

YARNFIELD AND COLD MEECE PARISH COUNCIL  
PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES  
Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2023  
Yarnfield Park Conference Centre

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

**Councillors:**

David Beeston

Sally Parkin (Chairperson)

Margaret Broader

Kirsty Treen

Jo Griffiths

Officer in attendance: John Fraser, Clerk to the Parish Council

Also in attendance: Lisa Powell, PCSO Staffordshire Police, Trevor Parkin

Public at the meeting: 0

Apologies for Absence

- 23-400 Apologies were received from: Cllr Ed Whitfield, Cllr Stella Hughes and Cllr Roy James.

Declaration of Interest

- 23-401 Nil

Public Question Time

Question 1

- 23-402 Public footpaths around the village, and possible joint action with landowners to apply for grants to upgrade and repair paths, signage and stiles that are accessible for all, like the one on footpath 10. I think the parish walk highlighted the need for work.

Response

The recent parish walk, which was extremely well supported by residents, identified numerous maintenance and repair problems that need to be addressed by the landowners. Details of how to make complaints to the Staffordshire County Council Rights of Way Team have been shared with everyone who went on the walk.

Question 2

- 23-403 Drug distribution in Yarnfield involving children and teenagers.

Response

The problem identified in the question relate to the Labour in Vain car park and the three car parks on Yarnfield Park. The PCSO asked that incidents are reported using the Crime Stoppers 101 phone service or online.

Reports from Borough and County Councillors

- 23-404 No reports were received from the Borough or County Council councillors.

PCSO: introduction and update report

- 23-405 PCSO Lisa Powell provided an update report on issues dealt with by the police in the previous three months, a copy is attached at Appendix 1.

### HS2: update on HS2 Phase 2a

- 23-406 The Stone Railhead Crisis Group update is attached at Appendix 2.
- 23-407 The SRCG will be holding a public meeting on 20 November, 2023 at Yarnfield Park Conference Centre.
- 23-408 In view of the announcement that HS2 Phase 2a has been cancelled it was decided that monthly reports from the SRCG were no longer necessary and that future updates would be provided on an as and when required basis.

### Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September, 2023

- 23-409 **Resolution:** It was resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 15 September, 2023 were approved as a correct record of the meeting, subject to an amendment in paragraph 23-389; reference to the Working Group should be changed to Core Group.

### Actions Tracker Update

- 23-410 Minute 21-524: Village Green Project
- Stafford Borough Council has confirmed it will pay for the press advert needed before the lease with the Parish Council can be agreed.
  - The date of a meeting with the lead officer at Stafford Borough Council, at which outstanding issues about the lease will be addressed, has been agreed to take place on 18 October, 2023
- 23-411 Minute 23-296: Homes Plus Estate Management
- The date of a meeting with Homes Plus property services, to look at the problems on the Furlong and Greenside, has been agreed to take place on 18 October, 2023.
- 23-412 Minute 21-499: Severn Trent work Highlows/Yarnfield Lane
- The date of a meeting with STWCo has been agreed.
- 23-413 Minute 22-47: Firing Range
- The Police have now agreed to provide the Parish Council with regular updates on the use of the range.
- 23-414 **Resolution:** It was resolved that the firing range programme is shared with residents directly affected by the use of the range and that this would be distributed by email .
- 23-415 A copy of the Update of Actions Report set out in Appendix 3, and posted on the parish council website, was noted.

### Labour in Vain: Working Group update

- 23-416 The Stafford Borough Council review of the asset of community value found in favour of its retention but with the area of the car park on which planning permission to build three houses being removed from the listing.
- 23-417 The parish council has confirmed with Stafford Borough Council that it wishes to be considered as a potential bidder for the Labour in Vain.
- 23-418 The six-month moratorium will end on 31 January, 2024.
- 23-419 The expression of interest application to the Community Ownership Fund has been approved, with one caveat: the full grant application and delivery of the project must be by the same organisation.



- 23-420 The working group is preparing an application for the next round of the Community Ownership Fund.
- 23-421 The working group has come to the view that they should form a Community Interest Company. The parish council supports this approach.
- 23-422 Money to pay for the formation of the community interest company and the independent valuation of the Labour in Vain will need to be raised by the Working Group.
- 23-423 The Parish Council needs to be confident that its role in the Labour in Vain project will not create problems in future financial and governance audits.
- 23-424 **Resolution:** It was resolved that:
- i. The parish council set aside £1,000 from the General Reserve Account and that this is used to pay for the independent valuation.
  - ii. The Working Group is asked to confirm what costs will be incurred in submitting the Community Ownership Fund application.
  - iii. The Parish Council's auditor is approached to seek advice on the project.

