

## GREAT WYRLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF GREAT WYRLEY PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7.00 P.M.  
ON WEDNESDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2020 AT GREAT WYRLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE,  
LANDYWOOD LANE, GREAT WYRLEY

### PRESENT:

(Chairman)  
Cllr. Ms. H. R. Snape

Cllr. M. Dabbs Cllr. Mrs. J. A. Johnson Cllr. A. J. Kelsey Cllr. M. McKenzie Cllr. A. Newell	Cllr. A. Pearson Cllr. Mrs. K. M. Perry MBE Cllr. R. J. Perry Cllr. S. Toddington Cllr. Mrs. S. M. Wood
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### **139/2020 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Mrs. O. Brazier, Cllr. J. C. Jones, Cllr. R. Myatt, Cllr. A. D. Smith and.

### **140/2020 MINUTES OF LAST PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 be accepted, approved and signed by the Chairman.

### **141/2020 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman advised the meeting that she was very pleased to inform everyone that the French drain in Landywood Lane was to be carried out during the week beginning 10<sup>th</sup> August and that the foundations to the dwarf wall to enhance the flooding defences to the Community Centre was to take place on 17<sup>th</sup> August. This was noted by Members.

The Chairman also reminded the meeting that the face coverings being worn made it difficult to hear people speaking and requested that Members also raise the hands if they wished to speak. This was noted.

### **142/2020 STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE SERVICE REPORT**

There were no representatives of Staffordshire Police Service present on this occasion.

### **143/2020 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no one present in the public gallery on this occasion.

### **144/2020 CLERK'S REPORTS**

#### **(A) GREAT WYRLEY MEMORIAL GARDENS**

Members recalled that at the last meeting of the Parish Council Members had discussed a way forward with regard to the opening of the Memorial Gardens. Following the discussion at the last meeting the matter was followed up for confirmation via email which asked all Parish Councillors, including those who had been unable to be in attendance at the last meeting, to vote on whether the gardens should be re-opened to the public at that time.

The response received was clear in that the majority of Members wished the

Gardens to remain closed with a review at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

However, since that time the Parish Council had received a number of approaches from various sources advising it that the FROG organisation was extremely upset that the gardens were still not being made open to the public.

With regard to this Members also recalled that there were a number of reasons contributing to the decision to remain closed, all of which were set out in the Clerk's report to Council; it had not only been based on guidelines with relation to Covid19. However, on receipt of updated information and several requests from various agencies the matter was reviewed prior to the meeting and the gardens were opened on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2020.

The meeting was advised that in order to achieve the optimum protection for all concerned, the use of the gardens would be entirely at visitors own risk and the Parish Council would not take responsibility for any resurgence of Covid19 associated with the Memorial Gardens. Notices to this effect had been posted on site. The Clerk had also organised for the erection of Entrance and Exit signs on site in an attempt to avoid any possible pinch points and to ensure public safety as much as possible.

For Members information the Clerk had reiterated the terms under which the Gardens needed to now operate. These guidelines had been drawn from Government advice and recommended for use by South Staffordshire Council.

Please see extract below:-

It will **not** be feasible for **Great Wyrley Parish Council** to provide the following:

1. Provision of Stewards
2. Arrange a booking system
3. Relocate any seating to accommodate social distancing
4. Clean equipment daily
5. Provide cleaning equipment
6. Enforce the operation of a one-way system. However, signs will be provided to encourage this.

**Great Wyrley Parish Council will** carry out the following in relation to the re-opening of the Memorial Garden:

1. Prior to opening, carry out safety checks on the site.
2. If a confirmed case of Covid-19 is identified and associated to any shared gardening equipment or lack of social distancing then the area will be closed upon notification and external contractors will be contacted for a deep clean before reopening.

3. Produce signage to include the following:

Entry and Exit Signage with 2 metre distancing instructions.

In addition, all organisations holding keys to the Memorial Gardens and the disabled toilet where shared gardening equipment is stored must take responsibility for the cleaning of the shared equipment used both on arrival and again on leaving the Gardens.

