**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF HIMLEY PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT SWINDON COMMUNITY CENTRE ON WEDNESDAY 26th MARCH 2025 at 7.30PM**

**PRESENT: - CLLR Y NOCK (CHAIRMAN) PRESIDING**

 **PRESENT COUNCILLORS: CLLR S OLIVER, CLLR R LEES, CLLR G BOWEN,**

 **APOLOGIES:- CCLR V WILSON, MR S BROWNE**

 **OTHERS:- MRS S FARLEY (CLERK)**

 **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:- MR R PAINTER**

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS –**

**Section 17 – reminds Parish Councils to review if any of the decisions made at the Parish Council meeting have implications in relation to crime, disorder, anti-social behavior or community safety in general.**

**Cllr Lees: as a member of South Staffordshire District Council (SSDC), will reconsider any planning applications at District level taking into account all relevant evidence and representations at that tier and at District level will declare an interest arising from membership of this Parish Council when expressing a view on any relative matters**

**MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MEETING :-**

* Gospel End Flats area: Street Scene have confirmed that this area is on the list waiting to be tidied. They will not replant the bed where the tree root was removed, that is the responsibility of Homes Plus, or remove ivy from a fence. Clerk to ask Homes Plus for the semi-circular bed to be re-planted and the site to be kept in order.
* Playing Field: Four lime trees have been planted to replace previously vandalised ones. The bench, picnic tables with benches and their concrete plinths, signs and some of the play equipment have all been jet-washed, courtesy of Phil from Stourbridge Jet Clean, [https://stourbridgejetclean.co.uk](https://stourbridgejetclean.co.uk/)    01384 666 416,   07874 167 416. We thank him sincerely. He also cleaned the Commemorative bench in Bridgnorth Road.
* Lime tree in Land off Plantation Lane:   There has been no notification of a planning application to remove the tree as yet.
* Himley Notice Board: This is due to be delivered at the end of March.
* Himley Lane Flooding: Reply from Amey stated: ‘The problem you reported has been inspected by a highways officer and a number of factors as well as any evidence provided were considered. As the issue is not currently posing a safety issue, no work instruction has been raised by the officer, however the gullies in this location will be cleansed on the next routine visit but will continue to be monitored during routine safety inspections.’
* Gullies in School Road:  Reply from Amey stated: ‘The inspector for your area has read your report and will consider these on the next planned inspection of the area.’
* Parish Summit: South Staffordshire’s Parish Summit will be held on the Thursday 22 May – Clerk to reply that Cllrs Oliver and Nock will probably attend.

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS :-**

* 25/00210/TREE  - Himley House Hotel, Himley Village and Parkland Conservation Area.  Tree works to T9, T10, G1, G2, G3, T12, T14, T15, T16 and T17 as described on application form. Val 05.03.25, consult to 19.03.25, deadline 16.04.25, Case Officer Gavin Pearce.

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS AWAITING A DECISION -**

* 25/00118/FULHH   Rose Cottage, Plantation Lane. Single storey rear extension and two storey front extension. Val 14.02.25, consult to 14.03.25, deadline 11.04.25, C.O. Caitlin Harper. No Objections.
* 24/01056/FULM   Land at Park Farm, Himley, (rear of Himley Hall). The temporary (forty years) development of a battery energy storage system (BESS) with ancillary infrastructure to provide balancing services to the electricity grid. Val 29.01.25, consult to 08.03.25, deadline 30.04.25, C.O. Imogen Hopkin.  HPC sent the following objection: -

Himley Parish Council objects to this application with concerns for the following: -

The site is in Green Belt.

This land produces food for animals, it is cut for hay every year.

The nearby farmhouse would suffer noise disruption.

The site can be seen from a public Footpath, especially in winter when leaves have fallen.

The access road to be constructed crosses a Public Footpath.

The site is surrounded by woodland, including Ancient Woodland and deciduous woodland. There are roe deer, muntjac, brown hares, buzzards, badger tracks and fox visible most days in this area.

The nearby Spring Pool is one of a series of lakes and brooks feeding the Great Pool in the grounds of Himley Hall and onwards to the brook within gardens in School Road. These brooks are inhabited by protected species and would be affected by run-off from the site.

There are monkey puzzle trees on the farm of historic interest, they were planted when Dowager Lady Ward occupied the hall (mid 19 century). They should remain.

Where will drainage from toilets and welfare building go?

There is no right turn out of the proposed access/exit point as it is on a 70-mph speed limit dual carriageway, well known for having the outside lane also full of faster traffic with drivers trying to overtake as many inside-lane vehicles as possible before the dual carriageway ends.

