

BREWOD AND COVEN PARISH COUNCIL
WITH BISHOP'S WOOD AND COVEN HEATH

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL IN THE COUNCIL OFFICES,
STAFFORD STREET, BREWOOD
ON THURSDAY, 8 MARCH 2012 AT 7.30PM

PRESENT:

Mr A. Ball, Mrs J. Carr, Mr R. Dakin, Mr T. Fellows, Mrs J. Jeffries, Mr G.E. Martin, Mr J. Pegg, Mr P. Smith, Mrs L. Tomkins, Mr M. Webb MBE.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Cllr M. Hampson.

APOLOGIES:

M. Alden-Court (holiday), Mr D. Evans (holiday), Cllr Mrs D.M. Holmes (prior engagement), Dr R.C.H. Taylor (holiday). Cllr B. Cox (unwell).

MINUTES:

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held 23 February 2012 and the minutes of the Traffic Management Working Party held 2 March 2012 were approved as an accurate record and duly signed.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST:

Mrs J. Carr declared an interest in planning application 12/00130/COU. Mr M Webb declared an interest in planning application 12/00108/LUE.

CRIME AND DISORDER ACT:

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998 places a duty on local authorities to consider the crime and disorder implications when exercising its functions and to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. Unless otherwise stated it was not considered that the resolutions moved herein would have any adverse impact for the purposes of the Crime and Disorder Act.

409. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

The Chairman moved that the meeting be adjourned for a period of no more than fifteen minutes to allow any elector of the parish or his/her representative to raise or question any issues appertaining to proper Parish Council business.

Miss C. White of Coven Heath spoke on a matter relating to Coven Heath. Miss White agreed to contact the Parish Council again when she had further information.

Mr Paul Whitehouse of the Rainbow Inn, Coven spoke regarding the condition of the curtilage of the public house and the improvements that he had agreed to make including cleaning the patio area at the front, cutting back the hedges at the rear, sweeping up leaves and installing

12 hanging baskets. Mrs J. Carr explained the impact that the condition of the premises had on the Best Kept Village competition.

Mr Jason Bate of St Chad's Close, Brewood spoke to Members about his website (The Village Times) and asked them to consider approving a link from the Parish Council website to the Village Times website. The matter was to be debated later in the evening.

Cllr M Hampson on behalf of the Brewood and District Rotary Club asking whether the Parish Council would take responsibility for cleaning the three stones at the entrances to the villages of Bishops Wood, Brewood and Coven, which had been donated by them. The Council did not take up the opportunity but Mr Pegg offered to clean the Bishops Wood stone and Coven members the Coven stone.

410. POLICE REPORT:

There was no Police report received. Mrs J. Jeffries reported that she had attended the PACT meeting with other Members and reported that there would be new ways of looking at crime – victim impact. Future Police reports would be produced by an analyst. There had been an overall reduction in crime, with the exception of hate crimes. Plans for the reduction in funding and a recruitment freeze may have a negative impact on service provision. Helen Marshall of the Community Safety Partnership would be contacting the Parish Council to form focus groups. By November, there would be no local policing authority but one elected police and crime commissioner.

MATTERS ARISING:

* items appertain to matters arising during 2010/2011, ** to matters prior to May 2010.

245** **Brewood Bowling Club** Letter received from Ms H. Skidmore, secretary Brewood Bowling Club inviting Members to attend the Club's AGM to be held 22 March, 8.15pm for an 8.30 start at the Royal British Legion, Brewood. Briefing document and minutes from last year were enclosed. Staffordshire County Council enclosing the License required to commence the work to connect to the Highway drain, copy forwarded to Osprey and Ms H. Skidmore informed by email. Permit to dig still awaited. Clerk's Report referred.

It was resolved that the license be filed with associated papers held by the Council's solicitor in view of the requirement to produce the license should the Council decide to sell the associated land. It was further resolved that the meeting of the working party be arranged for 21 March 2012, time to be confirmed by the Clerk. The two points from the license to be referred to the Council's solicitor and the Clerk to also pursue the matter with the Council's insurers.

