

MINUTES OF THE KEELE PARISH COUNCIL INFORMAL MEETING

Held on Tuesday 18th January 2022 at 7.00pm by Zoom

Attendees: Parish Cllrs: Mr G Bibby (GB) (Chair), Dr D Hindmarch (DH), Mrs W Naylor (WN), Mrs Val Newman (VN), Ms T Wright (TW), Mr A Rowe (AR) and Mr T Kearon (TK)

Parish Clerk – Mrs D Powell (DP)

Present –No members of the public were present.

GB explained that the meeting was not a formal meeting and was a subcommittee meeting of Keele Parish Council due to the Government Regulations regarding meetings. Due to the rising numbers of Covid-19 cases and the vulnerability of some members of the parish council the meeting had been moved to an informal online meeting. To facilitate this meeting a quorum met on 17th January 2022 to delegate authority to the Chair and Parish Clerk where it was ratified that decisions made during this meeting were to be actioned.

05/22 Public Open forum

No members of the public were present.

06/22 Apologies were received from:

Dr R Studd (RS), Mrs S Hughes (SH), Mr D Meakin (DM), and Ms M Thomsen (MT)

07/22 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest in items on the agenda.

08/22 To note the draft minutes on 16th November 2021 and agree

To approve – It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes as the true and accurate record and that the minutes would be signed by the Chair at the next face to face meeting.

09/22 Actions arising from the meeting held on 16th November 2021

- a) DH is awaiting a response to the letter sent to the Police Force regarding the use of the Club House for training and an update from the borough council relating to the Section 15A Notice query. To provide an update on the Freedom of Information request. (DH) **DH**

- No response had been received to the first point. The response to the Freedom of Information request had been circulated to council. A request for a copy of the minutes relating to the S15A decision to remove recreational rights of members of the public was not available. Council considered that this matter should be debated by the borough council. DH to draft a letter and send to DP.

- b) GB had sent a letter to the Secretary of State regarding the Direction to pursue the Footpath S53 at Quarry Bank/Redheath. A response had been received and DP is to follow the matter up with The Planning Inspectorate. (DP). **DP**

- Copies of original documents had been requested by The Planning Inspectorate who were then asked to contact Staffordshire County Council for the documents as these should be stored in the files.

- c) WN and SH to take the width of the footpath and draft a letter to Cllr Huckfield and

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request that the footpath be widened or the bus service be re-installed. To provide an update. (WN/SH) **WN**

- There was no further update. WN to contact Cllr Huckfield regarding the letter and to invite Cllr Huckfield to the next parish council meeting.

d) Update on the Knights Templar x 2 sculptures. The contract is awaiting signature from Staffordshire County Council. DP to contact the Legal Department of Staffordshire County Council to try to move the contract along. (DP/WN) **DP**

- There was no further update available. DP to chase SCC Legal Department.

e) Update for information only on the broadband issues Pepper Street/ Quarry Bank –Mr Meakin/Mrs Hughes. It was decided to invite Martin Crutchley to the November meeting to discuss the matter of including certain addresses. (DM/SH) **DM**

- There was no further update on Pepper Street Broadband. Martin Crutchley to be invited to the next meeting.

f) Update on the tree planting initiative fund, community orchard and Keele conservation volunteers. Platinum Oaks is going ahead. Discussions are ongoing with Staffs County Council regarding potential sites in Station Road and Pepper Street. There is funding for five trees and a site meeting is to take place to finalise the sites on Station Road. (WN) **WN**

- The Platinum Oaks have been planted at Station Road. The Parish Council resolved to be responsible for their upkeep for the next five years before passing their care to Staffordshire County Council. Any continuation of planting at Pepper Street or elsewhere will be carried out by Keele Conservation group without further Parish Council involvement.

g) To discuss the re-siting of the bench opposite the Village Hall. VN and WN were asked to map the new location of the bench and to share this with ROTH for their approval. Also to approach Seddon to obtain their agreement to make good the site with hard standing and to lay a path up to the bench. (VN/WN/AR)

- The bench has been re-sited and slabs had been put in place. It was considered that there should be more slabs and a path to the bench. It was agreed that VN would contact the site manger again to request extra slabs and a path. **VN**

10/22 Other matters

a) Update on hedges, verges, highways, and footpaths.

