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CHESWICK GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

Thursday 11th January 2024 7pm Cheswick Green Village Hall

Present: Cheswick Green Parish Councillors: Amy Brotherton, Simon Coles, Margaret Gosling, Linda Heslington, Michelle Smith and Mick Swain (Chairman) and Gaynor Willmott.

Clerk: Marie Zizzi

4 members of the public

171. Apologies for Absence and to approve, if thought fit, the reasons if any given, for absence from the meeting.

171.1 Not applicable – all Parish Councillors present.

172. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations.

172.1 There were none.

173. Public Participation (15 Minutes).

173.1 At the start of this section there were only 3 members of the public present. A resident spoke about a lady who attended the Community Café, being concerned about flooding, due to the amount of rubbish by the bridge, she lives in Coppice Walk.

173.1.1 Cllr. Swain said with Cllr. Gosling, he had met an officer from SMBC to discuss the Cheswick Place development. He said there was more wood and other things in the river, by the Recreation Ground. He said another section of fencing had come down.

173.1.2 Another resident then joined the meeting; she said she had lived in Cheswick Green for 40 years, nobody had ever been to clear silt from drains, she referred to there being a lot of soil from the new development, the water had lost depth, a big mound had been built which was causing issues, as the water travelled towards where she lived, rather than towards the monument, she was worried.

173.1.3 The lady went on to say 40 years ago, the only time she had water in the garden was when it snowed, but now it happened every time it rained. She said because she lived on her own, she panicked and ran away, she should not feel like this in her own home. The first time it happened someone from SMBC and the EA came to her house, they told her this would only happen occasionally, but that was not the case. She referred to attending all the meetings that had been held, to stop this development being built on the flood plain; more and more housing meant more water, which did not go under the bridge anymore.

173.1.4 The lady said it was very difficult to get insurance, when you did get it, it was very expensive. She said she had cleared weeds herself before, but she could not do it now, she could see when the water was high.

173.1.5 Cllr. Swain said they had also been told flooding was only likely to happen every 100 years, but that was not the situation now.

173.1.6 The lady said she had managed to get someone from SMBC to look at the situation, this officer had said they would get a drain installed, this had been done, now water did not go into her garage.

173.1.7 Cllr. Swain referred to the swales installed on Cheswick Place; he said the water had changed direction; it did not come towards the Village Hall now; it went the other way. He said the Parish Council would do what it could; it would contact SMBCs, Senior Engineer and a Ward Cllr.

173.1.8 The lady said water came from the ponds straight into her house/garden.

173.1.9 Cllr. Swain said as you turned into Coppice Walk, the water went in both directions.

173.1.10 Another resident said their garage got flooded and other houses near them flooded before theirs did. Cllr. Heslington spoke about moving all the furniture upstairs in one property.

173.1.11 The lady said the problem was that she lived on her own, she could only use one arm. She said she had paid for all her own flood defences including a pump. She had asked SMBC for compensation, but she didn't get any. SMBC had offered to buy her a new door, it was the only thing it could do for her. She said the door was very heavy to close, so now she used the backdoor, unless it was flooded at the back, then she could not get out. She explained where her flood defences were located.

173.1.12 Cllr. Swain reiterated that the Parish Council would do what it could.

173.2 There were comments about a big SMBC truck being seen recently, it was suggested this was possibly a road sweeper; it was thought it may be to clear drains, there were comments about whether this was taking stuff out or putting stuff in.

173.3 A resident referred to the meeting that had taken place with the brewery, regarding the car park. She said they had agreed to get back in touch in the New Year, before they set their budget. Cllr. Smith said there had been a lot of redundancies made at Craft Union. Cllr. Coles said he was willing to pick this up and contact Stonegate.

174. To resolve to accept the Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 14th December 2023 (*circulated to Parish Cllrs. with the agenda*).

Resolved: proposed Cllr. Gosling, seconded Cllr. Coles – these were accepted as a true and accurate record.

175. To receive a report on the finances of the Council and to approve any payments made since last meeting and any payments to be made (*circulated to Parish Cllrs. with the agenda*).