38*/352* **Notices, Bishop's Wood Play Park** Members considered the quote received for the provision of a sign to address the concerns of Mr Kelly. Clerk's Report referred.

It was resolved that the Clerk place an order for the sign from Signs Now at a cost of £111.20 ex. VAT.

70** **Fencing for Playing Field.** Clerk's Report referred. Clerk to meet the contractor on site 9 March 2012 with regard to repainting the damaged fencing. **Matter of report.**

256* **Traffic Management, Brewood** The Council considered the recommendations arising from the Minutes of the meeting held 2 March. Letters received from Highways regarding the

proposed no loading or unloading in Stafford Street, Brewood and limited waiting in Market Place and Sandy Lane. In both cases formal approval had been received and details of the proposals were also included on the Notice and plan enclosed with the letters (not circulated). Advertisements would be included in the local newspaper. The Notice required any objections to be submitted by 22 March 2012. Resurfacing of Stafford Street, Clerk's Report referred.

The Council resolved the following matters:

- **the Clerk write to Mr Wright advising that the Parish Council was in agreement with Mr Wildings suggestion for managing the resurfacing Stafford Street, Brewood in 2013 – closing half of Stafford Street at a time to optimise access to the car park, work being undertaken on weekdays.**
- **Mr Wright be asked to follow up the matter of possibly narrowing Stafford Street outside the Spar, which may in turn address the problem of the dropped kerb, and advise the Parish Council in due course.**
- **Mr Wright be asked to investigate any action recommended with regard to the dropped kerb outside the Co-op and advise the Parish Council in due course.**
- **a request be made for a Police speed camera van to carry out speed checks through Kiddemore Green.**
- **the Clerk write to Mr D. Wright requesting that consideration be given to making School Road (from the school) to Newport Street a one way system; in which direction to be considered further.**

301*/339 **Queen's Diamond Jubilee.** Members to notify the Clerk in writing of recommended sites to plant a commemorative oak tree. Letter received from Cllr M. Maryon, Staffordshire County Council with regard to planning community tributes, copy circulated prior to the meeting. Letter received from Brewood Civic Society concerning their plans to plant a tree and those of the Council, copy circulated prior to the meeting, photographs were tabled at the meeting. Verbal request received from Mrs Parker of Shop Lane to replace the now 'missing' trees in Shop Lane with commemorative trees. Clerk's Report referred.

It was resolved that Mrs L. Tomkins seek advice from Mr B, Wilding regarding planting a tree in the car park at Coven Heath allotments. Mrs J. Carr to also seek advice from Mr Wilding regarding planting in Coven. Mr J. Pegg and Mrs J. Jeffries to liaise with representatives in Bishops Wood. Clerk to discuss Mrs Parkes' request for Shop Lane and the recommendations of the Civic Society for Deansfield Road (2) with Mr Wilding. The Clerk to also discuss the Civic Society recommendation for a tree in the Church yard with Reverend Host.

353b* **Millennium Bench, Sandy Lane.** Members considered making a donation to the St Mary and St Chad's Church Organ fund as suggested by Mr D. Pickrell in lieu of any payment for the repairs undertaken. Clerk's Report referred.

It was resolved that a donation of £30 be made to Mr Pickrell, to forward to the Church Organ Fund if he wished to do so.

183a. **Coven Heath Allotments.** Report received from Mr A. Higgins concerning proposals for the allotments at Coven which tied in with the South Staffordshire Council's audit undertaken in 2011.

It was resolved that a site visit be arranged for members of the Working Party to be convened at the next meeting of the Parish Council. Clerk to ascertain whether the proposals were a requirement of the Disability Discrimination Act.

238. **Speeding Traffic School Lane, Coven.** Mr D. Wright, Highways advising that the Council's request for an additional school flashing sign had been placed on County Cllr Rex Roberts' Divisional Highway Plan for the coming financial year, in order that resources were made available to carry out the works.

Matter of report.

282. **Council and Community Web Site.** Clerk's Report referred. Mr T. Fellows outlined the proposals for the revamp of the website. Members considered the supplementary report of the Clerk, circulated prior to the meeting, the email from Mr J. Bate and the Clerk's summary of discussions held with Mr J. Bate and Mr I. Carless which were tabled at the meeting.

It was resolved that the Council adopt Option 2 as outlined on the supplementary report of the Clerk, for the site to be primarily the Parish Council site with further information and listings relating to the four villages in the Parish. It was further resolved that the Village Times website be listed as a local business in the Business Listing of the Parish Council's new website and a disclaimer to be included on the Business Listing page.

Cllr M. Hampson left the meeting.

286. **Bus Shelter, School Lane, Coven.** Email received from Ms H. Marshall on behalf of Ms M. Quinn stating that there had been no anti social behaviour reported or taken place in, or nearby the proposed location, therefore the impact of a bus shelter would be minimal from an anti social behaviour perspective.' Clerk's Report referred.

It was resolved that the matter be deferred until later in May when other pressing matters would have been addressed. To be retained under Matters Ongoing.

346a. **Bus Stop, Bishops Wood.** Mr D. Wright, Highways had advised a job had been raised to make an area of hard standing for bus passengers to stand on and thanking the Council for bringing the matter to his attention.

Matter of report.

350. **Sandy Lane, Planning Enforcement.** Email received from Ms L. Macdonald, Principal Enforcement Officer, South Staffordshire Council advising the Council could only act in respect of the cladding and as such the Council had requested the submission of an application by 25 February. If this was not received (to be confirmed on 27 February) enforcement action would be considered if it was expedient to do so and in accordance with current National Enforcement Policy Guidance (PPG 18). Ms Macdonald stated the complainant had been made fully aware of the planning position. **Matter of report.**

405a. **Work Clubs.** Deferred from the previous meeting when a donation towards costs was received. Mr P. Smith reported that following a discussion with Mr A. Lindop he did not feel it was appropriate to make a donation as the Parish did not currently have a problem with high unemployment.

It was resolved that no donation would be made by the Parish Council.

MATTERS ONGOING:

The Council received the Matters Ongoing report circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman invited Members to raise any Matters Ongoing as they deemed necessary during the meeting.

281. **Grit Bins, Sunset Close.** Clerk's Report referred. Mrs J. Carr to advise Mrs Millward of the details of the report as outlined in the Clerk's Report for Mrs Millward to pursue the matter directly with Mr B. Wilding if appropriate.

307. **Rainbow Inn, Coven.** Clerk's Report referred. Members to report back to the next meeting to ascertain whether further action was required.

Matter of report.

NALC Consultation - urgent correspondence received. Clerk's report referred.

It was resolved that Members would forward views to the Clerk due to the limited time available.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

411. Correspondence received from South Staffordshire Council invitation to London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay through the villages of Great Wyrley and Newtown on Saturday 30th June 2012. More details on the Council's website, Facebook and Twitter. Email also received, from Keith Hardy, Great Wyrley 'Mini Olympics' Steering Group and a copy of a letter regarding the 'Olympic Torch Games' requesting the Parish Council nominate a champion to act as a contact point for local residents/clubs/teams in a series of events. Copy circulated prior to the meeting.

It was resolved that details be forwarded to Mr J. Payne, organiser for this Parish in the Inter-parish Games.

412. Amanda Whitmore of South Staffordshire Council working in association with South Staffordshire Tourism Association regarding magazine press releases for SSTA members also quotes from Helen Fortescue of Gailey Fruit Farm and Martin Vickers of Halfpenny Green Vineyard regarding the benefits of publicity received via South Staffordshire Tourism Association. Ms Whitmore requested details of any events happening over the Easter holidays for inclusion in the magazine.

No events were suggested.

413. South Staffordshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy Public Examination – Schedule of post hearing proposed modifications. Consultations to run from 22 February to 5pm 4 April 2012. All documents were available to view and download from South Staffordshire Council's website www.sstaffs.gov.uk/corestrategy. Hard copies available at the Parish Council Offices.

Matter of report.

414. Ann Whittaker, Staffordshire Pension Fund regarding their review of the approval of Independent Registered Medical Practitioners, the approval list and procedure, including a copy of a letter sent out to all doctors currently on the list.

Matter of report.

415. Mr A. Higgins Chairman of Coven Heath Allotments Association regarding proposals for disability enabled plots and novice taster plots for prospective allotment holders. Copy circulated prior to the meeting. **See item 183a above.**

416. Mr C. Hammersley of South Staffordshire Council, email (also sent to District Councillors) recommending a new draft Enforcement Notice due to the breach of planning

control at land adjacent to the old garden centre, Paradise Lane, Slade Heath. Copy circulated prior to the meeting.

It was resolved the draft notice be approved.

417. Email from Paul Edmunds of Coven regarding road signage for traffic turning right onto the A449 from Coven. Mr P. Smith reported that this was further complicated by the road works on the A449. The Clerk reported the response received in 2011 with regard to the request made at that time, that being no further action could be taken in the matter. Members raised concerns regarding similar problems on the A5 at Gailey.

It was resolved that no action be taken at this time, details to be forwarded to Mr Edmunds and the matter of lane markings generally be placed on a future agenda for discussion.

418. **CORRESPONDENCE CIRCULATED:**

South Staffordshire Council notice of the meeting of: Environmental and Public Health Protection Services Scrutiny Panel 23rd February; Direct and Support Services Scrutiny Panel, 23 February; Partnership and Strategic Services Scrutiny Panel 6 March.

SPCA/NALC updates: Grant launched for community buildings; latest on prayers at council meetings; Your Staffordshire e-magazine, Love Parks Week 21-29 July, free packs for the Big Lottery 'Big Lunch'; new media site to encourage community reporting; planning rules do not hinder growth, community energy challenge launched; £15m boost for sustainable travel; neighbourhood innovation; retail rural watchdog say Lib Dems; 2000th member for Public Sector Mapping Agreement; Village SOS national conference; NALC conferences 2012; Vacancy Huntingdon Town Council; Police and Crime Commissioners Timeline.

East Mids NHS Trust Clinical Bulletin –Priority Red Alert regarding Jequirity Bean Bracelets
Coven Heath Community Association: Newsletter; minutes of meeting 15 February.

Brewood Civic Society minutes of meeting 20 February; copy letters to planning department; copy of letter to British Waterways re a land slip onto the canal between Port Lane bridge and The Avenue bridge.

Staffordshire Fire, press release regarding Look When You Cook.

Staffordshire County Council: Staffordshire Trading Standards Officers feature on BBC1's Food Inspectors 7 March; Charity Clothing Collections; iTunes Scam.

Staffordshire Libraries What's on in March (Brewood and Codsall tabled).

Bishops Wood Bugle.

Bulletins: SSCVA Winter; Staffordshire Link Jan/Feb; Clerk & Councils Direct.

SSCVA locality forums.

ACAS handbook for small firms; SSHA Customer Learning Programme – Free Course.

Wolverhampton Magazine Feb and March.

419. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:**

The Council received the report of the Chairman, Mr M. Webb. Members were reminded that the Civic Sunday was due to take place on 11 March and requested volunteers to help lay tables etc be available from 9.30 am at the Jubilee Hall.

420. **FINANCE REPORT:**

The Council received the Finance Report from the Head of Finance, Mrs J. Carr and resolved the following matters:

- The Income and Expenditure Approvals Lists as of 8 March, **be approved**. Income £2,590.24 Expenditure £2,248.88. Direct Debits: Income £43.00 Expenditure £321.65
- The quotes received for play bark at Bishops Wood and Coven playing field. Clerks Report referred. The quote of £2,191.80 from Melcourt **be approved**.
- Ten additional hours above contracted **be approved** to cover urgent and statutory work while the Clerk is on annual leave. This was included in the budget.
- The following requests to carry over as yet unused annual leave in to 2012/2013 **be approved** as follows:
 - Clerk – 5 days to be used before 30 April 2012
 - Assistant Clerk – 5 days, to be used before 30 April 2012
 - Car Scheme Co-ordinator and Receptionist – 3 days, to be used before 30 April 2012

All 'days' referred to pro-rata days. Employee contracts state that 'By mutual agreement no more than five days leave may be carried forward to the next leave year.

The Chairman moved the suspension of Standing Order 44 to allow the meeting to continue beyond 9.30 p.m.

- **Grounds Maintenance charge query** Clerk's Report referred. The recommendation **be approved** that the Clerk meet with Mr Medicott to discuss the matter further before payment of the account is approved and escalate the matter if necessary.
- **Civic Sunday Budget**. The Clerk reported that the Civic Sunday was forecast to go over budget. **It was resolved the invoices be paid and the final costs be tabled for Council in due course.**
- **Annual Leave Cover** Clerk's Report referred. The payment of additional hours for Ms Whitehouse to cover the Janitor duties while Mr M. Smith was on annual leave, subject to availability, **be approved**.
- **Annual Leave of the Clerk** Matter of report.

See also items 353b* Millennium Bench, Sandy Lane and item 38*/352* Notices, Bishop's Wood Play Park.

421. **PLANNING REPORT:**

The Council received the Planning Report from Mr M. Webb MBE in the absence of the Head of Planning Dr R.C.H. Taylor and considered the planning applications received.

422. PLAYING FIELDS REPORT:

To receive the following reports:

- Bishops Wood playing field and skate board park, as supplied by Mrs S. Hughes. It was noted that the bark required topping up.
- Brewood playing field and skate board park, Mr M. Webb MBE had nothing to report
- Coven playing field and skate board park, Mrs J. Carr had nothing to report.

A number of low risk matters highlighted on the independent annual play inspection report had been resolved. A quote was required to adjust the tension on the Coven aerial runway.

423. CLERK'S REPORT:

The Council received the written report of the Clerk and resolved the following:

- Employee Contracts – the recommendations of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held 30 June, as noted in the Clerk's report, **be approved**
- Audit – Head of Finance and Chair of Council to review the updated Business Risk assessment, Risk Assessment Report, Financial Controls and Internal Controls Checklist with the Clerk and make a recommendation to Council, **be approved**.

The 'Review of effectiveness of Internal Audit' not to be undertaken for 2011/2012, having been repealed for all Parish Councils, **be approved**.

To manage the forthcoming workload the following **be approved**:

- only urgent items be dealt with until completion of the year end accounts and the Annual Return, to include the Bowling Club lease
- that the Clerk and Assistant Clerk be allowed to flex their contracted hours during March, April and May in order to deal with the increased workload during this time
- the Clerk be allowed to work from home, hopefully undisturbed, to undertake some of the process review and update work listed above, subject to ensuring the office is covered by the Assistant Clerk
- that if there is insufficient time between now and the deadline of 1 April 2012 then an application to the Community Paths Initiative for 2012/2013 will not be submitted but the matters raised pursued as maintenance where possible

Annual Parish Meeting – scheduled for 26 April 2012 at 7.00pm. Those Members who present reports at the Annual Parish Meeting were asked to confirm whether they wished to write their own reports this year or whether the Clerk was required to do so. Those Members were also asked to confirm their availability for the meeting and to consider if one Member should present all three playing field reports.

It was resolved this matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Council.

ANY OTHER MATTERS OF REPORT:

Mr P. Smith reported that he had spoken to the contractor at the site in Lawn Lane Coven and had resolved the issue of vehicles causing an obstruction on the highway.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.00pm.

..... Chairman

**REPORT OF THE CLERK FOR THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
TO BE HELD 8 MARCH 2012**

MATTERS ARISING

70** **Fencing for Playing Fields** I have forwarded a number of photos of what I consider to be unacceptable damage to the fence in Engleton Lane and have advised the contractor we need to meet on site.

Matter of report.

245** **Brewood Bowling Club** Permit to dig still awaited, update requested from Osprey. The license for private apparatus within the Highway lists a schedule of conditions including:

'If due to leakage or damage the construction of the highway is damaged the licensee will be responsible for all costs incurred to repair and reinstate.

The licensee will indemnify the authority of any claims arising as a result of the works or apparatus installed in accordance with Schedule 3 of the NRSWA 1991. The licensee shall also indemnify the authority in respect of any claims arising from a closure of a public highway required for the works. The licensee shall hold third party liability insurance to the value of £5,000,000 for any one claim with no limit to the number of claims for the duration of the licence.'

Although I have been unable to progress the report for the Working Party concerning the draft lease I recommend these points are referred to the Council's solicitor for his views along with the Council's recommendations for the lease, once confirmed. I also recommend I contact the Council's insurers to ascertain whether the Council's existing policy would provide cover.

I am unlikely to finish the report before next Tuesday when it will be available to circulate for the Working Party to consider. Any date for a meeting will need to take account of this.

Members' views.

38*/352* **Notices, Bishops Wood Play Park** Quote received for a sign, as previously approved, to the effect

'VISITORS TO THE PARK ARE ASKED TO CONSIDER LOCAL RESIDENTS AT ALL TIMES GLASS BOTTLES ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE PARK AND USE OF UNPLEASANT LANGUAGE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED

The Parish Council and its employees cannot accept responsibility or liability for any claim, loss or damage whatsoever which may arise from the use of these facilities, except as so far as provided by statute'

at a cost of £111.20 to supply and deliver (handyman to fit to existing posts) exclu VAT.

Recommended resolution: an order be placed for the sign.

256* **Brewood Traffic Management** Further to the Minutes of the 2 March Mr B. Wilding has made a further suggestion with regard to the resurfacing of Stafford Street in 2013. Members are asked to consider the proposal of closing only half of Stafford Street at a time (still on weekdays) thus maintaining access to the Stafford Street car park as each half is resurfaced for most of the time.

Members' views.

301*/339 **Queen's Diamond Jubilee** Members' recommendations are still required for commemorative trees around the Parish. I have confirmed that Boscobel still provide authenticated Royal Oak saplings and these will be available from mid April at approximately £10 each.

353b* **Millenium Bench, Sandy Lane** When considering making a donation in lieu of the work undertaken by Mr Pickrell Members should note that the work to repair the Church Organ has now been completed but any balance of funds remaining or received will be ring-fenced for future maintenance.

183a **Coven Heath Allotments** Further to the agenda item Mr A. Lawrence (caretaker to the allotments) has raised some concern regarding the tenant of plot 5 (a half size plot) and the encroachment on to land to the rear and his use of plot 7 to park his car. Council had previously approved the erection of a shed and cold frames on the land as Mr Lawrence is aware. If further encroachment has taken place then it may be appropriate to charge for the plot at the full rate. We also have longstanding concerns with regard a tenant with 2 and a half plots which are not maintained.

Recommended resolution: interested Member(s) meet with the Clerk and the caretaker on site to consider appropriate action.

282. **Council and Community Web Site** Separate report of the Clerk tabled regarding the progress and recommendations to consider for the new Council web site. Also tabled a copy of an email received from Mr J. Bate which arrived too late for the agenda but has been circulated as Mr Bate intends to address the Council during Public Participation. I have also provided a briefing to Members to put Mr Bate's email into context.

286. **Bus Shelter, School Lane, Coven** Verbal report received from Mr B. Wilding recommending that a bus shelter 2.5m deep (front to back) and 3m wide could be erected on the west side of School Lane as previously proposed. Mr Wilding has also offered to provide the concrete base for the shelter as and when the Council decide to proceed, this would ensure the base was located in the correct place. I would need to ascertain as to whether there would be a charge for this work and whether Staffordshire County Council are still providing grants towards the provision of bus shelters.

Recommended resolution: the matter be deferred until late May when other pressing matters will have been addressed and be retained under Matters Ongoing.

MATTERS ONGOING

281* **Grit Box, Sunset Close, Coven** Mr B. Wilding has advised that it may be possible to address this if the Council signed-up for the ice-busters scheme whereby the County Council will supply a bin and salt and will notify the Council when ice is expected. It would then be the responsibility of the Council's handyman or a local volunteer to spread the salt – a hopper (similar to that used for spreading grass seed) can be used to spread the salt. Mr Wilding could not confirm whether a hopper would be provided as well but recommending asking the question. In considering this matter Members are reminded that the Council's handyman is only employed to work for the Council three days per week. Any work undertaken by a community volunteer would need a degree of management by the Council – risk assessment, high vis jacket – as the Parish Council had signed up to the scheme.

Members' views.

71/390* **The Bront** The tree works to the rear of no 37 Moors Drive, as discussed last year with Mr S. Dores are scheduled to be undertaken from 23 March. I have met with the contractor this week to confirm the requirements. Mr B. Wilding has visited the Council office and is happy with the stepping stones to be laid at the Poplars Farm Way entrance and will arrange a meeting with Mrs J. Carr.

Matter of report.

288. **Winter Conditions – Grit Box, Forge Cottage** Mr B. Wilding has provided a verbal report advising that Forge Cottage is on a gritting route and would not therefore be applicable for a grit box.

Matter of report.

307. **Rainbow Inn, Coven** M. Alden-Court and Mrs Y. Millward met with the Area Manager on 5 March with regards the poor maintenance of the site and will email M. Alden-Court confirmation of the work that will be carried out. In summary this is to: remove the leaves from the car park; re-grout the front paving slabs to make sweeping easier; supply and fit hanging baskets to the exterior. As of this morning it was not apparent that there had been any improvement.

Recommended resolution: if the site has not been swept and tidied by the end of next week the Clerk to contact the Area Manager.

368. **Brewood Tennis Club – Tree Roots/Court** Mr S. Dores has agreed to meet me on site to assess the problem reported by the Tennis Club. Mr Dores is now waiting on me to suggest a convenient time.

Matter of report.

URGENT CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

NALC Consultation Seeking Council's views with regard to business rates for parish councils. The questions NALC would like answering are:

- Why would it be useful for local (parish and town) councils to receive a fair share of Business (National Non-domestic) Rates, locally?
- What would your local council do with either a share of locally raised business rates, or of discretionary rate relief on local council owned buildings?

Replies required by 19 March. **Members' views.**

FINANCE REPORT

Accounts for payment: South Staffordshire Council, Grounds Maintenance During February and March the Council has received two credit notes for Q3 grounds maintenance for which no invoice had been received and now 3 invoices for Q1 (one site omitted from original charges), Q2 and Q3. In working through the papers I thought we had managed to make sense of the charges but following the review of the accounts by Mrs J. Carr this morning this does not appear to be the case. A lot of time has already been spent on this just trying to get invoices issued for Q2 and Q3 and making sense of the paper work supplied.

Recommended resolution: the Clerk meet with Mr Medicott to discuss the matter further and if deemed necessary escalate the matter to Mr David Stockton, Director of Environmental Services whose portfolio includes Grounds maintenance.

Play Bark Quotes Three quotes have been obtained to replenish the play bark at Bishops Wood Play Area and the Coven Play Area as follows:

- Bishops Wood play area (restricted access – bagged delivery) 15.75m3 Play Bark 10/50
- Coven play area zip wire 9.45m3 Play Bark 10/50
- Coven play area, young children's play equipment 6.3m3 hard wood chip

Two of the quotes were by email and the third on-line: total costs quoted excluding VAT were: £2,191.80, £2,309.55 and £3,287. Clerk to report further with regard to the recommendation made.

Recommended resolution: the quote for the supply and delivery of bark / wood chip as stated be approved at a cost of £2,191.80 ex VAT.

Civic Sunday, 11 March Clerk to report.

Annual Leave Cover Members are asked to consider the payment of additional hours for the Council's Janitor Ms L. Whitehouse to cover the annual leave of Mr M. Smith, the Council's other Janitor, during April subject to Ms Whitehouse confirming her availability. This has been allowed for in the 2012/13 budget.

Recommended resolution: payment of additional hours be approved.

OTHER MATTERS FOR THE CLERK'S REPORT

Employee Contracts The employee Statements of Written Particulars as considered at the meeting of the Staffing Committee of 30 June have been produced from the template. Due to other staffing matters taking priority at the time I do not believe the recommendation of the Staffing Committee, as below, was considered by Council. Similarly the Committees recommendations concerning the Role Specific Risk Assessments, also below, were not considered by Council either.

In respect of Mr A. Lawrence, Mr M. Neylan, Mrs R. Dunbar and Mrs E. Gleed:

Members approved the template be personalised for each employee and that a recommendation be made to the Council that the Statements of Written Particulars be approved, signed by the Chair of Council and issued to employees to also sign.

And in respect of the Council posts: Caretaker to the Playing Field; Janitor; Caretaker to the Allotments (Coven Heath); Caretaker to the Changing Rooms (Coven); Office Workers including lone working; Handyman; Office Cleaner

It was resolved the recommendation be made to the Council that the role specific risk assessments be approved and that the Clerk:

- ***Amend the Office Worker risk assessment 'measures to reduce the effect in the event of an accident' in the case of visitors to the Council office, be updated to include anti-social behaviour to also be reported to the Clerk***
- ***source ladder training for the Council's handyman, as agreed at a meeting of representatives of the Staffing Committee held with Mr Barker in 2009***
- ***consult with the Council's Handyman to produce a list of the training and certificates he had previously received and to assess whether these were adequate for the duties undertaken by the handyman and the tools used***
- ***produce instructions in case of fire including an assembly point, exit notices and how to leave the building in case of an emergency. All office staff to be***

made aware of the instructions and a copy to be on display in the Council Chamber

- *ascertain whether Mrs Postles has been issued with a personal attack alarm.*

Recommended resolution: the above recommendations from the Minutes of the Staffing Committee held 30 June 2011 be approved.

AUDIT

Although received too late for the agenda the Council has been notified that the end of year accounts will need to be submitted to the External Auditor by 21 May 2012, unless an extension is requested. This should mean that the end of year accounts will need to be completed, approved by Council and available for inspection by the public by 16 April. Long standing Members may recall audited accounts being required by June / July some years ago. When I queried the April date with the external auditor last year she advised that whilst the accounts should be completed and ready for inspection it wouldn't matter if they weren't and we should just work to the May date for submission. Technically this is against Financial Regulations, a point that was supported by Peter Lacey, Financial Advisor (NALC) when the same problem was queried by this Council last year. We will endeavour to meet the May date and will advise the Council and External Auditor if I feel this is at risk at anytime.

In preparation for the Internal Audit of the Council's internal controls for the financial year 2011/2012 (to be undertaken prior to the external audit) I will, before the next meeting of the Council review and update the Council's:

- Business Risk Assessment
- Risk Assessment Reports
- Financial Controls
- Internal Controls Checklist

And update and prepare for Members to consider:

- The Internal Audit Plan
- Terms of Reference for the Internal Audit
- Schedule of Internal Controls for the Internal Audit

Members are asked to confirm whether the Head of Finance and Chair of Council should once again review the updated Business Risk Assessment, Risk Assessment Reports, Financial Controls and Internal Controls Checklist with the Clerk and make a recommendation to Council. It is not appropriate to leave this solely to the Clerk for obvious reasons.

The Internal Audit Plan, Terms of Reference for the Internal Audit and Schedule of Internal Controls for the Internal Audit will be updated and circulated to all Members to consider for approval. **Members are asked to consider whether the 'Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit' should be undertaken – this specific requirement was repealed for all parish councils in the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 SI 2011/817.**

I have to advise Members that a number of actions are still waiting to be progressed from the previous Minutes although with an extra week between meetings I am hopeful of at least carrying out the actions approved. The list of Matters Ongoing speaks for itself.

The above matters along with the end of year accounts and payroll must for now have priority with, I assume, progressing the Bowling Club lease with the working party and the ongoing

statutory deadlines we have to meet. During this time I must strongly recommend to Council that it approves:

- **only urgent items be dealt with until completion of the year end accounts and the Annual Return**
- **that the Clerk and Assistant Clerk be allowed to flex their contracted hours during March, April and May in order to deal with the increased workload during this time**
- **the Clerk be allowed to work from home, hopefully undisturbed, to undertake some of the process review and update work listed above, subject to ensuring the office is covered by the Assistant Clerk**
- **that if there is insufficient time between now and the deadline of 1 April 2012 then an application to the Community Paths Initiative for 2012/2013 is not submitted**

Obviously during this time any plans of the Council concerning the Jubilee will have to continue to be supported and progressed as will the installation of the new equipment at Brewood Park (funded as additional hours above contracted) and grant applications for the balance of the project (funded as additional hours for the Assistant Clerk and contracted hours for the Clerk).