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**CHESWICK GREEN STATUTORY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
 Wednesday 22nd March 2017 7:30pm in Cheswick Green Village Hall**

Present:

1 local resident

Cheswick Green Parish Councillors; Ian Bruce, Len Cresswell, Margaret Gosling
 (PC Vice Chairman), Steve Hall, Penny Phillips and Mick Swain.

CGPC Clerk: Mrs. Marie Zizzi

1. Welcome and introduction.

1.1 Cllr. Gosling welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. She then read an introduction prepared by Cllr. Brown.

'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 have the opportunity to 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 land owners, has unfortunately, so far, been unable to find land that could provide allotments. This is still under consideration and the possibility of land at Blythe Valley Park will be pursued'.

2. To accept apologies for absence.

2.1 Cllr. Brian Brown.

3. Minutes of the Statutory Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 21st March 2016.

Resolved; proposed Cllr. Cresswell, seconded Cllr. Gosling; that these Minutes should be signed as a true and accurate record.

4. Report from 2016/17 Parish Council Chairmen, Cllr. Brian Brown.

4.1 Cllr. Gosling then read a report prepared by Cllr. Brown - copy attached.

5. Report from Recreation Committee Chairman, Cllr. Penny Phillips.

5.1 Cllr. Phillips then gave a report - copy attached.

6. Report from Planning Committee Chairman, Cllr. Margaret Gosling.

6.1 Cllr. Gosling then gave a report - copy attached.

7. Issues of particular local importance.

7.1 It was stated that the three Blythe Ward Councillors, had all supported the Blythe Valley planning application including the Kineton Lane access.

7.2 It was pointed out that Cllr. Ken Hawkins had supported the application on the condition that the Kineton Road access was allowed.

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7.3 It was noted that CG RA had put forward different views.

7.4 It was also stated that other long standing Borough Councillors, Ken Meeson and Ian Courts, who was the Deputy Leader of the Council, had opposed the Kinton Lane access, they were not in favour of this.

7.5 It was felt that the Blythe Ward Councillors had not supported the parish on this matter.

8. Any other matters raised by an elector of the parish.

8.1 It was stated that some ex-Council properties were being viewed regarding being linked to the sewer. It was thought that there was currently an annual fee of about £30 that was paid. It was stated that being linked to the sewer would cost more and that there would be a connection fee. It was stated that the cesspit was possibly emptied about 5 times a week.

Meeting closed at 7:55pm.

Signed

Position

Date

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE STATUTORY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
ON 22ND MARCH 2017 – CLLR. BRIAN BOWN**

The last twelve months have been extremely busy for all Members of Cheswick Green Parish Council and in particular for our very experienced and good Clerk, Marie Zizzi. We could not have coped without the dedicated help from our Clerk who is only employed on a part time basis.

Members

Resulting from the sudden, very tragic and sad death of Cllr. Chris Noble in August 2015 and the subsequent resignations by Cllr. Greg Allport at the end of January 2017 and Cllr. Mike Cooper at the end of March 2017, it was necessary to advertise and fill the vacancies. I am delighted that Cllr. Ian Bruce was co-opted in March 2016, Cllr. Mick Swain was co-opted in May 2016 and Cllr. Penny Philips was co-opted in June 2016. Consequently, the new Members have all been on a steep learning curve. This has been made even harder with the many very important issues that have had to be and are still being dealt with.

Last year our Clerk, Marie obtained the General Power of Competence – GPC – this gives the Parish Council the power to do anything that individuals may do, as long as they do not break other laws. It is a 'power of first resort'; this means that when searching for a power to act, the first question you ask is whether you can use the GPC. To find the answer, you ask whether an individual is normally permitted to act in the same way.

Planning

Cheswick Green Parish Council is a Statutory Consultee for all planning applications within the Parish and therefore Solihull MBC is required to consult with the Parish Council. In previous years, the Parish Council has been able to influence some planning decisions made by Solihull MBC. Members feel that their concerns have not been properly taken into account in respect of Blythe Valley Park.

Cllr. Margaret Gosling was elected as Chair of the Planning Committee in May 2016. With the volume of work, I am not sure whether Margaret was expecting to be quite so busy when accepting to be Chair. The Planning Committee deals with planning issues and is working on the Parish Neighbourhood Plan. Margaret will give her report on all the work that has been done and the many issues that the Parish Council is attempting to deal with amongst which the major issues are Mount Dairy Farm, Solihull Local Plan Review and Blythe Valley Park development.

