

Coleshill Town Council

Meeting of the **COLESHILL TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Old Courtroom, Town Hall, High Street, Coleshill on **WEDNESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2017** at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: - Cllr. Wallace, Town Mayor, in the Chair.

Councillors: - Battle, Breeze, Farrell, Farrow, Jones, Mason, Richardson and Wootton.

16/61 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr. Taylor.

16/62 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Mayor declared a prejudicial interest in 16/68 as she was part of the campaign group that was fund raising for the Parish Church project.

16/63 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Town Council Meeting of 9 November were proposed to be adopted by Cllr. Mason and seconded by Cllr. Farrell.

They were then **ACCEPTED** by those present.

16/64 COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED SINCE THE LAST MEETING OR GIVEN BY THE MAYOR

The Mayor had received notification that the “National Pageantmaster” Mr. Bruno Peek was encouraging local authorities to commemorate the end of World War I in November 2018 with gas-filled or traditional bonfire beacon displays. She suggested this would be for the appropriate committee to discuss, nearer the time.

She thanked all those involved in assisting with the Remembrance Day parade and service and the Christmas Fair, both of which were in the Town Council civic diary. She had also judged the best Christmas trees at Maxstoke Church and supported the Annual Service of Remembrance at Woodlands Cemetery and the re-signing of the Churches Together covenant at a service at the Parish Church.

Further afield, the Mayor had attended an event at the local church of the High Sheriff of Warwickshire at Aston Cantlow and a tour of Nuneaton & Bedworth organised by its Mayor. The Bedworth backgrounds for George Elliot (the authoress) and Nicholas Chamberlaine (a philanthropic priest) had been particularly well portrayed.

16/65 PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

Cllr. Peter Fowler, County Councillor, reported on his campaigning for a 50 m.p.h. limited section of the A446, the removal of damaged items and detritus from Gorse Lane. He was hopeful of “Hams Hall” being added to the sign at the A446 /Coleshill Heath Road roundabout which might encourage more HGV drivers to take the main

road rather than the Coventry Road option, through the town. He was also hopeful of “Unsuitable for HGVs” signage around the Temple Way area.

The Cole End bridge repair had been delayed but this might allow LED lighting changes to be undertaken at the same time. Cllr. Fowler was also expecting bollards were to be placed alongside the lay-by at Temple Way to restrict parking on the grassed areas.

Finally, Cllr. Fowler advised that the Police & Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire was due to attend the 16 February Area Forum and thanked members for their support and suggestions for simplifying the signage at the Green Man crossroads.

16/66 TO APPROVE THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

The second set of Planning Committee minutes needed the heading date amending from 30 November to 11 January. With this amendment they were proposed by Cllr. Breeze, seconded by Cllr. Battle and **AGREED** unanimously. The Mayor enquired as to whether the Borough Council Enforcement was able to insist on the Stewart Court property having its gable roof fully reinstated. It was the view of Borough Councillors that some compromise solution was being discussed.

In the minutes of the 23 Community & Environment Committee, item 44 should have been “at this stage” rather than “art this stage.” With this change, they were proposed by Cllr. Farrow, seconded by Cllr. Jones and **ADOPTED** unanimously.

Cllr. Farrell noted that Ms. Katherine Marks was minuted as a contact for Warwickshire County Council on town development. He and Administration Manager, Helen Whittaker, had met her at a Kenilworth seminar and now had contacts for town development and WiFi who might visit Coleshill to advise. The Mayor advised that there had already been some leafleting of High Street businesses taking place.

14 December Resources and Amenities Committee minutes were proposed by Cllr. Richardson, seconded by Cllr. Battle and **ACCEPTED** for adoption unanimously. Cllr. Farrell clarified that a Community Centre oven installation was only committee-agreed on the assumption that the discussed room improvements were not viable.

16/67 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR 2016/17 QUARTER 2

Members made a number of enquires or comments regarding the payments summary relating to: the Walking Group, BUPA payments, mobile phone charges, allotments awards purchases and the income from the LAPF fund investment. All queries were answered at the meeting.

