

Marchington Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting held on

13th February 2024 at Marchington Woodlands Village Hall

Present: Cllr Bullock, Cllr Glover, Cllr Hayes, Cllr Hayhurst, Cllr Mann, Cllr Morgan, Cllr Newstead, Cllr Tomkins.
Clare Nash, Parish Clerk
8 Members of the public

Meeting opened at 7.30pm

The Chair made a statement to clarify opportunities for public participation in parish council meetings. The Public Forum is open for members of the public (MOP) to speak on any topic of their choosing, this doesn't have to be on an agenda item. Each person is allowed 3 minutes to speak. Any debates held during the Parish Council meeting are solely for the involvement of councillors. If a MOP wishes to speak during the debate, they must raise their hand and it is at the Chair's discretion if they are allowed to speak. If MOP's wish to speak on a planning application on the agenda they must use the Public forum to do this.

1. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Hudson
2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations on items relating to the agenda were received and recorded as follows:
Cllr Morgan – Item 8.a) i) and Item 15.

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 9th January 2024 were approved and signed as a true record.

Proposed – Cllr Glover
Seconded – Cllr Tomkins

4. Public Forum

- a) A member of the public expressed disappointment with the recent format of Parish Council meetings which she has attended for 12 years and seen change from a 'us & them' to a more welcoming attitude towards residents, despite occasional disagreements. However recently she felt that the meetings have been less welcoming of parishioners and even dictatorial, and whilst expressing her gratitude for the voluntary work of the Councillors, she requested that the council make parishioners feel welcome at meetings as previously.

5. Other Organisations –To receive reports from outside organisations.

- a) ESBC – Cllr Hudson sent an update on the car parking charges in the ESBC area, these will be increasing and the Free After 3pm will be ending on 1st April and parents may have to pay to park to pick up children from Thomas Alleyne's High School. ESBC are looking at alternative methods of charging also.

6. Crime, Chair

- a) Crime Report (previously circulated) – Accepted.
- b) PCSO, to discuss offer to meet. It was agreed that the PC would ask the local PCSO to do a drop-in session at the village shop on a Saturday morning and/or at a coffee morning at MWVH. **Action: Clerk to contact PCSO**

7. **Clerk's Report** (previously circulated) It was noted that many potholes have been reported particularly in the Woodlands, very few of which have been repaired.

8. To consider planning applications and receive planning decisions, review planning appeals and enforcement issues.

a) Planning Applications Received

- i) **P/2024/00079 - Proposal:** Prior Approval for the installation of 14 Solar PV equipment on the roof. **Location:** The Community Shop, Church Lane, Marchington, Staffordshire, ST14 8LJ **MPC Comments:** Following discussion, during which concern was expressed about the need to uphold Conservation Area rules and understanding also voiced about the shop's need to reduce energy costs, Cllrs voted and **it was resolved not to object** to this planning application. However, the PC would like clarification on how ESBC are treating the Conservation Area. It was noted that times are changing, and it would be helpful to know how an application for an EV charger (for example) would be treated in the Conservation Area. **Action: Clerk to draft comments for ESBC and send to Cllrs for approval prior to submission.**

b) Decisions Received - None

c) Enforcement Issues

- i) Charnwood, Chair - Clerk emailed ESBC Enforcement as requested in January. Chair read out the response from Enforcement in which they said that the matter had to be referred to SCC Highways and that the pointing of cameras onto the

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public highway is not a breach of regulations. Councillors decided to ask County Cllr Atkins for his support with this issue and request SCC to take action. **Action: Clerk to contact SCC Highways & Cllr Atkins**

ii) Newfield Green Farm, Cllr Hayes reported that local residents have raised concerns that an agricultural building is being used for a non-agricultural business. It was decided that the Parish Council should ask ESBC enforcement to investigate. **Action: Clerk**

9. **Council owned property** - To receive reports & action if required.

a) Play areas and outdoor park areas safety checks -

i) Silver Lane playground: monthly safety report. **Action: Cllr Bullock to send to the clerk asap.**

ii) Forestside playground and football pitch monthly safety report. Cllr Hayes reported that the playground could do with a post winter tidy up.

