

BADGER PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 21ST JULY 2016
AT ST. GILES' CHURCH, BADGER, STARTING AT 7.00 PM

21. PRESENT

Cllr. T. Lipscombe

Cllr. G. Bond

Cllr. R. Greenwell

Cllr. Mrs. S. Greenwell

Cllr. Mrs. E. Wakelin

22. ALSO PRESENT

Shropshire Cllr. M. Wood & F. D. Voysey (Clerk to the Council)

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none.

24. OPEN FORUM

Shropshire Councillor, Michael Wood, outlined his duties and responsibilities as the Shropshire Council port folio holder for Corporate Services, which covered a wide range of activities and services that included assets and properties. He commented that Shropshire is one of the most sparsely populated counties in England and that the National Government's formula for funding the county is disproportionate and inadequate to meet statutory responsibilities for adult social care and vulnerable children. An £8 million transitional grant from central Government had temporarily filled a funding gap in revenue, but there is an urgent need for Shropshire Council to make substantial savings. This has led to discussions, which are ongoing, with town and parish councils to determine how they can share the burden of costs and responsibilities for local services such as libraries and leisure centres. The Chairman stated that with such a small precept ways that Badger Parish Council could assist in costs and running services was minimal. However, the Council's contractor could perform the grass cutting of the highway verges in the parish undertaken once a year by Shropshire Council's contractor. The Clerk was asked to pursue this possibility and keep Councillor Wood informed. The suggestion to meet the revenue deficit by increasing Council Tax has been rejected by Shropshire Council as an increase of 2% or more would legally require a local referendum costing around £800,000, funds that could be better spent help maintain current services. Cllr. Wood mentioned National Government's proposals for some, or all of business rates to be retained in the areas where they were raised. However as Shropshire has little major corporate industry such a proposal would mean Shropshire Council losing not gaining income. The Chairman warmly thanked Councillor Wood for his interesting account about Shropshire Council's current economic position.

25. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL AND/OR PECUNIARY INTERESTS NOT ALREADY DECLARED FOR MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED

None were declared

26. TO CONFIRM ANNUAL AND BUSINESS MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON 9TH MAY 2016.
Council agreed that the minutes were a true record and accordingly the Chairman signed a copy.

27. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COUNCIL MEETINGS ON 9TH MAY 2016

- a) Minute 8b): Cllr. Mrs. Wakelin confirmed she has registered the Council with the Pension's Regulator.
- b) Minute 15c): Councillors noted that the Due Notice of Appointment of the Exercise of Elector's Rights is currently displayed on the Council's notice board.

28. ADMINISTRATION

- a) The Clerk reported that he purchased two duplicate keys for the Council's notice board but as they do not fit he will seek replacement. Cllr. R. Greenwell volunteered to look at the door of the notice board which was not locking properly.

29. FINANCE

- a) The Council noted that Mazars, the External Auditors had accepted the reasons for the level of general reserves and the amount of outstanding funds for the production of a Parish Plan, but written confirmation of approval by the auditors for the Annual Accounts Return for the 2015/2016 financial year has yet to be received.

- b) The Council approved the following payments by cheque:-

- Clerk's income tax to HMRC	(cheque 100361)	£ 75.60
- Clerk's salary & expenses	(cheque 100362)	£336.37
- Numbers plus Ltd	(cheque 100363)	£118.80
- Bridgnorth Cleaning & Garden Services	(cheque 100364)	£210.00
- Money for petty cash	(cheque 100365)	£ 70.00
- Lewis Arborcare Ltd.	(cheque100366)	£462.00

- c) As at 21st July 2016, the Council's Community Account at Barclays Bank stood at £10,390.92 in credit, which included receipt of £950.00 grant for minor highway maintenance and £3,000 precept from Shropshire Council, plus £501 VAT refund. After encashment of cheques at section b) above, the Community Account will be £9,118.15 in credit, of which £1,342.2 is Parish Plan Steering Group funds, leaving £7,775.95 belonging to the Parish Council. The Council's Business Premium Account at Barclays Bank is £1551.78 in credit. Petty cash will be £90.85 after payment for the use of St. Giles' Church for the Council meeting on 21st July 2016, and encashment of £70.00 cheque for cash.

30. PLANNING MATTERS

There were none to report.

31. PARISH MATTERS

- a) Councillor G. Bond reported that there appeared to have been no remedial action by the owner of the Gymnasium to make the building safe and secure. The Clerk is to ask Shropshire Council to conduct a further inspection of the site, and take any necessary steps to ensure the building is in a safe condition.

- b) The Chairman reported that BT has installed a new cable into Badger village improving services, and that in recent times no complaints about poor reception have been received from local residents.
- c) Councillors agreed to ask Gary Higgins of Smartwater to attend Council's meeting on Thursday 8th September 2016, to tell local people about the scheme.
- d) Shropshire Council has advised that the owner of the land where the fallen fence was on the embankment of the highway at Stableford has been asked to remove it. Councillors agreed to "keep an eye" on the site and if the fence was not removed within a reasonable time, Shropshire Council should be informed and requested to pursue compliance.
- e) The Clerk reported that the Chairperson of The Parish Plan Steering Group has still two information topics to work on that will supplement the Plan. She asked whether the Parish Council would like to put forward some facts and figures regarding the village structure or other aspect to incorporate in the finished Plan. The Council decided to forward a Badger Parish Profile that was prepared by Shropshire Council, suggesting and use any suitable material from it.
- f) Councillors were concerned that an overgrown hedge along the B4176 (not far from the turning into the lane to Stableford), was a visibility hazard to motorists, so the Clerk will request the highways Authority of Shropshire Council to investigate and remedy.
- g) A parishioner has raised the issue about the need for parking signs at The Crescent, Badger. As the parking area is in the ownership and responsibility of Shropshire Council, the Council decided to refer the matter for its consideration.
- h) The Council was dissatisfied with the maintenance of the Green at The Crescent, Badger which is owned by Shropshire Council. It was agreed that the Council should offer to undertake the responsibility of cutting the grass. The Clerk will pursue.

32. UNITARY AUTHORITY MATTERS

- a) The Clerk reported on the meeting where Shropshire Council discussed with representatives of town and parish councils how to share responsibility, cost and delivery of its services in order to achieve necessary savings on its budget. Agreement was reached that parish councils should be formed into voluntary clusters around town councils with Shropshire Association of Councils (SALC) co-ordinating arrangements.

33. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) The Council was informed that Focus Environmental Ltd, a ground works contractor, has been instructed by Balfours Land Agents to renew a run of foul drain through the estate it manages in Badger. A new foul run is to be installed down the old walled garden, through the garden of the Cottage and connected on the main drain in the lane. It is likely to be several months before the work is undertaken and a traffic management plan putting required road diversions will be notified in good time. The work will take seven days.

34. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be on Thursday, 8th September 2016, at St. Giles' Church, Badger, starting at 7.00 pm