

**YARNFIELD AND COLD MEECE PARISH COUNCIL**  
**PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**12 November 2019 at 7.30pm**  
**Yarnfield Village Hall**  
**Minutes**

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**Present (for all or part of the meeting):-**

**Councillors:**

David Beeston

Stella Hughes

Frank Cromey

Sally Parkin

Brian Eyre (Chairman)

Brian Rushton

**Officers in attendance:** - Mr J Fraser- Clerk to the Parish Council

**Also in attendance:** - Cllr. James (SBC), Cllr Nixon (SBC)

**Public at the meeting:** - 16

**19.98 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr M Beeston and Cllr J Pert (SCC)

**19.99 Declaration of Interest**

A declaration of interest was made in relation to Item 19.104(a) - Footpath 34 by Cllr. D. Beeston.

**19.100 Public Question Time**

*Could the Parish Council explain what could be done to improve communication with the Swynnerton MOD camp?*

Response - The creation of the new parish council in April 2019 had caused some confusion for Landmarc Support Services at Swynnerton Army Camp. It is hoped this has now been resolved following a discussion with the staff at the Camp during which the Parish Clerk confirmed that he was to be the point of contact between the camp and parish council. Furthermore that information would, if it was appropriate to do so, be shared with the ward members and parishioners.

**19.101 Reports from Borough and County Councillors.**

Cllr. Nixon referred to a meeting with the Borough Council's Planning Obligations Monitoring and Implementation Officer about possible changes to the implementation of the Walnut Tree Far section 106 agreement. It is hoped that the Borough Council will agree to a new scheme of work being developed. Cllr. Mrs Trowbridge, Stafford Borough Council Cabinet Member for Leisure, has indicated a willingness to meet the Parish Councillors as part of this process

**19.102 To receive an update on HS2 from the Stone Rail Head Crisis Group (SRCG)**

The Government's original intention was that the House of Lords Select Committee proceedings would start on the 28 October 2019. The Parish Council was offered a provisional date of 30th October to present their petition. However the appointment of the Select Committee was delayed with the result that our provisional date was put back until 11 November. This has been further delayed as a result of general election which has pushed everything back until the New Year. The House of Lords Select Committee was announced on 31 October 2019. The chair is Lord Walker, a former Supreme Court judge and a cross-bencher. The other members of the committee comprise of 3 Tories, 2 Labour and one Lib Dem.

The latest press coverage suggests that the Oakavee review will find in favour of HS2. However the SRCG do not believe this is the end of the story. Lord Berkeley (Vice-chairman of the Review) has expressed grave concerns about Department for Transport interference with the review and is producing his own report that will undermine the findings of the Oakavee review.

**19.103 Approval of the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting**

The minutes were approved subject to minor typographic changes being made.

**Resolved:** The amended minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019 were approved and signed as a correct record of the meeting.

**19.104 To consider any matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda.**

**(a) Footpath 34**

The dispute over the correct location of Footpath 34 has now been resolved with the Planning Inspector finding in favour of the Staffordshire County Council decision, previously reported to the Parish Council. As a consequence of the Planning Inspectors ruling the line of the footpath will now need to be moved from its existing location to the correct position in line with the County Council's published definitive map of footpaths.

**Resolved:** That the clerk write to the County Council to seek clarification on when the work will be undertaken to reinstate Footpath 34 to its correct location.

**(b) D&G Buses**

Following a complaint about the reliability of the bus service in Yarnfield the issue has been raised with the operator D&G buses. The principle problem affecting the service is due to traffic congestion on the route and in the surrounding area resulting in delays to the service.

(c) Speed Activated Sign installation cost

BIFFA have confirmed that they will pay for the cost of the installation of the Speed Activated Sign in Yarnfield.

(d) Grant Application

The decision at the Parish Council meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in relation to the development of the Parish Neighbourhood plan that it should be put on hold should be reconsidered. The timing of the development of the neighbourhood plan should be done to compliment the work by the Borough Council however this should not preclude the gathering of evidence and the development of the core elements that will be included in the plan.