#### Parish Clerk's report

- 23-425 Budgets
- i. Schedule of invoices awaiting payment since the last meeting = £1,447.01
  - ii. A transfer of £1,500 from the reserve account to the current account is required to keep the account in credit.
  - iii. Current Account bank reconciliation on 9 October, 2023, after accounting for outstanding payments and transfers, = £1,080.52.
- 23-426 Notification of the second instalment of the precept and concurrent grant payments of £14,286.50 from Stafford Borough Council has been received.

#### Half Yearly Review

- 23-427 The parish council has projected commitments for the period 10 October, 2023 – 31 March, 2024 of £14,000. These includes:
- Grounds Maintenance
  - Salary
  - PAYE
  - Office Expenses
  - Training
  - Room Hire
  - Annual Insurance premium
  - Greenside annual inspection
  - Subscription charges

- 23-428 Projected end of year balance on 31 March 2024 = £1,367.

#### Reserve accounts

- 23-429 The Parish Council has three reserve accounts:
- General reserves, which include special projects;
  - Community Action Group;
  - Events Working Group.

	Income	Expenditure	Balance
- General Reserves	33,256.07	14,199.51	15,056.56
- Special Project	23,885.00	19,885.00	4,000.00
<b>Reserves Account</b>	<b>57,141.07</b>	<b>34,084.51</b>	<b>19,056.56</b>
<b>Community Action Group</b>	<b>3,437.27</b>	<b>1,191.17</b>	<b>2,246.10</b>
<b>Event Working Group</b>	<b>1,509.02</b>	<b>675.88</b>	<b>833.14</b>
			<b>22,135.80</b>

23-430 The commitments for the period 10 October, 2023 – 31 March, 2024 include:

- General Reserves – Labour in Vain project £1,000.00
- Special projects (Staffordshire County Council Highways) £4,000.00
- Community Action Group – defibrillators £1,720.16

23-431 **Resolution:** It was resolved that:

- i. The schedule of payment for the period 16 September - 9 October, 2023 set out in Appendix 4 is approved.
- ii. The half year budget review is noted.

Update on Actions Taken

- i. The owners of Boundary Cottage and Elton Cottage have confirmed that the hedge adjacent to Yarnfield Lane is to be removed. A new hedge will then be planted further back from the boundary. This is a significant improvement and the council noted with thanks that this work is taking place.
- ii. The hedge by the pavement over the stream on Greenside has been cut back to increase the width of the pavement.
- iii. Work with the Yarnfield Park Residents Association continues. An update on proposals from Barratt West Midlands is set out in Appendix 5.
- iv. Preparation for the Remembrance Day event have been confirmed by the Events Working Group:
  - The village green and Rose Garden display will be installed on Monday 6 November, 2023.
  - A Remembrance Day event will be held at the Cold Meece, Rose Garden at 11 am on 11 November, 2023

23-432 The village green display has previously included sandbags to enhance the display. These now need to be replaced with new bags.

23-433 **Resolution:** It was resolved that new sandbags are purchased for the Remembrance Day display.

Community Speed Watch: joint funding arrangement with Stone CSW

23-434 The Parish Council has been approached by Stone Community Speed Watch to work together to buy and install permanent community speed watch signs.

23-435 The proposed arrangement is that the parish council will place an order for the supply and installation of 14 signs, 2 for Cold Meece and 12 for Stone.



- 23-436 The Stone Community Speed Watch will transfer funds to pay for their signs before the purchase is made.
- 23-437 The VAT on the 12 signs purchased for Stone CSW will not be recoverable.
- 23-438 **Resolution:** It was resolved that:
- i. The Parish Council work with Stone Community Speed Watch to purchase and install 14 speed watch signs.
  - ii. The Clerk is to make enquiries about the cost of purchasing and installing 20mph repeater signs for Brookvale Drive and Yarnfield Parkway.

Neighbourhood Plan – update and next actions

- 23-439 A meeting with the consultant from Urban Vision is scheduled for 19 October, 2023 to update the work programme and to prepare a grant application to LOCALITY to fund the cost of this final part of the neighbourhood plan project

Updates from Parish Councillors

- 23-440 The next meeting of the Stone Parish Council Liaison Group will include a presentation by representatives from Staffordshire Highways.

Planning: to consider any planning applications in the parish

- 23-441 23/37805/LDCPP, 15 Kielder Drive, Yarnfield, Proposed chimney

- 23-442 Resolution:** It was resolved to offer no comment about the application.

Forward Plan

- 23-443 The forward plan for meetings was noted.

Date and time of next meeting

- 23-444 15 November, 2023 at 7.30pm



Signed

Chairperson of the Parish Council

Date: 15 November, 2023

Meeting closed 9:35pm

Appendix 1

PCSO update report - 09/07/2023 - 09/10/2023

**Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish**

<b>Activity</b>	
Anti-Social Behaviour	2
Crime	12
Transport	5
Misc	7

## Appendix 2

### October 2023 – SRCG Update Report

I reported last month about the article that we had published in the Times on 4th September.

