

Hammerwich Parish Council Minutes

17 January 2024

Date: 17th January 2024 (Wednesday)

Time: 7:00pm

Venue: WI Hall, Hammerwich

In attendance:

Councillors Greenway (Chair), King (Vice-chair), Grundy, Mears, Taylor, Smith and Ubhie

Also in attendance:

Councillor Janice Silvester-Hall from Lichfield District Council (LDC)

4 Member of the Public

Clerk:

Vivien Wang

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies was received and accepted from Councillor D Smith of SCC due to a long-standing meeting.

Apologies for lateness were received from Cllr J Smith due to car issue and Cllr J Silvester-Hall due to a meeting LDC.

Noted and accepted.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Grundy declared an interest relating to LDC, husband's business asked to do work on behalf of the Council.

Cllr Ubhie declared an interest that he is the owner of the property that affected by the flooding on Ashmall/Meerash Lane.

Noted

3. Approval of the minutes of 20 December 2023

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 20 December 2023 was approved.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Noted

5. Chairman's Announcements

Chair reported that she has received a petition, said to have consisted of 160 signatures from residents, just before the meeting commences. The petition demanded the flooding (due to broken drains) at Meerash Lane be fixed by urgent actions to avoid potentially dangerous driving conditions. Chair said this will be discussed at this meeting for it is one the agenda.

Chair had also reminded all HPC councillors to stay polite and respectful when working with SCC.

Noted

6. County/District/Police Reports

The report from District was moved to after Public Participation as the District Councillor was late due to a meeting at LDC.

Councillor J Silvester-Hall (LDC)

Cllr Silvester-Hall updated that the date for Leisure Greenway project has not been set yet, while there is a growing number of volunteers to support the clearance of trail.

Cllr Silvester-Hall said she is urging Police to continue work on combating the racing on Burntwood Bypass.

Noted.

7. Planning Applications

The council has no comment towards the following planning applications:

23/01445/FUH – 67 Norton Lane

23/01061/FUL – 159 Highfields Road (amended info)

23/01392/FUL – Erasmus Darwin Academy, Pool Road

23/01455/FUL – 8 Park Road, Burntwood

Noted



8. Speedwatch

30mph repeater at Hospital Road:

Cllr Taylor reported that she is awaiting a quotation from SCC.

Chair requested the Clerk to check whether the insurance for the Speedwatch Device is still valid if it is kept by a councillor who has no permanent home address now.

Noted

(Cllr J Smith joined the meeting at 7.28pm)

9. Highways and Footpaths

Flooding on Meerash Lane / Hall Lane:

Chair announced to move the discussion of Flooding to last part of the meeting to allow the members of public to participate. Recap of the discussion is recorded in this document after #12 Accounts for payment.

Fingerpost damage:

One of the fingerposts was damaged by vandalism, and Cllr King reported that Police is investigating so no repair to take place now. He also reported some of the dog poo signs produced by the Council were stolen.

Another fingerpost located on a farmland was accidentally damaged by farmer's tractor. To avoid repeat damage in the future, the farmer will cut down the height of the post and reinstate it for HPC without prejudice. The post will be reduced from 7 feet to 5 feet tall.

Noted

10. Parks and Open Spaces

Scannable QR code and website: Cllr Mears said there is no update available due to her time spent on the follow up of flooding at Meerash Lane.

Oakfield Park new equipment: Cllr Taylor reported that she needs to get one more quotation, and she will check the possibility of getting a loan from Playing Field Association.



Disclaimer to footpath near Ridgeway School: Chair said she has yet to contact Gary from LDC on this topic. She will report at the next meeting.

Noted

11. Correspondence Report

The Clerk had reported on correspondence received and sent since the last meeting:

- SPCA staffing notice
- Training on "be a better councillor" from SPCA

Noted

12. Accounts for payment

The statements for the Business Current Account and Savings Account as at 31/12/2023 were £25,035.11 and £8,412.63 respectively.

Councillors are asked to approve the following accounts for payment:

	Cost	VAT	Invoice No	BACS Ref# / Cheque Number
Clerks Wages – January	£586.81	-	-	BACS #859428274
WCAVA – payroll (January)	£6.60	£1.10	4436	BACS #45160314
Clerk expense – land search fees	£16.00	-	-	BACS #66224369
Hammerwich WI Hall - venue hire for December	£38.50	-	398	BACS #654435582
Bank Service Charge - October to December	£18.00	-	-	Direct Debit on 31 December 2023

The Parish Council are asked to note the following income:

Source	Amount	Reference
Interest	£55.48	October to December 2023



The accounts for payment were approved.

The latest bank reconciliation (December 2023) was presented to the full council and approved.

A detailed budget monitor file has been shared by the Clerk.