The **Town Clerk** agreed to advise why payment 598 (£750 to Nouveau Theatre School) was made as a “Return of hall hire” and to investigate whether amended business rate-free rules affected the Community Centre. The reports were proposed and seconded for unanimous **ACCEPTANCE** by Cllrs. Mason and Richardson.

16/68 PARISH CHURCH REQUEST FOR FUNDING ASSISTANCE

The Mayor left the room at this point (having declared a prejudicial interest) and Cllr. Battle assumed the chairing of the item.

A letter from Dr. Joel Burden requesting financial assistance had been circulated. It referred to a total project cost for the Coleshill Parish Church of £857,500 and churchyard surveyor-estimated works of £39,000. The campaign was seeking £19,500 assistance as 50% of these churchyard works.

Rev. Nick Parker attended the meeting to add background and comment to the letter. He outlined that the objectives of the whole project were to open up the church for more people and more time. This required better facilities, particularly kitchen, seating, toilet, shop and heating related.

In relation to the churchyard works, he appreciated that the church had a good relationship with the Town Council on its maintenance. He was also keenly aware that the residents and business owners of the town sought additional car parking. A feature of the church's plan was to provide 5 spaces, 2 of which were to be for disabled badge holder vehicles. The campaign group were prepared to make access available to the town at other times than during services. Rev. Parker was open to Town Council views on whether a more adventurous number of spaces might be achieved.

Rev. Parker left the room and members discussed the request.

Cllr. Farrell highlighted that the amount requested was almost exactly the excess of income over expenditure in the draft budget paper for later discussion. He proposed allocating £19,500 into the 2017/18 budget, particularly referencing the Local Government Act responsibility on parish /town councils for maintenance of closed churchyards. Cllr. Wootton seconded, again commenting that the Town Council was potentially improving a facility for which it had obligations.

Member consensus was that the Parish Church should be encouraged to consider the maximum number of car park spaces possible without increasing the project cost. A vote was taken and the inclusion of a £19,500 grant sum in the budget was unanimously **ACCEPTED**.

16/69 WALC BRIEFING DAY – SATURDAY 4 MARCH

There was a specific invitation from a Warwickshire County Council officer (on behalf of WALC) for a representative from Coleshill Town Council to provide a short presentation at this event on, for example, "how the Town Council had put together their own Neighbourhood Plan, refurbished the Council Office or Community Centre". Members suggested Cllr. Wootton might attend to present the background on the Neighbourhood Plan project as she had been heavily involved at times. She agreed to do so.

If other members considered it beneficial to attend this event as delegates, they were to advise the **Town Clerk** who would book the appropriate places.

16/70 DAW MILL – UPDATE REPORT

The Town Clerk had provided an update report with the help of the Over Whitacre Parish Council /LAWRAG campaign group and suggested it had reached over £22,000 towards its expected £30,000 total campaign costs.

The group had released the names of the barrister, planning consultant and traffic consultant it was using. The inquiry was to be held at the Borough Council offices, commencing at 10.30 a.m. on 21st Feb and was scheduled to last for 8 days.

Cllr. Farrell suggested asking WALC to assist with lobbying neighbouring parishes to grant or fund-raise any financial assistance, particularly those that had not contributed to the campaign group's fund or, in some cases, not even replied to it.

16/71 **BUDGET AND PRECEPT REQUEST FOR 2017/18**

The Town Council's tax base for the 2017/18 year had been announced by the Borough Council as to be 2405.17. This would provide a Council Tax of £235,395.68 based on charging the same £97.8707 per Band D property as in 2016/17.

However, the Borough Council had also detailed that the Town Council's Transfer Grant was to reduce to £12,439 from £14,666 a net loss of £2,277 (or 15.2%).

A draft budget showed a total Income figure of £334,674.68 based on the precept of £235,395.68 (i.e. no change in Band D charge). The start point annual expenditure was £315,405.00, giving a starting revenue balance of £19,269.68.

Cllr. Farrell felt there was adequate reserves in the £192,985 LAPF Account and proposed the use of reserves (assuming the £19,500 was to be allocated as per item 16/68) to support the following one-off items:

£20,000	Cemetery purchase fund (cumulatively to a figure of £140,000)
£20,000	Town Hall kitchen
£50,000	Town Hall windows
£75,000	Improvements to Memorial Park II
£5,000	High Street improvements/ market set-up
£4,000	Caretaker's House boiler replacement
£1,000	Additional easy-access roundabout or other apparatus.
£1,000	Christmas tree lights not achieved in 2016. Possible 2017 project.
£18,000	CCTV, possibly part of bigger WiFi broadband funding
£17,000	Community centre improvements (options / quotations still being agreed).

