



YARNFIELD AND COLD MEECE PARISH COUNCIL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 14 February, 2024 at 7.30pm
Yarnfield Park Conference Centre

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declaration of Interest
3. Public Question Time (30 minutes)
Anyone who wants to ask a question during the public question time session should contact the Parish Clerk by 12 noon on Tuesday 13 February, 2024.
4. Reports from Borough and County Councillors
5. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 22 January, 2024.
6. Parish Action Tracker, review of actions
7. Community Action Group, 23 January, 2024: verbal update report
8. Parish Clerk's report:
 - a. Budget – update and schedule of payments
 - b. Update on actions taken
9. Village Green – update report
10. Labour in Vain Working Group – update report
11. Neighbourhood Plan – update and next actions
12. Updates from Parish Councillors
13. Planning – to consider any planning applications in the parish
14. Forward Plan and Events Calendar

Date	Meeting	Venue
6 March (7.30pm)	Informal briefing	TBC
18 March (7.30pm)	Parish Council	Yarnfield Park Conference Centre
10 April (7.30pm)	Informal briefing	TBC
22 April (7.30pm)	Parish Council	Yarnfield Park Conference Centre
23 April (7.30pm)	Community Action Group	Village Hall
Events		
7, 14, 21 & 28 February (1pm – 3pm)	Wednesday Warm Welcome	Village Hall

Parish Clerk -email ycmclerk@gmail.com

Tel: 07546 456771

Date	Meeting	Venue
15 February (11am – 7pm)	NHS Health Checks	Village Hall

John Fraser
Clerk to the Parish Council
Date: 8 February, 2024



YARNFIELD AND COLD MEECE PARISH COUNCIL
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday 14 February, 2024 at 7.30pm
Yarnfield Park Conference Centre

Planning applications

Reference	Address	Outline
21/34786/OUT -	3 Cold Meece Cottages, Cold Meece	Outline planning application amendment - reduced number of dwellings (5no. reduced to 3no. dwellings)

YARNFIELD AND COLD MEECE PARISH COUNCIL
PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
Monday 22 January, 2024
Yarnfield Park Conference Centre

Present (for all or part of the meeting): -

Councillors:

David Beeston	Sally Parkin (Chairperson)
Margaret Broader	Kirsty Treen
Stella Hughes	Ed Whitfield

Officer in attendance: John Fraser, Clerk to the Parish Council

Also in attendance: -

Public at the meeting: 1

Viewing live on Facebook: 9

Apologies for Absence

23-532 Apologies were received from: Cllr Jo Griffiths, Cllr Pert (SCC), Cllr James (SBC).

Declaration of Interest

23-533 Nil

Public Question Time

Question

23-534 Please raise a complaint with Cllr Pert at the next parish council meeting about the overall state of Yarnfield Lane road surface.

Response

23-535 The complaint relates specifically to the length of lane by the entrance to the HS2 site compound which has previously been reported to Balfour Beatty asking that they undertake work to stop water from their site getting onto the lane. No response has been received from Balfour Beatty

23-536 **Resolution:** It was resolved to write again to Balfour Beatty asking for action to be taken and to send a copy of the correspondence to Cllr Pert and Staffordshire County Council Highways.

Reports from Borough and County Councillors

23-537 Nil

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December, 2023

23-538 **Resolution:** It was resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 13 December, 2023 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

Personnel Committee – report of meeting

23-539 A meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 8 January, 2024 received reports on the 2023–24 local government pay award, a new model contract

of employment for parish clerks prepared by the National Association of Local Councils, and a report on risk and succession plans.

23-540 **Resolution:** It was resolved that the recommendations of the Personnel Committee are accepted and that:

- i. the 2023/24 pay award is adopted by the parish council with effect from the 1 April, 2023 and the appropriate payments and back payments made.
- ii. That the clerk's contract of employment is updated to reflect the changes introduced in the new Model Contract of Employment, with a view to it being endorsed by the Council meeting in March 2024.
- iii. That the clerk undertakes to prepare documentation for all business-critical systems and procedures to stand alongside the existing standing orders, financial regulations and other council policies.

