Minutes of the Cotesbach Parish Council Meeting on Monday 14th January at 7.30pm

**Present**

Mr Ed Hunt (Chair, EH), Mr Tom Haywood (TH), Ms Olivia Newton (ON), Ms Margaret Wild (Clerk, MW)

1. **Apologies**

Apologies received from Cllr J Bateman; PCSO Laura Bolton

MW spoke to Laura Bolton by phone – Laura is going to remind PCSO Andy Cooper about the next PC meeting as he should be the one to attend.

1. **Councillor’s Declaration of Interest**

None

1. **Minutes from previous meeting**

Minutes approved and signed off as a true record

1. **Actions from previous minutes**

**Flies - TH to speak to David Haynes and HDC directly to begin a conversation about plans for next year and whether insecticide can be applied more regularly.**

**TH to speak to Harborough District Council to understand what can be done to enforce increased pesticide spraying by David Haynes to mitigate against another bad influx next year and / or monitoring of the situation**

TH has spoken to David Haynes’ business partner – TH to follow up with David directly.

**Parish Council to re-circulate Environment Agency / Harborough District Council Environmental Health contact numbers in Spring next year to encourage people logging complaints.**

Completed

**EH to reprint and distribute parking on pavement flyers**

Completed

**ON to ask Tarmac whether they are responsible for litter picking on A426, or whether they’ve done it on goodwill in the past.**

**ON to ask Keith Wharmby why the Cotesbach application was not put in following the scoping plan and receive confirmation in writing if possible.**

**ON to further understand why Tarmac are not cleaning the crossing**

The open forum raised questions about the investigative drilling on A426. The original quarrying plan saw trees being planted on the back of that field to create a boundary which they now appear to be crossing.

**ON to understand how Tarmac can now be scoping to quarry an area outside of the original boundary**

Completed – see notes below

**ON to obtain gulley clearing schedule from LCC**

Outstanding

**ON to find out whether the grass verge it can be cut back imminently and thereafter the splay be wider.**

Completed – LCC have captured this as a request

**TH to look at practicalities of moving one Vehicle Activated Sign to bend in Main Street**.

Outstanding

**TH still working on finalising a date for a defibrillator training session in Spring, hopefully in April.**

Outstanding

**EH to explore what’s involved in changing the speed limit and installing pedestrian signs on the A426**

EH has contacted Willy Bach, Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire about reducing speed limit on A426:

* Having asked for a 40mph limit, Lord Bach his enquired with the Force Road Safety Unit (RSU) who state the A426 doesn’t meet the criteria for 40mph nor have the casualty limits been exceeded to validate static enforcement cameras.
* The RSU will investigate if it qualifies for mobile safety cameras and Lord Bach will report back
* Voluntary speed reporting (i.e. borrowing a speed camera) through the Community Speed Watch scheme would not be possible for safety reasons
* The council should raise with Leicestershire County Council (LCC) whether the average speed cameras are possible

Members of the public further requested the council explore how pedestrian warning signs could be introduced along the A426 near Cotesbach.

**Action – GK to follow up Lord Bach’s letter to know if mobile safety camera presence can be assigned to the A426; if the speed can be restricted to 50mph; if LCC can plan for average speed camera installation; how pedestrian warning signs can be installed.**

1. **Co-opting new Parish Councillor**

Thank you, Guy Kendrick, for nominating himself to be a new councillor. All councillors approve the co-option of Guy as a councillor and welcome him. Guy will be part of the election process this year.

1. **Precept increase**
EH explained the parish council precept forms part of the council tax, most of which goes direct to the district council to pay for roads, schools etc – local services. Each year there the budget needs to be set. Parish councillors have been discussing the potential of increasing the precept for this budget, mostly in order to raise the funds required to pay a clerk’s salary for c. 3 hours per week.

It is noted that this role has been filled over the years by people who have volunteered their time, and thank you to those people. Now though it seems to be the general trend amongst other councils that a clerk is not only paid but also independent in order to operate effectively and also to be able to be compliant. As well as being able to pay a clerk, increasing the precept will hopefully also allow for us to fulfil some other additional projects and pay for amenities which will hopefully contribute to life in Cotesbach.

EH highlighted that while Cotesbach currently charges £8 per annum and villages with similar responsibilities and size to Cotesbach (e.g. Shawell,Tur Langton, Wistow are at least £20 per annum). Noted also that this is based on properties in Band D, and as such properties in a higher or lower council tax band will be charged a percentage more/less as appropriate. It is added that if this precept does go up, it is not necessarily forever, and it can be changed and reduced if it doesn’t work or if for example we can’t find a clerk to hire.