b) **Marchington Village Hall**, Cllr Mann reported that Michelle Cliff of Support Staffordshire informed him that the PC are not the owners of the village hall. It is held in a trust overseen by the Parish Council but it is entirely owned by the Trustees and run by the management committee. Recently several Trustees have resigned. Two new Trustees have been appointed making a total of six currently. MVH committee would consider charging for PC meetings if the PC ceased paying for trade waste collection. Cllrs discussed this but no conclusion was reached.

c) **Cricket Club**,

i) Drains, update. Cllr Morgan reported that the soakaway has been fixed. Cllr Bullock reported that UCC are very pleased that the PC has resolved the issue so quickly.

10. **Finance**, Chair

a) To authorise payments as listed in Appendix A

- Proposed Cllr Bullock
- Seconded Cllr Morgan

b) To discuss and appoint a new Finance Officer, Chair. After discussion Cllr Hayes agreed to continue until May.

11. **Flooding and Environment**,

a) Public Meeting, to discuss progress and response from Severn Trent (ST). Kate Kniveton MP had asked what PC hopes to achieve from a meeting and has forwarded ST's response to the questions raised. ST reported that the survey phase of a potential project was completed in 2023 & indicated that the local sewerage network is generally satisfactory; no further activity is proposed in the current funding period (up to Spring 2025). ST is targeting improvements to many combined sewer overflows from 2025 and further assessment may result in future enhancement work to reduce occurrences of sewer overflow pollution. Pumps: ST confirmed that all 3 pumps are fully automatic and will operate when required. They are only for the management of foul water flows and not flood water from water courses. They have no plans to upgrade the pumping station. Regarding concern about raw sewage entering the flood water ST reported that following the cleansing work and modifications to the channelling at the manhole outside Brookside House they had not received reports of flooding at this location. Cllrs discussed ST's responses and concluded that they did not adequately address the issues. The PC requires a copy of the survey and a public meeting with ST, SCC and the EA.

Action: Clerk to contact MP.

b) Flood Wardens, update. Cllr Morgan. A training course was held on 18th Jan & nine new flood wardens were trained. MPC are the only village in Staffordshire that have a Road Closure Scheme in place and has recently been approached by another local parish council for information regarding the implementation and running of a similar scheme in their parish.

c) Community Flood Action Plan, update. Cllr Morgan outlined a draft Community Emergency Response Action Plan which could be used in any emergency situation as well as flooding ie. plane crash. In the first instance members would be the Flood Warden team but ideally this would be expanded to include more people. Cllrs discussed and agreed that this should be progressed. **Action: Cllr Morgan to progress with help from other Cllrs and Clerk as required.**

d) To consider purchase of waterproof phone protectors for Flood Wardens. Cllr Morgan has obtained costs of mobile phone protectors of £22.74 (inc VAT) for 14 nos. **It was resolved** that the PC would purchase these. **Action: Cllr Morgan**

e) Tree felling on Marchington Cliff, Chair. Concern has been expressed that the recent tree felling on Marchington Cliff has resulted in an increase in run-off during high rainfall leading to more frequent flooding incidents in the village. It was noted that the LLFA are of this opinion also. The Duchy responded previously (Oct 2023) to questions raised by the PC and drew attention to the planned replanting of trees and the work carried out in conjunction with the EA and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to alleviate flooding through natural flood management. Whilst noting that the saplings will not make a real difference for many years, Cllrs questioned if replacement trees had been planted this winter as planned by the Duchy? **Action: Clerk to contact Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to ask what has been done, and what will be done, to alleviate flooding issues through natural flood management. What is the water uptake of a mature tree compared to a sapling? Clerk to contact the Estate manager at the Duchy to ask if tree planting has been carried out and ask if they are**

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proposing to undertake any other mitigation actions to minimise the run-off. A resident noted that this is one of the reasons that a Public Meeting is required.