Actions Tracker Update

23-541 Minute 21-524 – Village Green Project

- Meeting held with Stafford Borough Council officer overseeing the lease and section 106 funding agreement. [10 January, 2024]
- Work on the lease by the borough council's legal team has yet to be completed.
- New section 106 fund application to be refreshed and resubmitted to Stafford Borough Council.
- Cancellation of the HS2 Phase 2a project will mean that the HS2 Community and Environment Fund is no longer available, and it will be necessary to revisit the scope of the village green project.

23-542 **Resolution:** It was resolved that the councillors review the village green project and the sequence for delivery of the refreshed project.

23-543 23-296 - Homes Plus Estate Management

- Homes Plus have confirmed both the grounds team and the major works team will start work in February, 2024.
- the grounds team will be addressing the trees overhanging the garages then working their way around the 2 estates with clearing alleyways of weeds and moss.
- The major works team will be removing trip hazards and filling in holes around the Furlong playing field and Greenside alleyways.

23-544 21-499- Severn Trent work Highlows/Yarnfield Lane

- Severn Trent still to confirm how drainage problems will be remedied
- Clerk to email Severn Trent asking for an update.

23-545 22-47 - Firing Range

- Meeting with Stafford Borough Council, Environmental Health and Staffordshire Police [22.01.24]
- The reporting arrangements for the schedule of operation of the range from the Police is limited to reporting days that carbine guns are being fired. This represents a considerable level of underreporting as it does not include all the use of the range.
- Police to start reporting all activities on the range.

- Police to use WhatsApp to report emergency activity outside of the reported schedule of operation.
- No nighttime training will take place at Cold Meece this year. The police have approved the additional budget needed for this training to be undertaken at a range in the West Midlands.
- The tendering process for the construction of the new range is underway.
- The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner election will take place on 2nd May 2024. It was not thought this would have any impact on the proposals to construct a new range in Stafford.

23-546 A copy of the Update of Actions Report set out in Appendix 1 and posted on the parish council website was noted.

23-547 **Resolution:** It was resolved that the Chairperson write to the candidates in the forthcoming PFCC election seeking assurances that they support the plans to construct a new firing range at Stafford.

Parish Clerk's report:

23-548 Budgets

- i. A payment of £240 to the Plunkett Foundation was made on 18 December, 2023 to pay for the annual Plunkett Foundation membership. (see also Minute 23-554)
- ii. Schedule of invoices awaiting payment since the last meeting = £1,776.37.
- iii. To maintain the current account in credit a transfer of £1,500 from reserves is required.
- iv. A grant of £900 towards the cost of the Warm Welcome project has been received from Stafford Borough Council.
- v. The neighbourhood plan budget of £788 has not been used and a transfer of the budget to the ear marked reserves should be made.
- vi. Current Account bank reconciliation on 22 January, 2024 after payments and transfers have been made = £209.06

23-549 **Resolution:** It was resolved that the schedule of payment for the period 13 December, 2023 – 22 January, 2024, and transfers set out in Appendix 2 is approved.

Update on Actions Taken

- i. Training dates for the next round of councillor fundamentals training by the SPCA have been announced for 13 February or 8 May.
- ii. The pads and the battery for the defibrillator outside the village hall need to be replaced. In view of the cost of these items a review of whether to buy the replacement parts for the unit or replace it with a new more up to date unit should be considered. As a temporary measure the defibrillator acquired from the former MS Society shop in Stone will be sited at the village hall.

23-550 **Resolution:** It was resolved that the Community Action Group identify the costs of replacing the battery and pads on the village hall G3 defibrillator and whether a more cost-effective option would be to replace the unit with a fully automatic G5 unit.