The proposal to the open forum was to increase the precept to c. £28 for Band D properties for 2019/20, and member of the public were encouraged to give feedback on the proposal.

Feedback included:

* Broad support for the proposal
* Questions whether the increase was enough – to avoid further increases later
* Whether 3 hours per week for the clerk is enough
* Some debate whether the clerk needs to be the responsible financial person and if a councillor should be appointed as Treasurer, separate to the clerk’s position
* Noted that it is not legal for any member of the council to do any work for the council and be remunerated for that work.
* Queries in how the precept is administered by the district council
* An interest in a parish council “plan” being published, i.e. what the areas of focus for the council are and how they will be reported / measured against

A motion was put forward for the proposal by EH. It was seconded by Maria Lee. A vote was also taken by way of a show of hands on whether to support the precept increase.

* 15 in support
* 0 against
* 1 abstention

Following the feedback from the public, the council agreed after the open forum to raise the precept to £30p/a for Band D properties for 19/20

**Action – EH to confirm the responsibilities of the clerk and whether a separate Treasurer role is required**

**Action – MW to complete precept submission and return to HDC**

1. **Matters arising**

Village notice board – decision on supplier

The council decided to accept Smith and Chambers’ quote for the village noticeboard refurbishment from the 2 quotes that were received.

Quote to be revised including engraving “In Memory of” (name TBC) and a magnetic board to be used instead of cork for longevity.

**Action – ON to complete Eight Parishes CIC funding application for the noticeboard that the council needs to approve.**

Parish and District election preparation

EH explained that every year councillors have to formally stand down and be re-elected.

EH has looked into this process and evidently, even if the councillors’ positions are not contested, the parish council must pay £400 as admin fee for the process.

EH intends on putting in a formal complaint because this does not seem fair, it represents half of our current total precept. Information to be circulated as to how others can do that too.

**Action – EH to respond to HDC with formal complaint re £400 charge for uncontested election and circulate details to public.**

Village Pond – spring clear out

Spring pond clear out date should hopefully fall on a Sunday in April – either 7th or 14th TBC.

ON has spoken to Tom Newton about watercourse, but he says that the water table has just changed so much that there just isn’t a water source any longer.

Aubrey agrees and says that the water table has changed so much, probably as a result of all the quarrying.

**Action – EH to circulate confirmed dates for Village Pond clear out**

Re-painting 30mph limit on Main Street

It was agreed that the maintenance of these would fall into the remit of highways. EH has contacted them to schedule repainting of the road lines including 30mph.

There was a query from the public why we still have a 30mph limit when many villages are 20mph, and a query when was main street last resurfaced? Noted that the condition of the road is very poor.

**Action – EH investigate how a 20mph limit might be possible and whether resurfacing is possible**

1. **Specific items**

Tarmac liaison

Tarmac planning permissions : A5 site application will be resubmitted soon pending further archaeological reports. Site adjacent to A426 towards gibbet roundabout is still in undergoing scoping.

ON reports that the trees planted at the back of that site were planted as a boundary in order to safeguard that site from extraction. HDC wrote the original legal document stating this but apparently this may not be legally binding any longer.

ON is awaiting further information but it is expected that the application will be submitted this year.

The original plan included a site behind Orchard Farm in Cotesbach has been paused due to ongoing negotiation with landowner(s). ON to keep in touch with Tarmac about this and report any changes.

Shawell lane is still in poor condition and is not being maintained as best as possible. ON asks people please to send photos either to her or to parish council for forwarding to quarry manager in order to keep pressing the issue. Landfill smells should continue to be reported to the environment agency.

1. **Planning**

Symmetry Park – submission of “infrastructure” reserved matters

TH, EH and GK saw Symmetry Park planning consultants before Christmas regarding the recent submission to HDC for the infrastructure of Symmetry Park (roads / landscaping etc).

More information was requested for the visual effect of the landscaping looking from Cotesbach to understand how the contours will be seen with the proposed landscaping.

1. **Finance**

Closing balance is £1,420.86 with no expected outgoings.

1. **AOB**

There is an ongoing issue with dog mess in the village again, particularly near the village playing field and on the footpath over Aubrey’s field.

Would residents please observe who they think may be doing this and approach the dog walker themselves if they believe it is safe to do so.

**Action – Aubrey to provide more laminated dog signs and ask Brian B to produce more wooden signs to distribute around the village**