Payee	Reason	Total
Countrywide GM	Grounds maintenance December 2023	£786.89
M. Zizzi	Reimbursement for Instant ink	£16.49
Vision ICT	Hosted email x 2	£43.20
Four Seasons Roofing	Work on the Village Hall roof	£7440.00

More in confidential section.

Petty cash £75.42

Resolved: proposed Cllr. Smith, seconded Cllr. Swain; that all payments were approved.

176. To receive third quarterly comparison (budget/actual expenditure) and bank reconciliation.

176.1 Cllr. Smith requested a breakdown of what was in the Co-operative bank account.

177. To resolve 2024/25 Precept.

Resolved: proposed Cllr. Coles, seconded Cllr. Swain; CGPC 2024-25 Precept set at £57,000; Clerk to complete and send the form to SMBC.

177.1 Cllr. Swain said the concern was if the Government applied capping to precepts, if they increased it over a certain amount, there would need to be a Referendum.

178. To consider planning applications and local development including Cheswick Place and Blythe Valley.

PL/2023/02650/MINFHO - 66 Saxon Wood Road Cheswick Green Solihull B90 4JN; Demolition of rear glazed conservatory and part of existing kitchen and construction of new single storey kitchen and day room.

178.1 There were no comments to be submitted.

178.2 In relation to Cheswick Place; Cllr. Swain and Cllr. Gosling had met with an Officer from SMBC, they had told him it was not just about the water, but what was below, the root system and silt building up.

178.3 In relation to Blythe Valley; Cllr. Coles said residents were complaining about flooding and gnats in their property. It was stated this was inevitable when you lived on flood plain. He added that one resident had employed a professional cleaner, to clear their drains, they had got rid of all their house plants, but there were still gnats.

179. To discuss Facebook and the posting of messages.

179.1 The Clerk said any wording should be shared before it was posted. Cllr. Coles said at the last meeting, it had been agreed to post on Facebook reference the Christmas tree lights, how much they cost and if residents wanted to continue with them.

179.1.1 The Clerk said they had discussed the process in 2021 and 2022; Cllr. Coles said he believed he had been delegated authority to manage with the Parish Councils Facebook page.

179.1.2 Cllr. Coles spoke about social media training courses he had attended and the need to be reactive; he pointed out this post had been removed by someone now.

179.1.3 Cllr. Smith said she did not like the way it came across. Cllr. Coles said he had asked if he could include the costs and ask the question, whether people still wanted the Parish Council to pay for this.

179.1.4 It was queried why there was still a RA Facebook page, when the RA no longer existed; Cllr. Coles spoke about people following the Parish Council Facebook page being different to the people that looked at the RA Facebook page and the Only Way is Cheswick page.

179.1.5 Cllr. Swain said his view was they could hold back on somethings, but not on others; he gave the example of trying to get a van removed from a parking space on the car park, to enable tree work to take place tomorrow.

179.1.6 Cllr. Coles said Towic was the one that had the numbers; he could go on both the Parish Council and the RA pages, he could give the demographics. He referred to social media courses.

179.1.7 Cllr. Coles asked how much it cost to have the poppy wreath installed/removed; it was £225; Cllr. Smith said they got this at a good rate, because she knew the people.

179.1.8 Cllr. Smith said she could get the Christmas tree lights done for at least half of what SMBC charged; but the issue was that they were connected to a SMBC lamppost.

179.1.9 Cllr. Coles said they were only one of a few local councils in Solihull, that still had SMBC do the lights, due to the cost.

179.1.10 The Clerk suggested Cllr. Coles and Cllr. Smith attended WALC social media training. It was agreed to park the subject for now.

180. To discuss progress with Cheswick Green School expansion.

180.1 It was stated the prism at the front was gone, the children were allowed in the playground, work was still going on, it was finished by the big playground at the back now; you could walk all the way round the school now.

180.1.1 It was noted workers/builders had been on site over Christmas; Cllr. Coles and Cllr. Brotherton had visited the school. There were comments about the PTA; it was thought there were few volunteers now.

181. To discuss proposals by SMBC for various roads in Cheswick Green.

181.1 Members were reasonably happy with the proposals; there would be half an hour parking outside the shops and both sides by the pub would be no parking.