Precept and budget setting for 2024

- 23-551 The precept and budget for 2024-25 is based on:
- Moving the £788 neighbourhood planning budget to reserves and the 2024-25 Neighbourhood plan budget adjusted to £50.
 - No change in the cost of the grounds maintenance contract other than a £175 increase for a new piece of work to maintain the hedge by the playground.
 - Not renewing the civic amenity collection – use of the scheme by residents over the last two years has been very limited and does not justify the cost.
 - Community grants budget to be reduced to £500.
 - Special projects for 2024
 - o Community Action Group (SP4) - £1,200
 - o Cold Meece Gates (SP5) - £1,000
 - o Events Working Group (SP6) - £800
 - o Community Speed Watch (SP7) - £1,000
- 23-552 The budget set out in Appendix 3 will require a precept of £28,332 being raised through the council tax. The impact on band D households in the parish will be an annual increase of £1.36 (£32.10 -> £33.46)
- 23-553 **Resolution:** It was resolved that:
- i. The annual budget set out in appendix 3 is approved.
 - ii. The clerk writes to Stafford Borough Council to confirm the parish council's precept for the next financial year.

Labour in Vain Working Group

- 23-554 The parish council has paid for the working group's membership of the Plunkett Foundation. (£240 paid for in line with council resolution 23-424).
- 23-555 The registration of Yarnfield and Cold Meece Community Limited has now been endorsed by the Financial Conduct Authority.
- 23-556 The appeal to raise pledges to support the Labour in Vain project has resulted in £52,660 being pledged, together with offers of volunteering, against a target of £120,000.
- 23-557 The work to promote pledges included BBC Radio 4 and Radio Stoke appeals, Facebook posts and an article in the parish newsletter.
- 23-558 A meeting of the Labour in Vain working group was held on 18 January, 2024. The group updated their work programme and agreed:
- i. Set up Facebook page
 - ii. Set up a bank account for the company
 - iii. Approach the Plunkett Foundation about:
 - a. the VAT rules in relation to the purchase of commercial property
 - b. rules governing launch of the company share offer
 - iv. The Community Ownership Fund Round 3 bidding window closes on 31 January, 2024. It is unlikely that an application will be submitted as the value of pledges received has not reached the £120,000 target required to generate the level of match funding needed to support a Community Ownership Fund application.
 - v. A meeting with the agent representing Stonegate is to be held to make tentative enquiries about an offer to buy the Labour in Vain and what price would be acceptable to Stonegate.

- 23-559 The Community Ownership Fund runs until March 2025 and there will be at least 4 further opportunities to submit an application.
- 23-560 Fund raising events are being planned to raise money to support the project, the first event will take place on Saturday 27 February, 2024.

Neighbourhood Plan – update and next actions

- 23-561 A revised version of the Master Plan has been received and is now being considered by Cllr Parkin and Cllr Hughes.
- 23-562 The latest newsletter includes an article about open green spaces and a call for evidence which is supported by a photographic competition the prize for which will be two £25 M&S vouchers.
- 23-563 A meeting is scheduled for the 31 January, 2024 with the consultant, Hannah Barter.
- 23-564 **Resolution:** It was resolved to support the photographic competition with two prizes of £25 M&S vouchers.

Updates from Parish Councillors

- 23-565 A meeting of the Events Working Group was held on 11 January, 2024 at which an annual plan of events was drafted and a budget request to support the events agreed.

Planning – to consider any planning applications in the parish

- 23-566 Nil

Forward Plan

- 23-567 The forward plan for meetings and events was noted.

Date and time of next meeting

Wednesday 14 February, 2024 at 7.30pm




Signed


Chairperson of the Parish Council

Date: 14 February 2024


Meeting closed 8.39pm

Monthly Progress Tracker – Update 21/01/2024

	 Warning	 Action – in progress	 Achieved
April 2023	1	8	5
May 2023	2	10	0
June 2023	1	10	2
July 2023	1	10	1
September 2023	1	13	3
October 2023	1	11	2
November 2023	1	10	1
December 2023	1	10	0
January 2024	1	10	0
February 2024	1	12	0




Minute	Resolution	Action	RAG
Ambition 1 - Environment			
21-524	Village Green Project	<p>Meeting with Stafford Borough Council officer [10/01/24]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work on lease still with legal services - New section 106 fund application to be refreshed and resubmitted to Stafford Borough Council <p>Meeting with officer leading this work set for Wednesday 15 November, 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instruction to prepare lease sent to solicitors - Existing lease to be incorporated into the new lease - Pepper corn rent to be charged for the lease <p>Stafford Borough Council confirm funding for the village green lease advert has been found.</p> <p>Meeting with officer leading this work set for Wednesday 18 October, 2023.</p>	