Recreation Matters

The Parish Council owns various parcels of land that are used as public open spaces. These areas are maintained by a contractor working for the Parish Council. The specification for the renewal of the grounds maintenance work was sent out for competitive quotations in December 2016. Four quotations were received. The renewal of the contract takes effect in April 2017 and is for a three-year period.

The trees are inspected every three years and action is taking in accord with the arboriculturist's recommendations, the previous report was provided in 2013.

The trees were inspected and report received in September 2016. Any necessary work and some additional work has been undertaken.

Cllr. Penny Philips was elected as Chair of the Recreation Committee. Penny will provide a more detailed report.

Shop Frontages

Attempts have been made over many years for the appearance of the forecourt to the shops and Village Surgery to be improved. In the past efforts have been made to tidy the area on an annual basis with the assistance of Solihull MBC and members of Cheswick Green Residents Association. In June 2015, the Parish

Council came up with an idea where its grounds maintenance contractor could carry out litter picking twice a week and maintain the shrub beds. The scheme was first discussed with the owners of the shops and their managing agent, who supported this arrangement. The scheme was for each of the shopkeepers and Village Surgery to reimburse the Parish Council with their proportion of the costs. The scheme came into effect at the beginning of April 2016. Vast improvement has been seen. This is for the benefit of the shopkeepers, all residents and visitors to the village. Unfortunately, due to financial constraints, the Village Surgery withdrew from the scheme at the end of last October and now carry out the litter picking and sweeping of the car park in front of the Village Surgery. Discussions are taking place for the renewal of the scheme, with reduced costs, to take effect from 1st April 2017.

Defibrillator

Soon after his election as a Borough Councillor and being one of our three Ward Councillors, Cllr. Alex Insley managed to obtain a free Defibrillator from a few being offered by West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust. This was on the basis that the Parish Council provided a cabinet in a suitable location. The Parish Council investigated the obtaining of a Defibrillator Cabinet. The Parish Council negotiated with the supplier for a cabinet that will, hopefully, be vandal proof. The cabinet with low wattage LED light above was installed on 10th March 2017. The Defibrillator will be installed on 10th April 2017 along with free training on how to use the defibrillator provided by the WM Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust.

Tesco Bags of Help

At the beginning of 2016, the Parish Council submitted an application for funds from the Tesco Bags of Help scheme. The Parish Council reached the short list of three successful applicants. After local voting by the public, the Parish Council achieved second place with a grant of £10,000. Funding from the grant has been spent on refurbishing the recreational equipment on the Recreation Ground together with the installation of a new concrete table tennis table. The final element of redecoration has just been completed.

Village Hall Roof

Early in September 2016, it became apparent that the roof to the original part of the Village Hall was in danger of imminent collapse. This was noticed by a member of the Cheswick Green Residents Association, who contacted a Structural Engineer known to him. The Structural Engineer arranged for a specialist roofing contractor to immediately attend and make the building safe. The Parish Council then became involved because of the nature of the problem and likely expenditure. The Structural Engineer was appointed on behalf of the Parish Council. A specification was agreed and six competitive quotations sought with three quotations being received.

Cllr. Mick Swain offered to be the link contact and coordinator between the Parish Council, Structural Engineer and contractor.

The initial approach was to attempt to straighten the roof trusses that were leaning and about to collapse. Unfortunately, the trusses were too twisted and would not straighten. There were three alternatives to deal with the problem: -

- To replace all the roof trusses. This would incur the cost of erecting a 'tent' over the building. There was a possibility of rainwater damage to the interior of the 'large hall'. A 'tent' would cost in the region of £12,000 to £16,000 in addition to the costs of new roof trusses.
- To leave the roof trusses in place and to install two very large steel beams upon which new rafters could be fixed and supported.

- The other alternative was to demolish the 'large hall' with the loss of the facility.

The second option was chosen as being the most appropriate course of approach. The work was completed ahead of schedule. Weather conditions were favourable, with the result that there was not much rainwater ingress.

Even with the area appropriately fenced off and kept secure, vandals continued to cause damage.

Cllr. Mick Swain carried out extensive research to see if there was any grant funding available to assist with the costs of the roof repair. Unfortunately, there did not appear to be any grants for this situation.

