

**MINUTES OF THE SWINFEN AND PACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD IN THE CONFERENCE CENTRE, HMP SWINFEN ON  
WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY 2024 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM**

**PRESENT**

Councillor Barnes in the Chair  
Councillors Armstrong, Dyott and Loescher

**In attendance:**

Ms J Minor, Parish Clerk

**PARISH FORUM**

No members of the public were present.

**58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors Perks and Mrs Pope and Mrs Phillips.

**59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None declared.

**60. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 08 November 2023 [Minute Nos. 46-58] as circulated, be approved as a correct record.

**61. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Packington Hall**

Councillor Barnes informed Members that the development was nearing completion, however, there was still a number of properties for sale.

**Tamworth Herald Article**

Councillor Barnes informed Members that Mr Frank Bartlett had written an article under "Whittington Voice" in the Tamworth Herald about the ranges and 8,000 house development. The article was about the proposed 8,000 new houses south of Whittington and 1,800 more in something called Hopwas Vale. He informed Members that he could not find anyone who knows anything about it as yet, even the local Councillors.

Councillor Barnes informed Members that information had been posted on social media by a MOD employee, who goes under the name of Wiggle McAllister about the probable closure of the Whittington firing ranges and a proposed 8,000 house development south of the Whittington army medical training depot on land they own/control. This clearly is news to us all and was announced in the Tamworth Herald as well as on Facebook. He explained that he was well aware, living in close proximity, about the issue of the general

public going into Hopwas Woods while the flags are up. Councillor Barnes confirmed that he had emailed and had received a response dated 12 January 2024 from Toby O'Shaughnessy, Defence Infrastructure Organisation. Mr O'Shaughnessy had confirmed that the Defence Infrastructure Organisation [DIO] were responsible for the management of Whittington Range [including Hopwas Woods] and was pleased to confirm that there were currently no plans to close or dispose of this Defence Training Estate asset, despite the article in the Tamworth Herald.

With reference to the safety of the public entering Hopwas Woods, Mr O'Shaughnessy confirmed that community relations are of the utmost importance to the Ministry of Defence [MOD] and all efforts are made to keep the public informed of training exercises. For Whittington Ranges, the MOD advertises these activities through various channels including advertising firing times [and direction on public access] on the gov.uk website and provides regular updates to Lichfield District Council. Regarding Hopwas Woods in particular, public information map boards with permitted routes are displayed on all access points, in addition to danger signs on boundary fences and red flags/lamps displayed when Live Firing is in progress. DIO is aware of the impact of incursions and is currently considering a "Respect the Range" communication campaign for the Midlands area, which focuses on accessing the training estate safely.

#### **Car Park on the A51 opposite Hopwas Woods – Fly Tipping**

Councillor Barnes referred to emails he had sent and received to Councillors and officers from Lichfield District Council regarding the recent fly tipping of 4/5 loads of builders rubbish. Ms Tims, Assistant Director, Operations, Regulation and Enforcement at Lichfield District Council confirmed on 23 November 2023 that the EP Team had visited and pictured the debris to see if there was any evidence to collect. She advised that Operational Services do not have capacity for this work at the moment so the landowner should seek a registered waste disposal company to collection and remove the waste lawfully. She felt that the Parish Council should have been aware of the wider implications of the decision to invest in the land and the ongoing maintenance liability it creates.

Councillor Loescher informed Members that he had spoken to Barnes Skips and Recycling who had agreed to remove the "mixed municipal waste" on 12 December 2023 free of charge and it was **AGREED** that the Parish Clerk would send an email to Barnes Skips and Recycling thanking them for their support and assistance on this matter.

#### **62. THE HIGH-SPEED RAIL PLANS**

Councillor Barnes informed Members that BBV will resume work on "our patch" within the next 18 months. Councillor Loescher thought it may be a good idea that our previous questions and concerns were still raised "keep it live" and it was **AGREED** that Councillor Loescher would draft an email to be sent by the Parish Clerk.

#### **63. CIL MONIES**

**RESOLVED** That the CIL unspent to date totalling £2,555.22 be noted.

**64. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** That under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (Section 2) (and as expended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information.

**65. PARISH CLERK'S SALARY**

**RESOLVED** That cheques be drawn in respect of the Parish Clerk's December 2023 [**cheque number 100702**] and January 2024 [**cheque number 100704**] salary, Staffordshire Pension Fund – December 2023 [**cheque number 100703**] and Staffordshire Pension Fund – January 2024 [**cheque number 100705**].

**66. DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**RESOLVED** That:  
Wednesday 27 March 2024  
Wednesday 15 May 2024

All meetings will commence at 6.00 pm.

[The Meeting closed at 6.30 pm]

Signed .....

Dated .....