Monthly Progress Tracker – Update 21/01/2024



		<p>Stafford Borough Council working to resolve issues with the lease of village green</p> <p>Parish Council meeting to be asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To form a working group to prepare the tender for the village green project and to issue tenders documents - Resolve to submit a bid for money to the HS2 Community and Environment Fund - Conclude negotiations with Stafford Borough Council over the lease of the land. <p>Meeting with Planning and Streetscene held on 5 June.</p> <p>The cost of advertising the lease (£500) has yet to be resolved with Stafford Borough Council looking to see if they can identify a budget to pay for this.</p> <p>Planning to look at the boundary lines of the proposed lease to establish ownership details of the pavements surrounding the south green.</p> <p>Streetscene to review work needed to “red flagged” trees on the village green.</p> <p>Progress update report to be brought to next Parish Council Meeting (June 23)</p> <p>Site meeting with Stafford Borough Council officers from planning and Streetscene arranged.</p> <p>Progress on the project and lease of the village green has again stalled.</p> <p>Escalate action to the Borough Council’s Planning Officer</p> <p>Cabinet lead and ward councillors pressing Stafford Borough Council officers to release funds and agree the lease.</p> <p>Project to be added to new council work programme.</p>	
22-376	Yarnfield Lane Lay-by – litter and fly tipping.	<p>Working with SBC and SCC to find a permanent solution.</p> <p>Project to be added to new council work programme</p>	

Ambition – 2 Safety



Monthly Progress Tracker – Update 21/01/2024

23-291	Highway Repairs	<p>Potholes marked up to be repaired by Staffordshire County Council [10/11/23].</p> <p>A complaint about the state of the junction of The Paddocks and Yarnfield Lane has been logged with Staffordshire County Council.</p> <p>A Freedom of Information Act request has been made to Staffordshire County Council for detail so their programme of highway repairs specifically relating to the parish and the criteria that they use for prioritising work.</p> <p>That residents are encouraged to log problems on the Staffordshire County Council report its website.</p>	
23-296	Homes Plus Estate Management	<p>Homes Plus onsite – work on hedges and pavements underway. [14/02/23]</p> <p>Email from Homes Plus – work scheduled to start February 2024</p> <p>Site meeting with Homes Plus [18 October 23] Agreed to deal with maintenance and repair issues Greenside and The Furlong. Awaiting response from Homes Plus officer.</p> <p>Contact made with Homes Plus Estate Management Team Lead. Meeting with estate walk to be confirmed.</p>	
21-499	Severn Trent work Highlows/Yarnfield Lane	<p>Telephone contact with Asset Planning Lean – evaluation and options report being prepared. Further work needed to establish whether the Highlows Lane junction is the symptom of a bigger problem of the cause of the problem. Meeting to be arranged for the new year.</p> <p>Meeting with Asset Planning Lead (Watsse Networks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - STWCo looking to find solution that is represents value for money and is achievable given the physical constraints and doesn't move the problem to a different location on the location. - Possible schemes referred to STWCo hydrologists to undertaken assessment of the schemes' suitability. <p>Email to CEO of Severn Trent. Problem delegated to senior officer at Severn Trent to resolve the problem. Contact made with the Asset Planning Lead (Waste Networks): meeting being arranged.</p> <p>Meeting arranged with STWCo Catchment Lead – Sewerage North Staffordshire and his colleagues</p> <p>Pressing STWCo engineering team for date phase 2 project will be started. Site visited by STWCo progress made on the scheme, date for start still to be confirmed. Request made for a site meeting with engineers responsible for the project.</p> <p>STWCo visit in April 2023 identified further complications with delivery of the project. Work with engineers to establish what needs to be done to see the work completed</p>	




Monthly Progress Tracker – Update 21/01/2024

Parish Ambition – 3 Community			
23-550	Village Hall defibrillator	Community Action Group to identify the costs of replacing the battery and pads on the village hall G3 defibrillator and whether a more cost-effective option would be to replace the unit with a fully automatic G5 unit.	
23-323	Defibrillator project	Meeting with AEDdonate to look at possible site on Ford Drive and in Cold Meece For possible sites. Application to National Grid to provide cost for unmetered cable supply started Application for grant funding being explored.	