Cllr. Jones questioned the High Street improvements/ market set-up item, given this had been discussed at Community & Environment Committee and voted for rejection. Cllr. Farrell said it was something that had been discussed for other agency assistance and felt it important to have an amount budgeted in case there was a matched funding need.

It was remarked by Cllr. Wootton that the public should have full visibility of intended spending so that there was openness to the budget.

Cllr. Jones felt the level of budgeted staff costs were of concern when compared to the current year to date. Responses from Cllrs. Farrell and Wootton were that this was because of the addition of the Community Development Officer (Hub incorporated into the Council), a higher pension contribution level, auto-enrolment and more staff joining the pension scheme, a second maternity leave, staff grade advancement and general increased costs due to sickness absence.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Richardson and duly **AGREED** unanimously.

16/72 CAMPAIGN FOR THE PROTECTION OF RURAL ENGLAND

The Town Clerk had circulated a paper explaining the benefits of membership of CPRE for £36 per year. A commencement of this subscription was **RESOLVED** unanimously after being proposed by Cllr. Jones and seconded by Cllr. Farrell.

16/73 ELECTED MEMBER RAISING MATTERS OF GENERAL COUNCIL INTEREST

The Mayor felt that elected members did not have an opportunity to share items of common interest or pass on points of information and were getting away from the grass roots of the role. A general Councillor agenda item would help as above, as well as allow matters to be referred to appropriate committees for further discussion and for Councillors to report back from bodies where they were the Authority's representative.

Cllr. Breeze referred to initial WALC training that having general items on an agenda was regarded as bad practice and that if something was worth bringing to be discussed it should have a specific agenda item written by the member. Cllrs. Farrow, Mason and Richardson agreed that this had been part of their early training, with Cllr. Richardson adding that a general non-specific discussion would extend the meeting time.

There was support for a general Councillor agenda item from Cllr. Jones who believed members should exchange information about what each was doing and because he for one did not have time to write reports in order to do so.

Cllr. Farrell raised contrary views, such as the "Good Councillor Guide" referring to general items being "dangerous," a previous example of poor use of the former "5 (f)" standing order and stated that it was vital that the public saw what was on an agenda, pre-discussion of it.

Although Cllr. Wootton thought it important that members had the chance to report back about representation on external bodies, a general Councillor agenda item was not the right solution.

The Mayor was seconded by Cllr. Jones on the proposal to introduce a general agenda item within standing orders. A vote was taken and there were 4 for and 5 against, so the proposal was **LOST**. However, Cllr. Farrell proposed and Cllr. Battle seconded that an item for elected member reporting on developments from their representative bodies twice per year should be introduced into standing orders. This was **RESOLVED** nem. con. The Town Clerk suggested that this would be timetabled each March and September meeting.

16/59 TOWN CLERK REPORTS

The Hudson Room was due to have its planned redecoration and would be painted in a light or pastel colour (i.e. no longer a bright blue).

The Guide to Coleshill was with the printers and would be a 48-page booklet (44 pages in the previous copy). Thanks were expressed to those who had assisted with edit checking the draft copy text.

PC Chris Bell was now in situ as the local Constable for the police in Coleshill, having transferred from Atherstone.

The Town Clerk was seeking to resolve the non-receipt of a new cheque book as HSBC had received some "Gone Away" returned mail from the Town Council. This involved visiting the Castle Bromwich branch with identification as the Coleshill branch was now closed. Members had heard that HSBC planned further branch closures, including at Castle Bromwich branch.

The football pitch aeration was due in January but the **Town Clerk** agreed to chase up an actual date for this work, as had been ordered.

16/60 **CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS**

The confidential minutes of the 14 December Resources and Amenities Committee meeting were proposed to be adopted by Cllr. Wootton, seconded by Cllr. Jones and **ACCEPTED** without amendment.

The meeting closed at 9:58 p.m.



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Town Mayor