- Hedge and verge issues had been less onerous during the winter months. Quarry Bank hedge had been cut and it was reported that a good job had been carried out.
- Fly tipping had been reported on Lymer. A caravan containing rubbish had been removed. Litter had been left in the layby on Quarry Bank Road. There had been an incident of fly tipping on Limes Road and two mirrors had been smashed and left on Keele Road.
- Highways – GB has been assured that the TRO will be activated by the end of January 2022.

The footpath in front of the Hawthorns is in a poor state of repair and it was

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agreed to contact SCC Highways to ask for repairs to be carried out. A sign off meeting is to take place with the Site Manager of The Hawthorns. It was noted that the curbs, road surfaces and raised drain covers needed to be finished off and that more lighting was needed for safety reasons. Plants and undergrowth had been removed from behind the hedge and it was noted that the gardens are to be restored.

- b) Responsibility for maintenance schedule of Station Road Jubilee trees
 - There is an informal agreement with Staffordshire County Council Highways that the parish council will look after the trees for the first five years.
- c) Commemoration of Jubilee and involvement in 'The Big Lunch' event
 - As the Christmas event was cancelled due to Covid-19 it was proposed to move the event with Village Hall funding to the summer for 'The Big Lunch' event. To be discussed at the February meeting.
- d) Arrangements for February meeting
 - It was discussed that the February meeting should take place in person and that members should take a Covid test before the meeting as a precaution. The possibility of future meetings taking place with alternate monthly physical meetings interspersed with Zoom meetings was discussed. TK raised the point of the possibility of increased public engagement through Zoom meetings.

11/22 Finance

- a) Discussion of budget/ precept as resolved by the extra ordinary meeting 17th January 2022
 - The meeting of 17th January 2022 **RESOLVED** to approve that the Precept be increased by 1.99% (Option C). This will allow for an increase in the Clerk's workload and hours to include tasks currently undertaken by GB, and extra payments for the work required for the completion of the NDP. TK supported the increase as it demonstrates that the parish council are proactively increasing levels of public engagement and freeing up GB for alternative tasks as the Chair.
 - The Budget for 2022/23 is to remain the same as 2021/22. GB thanked the Parish Clerk/RFO for the new format budget and finance reports.
- b) To approve payments/orders, receipts and transfers - **Appendix A**
 - The payments were approved by delegated authority. To note that GB and VN have the facility to approve online banking payments.
- c) To note and approve the budget report – **Appendix B**
 - The budget report was noted and approved.
- d) To note and approve the bank reconciliation – **Appendix C**
 - The bank reconciliation was noted and approved.

12/22 To note (only) written reports circulated in advance:

- a) Chairman's report.
 - The report had been circulated.

- b) County & Borough Councillors Cllr Huckfield and Cllr Kearon.
- TK reported on the recent power cut and satisfactory contact with Western Power.
 - TK to speak to the Chief Executive of the borough council regarding the Boggs Cottage appeal.
 - There have been reports of dangerous driving.

13/22 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Data Breaches (72 hrs)/Information Security/Subject Access Requests (reminder).
There had been no breaches.

14/22 Keele Neighbourhood Plan (Standing Item) – to note progress– Mr Bibby

This matter is covered in the Chair's report. The Policy documents are to be sent to DP.

GB

15/22 Borough Local Plan (LP) (Standing Item)

- A final draft of the response to the Local Plan 'Issues and Strategic Options' document is to be sent to the borough council.

GB, VN and HA had met with the Cabinet to discuss the Local Plan.

- It was stated by the Council that there is no decision on where the building is to take place and no plans will be made until the draft Plan is in place.
- The covenant on the 18 hole course was mentioned by KPC which attracted a degree of interest from the Council.

At the Council's request a subsequent Zoom meeting was held with Simon McEneny, the officer in charge of Economic Development.

