Minutes of a Meeting of Prees Parish Council

held on Monday January 15th 2024 at 7.15pm in Prees Village Hall.

Present: Cllrs Mrs S Short; Mrs B Finch; Mrs S Jones; Mrs R Clutton; Mrs J Catterall; R Hirons; M Lanham and P Wynn.

Also present were eight members of the public and Mrs K Sieloff clerk to the PC.

**001/24 Public Session**

A member of the public shared his concerns about vehicles parking on the double yellow lines on the Crossroads in the centre of Prees.

**002/24 Apologies**

Cllrs Mrs L Baer; J Whelan and D Ladd.

**003/24 Disclosures of Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interest.**

There were none declared.

**004/24 Signing of Minutes of Previous Meeting.**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18.12.23, which had been previously circulated, were agreed to be a true record. It was proposed by Cllr Mrs B Finch that they should be signed and this was seconded by Cllr M Lanham. All were in favour.

**005/24 Actions Arising from the Minutes not included on the Agenda.**

The clerk confirmed that the Chairmanship Board had been updated and that the missing timber posts at Higher Heath playing field were due to be replaced on the following Friday.

**006/24 Community Policing.** The clerk had been told that unfortunately no police officer would be available to attend the meeting. No report had been received.

**007/24 Co-option of new Parish Councillor.**

Three candidates spoke to the Parish Council about their motivation for applying for the post and the skills and experience they offered to the role.

A confidential vote resulted in John Redgate being appointed. The Chair thanked all three candidates for their applications and told them that the decision had been a difficult one, with three strong candidates all offering valuable expertise and experience.

John Redgate was attending via Zoom, as he was out of the country. The clerk confirmed that she would arrange for him to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office on his return later in the month.

**008/24 Parish and Parish Council Matters**

**Vehicles parking on double yellow lines at the Crossroads.**

The clerk read out a report re-capping on the concerns the Parish Council has had over the past years and the actions it has taken to endeavour to remedy the situation. It was acknowledged that enforcing the double yellow lines is not a matter for the Police, but for Shropshire Council’s Civil Enforcement Officers. It is the case that the Police are only able to intervene, except in an advisory capacity, if a dangerous situation arises or the highway is blocked.

Loading and unloading is permitted on double yellow lines, but parking is not. An exception to the no-parking rule is for Blue Badge holders, but even these drivers are exhorted by the Highway Code to assess if it is safe to park in that situation.

The Parish Council had appealed to SC on several occasions for help, especially as the Fire Wagon often experiences difficulty in getting through when vehicles are parked on the double yellows, and the officer in charge in Prees has expressed his understandable frustration and distress to the Parish Council.

When the PC asked for signage reinforcing the no parking restriction, SC traffic officers responded that the usual way forward was to step up enforcement. Enforcement officers attended for a day and handed out seven tickets, but as soon as they were gone, the effect was predictably found to be short-lived.

The PC has erected one sign of its own to reinforce the double yellows, but without noticeable effect.

The PC has again asked SC to advise and support, and to attend for enforcement activity.

Cllr M Lanham pointed out that enforcement is just one way of tackling the problem and in his opinion there are others. He suggested lots of people see no harm in parking briefly on the double yellow lines, so that a campaign of education is necessary, so that vehicle drivers review the possible dangerous consequences of their actions. Cllr Lanham suggested a regular police presence could assist in this face-to-face education. He also suggested that the car park behind the village hall, owned by Shropshire Council, could be made more appealing so that at least able-bodied drivers would be more likely to use it.

The efficacy of social media in easily reaching lots of local people was acknowledged. It was agreed that a small group should be formed to be in charge of social media posts, so that all words are considered and reasonable. Cllr Mrs Julie Catterall volunteered to join the Chair in this group and the clerk was asked to attend too.

The use of cameras to record illegal parking was mooted, but is acknowledged to be fraught with difficulty. Clerk to make some enquiries about the parameters for their use.

**Shropshire Council Report**. (Brought forward on the Agenda as Cllr Wynn had another meeting to attend.)

Cllr Wynn reported that the future of the Civic Centre is being discussed. There was a public meeting and the matter was going back to Cabinet in the middle of the week.

He said he would do what he could to help with the problematic parking at the Crossroads. He undertook to ask SC Traffic Enforcement Officers to drop in and also to ask for attention to increase the appeal of the car park behind the Village Hall including repair of pot-holes and replacement signage.

**Request for Confirmation of Local Connection.**

A resident’s documents had been previously circulated to all parish councillors and there was a unanimous decision to support the claim to Local Connection. This was proposed by Cllr Mrs B Finch and seconded by Cllr Mrs R Clutton. All were in favour.