Monthly Progress Tracker – Update 21/01/2024


23-267	Labour in Vain - Community Ownership Fund Round 3	<p>Bid to buy the Labour in Vain rejected by Stonegate.</p> <p>Application to Community Ownership Fund put on hold – further work to secure pledges needed and for Stonegate to their view that the Labour in Vain and associated car park has a value of at least £500k</p> <p>Application for the membership of the Plunkett Foundation secured</p> <p>Application for the registration of the Community Benefit Society prepared based on the Plunkett Foundation model standards</p> <p>Closing date for Community Ownership Fund application – 31 January 2024</p> <p>Plunkett Foundation support for the project secured. Dates of meeting with PF advisor circulated to members of the working group.</p> <p>Valuation of the Labour in Vain commissioned by the parish council.</p> <p>Working group meeting agreed that the formation of a Community Business Society will be the best approach to secure a Community Ownership grant.</p> <p>The review of the asset of community value found in favour of its retention but with the car park being removed</p> <p>Expression of interest has been approved – with one caveat – application and delivery must be by the same company</p> <p>Formation of a Community Interest Company proposed by the Working Group</p> <p>Asset Lock – can the parish council be named as the recipient of the asset lock</p> <p>LiV Action Group meeting 14/09/23 – agreed outline of the expression of interest application to the Community Ownership Fund.</p> <p>Closing Date for full application 11 October 2023.</p> <p>Meeting of the Parish Council - Community Meeting 7 September 2023 confirmed notice is given to Stafford Borough Council that the parish wish to be considered as a potential bidder</p>	
22-153	Yarnfield Lane Cycle path	<p>HS2 and the DfT are yet to make a decision on the future of the Road Safety Fund and so we are still waiting for further instruction on this.</p> <p>HSW Phase 2 cancellation may affect delivery of this project</p> <p>Application submitted to SCC decision not due until Spring 2024.</p>	

Monthly Progress Tracker – Update 21/01/2024

23-547	PFCC elections 2024	It was resolved that the Chairperson write to the candidates in the forthcoming PFCC election seeking assurances that they support the plans to construct a new firing range at Stafford.	
22-47	Firing Range	<p>Meeting with Stafford Borough Council and Staffordshire Police [22/01/24]</p> <p>Planning permission for the new range in Stafford approved.</p> <p>Police confirm reporting arrangements with parish council to supply dates and time for the operation of the range.</p> <p>Awaiting results – see email from SB</p> <p>Monitoring of the site undertaken by Stafford Borough Council – 25 August 2023</p> <p>Site visit with Police, Property Services and Stafford Borough Council – 24 August 2023.</p> <p>No perceivable improvement in the noise from the site. Meeting with Police Estate Office, Firing Range Team, Stafford Borough Council and representative of the PFCC office.</p> <p>Stafford Borough Council Environmental Health to visit noise sensitive properties to carry out noise monitoring.</p> <p>SBC Environmental Health to SBC pressing Staffordshire Police for date to complete acoustic insulation work at the range.</p>	
21-488	Gates at Cold Meece	<p>Price for new gates included in 2024 budget. Cost limitations will mean the project will need to be phased over several years.</p> <p>Prices for gates being arranged – to be reported to the September</p> <p>Gate design, cost of procurement and installation to be present to September 2023 meeting</p>	

Parish Ambition – 4 Good Governance

Monthly Progress Tracker – Update 21/01/2024

<p>22-97</p>	<p>New Office Systems</p>	<p>Community Development Officer – review of website to identify improvements. Councillors to be invited to share their thoughts on the website and what changes they would like to see. Meeting requested with SCC Digital Team before end of July 2023 Contact SCC digital team to agree project to update the parish council website Project to be added to new council work programme.</p>	
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Schedule of Payments -14 February 2024