Noted

9. Highways and Footpaths (con't)

Flooding on Meerash Lane / Hall Lane:

Cllr Ubhie moved himself to the seats of member of the public.

Cllrs Mears and Taylor reported that three teams from STW had been called to investigate the situation. The representatives from STW concluded that the concerned pipes belonged to SCC Highways, so Cllrs Mears and Taylor said they will check with SCC after receiving an official confirmation from the manager of STW. They will take the petition from residents and the court paper to SCC and request this pipe to be added to SCC's drain map.

Cllr Mears said that the blockage is caused by tree roots from 2 Ashmall and the blocked location is believed to be beyond the green and fallen into the boundary of 2 Ashmall. However, this was disagreed by a member of public later.

Cllr Taylor then presented a document that she obtained from a resident from Middleton Close who was taken to court and fined by SCC for putting up a fence at the top of the concerned green 10+ years ago. SCC did claim it owned the green in that document. Chair replied that the document had been shared to SCC months ago when HPC attempted to claim the CCTV inspection cost of the drain from SCC but was then told that its action on the fence did not constitute ownership to the land.

Chair doubted if SCC will be responsive to this wave of follow-up, and she then asked the Clerk to read out the latest email reply from Cllr D Smith of SCC on 14th January 2024 which stated, "Staffordshire CC are adamant that they do not have any services on the Green...".

Cllr King updated that he had talked to Mr. John Baillye, a local farmer, who said the green was formerly a coke store for the former school with a gully beneath. After it was abandoned, the council put a pipe in and levelled the land followed by putting a bench and sign. The land was then not registered for reason unknown.

Standing Order was removed to allow public participation:



- Mr. Steve Thomas: he said according to the diagram from STW, majority of the blockage is located on the green. The road is now dangerous for the community.
- Cllr Ubhie (as a member of public): he said the root cause of the flooding is the broken drain at the upstream of the pipe. Clearing the blockage solely will not solve the problem. It is a must to fix the broken drain and build another gully to take away the water.
- Member of the public #2: He agreed for the Council to re-instate the pipe for the land has now formed a death trap for public.
- Mr. Vance Wasdell (former HPC Chair): He supports the council to fix it as he believes it will never get done if to wait for action from SCC and no one will put HPC liable.

Cllr Mears responded to Mr. Wasdell saying that she would turn in her resignation if the Council decided to work on the land as there is legal concern, however, no detail of the concerned law can be provided when asked by the Chair.

- Cllr J Silvester-Hall: She first apologised for being late, and she spoke as a resident in Hammerwich that she supports HPC to fix the drain first while continuing with the pursuits with Highways.

Standing Order was resumed, and **the Council then resolved to allow 3 weeks (by 7th February) for Cllr Taylor and Mears to obtain a written reply from SCC Highways stating that Highways will repair the drain on the concerned road. If a written reply from Highways is not available by 7th February, the Council will proceed to appoint a contractor to carry out work on the drain, without prejudice.**

Vote Outcome: For: 4 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1 (Cllr Mears, recorded upon her request)

The Clerk requested to clarify which contractor to appoint, and **the Council initially agreed to appoint contractor Morgan & Bond (quoted cost £2250, ex-VAT) to repair the drain.** Cllr Grundy then questioned if the Council should appoint a drain specialist instead of Morgan & Bond for their quotation was significantly lower than the other two, which leads to concern over the quality of contractor.

In the view of this, **the Council agreed to have Cllr King to seek a quotation from a drain specialist at Gartmore and circulate the quotation for the council to review once available.** It was agreed that an extraordinary meeting will be called only if the quotation is comparable to the one from Morgan and Bond, then the full council will decide at the meeting which contractor to appoint. However, if the quotation from the drain specialist is as high as those from the other two contractors (i.e. at £10K), then the council will proceed to appoint Morgan & Bond without holding an extraordinary meeting. The Council will communicate and discuss by email whether an extraordinary meeting is deemed required.

13. Public Participation

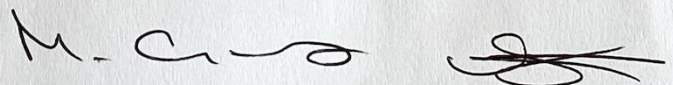
A member of the public from St. John The Baptist Church Hammerwich was present to give notice to HPC that the P.C.C. will start the procedure to close the churchyard as it is now full. They are applying to close it and request the council to take over.

Noted

14. Items for consideration at future meetings

- Code of Conduct (CoC) for Councillors: Chair requested the Clerk to check if everyone had signed the CoC and declaration of interest 2023.
- Review of petition received at January meeting
- Adaption of Petition Policy
- Churchyard transfer request
- Set-up of sub committees

Meeting closed at 8.56pm

Two handwritten signatures in black ink, one appearing to be 'M. C. ...' and the other a stylized signature.