The article said that: Contrary to the spin about HS2 increasing capacity on the WCML, the truth was that HS2 Phase 2 would destroy capacity on the WCML at Crewe and this would mean that inter-city services to 75% of West Coast stations north of Birmingham would be significantly reduced and that. Crewe itself would see the number of inter-city trains calling at the station halved from 4 trains per hour (tph) to just 2tph, together with the withdrawal of existing regional and local services calling at and passing through the station.

This detail, together with our solution for avoiding this disaster, was communicated to the HS2/Rail Minister (Huw Merriman) during our meeting in Yarnfield on 9th August and subsequently spelled out to the Government via the issuing of summary reports in September.

After seven years of hard graft, during which time we have been repeatedly ignored and treated with contempt by HS2 Ltd, the Government has listened and absorbed what we have said, verified the facts, and bravely acted upon them.




Prime Minister - Rishi Sunak deserves to be commended, and not criticised, for taking this sensible and brave decision and for ignoring the many vested interests who argued vehemently for the gravy train to keep on rolling!


HS2 Phase 2 would have been a disaster for the Midlands, North West and Scotland and would have resulted in a massive levelling down and the waste of £36 billion, which could be far more wisely spent on alternative projects and the UK priorities.

We are delighted by this phenomenal outcome and wish to thank everyone who helped us with our campaign, including all those that kept their faith in what we were doing.

Please join the SRCG for a public meeting to be held at 7pm on Monday 20th November at Yarnfield Park to hear the full inside story of our work behind the scenes and celebrate this momentous victory for the people of Staffordshire, Cheshire and the UK as a whole.


Monthly Progress Tracker – Update 9/10/23

	 Warning	 Action – in progress	 Achieved
April 2023	1	8	5
May 2023	2	10	0
June 2023	1	10	2
July 2023	1	10	1
September 2023	1	13	3
October 2023	1	11	2





Minute	Resolution	Action	RAG
<b>Ambition 1 - Environment</b>			
21-524	Village Green Project	<p>Stafford Borough Council confirm funding for the village green lease advert has been found.</p> <p>Meeting with officer leading this work set for Wednesday 18 October.</p> <p>Stafford Borough Council working to resolve issues with the lease of village green</p> <p>Parish Council meeting to be asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To form a working group to prepare the tender for the village green project and to issue tenders documents</li> <li>- Resolve to submit a bid for money to the HS2 Community and Environment Fund</li> <li>- Conclude negotiations with Stafford Borough Council over the lease of the land.</li> </ul> <p>Meeting with Planning and Streetscene held on 5 June.</p> <p>The cost of advertising the lease (£500) has yet to be resolved with Stafford Borough Council looking to see if they can identify a budget to pay for this.</p> <p>Planning to look at the boundary lines of the proposed lease to establish ownership details of the pavements surrounding the south green.</p> <p>Streetscene to review work needed to “red flagged” trees on the village green.</p>	





## Monthly Progress Tracker – Update 9/10/23

		<p>Progress update report to be brought to next Parish Council Meeting (June 23)</p> <p>Site meeting with Stafford Borough Council officers from planning and Streetscene arranged.</p> <p>Progress on the project and lease of the village green has again stalled.</p> <p>Escalate action to the Borough Council’s Planning Officer</p> <p>Cabinet lead and ward councillors pressing Stafford Borough Council officers to release funds and agree the lease.</p> <p>Project to be added to new council work programme.</p>	
22-376	Yarnfield Lane Lay-by – litter and fly tipping.	<p>Working with SBC and SCC to find a permanent solution.</p> <p>Project to be added to new council work programme</p>	


### Ambition – 2 Safety

23-291	Highway Repairs	<p>A complaint about the state of the junction of The Paddocks and Yarnfield Lane has been logged with Staffordshire County Council.</p> <p>A Freedom of Information Act request has been made to Staffordshire County Council for detail so their programme of highway repairs specifically relating to the parish and the criteria that they use for prioritising work.</p> <p>That residents are encouraged to log problems on the Staffordshire County Council report its website.</p>	
23-296	Homes Plus Estate Management	Contact made with Homes Plus Estate Management Team Lead. Meeting with estate walk to be confirmed.	
23-299	Road Safety – children	It was resolved that the complaint is reported to the Police Community Support Officer	
23-333	Footpath 11 – repair of bench	Quotation for timber needed to form replacement bench slates received at a cost of £120.60	