182. To receive any reports from Chair, Councillors and/or the Clerk.

182.1 Cllr. Coles referred to the post on Facebook regarding the Christmas tree lights; it was noted that most people who had responded were happy to keep them.

182.1.2 It was noted it had been suggested to leave them in place for the next year; it was stated it would probably cost more to install them and take them down, than to buy a new set.

Action item: Clerk to contact SMBC to enquire if this was possible.

182.2 Cllr. Swain said after Christmas a huge branch from a tree on Parish Council owned land, had come down and landed on a car, the car had been written off; this was in the hands of the resident's insurance company.

182.2.1 It was noted the Parish Council had a tree inspection, which was next due in 2025.

182.3 Cllr. Swain said the car park had been full of rubbish, someone had cleared it all up; if it was the person who had attended their October meeting, he deserved a medal. The Clerk suggested he was nominated for a Borough Award.

183. Update/report from Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC).

183.1 Cllr. Swain said there were a few things bubbling over; a new caretaker was to be appointed with a contract; there were going to be increased costs for hirers, from April.

183.1.1 A resident present who was involved with the Brownies, said not paying rent had kept them going, they were in minimal debt; their Treasurer would send a report to the VHMC.

183.2 Cllr. Swain said they were having the Vintage Cash Cow back again next month. It was hoped people would be informed about this.

184. To discuss issues with monthly site audits of Parish Council owned land, including trees.

184.1 Cllr. Smith said the trees by the Mount were quite high. It was noted she was to carry out a site inspection with a tree arborist. Cllr. Swain said this could be an agenda item for March.

184.2 It was noted there was an oil drum and pipe dumped at the Mount; Clerk to ask the Parish Councils grounds maintenance company to remove these.

185. To discuss issues raised with SMBC.

185.1 Cllr. Swain referred to emails with Borough Cllr. Hawkins about gritting; he said only bus routes were done, not main roads, by the school had not been done until today.

185.1.1 Cllr. Heslington said there had been an accident by Watery Lane; the junction was very slippery, it had not been gritted, she was unsure whether it was 2 or 3 cars that had been involved.

185.1.2 Cllr. Swain referred to gully being full again. He spoke about going back to SMBC about this and about the gritting.

185.2 Cllr. Heslington referred to a Street Watch walk, she said there were issues on buses from Shirley to Solihull; youths were getting on the bus, going upstairs causing a fire, then the driver was driving around with its bus on fire.

185.3 Cllr. Swain referred to a development appraisal proposal that had been pushed back; he said anyone immediately directly or indirectly affected should be consulted, or this would land on their lap, with no time to do anything. It was stated Creynolds Lane and Longleat Drive would be affected. Cllr. Swain referred to a meeting, he said they had asked them to go away and put more meat on the bones, now the meeting had been moved, they were going to the next stage. He said he would put something together.

186. To discuss CGPCs Action Plan.

186.1 Noted; deferred to be reviewed in March 2024.

187. To consider and resolve any action(s) in relation to items of correspondence received (issued to Parish Cllrs with the agenda).

187.1 It was note WALC had a new website; the Clerk said she had added all the Councillors as 'team members'; it was pointed out members had received a reply regarding a Youth Council Church. Cllr. Brotherton to forward this email to the Clerk for her to investigate.

188. To discuss and resolve any actions in relation to the ongoing CGPC action list (issued to Parish Cllrs with the agenda).

188.1 The Clerk said the next Solihull Area Meeting (SAM), was on Thursday 25th January at 715pm; Cllr. Coles, Brotherton and Smith could not attend. Cllr. Smith said it was quite interesting; Cllr. Willmott to check if she is available and if so, to attend with Cllr. Heslington.

189. Agenda items for next meeting.

189.1 March 2024 meeting – the Mount and Action list.

190. To resolve that due to the special nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.

190.1 There was nothing further to discuss.

191. To discuss and resolve any actions regarding any items of correspondence or matters considered confidential.

191.1 There was nothing further to discuss the meeting was closed.

192. PAYE, payroll and Pension Scheme.

Meeting closed 20:15

192.1 Details in confidential section.

Signed

Dated