



SHENSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

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Shenstone
APPROVED

Draft minutes of Full Council meeting 14th January 2020 Shenstone Village Hall

91. Register of members in attendance.
Cllrs Val Neale, David Thompson, David Salter, Sheila Beilby, Nick Smith, Neil Perry, John Branch, Darryl Godden, Nicki Gobran, Kelly Harrison, Lesley Edgley, Mick Cox, Nicola Macdonald, Gail Nicholls.
Clerk: Shirley O'Mara
92. Acceptance of apologies. Cllr Stuart Jones. District Cllrs Elizabeth Little & Brian Yeates.
93. Public Participation. Members of the Public are invited to address Council for a maximum of 15 minutes.
None.
94. Declarations of interest. Members should consider whether they should partake in any discussion or vote on matters on the agenda unless they have a dispensation.
None.
95. To accept and confirm minutes of the last Full Council meeting on Tuesday 10th December 2019
Signed and approved.
96. Clerks report on outstanding matters from minutes Tues 10th December 2019.
 - St Peters Close, Stonnall: an ongoing request for a tree in Thornes Close with branches overhanging his property continues to be put forward from a resident. The Clerk is writing to the resident with details of how to obtain a quote to do the work but the Council cannot & will not be involved.
 - Birchbrook Estate right of way overhanging trees- waiting visit from LDC officer.
 - .gov emails. There are many ongoing issues which are being reported to Jayne Laverick.
 - Complaint against Stonnall Youth & Community Centre Management Committee & Shenstone Parish Council. The Clerk has contracted the services of the Legal Services Division for Lichfield District Council & South Staffordshire Borough Council as it was agreed at the Dec Full Council meeting, and following advice from The Society of Local Council Clerks Legal team & the National Association of Legal Councils, that it was appropriate to do so. The team will investigate & provide the necessary report as well as compile management agreements for all Parish Council assets, including the SY&CC. Costs will be blended to give the best value for money with the Asst Director rate £100.00 ph., Solicitor £80.00 ph., Legal Exec £50.00 ph. & Admin Officer £30.00 ph.
Cllr Nick Smith requested clarification on the appointment of the Solicitors. The Clerk explained the reasoning behind the decision as discussed at length at the Dec meeting. To ensure that Council were fully supportive of the action the Clerk requested a vote which was unanimously carried in favour. Cllr Smith was concerned that money would be spent and the complainant, who has expressed his regret that public money will be spent in this way, would withdraw his complaint. The Clerk explained that this was highly unlikely to happen as the complainant, whilst unhappy that costs have to be incurred, is resolute in his conviction that the issues he has raised must be resolved and if the only way is by legal intervention then so be it.
Cllr Neale stated that she believed the action to be totally out of proportion with the original issue and a waste of time, money and effort.
Cllr Thompson stated that in his view the situation entirely requires this action to be taken and a blended solution of expertise/cost is the way forward.
Cllr Perry asked if a line will be finally drawn under this once the Solicitors findings are known. The Clerk responded to explain that we cannot anticipate what the findings will be but hopefully there will be some resolution.

- On a separate but related matter Cllr Salter read the following:

Members will recall that on 4th Dec 2019 the Clerk circulated a confidential marked document - 'timeline of correspondence and actions' ref the SYCC issue.

The last attachment to those papers was the text of a letter from the complainant dated 2nd Dec. stating that he did not consider the expenditure of possibly thousands of pounds to be a justifiable use of public money.

On 11th Dec Members were informed of communication from SYCC claiming that they had received legal advice on the matter.

Because Council then had no option but to commence the appointment of appropriate legal representation the complainant had to be informed of the now seemingly unavoidable expenditure.

On 16th Dec. the complainant emailed the office in the belief that there may have been a leak of information from the Council to SYCC causing them to take the action they are claiming.