(e) Bench

The bench, which was provided by the Yarnfield Forum as a memorial to a local resident, and donated to the former Parish Council is in a poor condition and needs to be replaced. The Clerk has been in contact with the family and confirmed that it is the intention of the Parish Council to provide a new bench at the same location.

**Resolved:** That the Clerk obtains prices for the replacement of the bench, which should include the formation of a hard standing for the bench.

**19.105 Parish Assembly Action Plans - to review progress on the action plans**

The following actions are to be added to the action plan monitoring log

**(a) Action Priority 1 - Open Space**

- Discussions are taking place with Stafford Borough Council over future grass cutting on the Village Green and whether the Parish Council could assume responsibility for the whole area.
- The draft tender for the grounds maintenance contract is being prepared
- Bulb planning on the Village Green by the Forum was undertaken in October.
- Litter Group - letter to go in the School Newsletter
- Section 106 - change to the proposed scheme of works agreed in principle with Stafford Borough Council.

**(b) Assembly Priority 2 - Communications**

- Letterhead competition shortlist to be announced and the shortlist candidates displayed in the village hall.
- The new parish council web site has been developed by Staffordshire County Council. A service level agreement will need to be agreed with the County Council based on one of the 3 schemes they offer to parish councils.

**Bronze Pack (£100 per year)**

- A dedicated WordPress site hosted by Staffordshire County Council

- Initial website setup
- Set up for user account for the clerk
- Training/Guidance document with third party video content and a best practice guidance document

Silver Pack (£125 per year)

- All Bronze elements
- Monthly security and plugin updates to the site
- Set up of additional user accounts where required

The gold standard service, which will cost £500 plus £500 per year, exceeds the current needs of the parish council

The website domain name [www.ycm-pc.org.uk](http://www.ycm-pc.org.uk) has been secured by the County Council for 10 years.

**Resolved:** It was resolved that:

- (i) The parish council enter into an agreement with Staffordshire County Council based on the silver package at a cost of £125 per year.
  - (ii) That the parish council approve the purchase of the new website domain name at a cost of £71.90
- (c) Assembly Priority 3 - Community**
- The offer of home visits by councillors has been published in the Parish Magazine
  - The second YCM-PC/PCSO drop in session was held on the 24 October 2019
  - Parish Christmas lunch promoted - 40 people asking for tickets.
- (d) Assembly Priority 4 - footpaths and pavements**
- Detailed photographs of the pavements in Yarnfield Lane, Meece Road and Ash Lane have been taken to provide baseline evidence and to assist in monitoring condition of the paths.
- (e) Assembly Priority 5 - Traffic**
- Community speed watch restarted with new members
  - Meeting with BIFFA to identify common objectives to reduce the speed on Swynnerton Road, Cold Meece is being arranged
  - BIFFA has agreed to fund the cost of the speed sign installation
  - The Staffordshire Road Safety Partnership has been asked to clarify their reason for not including Cold Meece in the camera enforcement rota
  - 2020/21 work programme to include provision to tackle speed in the parish
  - Smart Motorway Meeting - agreement to provide a lorry wheel wash and sweeping of Yarnfield Lane

**19.106 Transparency Code for Small Authorities - to confirm the arrangements for compliance with the code**

External Auditor

The Parish Council cannot appoint its own External Auditor: Mazars LLP has been appointed as the auditor for the whole of Staffordshire.

Based on the agreed fee scale this will cost Y&CM-PC £200; provided we complete their Annual Returns is completed within the required timescales. However there is no fee payable if the authority certifies itself as exempt because it meets the requirements of the Transparency Code.

Independent Internal Auditor

The Parish Council must appoint an independent Internal Auditor, who at the end of the financial year will be responsible for checking compliance with the Financial Regulations and to undertake some of the work which the External Auditor would normally have carried out.

Internal Audit services for neighbouring parish councils are performed by Mrs. Chris Heelis. She has agreed to perform these services for Y&CM-PC.