- Keele Parish Council raised the work being done by Homes England who were conducting a topographical and tree survey on the site.
- Mr McEneny confirmed that Newcastle had presented the site to Homes England as a possible area for developing new homes and had approved the survey. He acknowledged this contradicted the statement made in the earlier meeting (above).
- KPC would receive a copy of the Homes England topographic survey and tree count.
- Mr McEneny identified a traffic modelling carried out by Staffs in 2017 which had indicated that a 2500 house development would not be sustainable in traffic terms. Mr McEneny noted that the reduced number of homes now being planned (around 1000) would, in his opinion, be sustainable in this respect. A new model is being commissioned from the County.
- Keele Parish Council will receive a copy when it is available.
- The Borough are seeking a legal opinion on whether a covenant can be enforced after the death of the vendor who imposed the condition. They will share this opinion with KPC once it is available.

16/22 Planning applications – to provide comments on the following:

- No planning applications had been received during the month.
- The flood Management Scheme had resulted in planning applications being withdrawn.
- Issues which had been resolved are contained in the Chair's report.
- The Boggs Cottage appeal has been postponed as the client wishes to meet face to face with the legal team.

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- The Meeting discussed at length the postponement of the Boggs Cottage appeal hearing for the eviction at number 5 Boggs Cottages. KPC expressed grave concern and commitment to support the resident of Boggs Cottages in whatever way possible.

17/22 **To note the Staffordshire Parish Councils Association Bulletins and correspondence received: - Appendix D** - This was noted

18/22 **Any Other Business for future agendas**

- The format of future KPC meetings
- Platinum Jubilee 'The Big Lunch' event
- Community Orchard renovation for The Platinum Jubilee
- Restoration of the hole in the wall leading from the Church
- Groundwork
- The Rural Runaround – actively working for Keele.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Date of next meetings:

Keele Village Hall onwards

15 February 2021, 15 March 2022, 19th April 2022, 17th May 2022

Appendix A - Payments/orders, receipts and transfers

Keele Parish Council Payment schedule January 2022

DATE	REF/ Chq no	PAYEE / PAYOR	Decription	PAYMENTS
18/01/2022	BACS	Mr G Bibby	Zoom reimbursement	14.39
18/01/2022	BACS	Mrs D Powell	Microsoft Office subscription reimbursement	11.28
18/01/2022	BACS	VAST payroll services	HMRC month 10	84.40
18/01/2022	BACS	Mrs D Powell	Salary January 2022	352.45
08/01/2022	BACS	Mr Steve Hough	Noticeboards	60.00
		Total		522.52

Keele Parish Council Chair's Report: January 2022

COVID

Local case rates in Keele and Silverdale are falling steeply as they are in Newcastle as a whole.

Planning Applications

January 2022

None noted in agenda. I have search the portal for applications concerning the Pepper Street development, given that Seddon plan to start in 'a few months time'. There were no new updates and the applications for drainage and flood management conditions have now been withdrawn. Work cannot start until these conditions have been fulfilled.

November 2021

- a) 21/00952/FUL | **Application for variation of condition 2 of planning permission 18/00262/REM to allow substitution of house types** | Land North Of Pepper Street Keele Newcastle Under Lyme Staffordshire. Permit
- b) 21/00779/FUL | **Proposed Single Storey Dwelling | Red Heath House Pepper Street Keele Newcastle Under Lyme Staffordshire ST5 6QJ**. Comments submitted, pending consideration

October 2021

21/00919/FUL | **Erection of gates at the entrance to the Villa and the Barn** | The Hawthorns The Village Keele Newcastle Under Lyme Staffordshire ST5 5AH (newcastle-staffs.gov.uk). Permit

July 2021

Keele University: Intention to submit an application for **planning permission to open up the Newcastle Lodge for a bus entrance**. Permit

Boggs Cottages Appeal

The appeal against the eviction order for 5, Boggs Cottages has been rescheduled until the summer following the reinstatement of online hearings. I have been working with residents of Boggs to offer what support I can. They remain concerned about a lack of engagement by the Borough Planning Department

Renovation of Statues

We are continuing in our attempts to get the sculptures at the entrance to Keele Road and Station Road renovated. The project also being frustrated by the owners of the sculptures, Staffs County Council, declining to sign the grant contract in its current form and the grant awarders (DET) declining to change it. We are encouraging Staffs and the DET to talk to one another directly rather than through the Parish Council. Our best hope may be to request DET to put the project on hold and seek to have the sculptures transferred to the ownership of the Parish Council. Rob Steele seems open to this suggestion.

