested that council consider expenditure for enrolling him for a Certificate in Local Council Administration qualification, starting in September 2021. The cost of the qualification is currently £250 for the portfolio course, provided by the Staffordshire Parish Council's Association, and £410 for registration with the Society of Local Council Clerks, to a total of £660.

**Resolution:** Expenditure on the CiLCA qualification for the Clerk was unanimously agreed.

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 21:12 hours.

S. Ridgewell, Clerk to Council. Friday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021.