Transparency code for smaller authorities

Smaller authorities, including parish councils, with an annual turnover not exceeding £25,000 will be exempt from routine external audit. In place of the routine audit they will be subject to the requirements set out in the Transparency Code.

To meet the requirements of the Transparency Code smaller authorities must publish a wide range of information relating to their activities, spending and councillor details. The data and information specified in the Code must be published on a website which is publicly accessible.

**Resolved:** It was resolved that:

- (i) The appointment of Mrs. Heelis as the Parish Council's Independent Internal Auditor is approved
- (ii) Work is completed to ensure compliance with the Transparency Code

**19.107 Parish Council Clerk's Report:**

Budget - update and schedule of payments

The current account balance on the 12 November is £7,878.45.

The projected year-end balance will be £3,181.07.

To allow the Parish Council to build a reserve fund an application has been made to open a savings account with the Natwest Bank.

**Budget Risks:**

- i. Y&CM-PC are operating with no reserves, however the opening of the savings account will help to address this risk.

- ii. Stafford Borough Council hasn't issued the invoice for the cost of the 2019 parish election and has now revised the date when this will be issued. It is unlikely that this will be available until February 2020.

**Yarnfield and Cold Meece - November Schedule of Payments**

	Invoice No/date	Amount	Cheque No.
Support Staffordshire	08/10/19	25.00	000027
Clerk's salary	12/11/19	404.70	000028
Clerk's expenses	24/10/19	62.18	000029
Yarnfield Village Hall	1855/30 Oct 19	36.00	000030
The Play Inspection Company Ltd	38527/28 Oct 19	144.00	000031
<b>Total</b>		<b>671.88</b>	

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the Schedule of Payments is approved
- (ii) That £1,000 is transferred from the current account to the new savings account.

**19.108 Digital Banking**

In order to simplify the monitoring of the council's bank account it is recommended that Y&CM-PC apply to use the online banking facilities operated by Natwest Bank. The online service would be used to monitor the accounts, print statements and in time to transfer money to the savings account. The online facilities will not be used to make payments.

In order to do this the 4 authorised signatories and the Clerk will need to sign the application form.

**Resolved:** That the council apply to the NatWest Bank to set up online banking services to manage their bank accounts

**19.109 Walnut Tree Farm - section 106 funding**

In May 2017 Stafford Borough Council resolved that "the allocation of an existing off-site contribution under the terms of a Section 106 Agreement for the amount of £20,066 be approved for the provision and improvement of recreational facilities in Yarnfield Village."

The report approved the following projects:-

- Drainage works - on the northern section of the Village Green
- Provision of outdoor gym equipment

- Installation of sporting equipment on land currently leased by the Parish Council.

The land drainage work to create a drainage ditch along the length of the Village Green was completed in August 2017 and the works funded from the S106 contribution. The balance remaining after these works is £16,800.

#### Proposal

At a meeting, arranged by Cllr Nixon with Borough Council's Planning Obligations Monitoring and Implementation Officer, it was agreed that;

- Stafford Borough Council's Cabinet are asked to cancel the May 2017 proposals in favour of new schemes funded by the section 106 money. This would then allow the Parish Council to make new proposals for the use of remaining budget.
- That the Parish Council, with the support of the two ward councillors, organise a public consultation event to seek the views of parishioners.
- Once approved the parish council will be responsible for the procurement and delivery of the work.
- Stafford Borough Council will reimburse the parish up to the value of the £16,800.

#### Possible Scheme

The first Parish Assembly, which was held in May 2019, identified a number of projects for the parish. The section 106 funding will provide an opportunity to deliver some of these projects which could include:

- Further work may be needed to improve the drainage of the north section of the village green
- Creation of a community orchard/garden/allotment
- Work to improve the banks of the stream running through the Village Green
- New parish sign/benches/improvements to the litter bins
- Improvements to the existing play equipment

It is likely that the proposals will cost more than the money available. It is hoped that section 106 money could be made to go further if it is linked to community projects to provide some of the labour costs and ongoing maintenance costs.

