



Meeting of **Clent Parish Council** held at **7:00pm on Monday 15th January 2024**
at Clent Parish Hall, Church Ave, Clent, Stourbridge DY9 9QT

Minutes

Present: Cllr Ed Sheppard (Chairman), Cllr David Mudie, Cllr Sara ffoulkes, Cllr Andrew Sherrey, Cllr Margaret Sherrey, Cllr Peter Bates, Cllr Drew Beaumont.

In attendance: District Cllr Simon Nock, George Kirkham (NT), Bonnie Harvey (Clent Connect), Nick Farress (Clerk), 12 members of the public.

5556 Apologies for absence

County Cllr Karen May

5557 Declarations of interest

(a) Cllr Ed Sheppard declared a pecuniary interest in Minute 5562(a)(iii) as he is the parish Lengthsman/cheque payee. Cllr Sheppard did not vote on this item or sign the cheques.

5558 Dispensations

There were none.

Open session

The meeting was adjourned for the open session and the following reports/updates were noted.

Public comments/questions:

The following issues were raised by the public:

- Mr Richard Price reported that he had checked all the parish defibrillators (including the Clent Club unit which is not a PC unit) and all were in order. He will check the units at least once per month and report any issues to the PC. The council thanked Mr Price for his assistance with this.
- Large hole on Hill Lane on NT land. Mr Kirkham would inspect this and schedule in any maintenance needed.
- Street light at the end of Bromsgrove Road is still unlit. The Clerk stated that there appears to be a problem with the numbering as it has been reported many times. The Clerk would follow this up with WCC.
- George Kirkham from the National Trust updated the council on its activities on the Clent Hills.

5559 Clent Connect Update

The Chairman of Clent Connect provided an update on their activities and finances and thanked the parish council for its financial support. It was suggested that Clent Connect would

be applying for a further £6000 to allow them to continue into 2024/25. The parish council would like to see a breakdown of how these funds would be spent and the 2023/24 unaudited accounts ahead of making a decision on this funding.

County and District Councillor Updates

District Councillor Simon Nock provided updates on the following:

- District council finances and 2024/25 budget.

5560 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 20th November 2023 be agreed as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

5561 Correspondence

(a) From West Mercia Police asking the PC to identify its policing “Parish Priorities”. It was agreed to respond with the following issues: Anti-social behaviour on the Clent Hills, speeding and inconsiderate/pavement parking.

(b) From a parishioner in relation to creating a “Community Orchard”. Mr Lawrence Weston presented a detailed report about planting a community orchard in Clent. The Chairman had suggested the “wild” area behind the cricket pavilion. Around 15 trees would be planted and would link in with Clent Connect and the school to promote education around locally grown food. It was **RESOLVED** to agree to the principle of creating a community orchard and that the location should be the “wild” area behind the cricket pavilion. The Chairman would meet with Mr Weston on site in due course to discuss this further and to look at the health of the current fruit trees on PC land.

(c) From a parishioner in relation to the new play area on the Clent Hills. The NT is in correspondence with the parishioner in relation to accessible play equipment.

5562 Finance

(a) Payments: It was **RESOLVED** to approve the payment of the following for December 2023 and January 2024:

(i) Clerk salary & expenses (2 months)	£1540.66
(ii) HMRC PAYE (2 months)	£40.16
(iii) Ed Sheppard Lengthsman	£342.25
(iv) WCC Street Lamp Replacement	£1283.92
(v) Clent Parish Hall	£86.25
(vi) BDC lease of land	£60.00
(vii) GJH Electrical (xmas tree lights)	£300.00
(viii) Tree Tops (emergency tree works)	£200.00
(ix) Nick Sugden (Three Roses Hamper)	£107.83
(x) Steve Bubb (Christmas Tree)	£260.00
(xi) P Timmins (beacon painting Sept 23)	£180.00
(xii) WCC parish lighting Q3	£675.73
(xiii) Ed Sheppard rock salt	£64.87
(xiv) Mr S Geggie (hedge cutting)	£420.00

(b) Grant request: Following a request from the Vicar of St Leonards and school governor it was **RESOLVED** to grant £350 to cover the cost of a small Christmas gift given to each pupil at the school. Section 137 of the LGA would be used to cover the expenditure.

(c) Budget monitoring: It was **RESOLVED** to approve the budget monitoring report dated 31/12/23 prepared by the Clerk.

(d) Bank reconciliation: It was **RESOLVED** to approve the November and December 2023 bank reconciliations noting a balance of £104,252.01 as at 31/12/2023.

(e) Budget 2024/25: It was **RESOLVED** to set the parish council budget at £53,270 and demand a precept from Bromsgrove DC as the billing authority of £49,850. This represents a NIL increase in the parish council's precept. The full budget is appended to these Minutes.

5563 General maintenance & highway matters

(a) Replacement of "heritage" street lamps: WCC have advised that the current heritage style street lamps need to be replaced and cannot be refurbished. The heritage style would be retained but the lamp would be upgraded to LED. The cost of the new lamps would be around £900 each. It was **RESOLVED** to purchase 2 lamps and ask WCC to fit these in due course. The council would then check the quality of the units before ordering any more.

(b) Holy Cross Green maintenance – Cllr Bates asked that the council consider the costs and benefits of contracting out the maintenance of Holy Cross Green. Cllr Bates asked that this is put on the "back burner".

(c) Parish boundary planters - The Chairman had not yet been able to speak with Clent Nurseries about sponsoring the planters, however the tubs have been cleared and weeded. The school gardening club would also be interested in growing some summer plants for the tubs and Cllr ffoulkes is in conversation with them about this.

(d) Pond footpath and kissing gate: The work to improve the surface had not taken place as the contractor engaged to carry out the work had not done so. The Chairman would look at other contractors.

5564 Field Maintenance & Play Areas

(a) Field mowing 2024/25. It was **RESOLVED** to engage the Cricket Club to carry out the mowing of the fields beginning in April 2024 at a rate of £400 per month.

5565 Planning

23/01351/FUL - Proposed single storey side/rear extension - 8 Kings Meadow, Holy Cross. It was **RESOLVED** to raise no objection.

5566 Clent Youth Council

Cllr ffoulkes has drafted a "job description" for the Youth Council. It was agreed that this can be circulated to the schools with the addition of a requirement to establish written parental permission for the child to take part. It may be that whichever councillor(s) running the Youth Council will need DBS clearance. This costs around £76 per person.

5567 Parish Magazine

The Clerk would write a general update for the February edition.

5568 Councillor updates and items for next Agenda.

Items for next agenda: - Clent Connect grant request & Community orchard update

Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next Meeting of the Parish Council is the 19th February 2024 at Clent Parish Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.28pm.

Signed as a true record:

Chairman: _____ **Date:** _____