## Monthly Progress Tracker – Update 9/10/23

21-499	Severn Trent work Highlows/Yarnfield Lane	<p>Meeting with Asset Planning Lead (Waste Networks) arranged. Location is being arranged.</p> <p>Email to CEO of Severn Trent. Problem delegated to senior officer at Severn Trent to resolve the problem. Contact made with the Asset Planning Lead (Waste Networks): meeting being arranged.</p> <p>Meeting arranged with STWCo Catchment Lead – Sewerage North Staffordshire and his colleagues</p> <p>Pressing STWCo engineering team for date phase 2 project will be started. Site visited by STWCo progress made on the scheme, date for start still to be confirmed. Request made for a site meeting with engineers responsible for the project.</p> <p>STWCo visit in April 2023 identified further complications with delivery of the project. Work with engineers to establish what needs to be done to see the work completed</p>	
23-231	Greenside Playground – swing basket renovation	<p>Repair to be undertaken to the swing basket. Parts received.</p> <p>Order parts required to renovate the basket swing ordered.</p>	

### Parish Ambition – 3 Community

23-323	Defibrillator project	<p>Meeting with AEDdonate to look at possible site on Ford Drive and in Cold Meece</p> <p>For possible sites.</p> <p>Application to National Grid to provide cost for unmetered cable supply started</p> <p>Application for grant funding being explored.</p>	
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## Monthly Progress Tracker – Update 9/10/23

23-267	Labour in Vain - Community Ownership Fund Round 3	<p>The review of the ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE found in favour of its retention but with the car park being removed</p> <p>Expression on interest has been approved – with one caveat – application and delivery must be by the same company</p> <p>Formation of a Community Interest Company proposed by the Working Group</p> <p>Asset Lock – can the parish council be named as the recipient of the asset lock</p> <p>LiV Action Group meeting 14/09/23 – agreed outline of the expression of interest application to the Community Ownership Fund.</p> <p>Closing Date for full application 11 October 2023.</p> <p>Meeting of the Parish Council - Community Meeting 7 September 2023 confirmed notice is given to Stafford Borough Council that the parish wish to be considered as a potential bidder</p>	
22-153	Yarnfield Lane Cycle path	<p>HSW Phase 2 cancellation may affect delivery of this project</p> <p>Application submitted to SCC decision not due until Spring 2024.</p>	
22-47	Firing Range	<p>Police confirm reporting arrangements with parish council to supply dates and time for the operation of the range.</p> <p>Awaiting results – see email from SB</p> <p>Monitoring of the site undertaken by Stafford Borough Council – 25 August 2023</p> <p>Site visit with Police, Property Services and Stafford Borough Council – 24 August 2023.</p> <p>No perceivable improvement in the noise from the site. Meeting with Police Estate Office, Firing Range Team, Stafford Borough Council and representative of the PFCC office.</p> <p>Stafford Borough Council Environmental Health to visit noise sensitive properties to carry out noise monitoring.</p> <p>SBC Environmental Health to SBC pressing Staffordshire Police for date to complete acoustic insulation work at the range.</p>	
21-488	Gates at Cold Meece	<p>Prices for gates being arranged – to be reported to the September</p> <p>Gate design, cost of procurement and installation to be present to September 2023 meeting</p>	



## Monthly Progress Tracker – Update 9/10/23

### Parish Ambition – 4 Good Governance

22-97	New Office Systems	<p>Community Development Officer – review of website to identify improvements.</p> <p>Councillors to be invited to share their thoughts on the website and what changes they would like to see.</p> <p>Meeting requested with SCC Digital Team before end of July 2023</p> <p>Contact SCC digital team to agree project to update the parish council website</p> <p>Project to be added to new council work programme.</p>	
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## Appendix 5

### Yarnfield Park Resident's Association

Barratts are writing to residents of Yarnfield Park inviting them to set up a RMC limited by guarantee (rather than shares being issued) which means that it is controlled by its members.

The members of the RMC will be those residents who would like to be a member. The members will have overall control of the Managed Areas which includes appointing directors.

- The directors of the RMC will have certain duties to carry out. This includes the following:
  - appointing the managing agent (and, depending on the terms of the contract with the managing agent, replacing any managing agent that underperforms);
  - • setting up meetings to discuss anything relevant to the RMC including proposed service charge budgets;
  - • ensuring minutes of any meetings are kept;
  - • generally acting in a way that promotes the success of the RMC.

However, what this would mean is that we as residents would have to amongst other things:

- Appoint a Board of Directors to lead and manage the RMC that Barratts would establish.
- Contract manage the service providers (Grounds Maintenance Contractor(s) directly and monitor their performance
- Demonstrate vfm by means of periodic re-tendering of the service
- Hold regular minuted meetings with the service provider and an AGM for all residents and issue formal minutes
- Manage accounts and have them audited annually

This would be a substantial undertaking and require an awful lot of time and commitment. Our initial thoughts are that by offering to create the RMC, Barratts are looking to walk away and leave the maintenance of the open spaces of Yarnfield Park Estate to the residents.