

BAGNALL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting

17 November 2020

Via Zoom

Present:

Cllr Andrew Batson (Chair)
Cllr Roger Jackson
Cllr Les Knowles

Cllr Peter Lawley
Cllr David Pearson
Cllr Sybil Ralphs

In attendance:

Denise Cooper (Clerk)

Apologies

Cllr Sally Brown – Work commitments

Planning Presentation – Ben Haywood, SMDC

Cllr Batson welcomed Ben Haywood, Head of Development Services at SMDC to our meeting. Mr Haywood had agreed to provide an overview of planning processes and answer a few questions.

Mr Haywood commenced by giving an overview of the Local Plan, which was adopted in September 2020. The Plan was developed over a long period in consultation with the local populace, taking into consideration as many views as possible. The Plan identifies areas where sustainable development is desired and the format this should take, irrespective of the size of the development, and protects those areas, such as green belt and desirable vistas, where development should not take place.

Bagnall is surrounded by green belt and within the village itself and there is a strip of land that is protected in the centre of the village – village greens, and Stafford arms car park. Within the Plan there are no allocations for housing developments within the parish, and each application for extensions, etc is reviewed on its own merits to ensure it enhances the village's character.

Cllrs raised the issue of the plethora of stable developments across the Parish. Mr Haywood stated that one of the exceptions to the planning rules on developments is around the use of land for sports and recreation. However, developments do need to be of a temporary basis. For example a camping site for tents would have a minimal impact upon the environment, whereas caravans or mobile homes would detract from the openness and would be subject to full planning scrutiny. The same applies to stables. If they are a temporary, movable structure they have a minimal impact. The problems start when additional lean-to's are added for the storage of hay, etc and horse boxes are stored or the site is not well maintained. Any such occurrences should be reported to the Enforcement Officers for review.

A government consultation White Paper on ways to radically change the planning process has recently closed. The Paper is very light on detail and this has led to more questions and concerns on how the new processes will work in practice. The Paper is a vision and how much of it will translate into legislation once all the comments and views are collated remains to be seen. Mr Haywood gave an overview of the four sections and what SMDC's interpretation and concerns were around each of these.

The timescale for implementation of the Paper is next year, but early signs are that this is already slipping and it may not become legislation for some months.

Cllrs stated that within the Paper there is a lot of mention of Neighbourhood Plans and asked if these would supersede Local Plans and whether it was advantageous for parishes to have a Neighbourhood Plan in place. Mr Haywood stated that a Neighbourhood Plan gave an area more control over what type of development and where this should take place, but felt Local Plans still had their place although the timescales being set for their development would not allow comprehensive community consultation. Parishes without a Neighbourhood Plan were not disadvantaged as developments would fall within the scope of the District Council's Local Plan.

Cllrs asked why it appears their views on an application were being ignored and in cases where SMDC's views were contrary to parish councils' why they were not consulted. Mr Haywood stated the views of each parish council always forms a big part in determining SMDC's decision and a full report of how decisions were arrived at now appear on the planning portal. Unfortunately, it is not feasible to liaise with each parish council given the volume of applications officers have to deal with on a daily basis.

When applications are granted, many carry conditions and there does not seem to be a follow-up process around this. Mr Haywood advised that most of the conditions, particularly those issues following approval, relate to the type of materials to be used. This information is on the Planning Portal and should Cllrs feel they are not being adhered to contact with referral to the Enforcement Officers should be made.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The October minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record.

Declaration of Personal / Pecuniary Interest

Cllr Ralphs declared an interest in an item under correspondence. Cllrs Pearson and Knowles declared an interest in discussions around Footpath 28. Cllr Lawley declared an interest in planning, as he had an application under consideration.

Adjournment of meeting for public comments and concerns

Parishioners' Concerns

- No concerns have been raised.

District Councillor Reports (as at 13 November 2020)

- This week, the UK hit another COVID milestone with the total number of deaths now surpassing 50,000. The total number of deaths is 50,928, a daily increase of 563.
- Liverpool has tested 90,000 people in the mass testing trial's first week.
- Preliminary findings have shown a vaccine developed by Pfizer and

BioNTech can prevent more than 90% of people from getting Covid-19. The news has been met with cautious optimism by medical experts, but we must not let our guard down.