Platinum Tree Planting

The trees on Station Road have now been planted. Many thanks to Wenslie and Rob Steele for facilitating this and the donors for supplying funds. The Parish Council will be responsible for the upkeep for the trees for the first 5 years after which responsibility will pass to County.

Borough Plan

I attended the consultation session last Thursday as did several other Parish Councillors. Around 17 people had attended during the event. In contrast, the additional event at Audley had been extremely well attended.

The Parish Council's of Keele and Silverdale met with the Cabinet of the Borough in late November to discuss their plans for the Golf Course. They insisted that no firm plans were in place and that the option to develop the Golf Course would receive no further attention until the draft stage of the plan and the evaluation of all options outlined in the Issues Options document. The Parish Councils were sceptical of this response. We mentioned the possibility that the 18-hole course are might be subject to a restrictive covenant.

This received a degree of interest and Simon McEneny; Executive Director, Commercial Development and Economic Growth requested a further meeting to discuss issues surround the Golf Course development. The Parish's met with Simon last week. The Borough remain 'interested' in the development of around 1000 houses on the site. The Parish's expect this to be a favoured option for development once the draft Local Plan document is produced in September. A report on traffic issues was produced by Staffs County in response to the earlier plan for the site in the Joint Local Plan. It had indicated significant issues

with traffic congestion. Simon proposed that the reduced number of houses (from 1800 to around 1000) removed this issue and a new report is being commissioned. Simon undertook to share the findings of this report with the Parish Councils.

We also discussed the work being done by Homes England, the Government's Housing Accelerator. They are conducting a topographical and tree survey on site. Simon undertook to share the report with Parish Councils once it was completed.

Village Hall

Broadband

Installed and working but slow, 2.4 mps. As the VH are currently paying for a basic service (£50 pm). We will look at whether the speed is sufficient for streaming Parish Council meetings prior to our Feb meeting. If not, then a faster service may be procured.

Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

The Parish Council and Village Hall were disappointed to have to cancel our Christmas Party. It is hoped to transfer the event to the Platinum Jubilee celebrations by which time any safety concerns should have been greatly reduced. As well as a Keele get-together and planting of the commemorative trees, we also hope to work with St John's school and the church to organise a celebration of the life our community.

Public Realm

The hedge on Quarry Bank has been cut.

Precept meeting (DP, VN, GB) Saturday 15th January

1. Precept. It was agreed to accept the Borough's proposal to increase the precept by 1.99%. DP's breakdown indicated that this would be sufficient to allow the Parish Council to employ her for 9 hours a week and provide a buffer of 56 extra hours for work on completing the Neighbourhood Development Plan. This uplift will allow the Clerk to take on extra duties, specifically an enhanced role in web development

and editing of the Yew Tree. It was recognised that DP's work load varied through the year and that on some occasions she would work more than 9 hours, on others less. The work on the neighbourhood development plan will stand outside Debra's statutory hours and expenditure 'ring-fenced' and accounted separately. The 56 hour reserve may be insufficient but it was agreed that time in lieu could be offered as an alternative to paid time when requested by the Clerk. The scheme will be reviewed in September and next year's precept planned accordingly. All parties agreed to these proposals

2. Neighbourhood Development plan. GB will finalise amendments to the policy document for Friday 21st January. This will include including VN's expanded text justifying the Special Policy Area, Phil Butter's final wording for policy concerning development on campus, suggestions from Jemma March and some areas of policy expansion. VN, G and DP will constitute the NDP editing group with draft versions subject to ratification by the Parish Council.

3. Local Development Plan. The Clerk has an assurance from Cllr Northcott that she can submit our comments on the strategic options document as hard copy. She will get written confirmation from him that this is the case and seek to submit on Wednesday 19th by registered mail. She will be following this protocol for the other Parish Councils for which she is clerk.