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CHESWICK GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

Thursday 8th February 2024 7pm Cheswick Green Village Hall

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

Clerk: Marie Zizzi

3 members of the public

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

194.1 An apology was received from Cllr. Michelle Smith – this was accepted.

195. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations.

195.1 There were none.

196. Public Participation (15 Minutes).

196.1 Borough Cllr. Ken Hawkins was present; he spoke about the Boundary changes consultation, taking place until 10th April, he said the results would be submitted to Parliament.

196.2 Cllr. Hawkins said he was arranging a meeting for a more detailed look at the Blythe Ward, in relation to flooding, for Cheswick Green, Watery Lane and Dickens Heath, he referred to pinch points.

196.2.1 Cllr. Swain said at the last meeting a lady had attended, she had expressed her concerns about flooding. The Parish Council had contacted the EA and Bloor Homes about this. He added that she was not the only one that was worried, this affected older people, he said the bed of the river was far shallower than it used to be.

196.2.2 Cllr. Hawkins said when there was flooding, it was not possible to get into Dickens Heath, he said he looked at Coppice Walk and the flow. There were comments about the path via the bridge from Saxon Wood Road being designed to flood.

196.2.3 Cllr. Swain said with Cllr. Gosling, he had spoken with SMBCs Architect, it was not just what happened below the river.

196.2.4 Cllr. Hawkins said there were other areas such as Nottingham and Derby, where it was horrendous. He said it was not 'unprecedented' anymore, there was a lot more rain and the swales were struggling.

196.2.5 Cllr. Gosling said vegetation was growing and silt was building up.

196.2.6 Cllr. Coles queried if Cllr. Hawkins knew what the plan for adopting the Cheswick Place site was; he said SMBC had adopted some of the roads; Cllr. Hawkins did not know. Cllr. Swain added there were still some things SMBC wanted done.

196.3 Cllr. Hawkins said regarding the school and parking, he did not know who had taken over from the Engineer at SMBC who had left, who had been dealing with this. He asked whether the Parish Council was happy with the proposals, it was confirmed the Parish Council was.

196.3.1 Cllr. Coles and Cllr. Gosling pointed out there has been three Traffic Wardens and a Police Officer, outside the school last week, issuing tickets. Cllr. Brotherton said they stood on the corner, people could see them, so they did not park where they should not, she suggested they came out at 855am.

196.4 There were some comments about possible proposals from Richborough; Cllr. Swain said they had asked them to come back with more details, Richborough's meeting with SMBC had been cancelled.

196.4.1 Cllr. Hawkins said they planned to meet with Dickens Heath, to consult about the proposal for 450 homes on land by Tythe Barn Lane.

196.4.2 There were comments about football clubs and sports facilities.

196.5 It was stated at the recent Solihull Area Meeting (SAM), the issue about the high increase in price for Christmas tree lights had been raised.

Note at 19:20 Cllr. Hawkins left the meeting.

196.6 Comments were made by residents concerning the legitimacy of shrubbery on Foxland Close and SMBC will investigate.

197. To resolve to accept the Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11th January 2024 (*circulated to Parish Cllrs. with the agenda*).

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

198. 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*) **To agree amount to be transferred to UTB savings account.**

Payee	Reason	Total
Countrywide GM	Grounds maintenance January 2024	£786.89
M. Zizzi	Reimbursement for Instant ink	£9.99
DM Payroll Services Ltd.	Administration of payroll October 2023-March 2024	£90.00
M. Zizzi	Reimbursement for 1 year McAfee antivirus for Laptop	£5.40
SMBC	Rotation of speed sign Nov/Dec 23 Jan 24	£664.25
Mick Swain	Reimbursement for printing	£26.40

More in confidential section.

Petty cash £75.42

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

Resolved; proposed Cllr. Swain, seconded Cllr. Coles; £20,000 to be transferred from the UTB current account to the UTB savings account.