12. Highways & Footpath issues

- a) Highways issues
 - i) A50 Roadworks diversion. The Chair reported on the PC's recent meeting with National Highways (NH) and contractors prompted by the A50 closure for one night in November which resulted in a large number of HGV's coming through the village. Although all other control measures were implemented (signs etc), the police were not available to attend, and drivers ignored the signs. In future NH propose to close Moreton Lane and Bag Lane to traffic completely during roadworks periods on the A50. This needs the permission of SCC Highways. NH will advise PC next month if this approved. It would be a criminal offence to move the signs. It was noted that the bridge in Church Lane may have been damaged by the volume of HGV's and needs to be inspected by Staffordshire County Council Highways. **Action: Clerk to contact Staffordshire Highways**
 - ii) Potholes on Scounslow Green Road. Many large potholes here have been reported to SCC and Amey's actions to date are noted in the Clerks Report. The worst one has been repaired but many others have not. It was reported that gas pipeline marker poles have appeared on the edge of the road near to Wren Cottage and more potholes have appeared at Thorney Lanes **Action: Clerk to contact SCC Highways.**
 - iii) Gorsty Hill Chapel Triangle, Cllr Newstead reported that residents would like to see the triangle restored and planted with bulbs etc and possibly fenced with small wooden bollards. A working group could come up with a design. Road signs could also be improved here. Would PC take over the maintenance of the area? Chair thanked Cllr Newstead but noted that the triangle is owned by SCC Highways and they have not replied to previous emails on the subject. It was suggested that Cllr Hudson may be best placed to help with this. **Action: Clerk to ask Cllr Hudson to contact Cllr Newstead to discuss further.**
 - iv) Buttermilk Hill, Cllr Newstead – Heavy rain in January caused a tree to fall, there was also a landslip and residents are concerned that there could be another. Question raised if a survey be undertaken to ensure that the ground is stable? **Action: Clerk to raise this concern with the Duchy.**
- b) Footpath & Bridleway issues
 - i) Footpath 45 (back of Bridge Cottage) - It was noted that a resident may have a suitable timber sleeper and will contact the clerk.
 - ii) Bridlepath 22 (Forest Banks), Chair. It has been reported that following tree felling works that the bridlepath is not safe for use. **Action: Clerk to raise this with the Duchy, are they going to reinstate the path properly now that it is open again?**

13. **Parish Council Meetings**, The Chair responded to a resident's request for more meetings to cover flooding issues specifically and asked for Cllr opinions on this. Cllrs considered that a one-off meeting may be useful to get all the Flood Wardens, Cllrs and interested residents together to discuss all the issues and find out what people think needs to be done. Flood water in the village comes from the Woodlands and landowners could give useful input on the local watercourses. The meeting could possibly be publicised via village shop email. **Action: Cllrs Morgan and Mann to decide date, clerk to book and advertise.**

14. **New Clerk Recruitment** update, Chair reported that interviews have been held and a decision will be made shortly.

15. **Marchington Village Festival Sponsorship** – Cllrs considered a request for sponsorship of £250. **It was resolved** unanimously to approve this expenditure.

16. **Best Kept Village Competition** –Following discussion, during which a resident commented that the litter in the village would prevent success, Cllrs voted and decided not to enter the BKV. **Action: Clerk to advise the BKV organisers.**

17. Correspondence and emails, Clerk

- a) Lightsource BP (Green Lane Solar Fm managers) – request for information re spending of solar benefit payments – Clerk responded.
- b) Residents (2) Re Flood Recovery Framework Grant – Clerk responded.
- c) Ross White ESBC Accounts -Re clarification on Marchington Special Tax – Clerk responded.
- d) Marchington Village Hall – Re precept grant – Chair responded.
- e) Marchington Woodlands Village Hall – Re thanks for Precept Grant - Clerk responded.
- f) St Peter's Church – Re thanks for Precept Grant – Clerk responded.
- g) Kate Kniveton MP – Re Flood Recovery Grant – Clerk responded.
- h) Kate Kniveton MP – Re request for a public meeting to discuss flooding & environment issues – Clerk responded.
- i) Resident – Re trees in Bag Lane – Clerk responded.
- j) SPCA – Re notification of new Hospice Care Line – Forwarded to Cllrs and posted on PC Facebook.
- k) Resident – Re Bagshaws planning application – Clerk and Chair responded.
- l) ESBC Planning Dept – Re Bagshaws planning application – Clerk responded.

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