Cllr. Mrs. K. M. Perry advised the meeting that in view of the controversy and misunderstanding which had surrounded the subject of the Memorial Gardens in recent weeks she felt it would be beneficial for the Parish Council to invite all Members of FROG to attend a dedicated meeting, whereupon everyone could put their views forward and rather than experience any further discord all parties could work together on a better way forward.

It was proposed by Cllr. Mrs. K. M. Perry MBE and seconded by Cllr. Ms. H. R. Snape that the Clerk arrange for a meeting to take place. It was carried.

Cllr. A. Newell advised the meeting that all Members of the Parish Council had been invited to attend the unveiling of the new plaque which had been project managed by the Great Wyrley History Society on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2020. Cllr. Newell felt that perhaps it would be a good opportunity for all Members to view the works which had been carried out at the Memorial Gardens.

Following discussion the Chairman suggested that perhaps the meeting with Members of FROG could take place immediately prior to the next Parish Council meeting. This was agreed by Members and the following Councillors wished to be in attendance at the meeting:-

Cllr. Mrs. K. M. Perry,  
Cllr. Ms. H. R. Snape  
Cllr. Mrs. S. M. Wood  
Cllr. Mrs. J. A. Johnson  
Cllr. A. J. Kelsey

Cllr. A. Newell advised the Parish Council that the relative of a person connected with the FROG organisation had raised several matters of concern with the Parish Council under a Freedom of Information request but he felt that now that the gardens were opened the person may withdraw his request. The Clerk advised Cllr. Newell that the work involved in the Freedom of Information request had already been carried out and that the person in question had been expected to attend the meeting this evening. In light of his absence the Clerk was to ensure that the information was forwarded albeit the problem no longer existed on the basis that the requester had specifically stated that he wanted the information whether or not the gardens were re-opened. This was noted.

#### **(B) LOCAL FLOOD DEFENCE UPDATE**

Cllr. Mrs. K. M. Perry MBE gave a verbal update on the Flood Defence Project which is associated with Great Wyrley Parish and also other adjoining Parishes. Cllr. Mrs. Perry explained to the Parish Council that following a meeting with Officers and Councillors of South Staffordshire Council along with Officers from Staffordshire County Council there were a number of matters which she felt Members would be pleased to be kept abreast of.

The aim of the meeting had been to establish whether there were actions which could be taken in any one area which may lead to possible improvements in others by staging the flow of Wyrley Brook. This action, it was hoped, would help alleviate the flooding situation prior to the main works which will be at least 2 and half years in the future. Site meetings were now to be held at Bridge Avenue and Littlewood Lane and works had already taken place to improve the situation in Ramillies Crescent. This was noted by Members.

#### **(C) Trees in Great Wyrley Cemetery**

The Clerk advised the Parish Council that during the period of lockdown, the Parish Council had received a request from a resident of Glenthorne Drive to

have works carried out to the trees at the rear of his property. As Members were aware the trees he was referring to actually form part of the boundary of Great Wyrley Cemetery.

As this matter has been raised with the Parish Council action was required to check the condition of the tree in question. Further to this request the Clerk asked the Parish Council to consider the possibility of embarking on a new rolling programme to ensure that the trees in the Cemetery were not presenting a risk to public safety.

Following discussion Members agreed to refer to the assessment of the condition of trees in both Great Wyrley Cemetery and the Star Land with a view to any rolling programme being driven by expert advice. It was carried.

#### **(D) REQUEST FROM THE STAR PUBLIC HOUSE**

The Clerk advised Members that the Parish Council had received a request to use part of the land which forms The Star Land as an extension to the Star Public House. Members recalled that the Parish Council had received a number of requests of this nature in the past, however, Members discussed the matter fully and found it had no choice other than to **resolve**, unanimously that it would be unable to assist The Star Public House in this request as the area of land in question is covenanted to be used for community use and could not under any circumstances be used for any activity which is associated with the making of profit.

The Clerk was instructed to advise The Star Public House of its decision and to suggest that perhaps they would be able to use other areas in the vicinity as a possible alternative.

