



Friends of Essington Meeting
12th January 2023

Present: Neil Wheeldon, Adrian Nicklin, Clem Whittle, Tracey Taylor, Freddie Homer, Pete Ward, Angie Whittle, Jon Hanson. (Wilson Taylor also attended)

Apologies: Dot Radford, Wayne Whitehouse, Colin Richards.

Record of last meeting: Approved by CW, Seconded by TT

1. Matters arising from the record of the last meeting.

Local Plan Review

The review is now closed. NW, WT & PW met with the council planners in person to present their objections. The meeting was very frank but we were listened to and given some answers. However, all objections have to be submitted on-line which has been done both by the above and other individuals. The planners also advised that comments from an official body such as FoE carried some weight. Subsequently NW prepared a document which CW submitted from the FoE email address. Gavin was also copied in. Gavin replied which has already been circulated to all committee members.

Strimmer

As per request from last meeting NW presented a document outlining costs and some other information (attached at back of this report). All present voted unanimously in favour for the proposed purchase. However, all were in agreement that only committee members can use the item, and it should always be stored in one of their garages to deter theft and reduce exposure to damp etc (i.e., NOT the lock-up). NW will ensure safety equipment is purchased and a method statement is prepared for user guidance.

Miners Monument

AN explained that the council would like to pursue the installation of the miner's monument. It was agreed that in the near future it needs to be dry assembled to check it is all in good order. This will also allow a bricklaying quote to be obtained. On-going with AN to coordinate as weather improves.

Calendar 2023

All monies have been paid by committee members. Thank you to everyone involved for another successful calendar project.

It was suggested that we should aim to focus on the theme 'Village Life' for the next issue. CW will put a request for pictures on this theme in the next edition of the Church magazine.

Tree Planting

PW and NW will visit the trees on the new estate to straighten them up and report back on condition.

Bulb Planting

Planting crocuses in the central grassed area near where the trees have been planted on the Cannock Road, Broad Lane chicane area, bottom of Old Hampton Lane and some other areas - these will be discussed with Highways Department-WW to arrange a meeting. Ongoing.

Triangle

The new sponsors for the triangle and the gateway on Blackhalve Lane are having the signage manufactured and will be installed when ready. Highways Department to be contacted. WW's gardening company continuing to maintain both areas. Condition of grass and shrubs etc to be discussed at next meeting. All above is ongoing and will be discussed when WW is present for an update.

AN advised that the planters will need a coat of wood treatment once the weather improves. He will coordinate this and ask for volunteers as appropriate.

AN suggested a metal sign be purchased in the future to replace the rotting wooden one. This will give better durability and allow improved signage. He will investigate and feedback in the future.

Orchard

Last month a large group (members, teachers and relatives) assisted Emma in clearing a fresh area to provide an additional forest classroom. New paths were created and Emma was thrilled with the progress. Pictures have been circulated to all and also CW tweeted them for wider communication. The group have committed to keeping the undergrowth under control (utilising the new strimmer once purchased ☐ 📷)

Paul and H also attended and pruned the fruit trees.

Unfortunately, since the visit, we had notification that the sign had fallen off the post. NW collected it and it is now with AN to produce a new one ready for when the children start visiting the area.

Lock-up

PW has looked at lock and it needs a complete refit to improve function, which he will carry out shortly. Ongoing.

Golf Course Bursnips Road

AN explained that this now appears to be a 'done deal'. It was raised at the meeting with the Local review planners as an example of how difficult it is to get ownership from the various councils.

Brownshore Crossing

FH will monitor this project and coordinate future work groups.

Volunteer Hours

All were asked to keep a note of their hours so that once DR is back in action, she can collect them and communicate.

Website/Event Calendar and Magazine Updates

A year end summary of FoE actions was printed in the Church Mag. All present agreed it looked very impressive and hopefully raised our profile. Going forward, if people can update CW as they complete projects, they can be included in the following months Magazine report and tweeted as appropriate.

AGM

Due to the unavailability of the elected roles, it was decided to postpone the AGM until next month. However, it was felt important that we hold an AGM to allow the election of the roles as due to Covid etc we have not done this for several years. Therefore, it should happen next month for definite.

Laptop and projector

CW expressed concern that his personal PC is too slow for the website maintenance. JH also requested the PC to use for the quizzes. WW to be contacted to arrange transfer of the PC, once he is feeling better.

2. Environmental Activities

Wood Hayes Road/Old Hampton Lane junction

Could do with some work but on hold due to information from AN that the gateway across the road will be moved further down.

At the bottom of Old Hampton Lane adjacent to the Cannock Road the tree needs replacing. Ongoing.

Grass cutting

AN has completed his exercise to document which grass is maintained by which party. He will present this to the Parish Council and then update the FoE at a future meeting.

3. Social Events

Quiz Nights

Next quiz night - Wed 8th Feb

Many Thanks to JH for his continued leadership and time on this event.

4. Correspondence

- An invoice was received from the church for room hire charges up to March 2023. This has been forwarded to CR for payment.
- Invitations were received by individuals, from the Parish Council, to attend a Community Thanksgiving service at the church on 15th January.
- A response was received from Gavin Williamson regarding the Local Plan Review. This has been circulated by CW.
- A request was received from Paul Wooley and Wilson Taylor to join the committee. All present voted unanimously that they be welcomed to the committee.

5. Any other business

- CW asked if anyone else should also have admin roles for the FoE Gmail account. This would allow the sending of official emails etc. It was discussed and everyone thought it would be better housekeeping if CW maintained sole ownership, which he agreed with. This can be reviewed in the future.
- AN explained that the Christmas lights on the church trees are in a poor condition and need work. It was tabled by PW that Christmas trees outside the church and the Triangle would give a more festive feel in the village. AN will discuss this with the parish council and feedback. It may involve work by FoE volunteers to erect etc and there was general consensus that this would not be a problem.
- FH expressed concern that the school buses have started stopped directly outside Fred's Bed instead of using the layby. This has resulted in the children inadvertently trampling all the plants. AN will ask the secretary to contact the county council to alert them that fresh instructions need to be given to the coach companies.
- AN explained that due to his current health issues he can't be as 'hands on' with the Spring Clean as previous years. It was suggested that the 'Wombles' litter pickers could step in to help. As a few active members of this informal group were present it was agreed that after the next scheduled litter pick (Thursday 19th Jan) they would all meet with him at the 1911 café to discuss.
- Several people asked questions concerning the Constitution. There was some discussion and it is apparent that it needs a revisit and modifications. A new revision can then be issued to all committee members and added to website etc for wider communication. A copy will be circulated so everyone can read and comment on modifications for discussion at next meeting.

Date of next meeting (including AGM) - Thursday February 9th 7.30pm in WEB.