BESS installations are known to be a fire risk so some of the above points need to be taken into consideration and the fact that there are many acres of trees in the vicinity with much wildlife means that if there is a fire, it could be catastrophic to a very large area. The nearest Fire Station only has Retained Firemen, other manned stations are probably 15 and 20 minutes away having to travel through urban areas with much traffic.

Please confirm access to the National Grid will be available within 3 years.

Please bear these points in mind whilst considering this application.

HPC will explore the possibility of receiving a grant if this application is approved, to benefit the Parish.

**PLANNING DECISIONS**  - None

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS INCLUDING RESIDENTS COMPLAINTS :-**

* Speed Indication Devices:  The SIDS we ordered are now ready for us. Clerk is liaising with SSDC re type, delivery and payment. One County-owned SID has now been attached to the former SID post in Wodehouse Lane.
* Following an incident on the A449 at the Railway Walk bridge at 1430 hours on 19th February, when 3 youths were seen on the bridge and damage may have been caused to vehicles below, police appealed to the public to report any damage caused. The youths were detained, no further information has been received.
* Wall in School Road: A movement of the wall has appeared further along from the repair. The owner has been requested to investigate.
* Cllr Nock attended a meeting discussing The Local Plan, New Contract for Waste Collection, Temporary Accommodation for Homeless, new developments and the Re-organisation of Local Government into 2 instead of 3 tiers. SSDC do not support the idea.  Housing: Whole new towns/villages will have to be built, previous estimate of 220K properties needed has been increased to 650K.   Waste: New food waste contract, all properties will need 2 caddies for food waste, 1 for outside and 1 for inside. SSDC is looking at quotes. Temp Accommodation: Now allowed grants to pay for homeless. Economic Growth: The West Midlands interchange should bring in more income, firstly more rates until District disappears, but then more jobs and houses. Re-organisation of tiers: There will be 2 tiers, one a Mayoral Authority, the second a Unitary Authority. Population to be split equally and if more needed, some of Shropshire to be included. Deadline for outline proposals is 21st March and deadline for acceptance decision is 28th November. Elections this year will be 1st May. No change for parish Cllrs but parish councils need to be in strong position. Elections may cost much more as there will be less levels to share the cost, therefore parish rates need to be increased to pay for the extra costs.
* Staffordshire Parish Councils’ Association (SPCA): We have again been asked to join this organisation, but after a discussion we again decided not to join.
* Subject: Parish Remuneration Panel: Himley Parish Cllrs do not receive any remuneration.
* Intended Public Space Protection Order for whole length of Railway Walk in S Staffs, including Baggeridge Country Park. SSDC have asked for our view. Having had many incidents at both Baggeridge Country Park and on The Railway Walk, Himley PC welcomes the intention to serve this PSPO which gives the police extra powers to control nuisance.
* Planning Application Charges will increase from 1st April. This is to cover the cost of dealing with applications.
* Staffs County Council invited us to join in Supportive Communities Training & Health Data Webinars.
* Message from Police Commander for Cannock & South Staffordshire LPT**:** Chief Inspector for Policing in South Staffordshire, Tim Norbury, will leave his position on Friday 25th April 2025. His replacement will be Chief Inspector Alan Lyford.
* Accounts: An instant access interest account is to be opened by the Clerk to keep surplus monies in.
* The Clerk advised that bank charges will now be payable on the Lloyds Community account for all types of transactions. Online payments are cheaper and are to be used as much as possible in future.
* Signatories on the bank account are to be updated. There is now a maximum of 4 for the type of account that Lloyds will operate for Parish Councils. Cllr R Lees is to be removed and Cllr G Bowen added, he will also be granted online access.
* Clerk confirmed that the grant application had been completed and sent to the Village Improvement Fund for reimbursement of the cost of the new Himley noticeboard.

**ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT:**

* 000041 South Staffs Council – Grounds maintenance 3Q 2024/25 £56.98
* 000042 South Staffs Council – purchase of SID £1350.00
* 000043 S Farley – Clerk wages £694.00
* 000044 HMRC – Clerk tax £31.00
* Automated bank charges £4.25

Meeting closed at 9.10pm

DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING: -  **Wednesday 16th APRIL 2025 at 7.30pm**

**COUNCILLOR VACANCIES**

There are 3 vacancies for Parish Councillors on Himley Parish Council.

Please contact the clerk via email if you would like further details regarding this – himleyparishcouncil@gmail.com