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

PL/2024/00150/PPFL - Unit 3 44 Brambles Crescent Blythe Valley Park Shirley; Change of use from a flexible retail use falling under Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4 or A5 to a mixed-use facility falling under Class E and F1(a) at Unit 3, Block A, Blythe Valley Park, Solihull.

199.1 There were no comments to be submitted.

PL/2024/00193/MINFHO - 2 Briarwood Close Cheswick Green Solihull B90 4HT; Two storey side extension.

199.1.1 There were no comments to be submitted.

200. To discuss the Christmas tree lights.

200.1 It was agreed the tree that had been used for the last 10 years, should continue to be used.

200.2 After some discussion it was agreed; to take the existing set down, to purchase a new set as advised by SMBC in an email sent 24th January 2024; for this new set to be installed by SMBC for Christmas 2024; for the new set of lights to then be left in place.

200.3 Cllr. Coles said the Christmas disco and switching on of the lights had gone well; It was suggested to have the switching on of the lights before the disco this year; to hold the event on Sunday 8th December 2024; lights on at 5pm followed by the disco 530-730pm, subject to the Village Hall being available.

200.4 There were comments about the storage of the lights; how much space this took up.

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

201.1 Cllr. Coles spoke about the official retirement of the Head Teacher of CG Primary School; he said members of the PC were invited to the schools 50 years celebrations on Saturday 16th March 10-12.

201.2 Cllr. Heslington and Cllr. Swain had attended the recent Solihull Area Meeting (SAM); Cllr. Heslington said there had been quite a few absences, lots of things did not get discussed. SMBCs CEO Mr. Paul Johnson had been present. He had spoken about finances and budgets; SMBC was struggling.

201.2.1 She went on to say there was £7 million for adult and children's services, for people in care or looked after. Things were going to get worse for 2025-26.

201.2.2 Assets had been discussed; when Birmingham City Council had announced it was in trouble, people had thought it would sell the airport, however, SMBC owned half of the airport. SMBC also owned the Audi ownership on the Stratford Road.

201.2.3 Mr. Johnson had spoken about Regeneration; Mell Square was going ahead, originally the price was going to be £70 million, since Covid this had been reduced to £35 million, it was a good price; a loan had been taken out for this, over 40 years at 2% interest.

201.2.4 They had been told about new housing going up in Solihull Town Centre; Cllr. Coles said that would be okay, if it was going to be affordable.

201.2.5 Cllr. Swain said there were meant to be four guest speakers, but there had only been one. He said Regeneration programs/plans did not cost that much, as the Council could get money back from tax and Business Rates. He added that at present SMBC obtained Business Rates up to something like £7 million, anything above that amount went to the Government.

201.2.6 Cllr. Heslington said SMBC was tasked with buying 40 new houses in the Borough, to house refugees. Cllr. Swain added that people had probably seen in the newspapers, that there was £600 million to help Councils; SMBCs share was £1.3 million with some extra for children's social services. He said they had been told about one extreme case, where one family had cost £1.4 million last year.

201.2.7 Cllr. Coles said he knew of a family, with a child who had Cerebral Palsy, they got £10k for holidays, every year.

201.2.8 Cllr. Swain spoke about the Combined Authority, he said Birmingham City Council (BCC), was not building enough houses, SMBC was only taking 2000 on behalf of BCC.

202.2.9 At the SAM people had been asked if they were receiving WALC updates; CGPC was; it was stated there should be passwords for Councillors to access the website. WALC was encouraging people to attend more courses.

202.2.10 The next SAM was on Thursday 25th April 2024; it was hoped there would be a rep. from the EA to talk about flooding and someone from the police, possibly the Police Commissioner.

202.3 Cllr. Gosling spoke about the situation with BT and a letter some residents had received; she read from the letter. She said this would affect older people, what was said in the letter was absolute rubbish. When Cheswick Green had been built the exchange was very modern, copper had been used to the boxes, but aluminium had been used from the boxes to the houses, it was rotting.