The relevant wording from that correspondence is as follows: My concern however is that the timing of the SYCC's latest correspondence leads me to ask to what extent it is a mere coincidence that in the same week that the contents of my last letter to The Council, stating that it was my view that any future action that might incur costs to the Parish for litigation is avoided, The Council is in receipt of the SYCC's letter?

To which end as a matter of urgency I would like to ask The Council the following:

• Has any party to whom the contents were disclosed inadvertently or deliberately made the contents of my letter of the 2nd December available either in full or via conversation to any member of the SYCC management committee?

I bring this to Council, not by way of accusation or allegation but in accordance with our own Complaints Procedure Policy:

I have assured the complainant that I would raise his concern and in doing so I ask that if any Member recalls discussing, mentioning or referring to confidential documents to any person outside the bounds of Council membership that they please contact either the Clerk or me, in private, at their earliest convenience after this meeting.

97. To receive reports from District and County Councillors.

County Cllr David Smith reported on:

the tree in Thornes Croft (as noted also in item 82).

There are major flooding problems in Newick Avenue which may be difficult to resolve but is being looked at immediately.

Flooding in Cranbrook Lane is also quite serious - thought to be worsened by the Farm washing mud from vegetables and the mud going straight into the public water drainage system which is not designed for that purpose. This information may be relevant to the current planning application.

Cllr Smith has made Highways aware of the objection re the former Ash & Lacey site in Shenstone.

Design scheme details re the road projects in Shenstone & Stonnall will be ready soon - County have ring fenced the funds for both should the work slide into the next financial year.

Representatives of West Midlands Rail have finally agreed to meet with Cllr Smith in the coming weeks.

Offer of assistance regarding the Stonnall Youth & Community Centre lease proposal was restated.

Cllr Nicholls mentioned the problems with ditches being full in Cranebrook Lane & Lynn Lane to Hilton.

98. Finance: Transactions for approval & financial position as Jan 14th 2020.

Transactions for Dec & January to date were shared.

Financial position as at 14th Jan 2020: Unity Bank £35,855.73 Nat West Current Account £920.00
Nat West Reserve Account £83,252.23 Nat West Liquidity Account £161,384.81. Total £281,412.77

The closing date has now passed for this year's Community Grant Applications; The Finance Committee meets on Feb 25th to review & make recommendations to Full Council in March. 19 applications have been received totalling £23,802.72.

99. Planning applications

Approve planning applications received in last month and update on any objections/ developments.

Cllr Thompson briefed Council on two objections: Shenstone Moss on the grounds of cramming, Intensification & the former Ash & Lacey site in Shenstone which requests a 700% increase in HGV traffic. Neither application is in line with our neighbourhood plan.

Cllr Thompson has also submitted a response to Lichfield District Council Local Plan Options for Growth. Detail has been shared with "Save our Shenstone" & will go on the website. Key points are that the large settlement proposed has been shunted back but this will be reviewed in five years so there is still some uncertainty there. There is also a need for scrutiny of provision for Travellers sites within the district.

Updating and strengthening our Neighbourhood Plans is paramount including a HGV traffic management strategy. With Council approval, Cllr Thompson suggests hiring the original consultants.

Cllr Salter was in agreement but stated there may have to be a referendum if there are significant changes.

100. Update from the Employment Committee meeting Tues 7th Jan 2020.

Council were in receipt of a full report from the meeting (attached) and the following recommendations were put forward:

RECOMMENDATIONS: ☑ that the Lengthsman Scheme continues in the same operational way whereby the Clerk manages and oversees the workload and tasks. ☑ That the two current members of staff are retained at the same rate of pay until the review at the next meeting. ☑ That Steve is enrolled on the next available course to provide him with a chemical spraying license. (cost to be obtained).

RESOLUTION: All three recommendations were unanimously approved.

101. Progress on Management Agreements.

As covered in Clerk's report.

102. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 11th February 2020 Stonnall Youth & Community Centre 7.15pm.

