

**ALL STRETTON, SMETHCOTE AND WOOLSTASTON PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL MEETING**

MINUTES

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 23rd March 2016
at Picklescote Village Hall.

Present :

C'Ilr A McVittie (Chairman)
C'Ilr V Davies (Vice Chairman)
C'Ilr A Beagle
C'Ilr J Burton
C'Ilr M Morris
C'Ilr T Phillips
C'Ilr J Dale

C'Ilr T Barker

Clerk Mrs J Griffiths (Clerk)

Apologies

C'Ilr T Barker and C'Ilr V Davies had sent their apologies as both were unwell.

1) Introduction

The Vice Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2) Declaration of Interest

The Clerk reminded all Councillors to declare any interests in any items being discussed.

No declarations of interest were offered at this time.

3) Public Comments

No members of the public were present.

4) Approve Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 25th March 2015

It was proposed by C'Ilr Morris, seconded by C'Ilr McVittie and unanimously agreed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 25th March 2015 provided a true and accurate record of the meeting.

5) Report from the Chairman

C'Ilr McVittie gave the following report:-

Over the last year we have continued to meet bi-monthly and have considered carefully all planning applications which come before us for comment.

The Parish Council continue to complain about the state of the roads in the Parish. During the year Mr Tim Sneddon from Shropshire Council attended a site visit to roads in our parish and he has agreed to attend the Parish Council meeting which follows this Annual Meeting.

C'llr James Lambie left us in the Autumn to start a new adventure in New Zealand. We were sad to see him go but wish him and his family well.

C'llr Tony Phillips was co-opted at the January meeting serve as a Parish Councillor representing Smethcott until the next elections.

The Parish Council made a grant of £496 to the village hall to pay for the cabinet to house the defibrillator.

Under the Transparency Code grants are available for funding to provide Parish Council web sites. We have applied for funding and will hear at the end of March if our bid for funding has been successful. We hope to have a Parish Council web site up and running before the summer.

We all continue to serve the Parish to the best of our ability and welcome members of the public to our meetings where they are free to make public comments at the start of every meeting.

6) Report from Longnor School

The Clerk read the report from Lucy Adams (Head Teacher) which had been published in the Church Magazine as attached (Appendix A).

7) Police Report

Police reports and newsletters are circulated by the Clerk as they are received.

8) Report from C'llr Burton – Public Footpaths

C'llr Burton gave the following report:-

Footpaths in the Woolstaston & All Stretton Parish continue to be regularly walked throughout the year and mostly in good accessible order with new way markers in place on some of the footpaths.

The National Trust is beginning to put up signposts to make the 'cycle rights of way' clearer to cyclists; to make the general public aware of sheep with lambs, nesting birds and the need to keep dogs under close control on the Longmynd. (more substantial signs than last year).

Dave Hardwick of Shropshire Council recently walked some of the less used footpaths in the area with me to check that they were accessible, clearly marked and free from overgrown plants. A few needed a bit of plant clearance, this was noted. The All Stretton P3 group have done some work in the All Stretton area with styles, gates and signage.

Shropshire Council & the National Trust continue to be made aware of concerns regarding the excessive use of mountain bikes & scramble bikes on Plush Hill and the Longmynd; the replacing of way marker post when they have fallen over and dead livestock on the actual footpaths.

9) Report from C’Ilr Morris - Rev Fletcher’s, Munslow’s and Poor Land Charity

C’Ilr Morris told the meeting that the Charity continue to give grants for local needs and had provided money towards children’s village Christmas parties in the Parish. It was agreed that C’Ilr Morris and resident, Mr M Silence would continue as the Parish Council representatives on this charity.

10) Shropshire Council Report – C’Ilr T Barker

C’Ilr Barker had sent his apologies as he was unable to attend the meeting due to ill health. He had forwarded the following report which the Clerk read out to the meeting:-

“By now every household will have received its Council Tax demand. It will not go unnoticed that, for the first time in many years, Shropshire Council's element has risen. This rise totals 3.9% and is shown as two elements. One general rise of 1.9% and one hypothecated rise of 2%. The second item is that which the UK government has authorised to be allocated specifically to Social Care whereas the first is the maximum that would otherwise be allowed without a voter referendum.

Personally I have mixed feelings about these rises.

Taking the Social Care item first. The care of the vulnerable in our society is one of our prime duties and Shropshire's ageing population demographic makes our task more difficult than some of our urban neighbours. We would have been foolish not to take advantage of the opportunity provided by the UK government.

The general rise is a different matter. That is entirely the Council's decision and has resulted from an assessment of our resource needs (remembering that Central Government funding to local authorities has been already significantly cut, those cuts expected to continue) compared with what we plan to spend on services. Massive savings in what we spend have already been made and more are planned. The plans for 2016/17 could have been deeper and more far reaching but the administration decided not to go that route but to raise council tax instead. As for the future I believe that the deeper cuts will be required in order for the Council to set a legal budget (unlike central government, councils cannot by law set a budget that requires borrowing to finance revenue spending - the much discussed deficit). A great deal of work is in train now to look at what the Council does and how it does it. We have already taken steps to reduce bus subsidies without impact on services, review contracts and ways of working (recent press coverage of the highways maintenance arrangements with our contractor, Ringway, for example), to generate

external income by trading services and many other initiatives designed to reduce our net spending to the necessary levels in the future.
So let's be positive now and talk of better things.

Spring has arrived (remembering that Winter sometimes surprises with a late rally!), we finally have a period of dry weather and the gardens and fields have begun to look fertile. Lambs are to be seen with their mother ewes and the countryside is preparing for what we all hope will be a fine summer!

Please remember that I can always be contacted by telephone at home and/or e mail (tim.barker@shropshire.gov.uk) and am here for you and all the other residents of the ward I represent.

Best wishes to all of you”.

11) Date of Next Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 22nd March 2017.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.25pm to be followed by the Parish Council meeting.

Signed.....(Chairman) Date.....