**Resolved:** It was resolved that:

- (i) A meeting with the ward councillors is arranged to agree in principle the revised proposal
- (ii) The proposals are developed to including plans, costs and ongoing maintenance commitments
- (iii) That the public consultation on the proposal is undertaken in early 2020.

### 19.110 Village Green Play Equipment Annual Inspection

The inspection of the play equipment took place on the 22 October 2019 by The Play Inspection Company Ltd at a cost of £120.00 plus VAT. The report identifies 42 defects requiring attention or further monitoring; 22 very low risk and 20 low risk defects. A copy of the full report is available.

Risk Score	Risk	Count of Risk
0	Very Low	4
2	Very Low	1
3	Very Low	1
4	Very Low	10
5	Very Low	6
6	Low	13
8	Low	7
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>42</b>

Of the 42 defects identified 25 required no action beyond monitoring the condition of the defect and undertaking repair work should the defect deteriorate further.

The previously reported problem with the safety matting around the play equipment was identified as being a low risk item with the action required being - "Repair perimeter of surfacing to remove trip points".

**Resolved:** It was resolved that:

- (i) The monthly inspection schedule is supplemented with an additional quarterly inspection that focuses on the 25 defects requiring further monitoring.
- (ii) That quotations to repair the safety matting are obtained
- (iii) That the defects with a risk score of 6 and 8 are remedied.
- (iv) That a volunteer cleaning group is formed to deal with the defects in the report that relate to litter, algae, moss and graffiti.

### 19.111 Correspondence and circulars

- A request has been received from Yarnfield Forum asking the Parish Council to give a donation to support the cost of the bulbs planted on the Village Green.

Cllr; Mrs Hughes declared an interest in this request and took no part in the discussion.

**Resolved:** That a donation of £50.00 towards the cost of spring bulbs is given to the Yarnfield Forum.



- An invitation to attend the AGM of the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, which will be held on December 2, has been received.

**Resolved:** That Cllr Mrs Hughes and the Clerk should attend the meeting

- Parish election recharge - the cost of the parish council elections was to be confirmed by Stafford Borough Council by the end of 2019. This has now been deferred until January/February 2020.
- An invitation to get involved in a weekly litter pick is being promoted in Springfield First School newsletter.
- Stafford Borough Community Awards - Cllr. Mrs Hughes, who was nominated for her work with Yarnfield Forum, has been shortlisted for the finals. The winners of the Community Awards 2019 will be announced on 21 November 2019.

**19.112 Reports from Parish Councillors on meetings/courses attended.**

- Cllr Mrs Hughes has met the community engagement officer from Stafford and Rural Homes about the state of the the footpaths on the Furlong and Meece Road, Yarnfield.
- Cllr Cromey has met representatives of the Environment Agency to try and establish why the Eastern Brook flooded over into the gardens on Fieldside and the Western Brook was also ready to burst its banks. The culvert did not appear to be blocked and further investigation work will be required to establish why the problem is occurring.

**Resolved:** That Cllr Cromey contact the Environment Agent to seek a resolution to the problem.

- Cllr Mrs Parkin reported that she was due to visit Springfields First School on the 21 November to talk to the School Council.

**19.113 Articles for inclusion in the Parish magazine and the Newsletter's Community News**

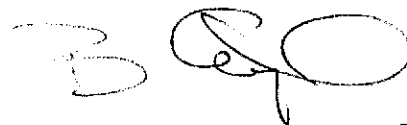
Future items for the Parish magazine were agreed:

- Parish Christmas lunch
- Update on the HS2 petition to the House of Lords

**19.114 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 12 December 2019 at 7.30pm, Yarnfield Village Hall

Meeting Ended 9:20pm



Signed  
Chairman of the Council  
Date 12 December 2019

**YARNFIELD AND COLD MEECE PARISH COUNCIL**  
**12 NOVEMBER 2019**  
**PLANNING MATTERS:**

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To discuss and confirm responses in respect of the following application:

Reference	Address	Outline	Decision
Nil			