**Grants and Donations**.

A request for a donation of £299.71 from Prees Scouts Group, to cover the cost of cooking equipment, had been received and circulated to all the cllrs. Cllr R Hirons proposed that the donation should be approved and this was seconded by Cllr Mrs J Catterall. All were in favour. Clerk to raise the cheque for the February meeting.

**Playground Enhancements**.

Higher Heath playground. Cllr Hirons and the clerk had had a further meeting with a representative from Playscape Ltd but the detailed quotation for the zip-wire had not yet been received.

Prees Playground. A second quote for the removal of the earth mound housing the slide had been received. This was considerably more expensive than the first quote which had been supplied by Oliver Gittins. It was resolved to accept the cheaper quote and have the mound removed. Proposed by Cllr Mrs R Clutton and seconded by Cllr M Lanham. All were in favour.

**Replacement of Parish Map outside Village Hall.**

The clerk advised that she was having difficulty obtaining a suitable Ordnance Survey map, although this was supposed to be achievable on-line through Shropshire Council. Cllr Mrs R Clutton offered to help the clerk with this matter. The clerk gratefully accepted.

**Over-grown state of old Canteen site, Prees Industrial Estate.**

Cllr Mrs J Catterall expressed concern about the untidy, over-grown state of this abandoned site. Clerk to telephone the manager of the industrial estate to register the concern.

**009/24 Planning Matters**

**Planning applications for consultation**.

There were none.

**Planning Decisions received from Shropshire Counci**l.

23/04656/VAR: Former Gro-Continental/Skylarks, Heathwood Road, Higher Heath SY13 2HF. Variation of Condition 1 attached to planning permission 15/05307/REM dated 6 January 2017 (plots 45-60 inclusive.) Decision: Grant Permission.

23/04826/FUL: Alandale, Preeswood, Prees, Shropshire SY13 2EL. Demolition of existing dwelling and ancillary building and construction of replacement dwelling and detached garage. Decision: Grant Permission.

**010/24 Housekeeping matters.**

The clerk was asked to contact the Waste Management department at Shropshire Council in order to obtain new larger bins to replace those currently outside the two shops in Prees village centre.

**011/24 Facebook.** Nothing additional to report, beside the discussion about the situation at the Crossroads.

**012/24 SALC.** Cllr Mrs J Catterall regretted that she had been unable to attend the recent meeting due to illness in the family.

**013/24 Accounting Matters**

**Accounts for Payment January 2024**

£

K D Sieloff salary January 2024+ back-pay April-Dec 2023 890.74

HMRC (PAYE) 116.00

K D Sieloff (expenditure.13.12.23-10.1.24) 18.35

Groundforce Landscape Ltd ( December 2023) 264.22

Scottish Power (streetlight energy) 408.58

Garoll Construction 480.00

Highline Electrical Ltd 4839.00

SALC 30.00

Pimlotts Ground Maintenance Ltd (works December 2023) 160.00

**Total 7206.89**

Clerk’s expenditure 13.12.23-10.1.24

*BT line rental contribution January 2024: £ 12.50*

*Petrol:1 x trip to noticeboards (Dec Agenda etc) 8 miles @ 45p per mile =£3.60*

*Stamps:3 x second class stamps @ 75p = £2.25*

Total = £18.35

The clerk explained that the JMC pay award to be implemented from April 1 2023 was announced Nov 2023.

The award increased the clerk’s hourly rate by £1.00 per hour to £12.42 p/h.

The clerk is contracted to work 47 hours per month, so the pay-rise is £47 per month.

April to December is 9 months. £47.00 x 9 = £423 of back-pay due.

Budget 2024-25

The clerk wanted clarification in the Minutes of what was agreed last month, as she felt the Minutes were not completely clear.

The operational budget, which was agreed at the last meeting, is for £33,975.

It was also agreed that the Precept contribution per Band D household would only be increased by 3%. This means for the year 2024-25 each household will make a contribution of £24.34, which is an increase of 71p on the current financial year ( £23.63.)

We have more households contributing to the calculation in the new financial year (new total of 1205.58 households) which means the Precept to be requested from SC will be £29,343.00 for 2024-25.

As agreed at the last meeting, the shortfall in the operational Budget will be met by reserves: this figure is £4,632.00.

It was resolved that these clarifications were approved and accepted. Proposed by Cllr R Hirons and seconded by Cllr M Lanham. All were in favour.

014/24 Correspondence

The Chair had received a letter from Prees Bowling Club thanking the Parish Council for the donation given towards equipment to encourage younger players to join the Club.

015/24 Items for the next Agenda

The Parish Council’s Aspirations.

The meeting was closed at 9pm.

Signed…………………………………………………Dated……………………………………..