

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Coleshill Parish Council – 29th June 2012

The chairman opened the meeting at 19.00

Apologies for absence from Dick Ware and Lyn Woodgate

The meeting closed for the democratic period.

Ann Lawrence asked when the parish council display board in the small meeting room would be replaced. The chairman said that he was in the process of finding a suitable sign writer.

Peter Lawrence said that he felt that the reputation of CPC had been damaged by recent disagreements with CDC. He remarked that the reputation of CPC was that of a quarrelling shop. He enquired whether the meeting had a quorum and was assured that this was met by the attendance of the necessary three councillors. He reminded the meeting that the PC represented some 500 people and that the village wants the PC to look after the interests of the village. He urged councillors not to interrupt others and the watchwords ‘Respect and Listen’ be adhered to and that there was a need to treat with CDC. The chairman explained that over the past months CDC had not offered support to CPC.

Sarah Parker commented that whilst working on the LEAF initiative she had come across anecdotal evidence suggesting that currently Coleshill Parish Council's reputation and credibility was not high amongst parishioners, other parish councils within the district or, indeed, with the higher tiers of local government. She suggested that, were there to be sufficient support from residents, the development of a Village Plan might be a positive step forward to re-establish trust and credibility within the broader community.

Carol Hallchurch commented that the manner in which some Councillors conduct themselves in speaking to Parishioners can be abrupt and not at all conducive to positive atmosphere for an exchange of views.

Patsy Wright-Warren said that as parish councils are the foundation of the democratic process she considered it important that CPC councillors should be elected rather than co-opted. **However, she added that in the first ninety years of the Council there were no elections and that three parish clerks had tenures of thirty years following which elections took place.** She felt that more residents may come forward for election if the actions of CPC were more effectively publicised. The chairman agreed, reminded the meeting that elections did take place in 2006, that in May 2011 there were insufficient candidates for election and confirmed that CPC would consider how this may be achieved. [Editor's note: In May 2011 four candidates stood for seven places; the four were elected unopposed with further members subsequently co-opted]

Peter Lawrence encouraged the development of a Village Plan, hoped it would get worked on to include, *inter alia*, the size of houses. He considered that the provision of a village plan would be helpful in building bridges with CDC.

Cllr McGhee, returning to the Penn Festival application noted that his disquiet over the handling of the issue extended to the “interested parties in this matter” and the role that hospitality might have played.

The chairman reiterated that the problems with CDC stemmed from the refusal of two CDC councillors to respond to his requests for help; and the leader of CDC had also not answered correspondence sent by him.

The Meeting reopened at 19.30

The chairman said that he intended to resign at the end of the meeting; he felt that the pressures on his time from his work plus the time needed to effectively full fill the role of chairman and councillor were not compatible.

The chairman confirmed that three applications for co-option had been received. These were.

Sarah Parker
Carol Hallchurch
Elaine West

Cllr Prideaux remarked that the village was fortunate in having three candidates for councillor. He had enquired of CDC as to whether the PC could have more than seven councillors. The number is determined by population and Coleshill's was currently limited to seven. Having regard to the resignation of the chairman, there were now potentially three places, two of which could be filled by co-option while that of a replacement for the newly vacated position would need to be filled through the formal process initiated by the notice of an election. It was agreed that Sarah Parker and Carol Hallchurch be appointed by co-option and that Elaine West be encouraged to put herself forward for election or co-option if the seventh position is not filled by an election.

The Chairman confirmed that three applications for the post of clerk to the council, two were from working parish clerks and one from a resident. It was agreed to progress the appointment to meet the next CPC meeting date. Cllrs Parker and Hallchurch offered to expedite the matter.

The retiring chairman read out a resignation letter from Susan Smith, who had resigned as Clerk at the previous meeting.

The meeting closed at 19:48