202.3.1 Cllr. Gosling said the Parish Council had already contacted the MP about this and Openreach. She said they had fibre provided by BT all over Cheswick Place and down Creynolds Lane. BT said there were other providers, Cheswick Green was an island, they needed to act and do something about Broadband in the village. She added the Parish Council had obtained the numbers needed for this to happen and even offered to pay something towards it, but BT would not accept this. She said she had been told they needed to write to the boss every week and suggested they approached the MP again, with another letter, to also write to the Director CEO of Openreach.

202.3.2 Cllr. Gosling said they had tried City Fibre as well, as this company had carried out lots of installation in Monkspath. A member of the public said apparently the speed was no better than before.

202.3.3 Cllr. Coles said what people did not understand about the speed, was that it was affected by the number of devices that were being used, if people shut devices off, their connection would be a lot better.

202.3.4 Cllr. Brotherton said she was with Virgin; she did not have a problem.

202.4 An email circulated about Social Media Posts by Cllr. Coles was discussed. It was agreed to continue with things the way they were for now, until the Parish Council decided what it was going to do. Cllr. Coles confirmed he was to continue updating the Parish Council social media, there were no objections, therefore this was agreed. It was noted it had been suggested Cllr. Smith could attend any WALC training.

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

202.1 Cllr. Heslington said from 1st April 2024 the hourly rate for the VH would increase by 10%, rounded up to the nearest 50p. The maximum increase was about £1 per hour. She said the VH fixed term contract for gas had ended, the VHMC was paying three times as

much now. All hall users had been informed, there had been no complaints, it was not a massive hike.

202.2 Cllr. Heslington said Brownies and Boys Brigade were not being charged for the next 12 months, these groups had been notified about this and about the increase for 2025.

202.3 Cllr. Heslington said the VH was being used as the Polling Station on Thursday 4th May 2024.

202.4 Cllr. Heslington said the VH had a new caretaker, the committee was really pleased with what the caretaker was doing, it was going well, the caretaker got on well with users.

202.5 There was a short discussion about the Youth Club, which had not taken place since July 2023; it was understood the person who ran this was handing it over to someone else. Another person wanted to book the hall on a Friday night once month. Currently, the situation meant the VHMC was being prevented from taking bookings. There were comments about how much stuff the Youth Club had, including a football table and bean bags. It was stated the issue was finding volunteers to run things.

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

203.1 It was noted most of the issues were at the Mount, this was to be discussed at the March Parish Council meeting.

203.2 It was agreed to keep an eye on trees.

203.3 Cllr. Gosling said it was nice to receive a compliment for once; a lady on Snowhill Drive had said she was really pleased with the way the area by the garages had been cleared. It was agreed to pass this on to the Parish Councils grounds maintenance contractor.

204. To discuss issues raised with SMBC.

204.1 Cllr. Swain said since he had raised the issue about the fence with SMBC again, the rotten parts had been taken down and a couple of plastic barriers had been installed.

205. To discuss CGPCs Action Plan.

205.1 Deferred to the next meeting.

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

206.1 A recent WALC newsletter had asked for nominations for the Royal Garden Party. It was agreed to put Cllr. Swain’s name forward.

206.2 Cllr. Swain referred to another WALC newsletter, which had contained information about intimidation in public life. He said WALC had wanted councils to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge, CGPC had replied to WALC that it was not willing to do this as it carried no weight. He said the Star Awards had been mentioned in the newsletter and informing people if they wanted to make a change, to become Councillor.

206.3 An email from a resident concerned about an Oak tree was noted; this tree was on land SMBC owned, the resident had been informed and given contact details.

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

207.1 It was noted an officer from SMBC had sent an invitation to a TEAMS meeting, about an electrical charging point, on Friday 23rd February 2024 2-3pm. Cllr. Coles and the Clerk had accepted. It was hoped Cllr. Smith would be able to attend.

208. Agenda items for next meeting.

208.1 Social/Media policies, The Mount, CGPC Action Plan and events.

209. 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.

209.1 There was nothing further to discuss.

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

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

211. PAYE, payroll and Pension Scheme.

Meeting closed 20:30

211.1 Details in confidential section.

Signed

Dated