

WESTON WITH GAYTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting that took place on Monday 13th November 2023 at 7.30pm in Weston Village Hall.

PRESENT

Councillor J Griffiths (Chair), Councillor Mrs H Hart, Councillor D Leake, Councillor Mrs J Gair, Councillor A Massey, Councillor J Tallentire, Councillor Mrs G Wray, Stafford Borough Councillor Karine Aspin

Parish Clerk DW Croxford
Four members of the public were present.

APOLOGIES

Councillor M Hardenberg, Councillor Mrs R Garner
Staffordshire County Councillor John Francis, Stafford Borough Councillor Frances Beatty.

PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

3929 MEETING 10th October 2023 – RESOLVED that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at 7:30pm on the 10th of October 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as proposed and seconded by Councillors Hart and Tallantire.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3930 There were no declarations of interest.

PARISH PLAN

3931 There were no updates.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NOTICES

3932 Mrs Beth Nicholls has been appointed Parish Clerk and RFO with effect from 1st December 2023.

There were no announcements or notices that had not been circulated prior to the meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

3933 Two members of the public from the Woolpack Inn called to discuss the level of past support from the Parish Council for their Village Green based events seen during last summer and sought to gauge the level and appetite for continued support during 2024. After a discussion it was agreed that clear and timely communication between the Woolpack and the Parish Council would be essential. It was agreed a separate meeting at the appropriate time would be desirable.

REPORT FROM STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR

3934 Staffordshire County Councillor John Francis was not in attendance to present a report.

REPORT FROM STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCILLOR

3935 Stafford Borough Councillor Frances Beatty's October report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Stafford Borough Councillor Karine Aspine reported the consultation process for the Local Stafford Borough Plan has been delayed. Additionally, re the asylum seekers accommodation on Beaconside, the operators Serco have not been granted a lease at this juncture, but negotiations are continuing.

There will be a public meeting arranged by the formally named Stone Rail Crisis Group at Yarnfield Park Conference Centre on Monday 20th November at 7pm. The meeting will be addressed by a team of parliamentarians and technicians, headed by the local eminent campaigner in matters relating to the scrapping of the HS2 project Charles Boote. The meeting will hear how the decision was reached and what helped to influence Government thinking. The meeting will also consider what to do next to achieve the best outcomes from the decision to cancel HS2 Phase 2. The notice of the meeting has been posted in the area and on the Yarlet Lane and Marston Lane Community Facebook page.

REPORT FROM VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (VHMC) REPRESENTATIVE

- 3936** Councillor Wray reported, with regret, that the Outreach Post Office, situated at the Village Hall, was closed by the Post Office on 1st November, with the P.O. citing lack of use as a prime reason for closure. The nearest alternative Post Office being Hixon, some 2.05 miles from Weston, will meet the P.O.'s coverage criteria. Travel to Hixon however could be a problem for the elderly.
- 3937** Request for a New Lease - another member of the VHMC advised that following discussions with the Solicitor acting for the VHMC the advice is (i) to form a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (ii) the CIO enter into a revisionary lease to take effect upon the expiry of the current lease. (iii) Transfer the existing leasehold interest to the CIO. The VHMC requested the Parish Council agree a new lease term of a minimum 25 years, and preferably longer. *Clerk to ensure this is on the agenda for the December Parish Council Meeting and to liase with the SPCA seeking a recommendation for a Solicitor to represent the Parish Council.*
- 3938** Councillor Wray reported that investigations are still under way regarding the new lights to be purchased and installed at the VH.
- 3939** It was unanimously agreed to support the VHMC on the evening of the Christmas Lights switch on by the Parish Council underwriting, in case of need, the provision of hot dogs, tea and coffee etc. up to the sum of £200. The allocation of any profits over this sum to be decided.

DEVELOPMENTS

- 3940** No applications had been received at the date of publication of the meeting agenda.

TREES AND CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA

- 3941** Three trees on the Village Green need felling and removal because they are rotten or in poor health. The trees are numbers 1084, 1074 and 1075 as noted in the Tree Survey. The grounds maintenance contractor will remove and invoice as additional work. Councillor Wray was thanked for the gift of two trees as replacements.

HIGHWAYS AND RIGHTS OF WAY

- 3942** Update on response to SCC Flood Risk Management Team / Riparian Letters
Councillor Hart advised she will complete the response to SCC Flood Risk Management Team with all the information she has collated and the Riparian letters to parishioners are almost complete, ready for approval, circulation, and dispatch.
- 3943** Councillor Hart sought, and obtained unanimous agreement, to investigate the purchase cost of two temporary road signs warning of flood water on the road and urging motorists to slow down.

3944 Damage to drainage ditch at Wetmoor Farm Gayton *to be reported by Clerk with photographs to the landowners.*

3945 Letter to Homes Plus with regards to Cherry Lane, Gayton. No response received to date.

CLERK REPORT

3946 RESOLVED that the PC approve payments listed below and included on the monthly Statement of Accounts/Receipts and Payments.

Payments to be made.

- Clerks Gross Salary November £682.08 plus associated PAYE
- Clerks Expenses November £28.50
- WGM Ground Maintenance October (including Dog Bin Maintenance £90) - £1698.60 + £339.72 VAT = £2038.32
- British Legion Poppy Appeal – Wreath purchase £20
- Purchase of sets of lights for the Christmas Tree - £222.80 + VAT £44.56 = £267.36
- SBC – Weston uncontested Election May 2023 recharge - £128.26
- SBC – Gayton uncontested Election May 2023 recharge - £73.40

3947 Draft Budget / Precept 2024/25

The final budget and precept request for 2024-25 had been circulated before the meeting. It was considered and approved. **RESOLVED** by unanimous agreement to set the annual budget for 2024-25 at £41,237.43 and to submit a precept request to Stafford Borough Council of £34,786.12 for Weston and £4,206.91 for Gayton making a total precept request of £38,993.03 plus £1,010.00 concurrent function funding. This representing a 0% increase for both Weston and for Gayton. *Clerk to submit precept requests to SBC.*

3948 The interim Internal Audit was undertaken and concluded on 18th October 2023 and no issues were reported by the Auditor.

3949 Was unanimously **RESOLVED** to allow the new Clerk / RFO to have access to NatWest Online Banking from 1st December 2023 on the same basis as the present incumbent who will no longer have access post 30th November 2023. *Clerk(s) to arrange.*

CORRESPONDENCE

3950 There were no items that had not already been circulated and dealt with.

DATE, TIME, and VENUE OF NEXT MEETING.

3951 Parish Council Meeting Tuesday 12th December 2023 at 7.30 p.m. at Weston Village Hall

**J GRIFFITHS
CHAIR**