- The 7-day rate across England is 254.5 per 100,000, Staffordshire 359.7 and West Midlands 328.9. Staffordshire Moorlands is 383. The situation is being monitored.
- There is a continuing increase in outbreaks across education facilities.
- There are also high levels of outbreaks within care homes.
- Enforcement actions remain in place where the police feel they are necessary.
- There are nationally run testing sites through the national portal www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or by ringing 119. Tests for people with or without symptoms can also be booked for the local mobile testing facilities via this number.
- The key message is social distancing, hand hygiene and wearing a face mask. People are asked to plan ahead when going out, ie, ensure they have a face mask if intending to enter shops or use public transport.

20.44 Finances

Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

- None

New Issues

20.44.01 – Capital repayment

At the last meeting Cllrs agreed to match fund the £460.00 received from the hire of the playing field and utilise this to make a capital repayment against our loan. A further amount of £50.00 has been received, and Cllrs agreed to bring the amount up to £1,000.00.

Action: The Clerk

20.44.02 – Financial Forward Plan

There are no government caps on the amount of precept we can apply for, although 4% is the recommended maximum. The average across other parish council's last year was 4%, Bagnall only asked for 1.26%. For 2021/22 the Responsible Officer projected that a precept of £9,000 was required to cover annual expenses and the projects we propose to take forward, this would necessitate an increase of 3.55% or £0.89 across B and D class council charges.

After discussion, Cllrs stated that historically the parish had been overly prudent in the amount of precept requested. There is a cost of ensuring that the village looks nice and therefore agreed the increase proposed.

20.44.03 – Invoices / Receipts

The Parish Council was in receipt of the following monies:

- Abbey Hulton Utd – Playing field hire - £50.00

The following invoices were received and payment agreed:

- Denise Cooper – Remuneration (Nov) - £152.50
- Sam Butler – Tree works - £650.00
- Denise Cooper – Reimbursement for Zoom costs - £14.39

20.44.04 – Community Fund

Cllr Knowles advised that he has submitted an application for £300 from the above fund for the purchase of lights for the village Christmas tree. We await confirmation that our bid has been successful, but given the timeframes the lights have been purchased in advance.

20.45 Planning

Government White Paper – Planning for the future

The Parish Council has submitted a response to this consultation. A copy of our comments can be obtained from the Clerk.

SMDC Planning Decisions

- SMD/2020/0492 – New House Farm, Luzlow Road, Bagnall
First floor extension over garage to form play room

Bagnall PC had no objections. SMDC approved this application.

New Applications

- SMD/2020/0609 – Holly Dene, School Road, Bagnall
Proposed first floor extension to bathroom
- SMD/2020/0591 – Mistra, School Road, Bagnall
Single storey garage extension with 3 x side elevation windows
- HNT/2020/0023 – Red Ridge, Clewloes Bank, Stockton Brook
Proposed single storey rear extension measuring 8m beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling, maximum height 2.93m and 2.93m to height of eaves

Bagnall PC had no objections to the above applications.

20.46 Footpaths and Highways

Matters arising from previous minutes

20.11.01 – Footpaths

Footpath 24

The planning application has now been agreed, and the purchase and installation of the gate are progressing. Cllr Batson stated that the Ramblers Association was willing to fit the gate, dependent upon Covid-19 restrictions, but if this was not possible Cllr Jackson agreed to undertake the work in the new year.

Cllr Batson advised that it may be possible to secure funding either from SCC or through funding streams allocated to Cllr Flunder for the purchase of a second gate. Cllr Batson is taking this work forward.

Action: Cllr Batson

20.17.02 – Footpath around Stanley Pool

Cllr Batson advised that the Canals and Rivers Trust are undertaking a staffing review, once this has been finalised a meeting will be arranged.

Action: Cllr Batson

New Issues

20.46.01 – Footpath 28

The Parish Council is aware that there has been further sightings of motor cycles illegally and dangerously using the footpath. Unfortunately, the bikes either covered over or did not have registration plates so it was not possible to advise the police. Cllr Ralphs will raise this issue with the police and ascertain how these circumstances have been dealt with in other area.

At the beginning of the year positive discussions had commenced with the equestrian community and one solution that was favoured was the installation of two planks placed across the footpath at a distance of about 8 feet apart in a chicane format enabling pedestrians to walk around them and horse to step over them. This is an option successfully adopted in other areas. Cllr Batson will make further enquiries and report back to the next meeting.

20.47 **General Maintenance and Other Issues**

Matters arising from previous minutes

18.84.02 – Railings at the Ford

Cllrs Pearson and Knowles are awaiting favourable weather conditions to undertake the work.