#### **(E) RENEWAL OF INSURANCE PREMIUM**

The Parish Council had received the quotation for the annual insurance premium and the Clerk was pleased to report that there was no significant increase the annual premium which stood at £4,890.78.

In addition, as the existing policy included a £5000 excess charge for flood damage, the Parish Council had been offered an opportunity to take out an additional policy with Ecclesiastical Insurance to insure the excess payment of £5000 (which would be required in the event of flood damage) for the sum of £469.13p.

Following discussion the Parish Council **resolved** to accept the quotation for the annual premium and to take advantage of the additional policy to cover the flood excess charge. It was carried.

#### **(F) RE-OPENING OF THE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

To date the decision to open a Community Centre had been left largely to the discretion of the body which has responsibility for it. Up until 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 The Government had strongly advised Community Centres against opening for indoor fitness and sport activities until such time that indoor gyms and sports facilities were going to be permitted to reopen.

This ruling clearly impacted on the Community Centre as a large percentage of its regular bookings related to activities of this type. i.e. Yoga, Kickboxing, Keep Fit, Karate, Zumba etc. Based on current guidelines the Community Centre would be allowed to open its doors for this use after 25<sup>th</sup> July, however, this is

only on the proviso that safe distancing can be achieved. The Clerk was unsure whether this was achievable for any of these bookings in their present format.

However, as everyone was aware the Community Centre, supported a much wider range of local activity such as the two Art Clubs, The Cards and Crafts Club and Weight Watchers to name but a few. However, it needed to be taken into account that their communal nature would make it impossible to achieve safe distancing due to sheer numbers in the classes. 30 members of the Art Club would mean that 30 separate households were gathering together in an inside space which was presently not recommended under any circumstances.

Following discussion it was **resolved** that the Clerk contact the smaller groups and advise them that before the Parish Council could properly consider the re-opening of the Community Centre there would be a need for each club to provide a risk assessment to the Parish Council evidencing how they would be able to operate their activity safely. This was to include the cleansing of any areas used by any Club during their visit. It was to be made clear that the Parish Council staff would not be undertaking the cleaning of the Community Centre between each use or taking any responsibility for the safety of any hirers who wished to hire the facility. The Clerk had provided the Parish Council with a full report on this matter which is attached at **Appendix 1**

#### **(G) NEW PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE**

As Members were already aware the Council had recently purchased a new website through Staffordshire County Council. Work towards going live with the website was progressing well and should be good to go by September. The website would be the new platform for the publication of Agenda, Minutes and any other information which it was now compulsory to publish.

The Clerk reminded Members that she had provided a link to a set of photographs which had already been taken to form part of the website and that it would be much appreciated if Members would take the time to have a look at and advise her which ones it was felt should be chosen to upload onto the website. This was noted.

#### **(H) FACEBOOK**

At the last meeting of the Parish Council Members had requested that this item be placed on the agenda in order to facilitate discussion. Members discussed this matter fully and **resolved** that as the new website would be up and running very soon it was felt that the Parish Council's dedicated Face Book account should now be closed on the basis that the new Parish Council website would be a more appropriate platform on which to provide evidence to members of the public.

Cllr. Mrs. S. Toddington advised the meeting that it was her view that it may be of benefit to keep the Facebook Account open and use it to signpost residents to the new Parish Council website.

Cllr. Mrs. S. M. Wood agreed with the decision to close Face Book but advised the meeting that she felt it did have a place in the scheme of things it just needed to have a better balance to suit the Parish Council's needs; as the facility was widely used by members of the public Cllr. Mrs. Wood felt that the situation should perhaps be reviewed for the future to be used as a platform to publicise less formal information such as the Bonfire or the Friday lunches.

**145/2020**      **COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Cllr. Mrs. K. M. Perry MBE advised the meeting that although the County Council was in lockdown it had still continued to operate its normal business via virtual meetings. Team meetings had been held every week to ensure that contingencies were kept in place to ensure the safety of the public.

Cllr. Mrs. Perry also advised the Parish Council that she had been re-elected Chairman of Staffordshire County Council for a second year. Cllr. Mrs. Perry was congratulated on this achievement. Cllr. Mrs. Perry thanked everyone for their kind thoughts and advised the Parish Council that there had been a number of changes in the hierarchy of the County Council which could be fully viewed on the County Council website.

Cllr. Mrs. Perry also advised the Parish Council that it could rest assured that should there be any outbreaks of Covid in Staffordshire that immediate lockdowns would be put in place to protect the public.

Cllr. Mrs. Perry advised the meeting that on a more local basis, she had had occasion to visit residents of Caddick Farm on the previous Sunday where a serious situation had arisen due to a drainage fault. Cllr. Mrs. Perry was pleased to say that Severn Trent Water had solved the problem within a very short space of time and that following the incident she had received an email of thanks from the person who had brought the situation to her attention for her prompt action and attendance. This was noted.

**146/2020**      **DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

Cllr. Mrs. J. A. Johnson advised the meeting that as ever the teams at South Staffordshire Council had been working hard to keep on top of all the business required to be attended to and the Council Offices were still only open at limited times to allow for collection of work. The library was to be opened shortly and so were the Leisure Centres. This was noted.

Cllr. Mrs. K. M. Perry MBE advised the meeting that the contentious planning application at 122 Streets Lane had been refused by South Staffordshire Council planning. This was noted.

**147/2020**      **REPORTS FROM PARISH COUNCILLORS**

**WORKS TO TREES IN SAXON CLOSE**

Cllr. A. Newell asked the Clerk to pass on the thanks of the Parish Council to the Groundsmen for the prompt action they had taken by carrying out works to trees on the Recreation Ground which were hanging into the garden of 16 Saxon Close. Problems were now being identified by the residents of 21 and 22 Saxon Close which needed to be investigated. One of which wanted a professional assessor to give their thoughts on the tree in question. This was noted.

**WHEELCHAIR ACCESS TO THE STAR LAND**

Cllr. A. Newell advised the meeting that he had been approached by a resident of the village asking if the Parish Council would be prepared to remove the stile to the side of the entrance gate to The Star Land in order to allow access for wheelchair users.

Members discussed this request and were extremely concerned that The Star Land did not have a wheelchair friendly surface by any means and did not feel

that it would be safe to encourage this use. This was noted by Members.

#### **ACCESS FOR THE DISABLED AT THE MEMORIAL GARDEN**

Cllr. A. Newell advised the Parish Council that the FROG organisation want to look at the creation of an access for the disabled at the Memorial Gardens and felt that the side gate and the footpath at the side of the Memorial Garden should be refurbished and access gained to the gardens from the side.

Following discussion it was **resolved** that this matter should be added to the meeting to be held with the FROG Organisation in the near future.

#### **UNAUTHORISED FOOTBALL MATCHES ON YEMSCROFT FIELD**

Cllr. Mrs. J. A. Johnson advised the meeting that an adult football team by the name of Walsall Swifts was regularly using Yemscroft field to hold football matches. The teams and spectators were leaving large amounts of litter behind, which although had been gathered up from the ground were being left in large bags on the side of the road.

Cllr. Ms. H. R. Snape advised the meeting that she was in possession of information regarding this matter which included the fact that referees were actually present at the matches which were taking place on Sunday mornings. Attendance at the matches was causing a cavalcade of cars to park on both Walsall Road and Yemscroft Cul-de-Sac.

To date it had not been possible to identify Walsall Swifts to enable the Clerk to make contact and request that this practice cease, however, the research would continue.

#### **148/2020      REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES**

Cllr. A. Newell advised the Parish Council that FROG would like to officially thank them for allowing the opening of the Memorial Gardens so that residents would be able to appreciate all of the works which had been carried out over the lockdown period. This was noted.

#### **149/2020      PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

There were no planning applications for consideration on this occasion.

#### **150/2020      REPORT OF OUTSTANDING ACCOUNTS**

A report on the outstanding accounts for authorisation for payment was presented to Council and it was **resolved** that the report be accepted, approved and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 8.52p.m.

**Chairman**