Date	Ref/Chq no	Payee	Description	NET	VAT	RECEIPTS	Payment
14/02/24	BACS	Parish Clerk	Salary	647.79			647.79
14/02/24	BACS	HMRC	PAYE payment	162.00			162.00
14/02/24	BACS	Parish Clerk	Office expenses	23.24	2.75		25.99
14/02/24	BACS	Creative Bee Ltd	Newsletter	196.00			196.00
14/02/24	Bacs	Cllr S Parkin	Warm Welcome supplied	26.67			26.67
14/02/24	BACS	Cllr S Parkin	Warm Welcome supplied	29.40			29.40
14-Feb-24	BACS	AED Donate	Defibrilator Pads	59.95	11.99		71.94
				1,145.05	14.74		1,159.79

Account Transfers - 14 February 2024

Date	Transfer	From	To	Payment
14-Feb-24	Transfer	Community Action Group	Current Account	59.95
				59.95

Chairperson:

Date: 14-Feb-24

1 Village Green – update report

The existing lease – South Green

- 1.1 The lease places an obligation on the Tenant to “be absolutely responsible for its upkeep and maintenance together with all fixtures and fittingsin good tenantable repair and in a clean and tidy condition.” [3.1.2]
- 1.2 In relation to maintenance of trees, hedges, fences and grass the Tenant “will be responsible for the maintenance safety, cutting, pruning, lopping and replacement (as required) of all trees and hedges on the demised premises. [3.1.4]
- 1.3 The landlord has the right to enter the land and undertake repairs, after giving notice and to recover costs. [3.1.8]

New lease for north and middle green

- 1.4 Motivation for taking on the lease:
 - Concern about the inadequate standard of grass cutting by Streetscene
 - Delivery of the Village Green plan
 - Legal tenure required to secure HS2 Community and Environment Fund.
- 1.5 The proposal was to secure an agreement that any work on trees identified in the Stafford Borough Council Tree Survey as being “red flagged” has to be undertaken and funded by the borough council.
- 1.6 There have been 6 incidents since July 2022 involving trees on the village green:
 - July 2022 – willow tree middle green – top growth branches broken during high wind
 - October 2023 – stump fall by stream (back of bus shelter)
 - October 2023 - tree fall next to bus stop leading to partial closure of Yarnfield Lane removed by highways. (Storm Babet)
 - December 2023 - tree fall next to bus stop leading to partial closure of Yarnfield Lane removed by highways (?).
 - December 2023 – tree fall on the south green across Yarnfield Brook.
 - February 2024 – south green – willow needed felling – imminent danger
- 1.7 Only the July 2022 incident involved a red flagged tree.
- 1.8 There are numerous problems with the trees on the village green that need to be addressed.
 - Crown topped willows on the middle green

- Birch trees on the edge of the middle green adjacent to The Furlong
- The trees running from the bus shelter to the corner of the north green.
- The diseased willow or possibly willows next to Yarnfield brook on the south green
- The trees in general that have ivy growing up and into the tops of the trees.
- There are other examples of crown topping of the trees that will need to be better managed.

BHIB Insurance - Tree Felling and Lopping Cover

- The Insurer will pay for necessary and reasonable costs and expenses incurred by the Insured with the Insurer's consent for the lopping or removal of trees for which the Insured is responsible if such trees are considered by an arboriculturist or other qualified person to be an immediate threat to life or to the Property Insured.
- However, this Extension will not cover legal or local authority costs involved in removing trees or costs solely incurred to comply with a preservation order.
- The liability of the Insurer under this extension shall not exceed a maximum of £1,000 any one Occurrence and £5,000 any one Period of Insurance.

Recommendation

- Independent assessment of all trees on north, south and middle green.
- Next Spring Clean to focus on the land between the bus shelter and the north green. Possible involvement of contractors to do heavier work, skip required.
- Temporary pause to allow time to revisit the lease and scope of the village green project.

Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council
Village Green
Trees

