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CHESWICK GREEN STATUTORY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
Thursday 25th April 2024 7pm Cheswick Green Village Hall

Present:

13 local residents

Cheswick Green Parish Councillors; Amy Brotherton, Simon Coles, Linda Heslington, Margaret Gosling (*Vice Chairman*), Michelle Smith, Mick Swain (*Chairman*) and Gaynor Willmott. CGPC Clerk: Marie Zizzi

Note: - *The Statutory Annual Parish Meeting is not a Parish Council meeting. It is a meeting of the electors of the Parish that must take place between 1st March and 1st June. Electors have the opportunity to learn of the activities that have been undertaken by the Parish Council during the past twelve months. The meeting is chaired by the Parish Council.*

Electors can debate current issues and put forward resolutions for consideration by the Parish Council. Such resolutions will not bind the Parish Council.

The Parish Council is not obliged to pursue these resolutions, except in the case of the provision of Allotments. Following the resolution in 2010 the Parish Council despite trying, by contacting several landowners, has unfortunately, so far, been unable to find land that could provide allotments.

1. Welcome and introduction.

1.1 Cllr. Swain welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

2. To accept apologies for absence.

2.1 An apology was received from Parish Councillor Simon Coles, however Cllr. Coles did arrive at 7:50pm.

3. Minutes of the Statutory Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 30th March 2023.

Resolved: proposed Cllr. Gosling; the Minutes should be signed as a true and accurate record.

4. Report from 2023/24 Parish Council Chairman, Cllr. Mick Swain
(written report attached).

4.1 Cllr. Swain said he would not read out his report, as he wanted to give residents the opportunity to raise their issues. (*Note: report will be attached to the Minutes, which will be available on the website.*)

5. Issues of particular local importance.

5.1 A resident spoke about the stream, three people from the EA had been to view it from this residents back garden. The resident said when Cheswick Place had been built, a mound had been made, there was nowhere for rainwater to go. The resident referred to proposals for houses being built, as per the consultation held at the Regency Hotel, she queried where all the water was going to go, from this development.

5.1.1 Cllr. Swain said the Parish Council had just received an outline planning application for 550 houses to be built, out of a possible 1150; there were 116 documents, with various sections/parts including reports on flooding. He said it would be very, very difficult to successfully oppose it, as Solihull MBC had already ear-marked the area for development.

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5.1.2 Cllr. Swain said the Parish Council had challenged planning applications in the past, it had cost thousands of pounds, just to be ignored.

5.1.3 The resident commented about the amount of development in Cheswick Green, saying there was more and more concrete, there was nowhere for water to go, no one cleaned the streams, the new development was protected by installing the mound, the developers did not think about existing residents.

5.1.4 Cllr. Swain queried whether the resident was not satisfied with the outcome. The resident was not, the resident said it was okay having flood defences, but there were still concerns.

5.1.5 Cllr. Swain referred to a walk that had taken place, from 5 miles upstream, he said there were fridges, irons, bedsteads and kinds of rubbish in the river.

5.1.6 The resident referred to weeds, stating they were unable to clear these, nor was their neighbour, they had been told it was the weeds, but it was not it was the mound.

5.1.7 Cllr. Swain said with Cllr. Gosling, he had met Solihull MBCs Landscape Architect, they had been through various concerns including overgrown vegetation and silt, they had been assured again and again, all these things would be dealt with. There were comments about getting this in writing. It was stated the bushes and trees were getting bigger.

5.1.8 Cllr. Smith referred to the resident's neighbour, she said the Laurels had been overgrown, Solihull MBC had written to this resident, asking for them to be cut, if they were not Solihull MBC would arrange for this to be done, then charge the resident. Cllr. Smith said branches from the Laurels were overhanging into the stream, they needed cutting again. She suggested SMBC wrote to the resident, to make sure they were cut, as they were encroaching from the garden, even doing this would help.

5.1.9 Another resident said their back garden backed on to the stream, they concurred with everything that had been said. The resident referred to the proposed development off the Stratford Road, saying it would be worthwhile for the Parish Council and residents, to make the best points they could, as to why they did not want this development, so it was on record. The resident added it would be helpful, if the Parish Council could let residents know what the main points were, in relation to flooding and traffic etc.

5.1.10 Cllr. Gosling spoke about attending the session at the Regency Hotel, she said when they had spoken about flooding, they had said it drained the other way.

5.1.11 The resident said they could factually demonstrate this was wrong.

5.1.12 Cllr. Swain said the Parish Council had received the application about 2 weeks ago, a request had been made to have longer to submit comments, this would be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting. He referred to not spending thousands of pounds on a professional planning advisor, he referred to the access/egress for the site and flooding. He queried what the final number of dwellings would be, as well as the use of the available space for other than housing, he said there were large trees all around, the application looked overcrowded, there would be flats, it was unsure whether these would be 2 or 3 storeys or a mixture. He added the Parish Council had been contacted by Taylor Wimpey yesterday, to arrange a meeting. He said Taylor Wimpey had been better at contacting the Parish Council than any of the other developers.

5.1.13 Cllr. Swain said various issues needed to be addressed, he said the Parish Council would do its part, but it needed others to support this.

5.1.14 The resident reiterated for the Parish Council to provide ideas on the points to make; they referred to not wanting big houses in greenbelt land – 5-6 storey houses. The resident said there was undeveloped Brownfields around and the higher the density of the development, the less taken out of the greenbelt.

5.1.15 Another resident, spoke about their property backing onto the fields, also experiencing flooding, the area was full of water at the top of the hill. This resident queried what consideration would be given to wildlife, bats/owls, special wildlife; they commented that all these houses and the possibility of flood lights for sports pitches, in the greenbelt, had Solihull MBC thought about these issues.

5.1.17 Cllr. Swain said he could not answer, he said a number of representations had been made from various bodies, originally the proposal was for the whole length of Dog Kennel Lane, due to concerns the site had been moved to the other side of the farm.

5.1.18 Cllr. Gosling said a couple of fields were meant to be left.

5.1.19 It was reiterated that development would affect wildlife, it would make it difficult for animals to hunt.

5.1.20 Cllr. Smith said bats were a protected species, she referred to nesting places. It was felt bats/owls were probably garden based, as well as living in the surrounding areas, it was assumed they would not stay.

5.1.21 Cllr. Swain spoke about problems on Longleat Drive, with the level being higher than the gardens, the gardens becoming flooded from the fields now. He referred to 1000 houses and cutting off drainage.

5.1.22 Cllr. Gosling said properties on Snowhill Drive had water flowing into garages, more tarmac and concrete, built on clay rocks and clay soil, there was nowhere for water to go.

5.1.23 A resident said they needed to build on stilts, like they did in other areas.

5.1.24 Cllr. Swain said the Parish Council would put something together for people to use. The Parish Council would make a formal objection.

5.1.25 A resident said the application itself was daunting. Cllr. Swain added the first document had 100+ things in it. A resident said when they had tried to look at the application, the documents had been unavailable.

5.2 A resident referred to the parking on Coppice Walk being horrendous, they said it had been okay when the pub had been closed, now it was terrible with vans and vehicles all parked up to Noble Way, was there anything that could be done.

5.2.1 Cllr. Swain said what was being carried out in relation to traffic restrictions, was being done in phases. Outside the school had been Phase 1. For Phase 2 the Parish Council has been expecting to see something last September, this had not happened due to an officer leaving Solihull MBC, a new person had been appointed, then that person had left. He said the Parish Council had seen the proposals for Phase 2; restrictions would be extended further down to Foxland Close and the cul-de-sac. There would be limited parking in some places, for 30 minutes only and there would be no parking outside the pub. Once the purdah period was over, Borough Councillors would be asked for comments on the proposals, a date to implement was not known at present, it was in progress, a public consultation would take place.

5.3 The issue of the car park and the potholes was raised. It was stated this was an ongoing matter. Cllr. Swain said last year a former Parish Councillor had pursued this rigorously with the brewery and the family who owned the shops, the other two owners of parts of the car park. Eventually, a meeting had been arranged, the Parish Council was willing to pay a third of the cost involved, the shop owners were also willing to pay a third of the cost, the pub/brewery had waived. He said he had spoken with the Head of Estates about this.

5.3.1 It was noted the brewery was £2.2 billion in dept. It was pointed out the pub had been refurbished, it was stated that was because the pub was profitable.

5.3.2 It was stated the Parish Council had been filling the potholes for years, it had also had a gully installed.

5.3.3 Cllr. Smith said during a Street Watch walk, it had been noted guttering on the Village Surgery was broken and water was pouring from this, into one of the big potholes on part of the car park the Parish Council owned.

5.3.4 Cllr. Swain said the car park would cost a lot of money.

5.3.5 There were comments about a resident driving into a large pothole and scrapping sounds. It was stated it was not possible to see how deep the holes were, when they were full of water.

5.4 A resident referred to developers investing into the community.

5.4.1 Cllr. Swain said the Parish Council would ask about this. He added the Parish Council needed to know what residents wanted.

- 5.4.2 A resident, who had been a Parish Councillor, referred to money being spend on the Recreation Ground, they said it looked good and it was well used.
- 5.4.3 Cllr. Swain said originally there was not going to be any Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), from Cheswick Place, initially there was meant to be 220 dwellings, when the developer had applied to increase this to 270, the Parish Council had received CIL due to this.
- 5.4.4 There were comments about £6 million for road improvements on the A34. Cllr. Smith said something needed to be done on the feeder lane to Land Rover by McDonald's, they had taken the feed lane out, it was dangerous, traffic backed up.
- 5.4.5 Cllr. Swain spoke about the A34 and the junction, he said this may change significantly over the next few years, Highways England was not happy with it.
- 5.4.6 A resident queried whether the 40-mph on the roads would ever be changed to 30-mph. There were comments about drivers not taking any notice of speed limits. This could be evidenced by data from the Parish Councils speed camera, people driving over 80-mph had been recorded.
- 5.5 Cllr. Swain asked residents what they knew about drug dealers in the area. It was pointed out there was currently a regular police patrol. A resident who worked with the Brownies, said people still used drugs in the shelter, however they had not seen them on the car park for a few months now, it had improved.
- 5.6 Cllr. Swain asked residents if there was anything they wanted the Parish Council to do. One resident queried about the derelict houses on Creynolds Lane. It was stated a complaint had been made to Solihull MBC, about the state these properties were in, as a result the shrubbery had been cut back. It was noted how the owners of these properties had acquired them.
- 5.7 There were comments about what was happening to the Lloyds College building, whether it was open or closed. There were comments about Marks & Spencer's still paying £80k in rates.
- 5.7.1 Cllr. Brotherton said Marks & Spencer's owned the building, it was full of asbestos, there were severe sewer problems and the lifts did not work. A quarter to half a million pounds was needed to fix it.
- 5.7.2 It was stated the Police Station was for sale and that TKMax had until the end of May. It was thought Mell Square would be tided up. There were comments about Solihull Town Centre being deserted, using it for housing and that Solihull MBC had brought out Norwich Union, for £34 million just after Covid.
- 5.7.3 It was stated House of Fraser would become housing/living areas.
- 5.8 A resident spoke about seeing Willow used in parks to make dens for toddlers, it looked pretty, it provided shade and somewhere for kids to play. They suggested to put a small one in. It was stated the Willow continued to grow, it also sucked up water and it would be inexpensive. The resident agreed to send photographs to the Parish Council.
- 5.9 Cllr. Swain asked if there was anything else. He updated the groups about an ongoing issue in relation to fencing owned by Solihull MBC.
- 5.10 Cllr. Gosling said despite going around the village with someone from Solihull MBC, to look at all the overgrowth, nothing had been done.
- 5.11 A resident suggested putting a bench on the corner of Watery Lane, for people to have a sit down. Cllr. Gosling said when the Parish Council had installed new benches, two of these had been pulled out, this is what happened when they tried to do something.
- 5.12 Cllr. Swain spoke about keeping residents informed, he encouraged them to look at the website. He said they used to deliver newsletters to residents, when there were 800 properties, the parish was too big to do this now.
- 5.13 A resident pointed out that there were possibly people from about 12 households here tonight, where was everyone else?
- 5.14 Cllr. Gosling spoke about Severn Trent digging a hole and making a leak, which had then been sealed, it was still leaking, gallons of water was wasted.
- 5.15 Cllr. Heslington informed people that the Community Café, was holding an event of Tuesday 4th June; to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of D-Day; there

would be a quiz, food/drink, if people were interested to attend, it would be 10-12.

5.16 A resident asked why there were elections for a Borough Councillor and elections for a Mayor.

5.16 It was explained that lots of parts of the country had Combined Authorities now; the Mayor was for the West Midlands Combined Authority. It was stated the Parish Council had no say over this and that the Government provide grants which Mayors could control where this funding went. It was pointed out the current Mayor, Andy Street continually said he wanted building to take place on Brownfield sites.

Note at 7:50pm Cllr. Coles arrived.

5.17 Cllr. Swain concluded Solihull MBC received a lot of criticism, he said officers were overstretched, one officer would be working on a number of issues. He said officers were trained by Solihull MBC, then offered positions at other councils for more money. He referred to one officer the Parish Council had worked with on various issues, being made an offer, which they had said no to, but then being made another offer that was too good to be refused. He said when people were replaced, they also soon left.

5.18 It was stated the next Parish Council meeting was on Thursday 9th May at 7pm.

Meeting closed at 7:55pm

SignedPosition Date

Chairman’s report 2023/24

So, what have we been up to during the past 12 months.
A synopsis of the good, the bad and the ugly in no particular order.

We:

Upgraded the children’s play area using funds that we received from the construction of Cheswick Place. Refurbishment was needed and the facility is in constant use.

Held a Kings Coronation Day which was very successful. A duck race took place with many attractions, bar, and bands. The build-up, the day and breakdown the following day were tiring for those involved. Many volunteers who offered to help were absent and we have decided not to hold an all-day event again until help is assured. We understand that other local events are likely to close for the same reason.

Did have several volunteers to help with our litter pick around the village.

Held the Christmas party for children, followed by a visit from Santa and the lights switch on. The Christmas tree lights will be renewed this year with coloured lights, as the existing lights are 10 years old.

Arranged for a residents meeting regarding changes to the Village Surgery services. Enough said.

Co-opted 3 new Councillors. The Residents Association closed due to a lack of members and interest from residents.

Have had meetings with developers regarding 1550 dwellings being constructed on land adjacent to Dog Kennel Lane and the Stratford Road. A planning application for 550 dwellings has already been submitted.

Have agreed further and new parking restrictions in the village with Solihull Council which will undergo a period of consultation prior to adoption.

Extended a contract with Solihull Council to rotate a speed sign around the Parish.

Provided planters and plants to residents in various locations.

Our thanks to those who have helped us throughout the past 12 months. You know who you are.