The Parish Council was very fortunate with the expertise of the Structural Engineer and the efficiency and competence of the roofing contractor.

Conclusion

The volume of work being undertaken by Members is having a detrimental effect upon their domestic lives. Fortunately, they are well supported by their spouses. I should like to thank all those people for all their kind and enthusiastic work and help. Without their help, the Parish would be much poorer in amenities, facilities and appearance.

Finally, on behalf of all Members I wish to express our sincere thanks to our Clerk, Marie Zizzi for loyally helping all of us. We could not have achieved what we have done without Marie's excellent assistance.

Recreation Committee Report 2016/17 – Cllr. Penny Phillips

As previously stated in the Chairman's report the Recreation Committee oversee the eight areas of land owned by CGPC. These include the Mount, open fields and grassed areas on Saxon Wood Road, the Village Green & Recreation Ground.

Our current grounds maintenance contract is due to expire at the end of March and after approaching several companies for quotes, CGPC agreed it would renew with its existing contractor, Meadowfields Ground Maintenance Ltd, as this was the most cost effective.

The Parish Council ran a separate agreement for outside the shop frontages, this is not Parish Land but in an attempt to keep this area tidy, the Parish Council collects from the shopkeepers to fund the cost. This contract is currently under review and will only continue if all parties agree to fund the cost.

A three-year check was carried out on trees on CGPC land in September 2016 and any necessary work has been carried out. As you will be aware, as a result of storm Doris, a tree fell down on the Village Green, work is in hand to remove the tree and make good the ground.

Mr. Matthew Gardner, SMBC Neighbourhood Co-ordinator for Blythe, attends our Recreation Meetings and liaises with CGPC advising of any relevant work, covered by the above committee, in hand within the Parish and members feedback any items for attention. Recent points for discussion being the concrete planters, the emptying of SMBC bins and a replacement bin for the Village Green. Mr. Gardner also donated the daffodil bulbs now in bloom. Kindly planted by Councillors Mick Swain and Brian Brown.

Various other items are reviewed & discussed by the committee as and when required. These include:

- Christmas Lights - unfortunately last year, despite having agreed a date with all interested parties, Father Christmas's visit to turn on the lights needed to be rescheduled, as it conflicted with the schools Christmas Fete. Councillor Steve Hall spent many hours attempting to agree a new date but to no avail. Hence, there was no official switch on last year. We will

plan a little earlier this year in the hope, once agreed, no party needs to change the date.

- A Young Person's Guide to the Mount by Peter Tonks this has been produced in a booklet format and has been issued to the local school, Solihull Central Library – The Hub and Dickens Heath library for reference purposes.
- This year was the first time a Remembrance Wreath was laid at the memorial flowerbed on the Recreation Ground.

The Recreation Committee would welcome any residents who would like to join this committee, there are currently two vacancies, please check our website and noticeboards for the date and time of the next meeting.

Report from the Planning Committee 2016-2017 – Cllr. Margaret Gosling

The past year has been busy for the Planning Committee with responses to major planning applications to be considered, a response to the Local Plan Review to be made and attempts to progress with the Neighbourhood Plan. The committee has also had to consider responses to many other planning applications. These are always done with the aim of attempting to achieve the best possible outcome for local residents

The application for development in Blythe Valley Park took up a great deal of time and a planning consultant was appointed in order for us to put forward our case. Unfortunately, SMBC passed this application and allowed the second access into Kineton Lane which had been strongly opposed. Time was also spent trying to influence the outcome of the application for the second phase of development on the Mount Dairy Farm site. Members of the Parish Council have also been keeping a careful eye as building has taken place on this site and have reported several issues of concern to the builders, SMBC and Considerate Construction. We have had some success in ensuring that not too many problems have remained. We would ask that residents continue to report any issues of concern to the Parish Council so that we can try to get a resolution.

Members have also sent a response to the Local Plan Review to SMBC and this can be found on our website. We are very concerned at the amount of housing development proposed either in our Parish or nearby and have made this clear.

Progress on the Neighbourhood Plan has unfortunately been slow for a number of reasons - changes in those working on it, a lack of volunteers to help with this and other major issues that have had to take priority. However, we have almost completed another document outlining the issues we feel need most consideration and will shortly be circulating this to residents to ask for their views. The Parish Council would appreciate as much feedback on this as people can give as the development of a Neighbourhood Plan and its acceptance will affect the future of our community for years to come.