Action: Cllr Pearson

19.74.02 – Notice Board

Cllr Brown will again made contact with Keith Weston regarding the installation of cork backing to the notice board on the village green.

Action: Cllr Brown

19.74.04 – Website

Cllr Knowles advised that in his opinion the current website was not up-gradable to the accessibility requirements under current legislation. Rather than do nothing, as a number of other small parish councils had done, the alternative was to develop a site that either met current needs at a cost of circa £600, or one that was more future proof at a cost of about £900. Cllrs felt it was prudent to develop a new website, and preferably one that was more future proof given that the use of technology as a form of communication was becoming more prevalent. Cllr Knowles was asked to look at this option in more detail and bring back information to the next meeting.

Action: Cllr Knowles

19.79.02 – Phone Kiosk, Rose and Crown PH

Quotations for the installation of a defibrillator have been obtained. The Clerk was asked to ascertain if these included installation costs and any additional costs relating to electricity supply, etc.

Action: The Clerk

20.11.02 – Gully Maintenance

Cllr Batson advised that he had received a response to the Freedom of Information request to obtain details of the gully location plan for the village and details of when they were last cleared. Unfortunately, the information received is not in a format easily read, but early interpretation shows that not all the parish gullies are included on the plan, nor have they been cleaned for some time. Following discussions it was agreed that Cllr Batson would request a copy of the original CAD images for interpretation by Cllr Jackson.

Action: Cllr Andrew Batson / Cllr Jackson

20.30.01 – Speeding

Cllr Ralphs is chasing up findings.

Action: Cllr Ralphs

20.36.01 – Tree Survey

The Parish Council has to meet certain duties under a number of H & S and Countryside Acts, and is charged by its insurers to mitigate the dangers to the general public which may arise from any known defective/dangerous trees on Parish Council owned land. Therefore, following notification that the condition of one of the trees on the playing field was deteriorating undertook immediate action to remove this tree. Alongside this a full survey of the remaining trees was undertaken where it was found that similar issues were present in two other trees, a small Cherry and the large Willow, which necessitated further work. The Willow tree is situated immediately below overhead power cables and as the tree has grown the centre of the crown has been routinely removed to allow uninterrupted passage of the cables. The continued removal of the centre over a long period has

left it susceptible to rot, which was found when we commissioned a tree surgeon to pollard this tree again. Cllrs took note of this fact and that the lifespan of Weeping Willow is generally considered to be in the region of 30-50 years. The removed tree was consequently at the end of its natural life. As the trees on the playing field are within a Conservation Area, the Parish Council had to seek permission from SMDC before proceeding. Steve Massey, SMDC's arborist, surveyed the trees and agreed with our proposed actions giving us permission to proceed with the felling of the tree.

Alongside this work, the Parish Council has undertaken an inspection of the trees, in the company of SMDC's arborist, on the village greens. We are currently awaiting SMDC's full report on the work required so that consideration can be given to undertaking any works recommended actions. Cllr Ralphs will chase this up.

Action: Cllr Ralphs

New Issues

20.47.01 – Fallen Leaves

Cllr Ralphs has arranged for the leaves on the roads through Bagnall to be cleared and Jackson's Nurseries have cleared the leaves from the greens.

20.47.02 – Railway Survey

The Parish Council has received a letter from SMDC requesting our support of their application for funding for a feasibility study to explore opportunities to re-open the Stoke to Leek rail link. The Parish Council is happy to support this venture.

20.47.03 – Road repairs

A number of repairs have been undertaken to the potholes within the Parish. Cllrs stated that the work had been undertaken to a high standard. A letter of thanks will be sent to Highways.

20.47.04 – Grounds Maintenance

Cllr Knowles suggested that it might be prudent to walk the new grounds maintenance company around the village to highlight where the bulbs and the tree donated by Karen Bradley, MP were to prevent them being mown over. Cllr Jackson very kindly agreed to undertake this in the new year.

Action: Cllr Jackson

20.47.05 – Census 2021

Cllr Batson has been contacted by the Census Engagement Manager for Staffordshire Moorlands and Stoke-on-Trent. The Census date is 21 March 2021 and will be the first Census to be undertaken predominantly online. Each household will receive a letter and an online code enabling them to take part early in March. The results will be available within 12-months, but personal details will be locked away for 100 years and kept safe for future generations.

20.48 Correspondence

- None

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be a virtual one on **Tuesday 19 January 2021, 7.30pm** via Zoom. There is no meeting in December.

Could any member of the public interested in participating please contact the Clerk for log on details.

Signed
(Chairman)
Dated: