

**Minutes of the Meeting of
PERTON PARISH COUNCIL
held at the Perton Civic Centre on
Monday 9th March 2009 @ 7:00pm**

Present: Mrs C M Young [Chairman]
AA Bourke [Vice-Chairman]
Mrs P Allen
DJ Billson
AK Black
Mrs S.Bott
SK Bott
NP Caine
Miss C Duffell
D.Fereday
Mrs R Heseltine
D.Heseltine
Mrs A James
AK James

Also Present: County Councillor - RJ Marshall (joined meeting at 8.15pm)
District Councillor - R Moreton
Neighbourhood Police Team - PC Frank Hossack
Asst Parish Clerk - Alison Moreton
Express & Star - Rita Maman
Members of the Public present : 3

171/09 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received and accepted from Cllr Mrs PN Pitt.
Notification of late arrival received from Cllr RJ Marshall and a request to move County Council matters to the last item on the agenda.

172/09 **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

- 1) The Chairman from Perton Village Nursery explained that though he understood the Management Meeting of 19th January, 2009 was null and void there were points of the Management meeting he wished to discuss tonight and assumed that Councillors would be in receipt of a 'pack' containing relevant documentation. The Chairman informed the representative that this was not the case. He went on to say that there are two very different views; entrenchment versus negotiation. He suggested that instead of sending emails or letters we sit down to discuss with Parish Councillors and Honorary Members of the Nursery and proposed that we move forward on this matter.

The Chairman stated that she was personally not happy with the tone of recent correspondence and felt that the letter attacked her personal integrity. The correspondence would be brought up at the next Management Committee meeting which is responsible for this building.

a) **Police Report**

Reported Crime Figs- Perton- 02/02/09 - 03/03/09

Rowdy / ASB behaviour...	34
ASB Vehicles...	1
Criminal Damage...	7
Damage to M/V...	2
Attempt / Burglary dwelling...	1
Burglary other building...	1
Attempt / Theft of M/V...	0
Theft from M/V...	1
Theft Other...	4
Assaults...	0
Robbery...	0

1. The nuisance calls for this period were high, but this maybe due to the kids being off for half term. The hot spots are the usual areas; Browning Grove/ Manston Drive, around the alleyway. Again Anders Square and Gainsboro' Drive had a few reports, but also Ennerdale Drive. There were reported nuisance Mini Moto's around Richmond Drive area, and the PCSO's are now carrying out observations.
2. The mindless damage returned. There 4 separate incidents of fence panels being damaged. However two youths have been interviewed and arrangements for compensation to two victims have been made. The other 3 accounts of damage are targeted, to a repeat victim. Enquiries are on going and the suspect is to be dealt with.
3. There were two reports of damage to motor vehicles. One of which occurred at Gainsborough Drive, where a vehicle parked on a driveway was turned onto its side. It was said to be done by a gang from off the village. Fingerprints have been obtained and enquiries are ongoing.
4. We had one reported attempted burglary and one shed burglary. From the shed, offenders stole two bikes. The attempted burglary dwelling involved offenders being disturbed by the occupants. It is believed they were after the car keys.
5. The reported thefts included 3 shop thefts. However PCSO Tooth needs a mention for chasing a suspect from Sainsburys to Tettenhall Wood. Due to his actions a prolific shoplifter was arrested and was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment. The other theft involved a radiator being left at the side of the house. I would advise all to be mindful of leaving anything outside their home. The theft from motor vehicle was from an insecure motor vehicle.
6. There were no reported assaults and no robberies. So once again the main issues involve anti social behaviour. With this in mind high, visible patrols have increased on the weekends at the arrangement of the new divisional Inspector.
7. There were no sexual offences, drug issues or dog issues reported. Any information please contact Perton's Neighbourhood Team via voicemail 08453 303132 - PC Duncan Lampitt (04259), PC Frank Hossack (03537), PCSO Teresa Wilkes (08861), PCSO Rachel Street (08862) and PCSO Ashley Tooth (016722).

Cllr AK James asked for guidance on the situation developing on the Bridgnorth Road following a report in the Express & Star concerning a change of use to the Pavillions Garden Village where between 5,000 -10,000 motor cyclists could potentially be meeting in the future. He added that he would be taking this matter up with the District Council but is also very concerned about the police cameras along this stretch of road and has been told that only one camera is working at any given time as it is moved from box to box. There have been several fatalities on this road and residents are very concerned. He asked if something could be done on behalf of the Parish Council to enforce the speed limits. PC Hossack responded saying he was very concerned about that specific location but it was the first he had heard that there was to be change of use. The Police would have very strong objections regarding road safety and he would speak to the Inspector to see if anything can be done with the motor bikes and meetings of that type.

Cllr A Black asked if a Community Surgery similar to one being held on Monday 23rd March for Bilbrook and Codsall could be arranged for Perton. PC Hossack replied that he would look into this and hopefully make it a regular feature for Perton. Cllr Black added that he was pleased with the response from the police regarding the missing person in Perton and PC Hossack went on to give a case example which illustrated that vulnerable people were utmost in the minds of the police.

Cllr AA Bourke reported that he had received complaints concerning the frequency of a scrap metal lorry in the Rydal drive area and was asked to record and pass on the number plate details to the police.

With regard to item 3 in the police report, Cllr Mrs Allen asked if there was a specific person being targeted to which PC Hossack responded saying that it was an unexpected malicious incident and that the vehicle had been examined for finger prints.

PC Hossack, without going in to detail, updated Members on the graffiti matter on the Parkway. He stated that enquiries were taking them over to Wednesbury area and that an arrest would be made shortly. The District Council were making immediate arrangements to get the graffiti removed at a cost, in the region, of £500.

PC Frank Hossack went on to report that following incidents at the Pear & Partridge in February, steps had recently been taken to install CCTV equipment to a value of £10,000 in a bid to cut out the disorder and assaults. He was questioned about the incident that took place at the Pear & Partridge on New Year's Eve morning and informed the Members that an arrest had been made and the offenders, who were all local, charged. He remarked that the Pub was at risk of losing their license if the Police made strong objections.

It was also reported that Insp Andy Chapman had increased visible controls on Friday and Saturday nights but PC Hossack said that a lot of the problems emanate from the connections the pupils make at Codsall High School from outside the area.

The Police had noticed a significant drop in repeat domestic violence which may be due in part to 'victimless prosecutions' where the injured party decline to prosecute or withdraw their complaint, but the Police will still go ahead with the prosecution without the victim. Lastly, PC Hossack informed the meeting that following burglary problems in the Wombourne and Codsall area the LPU had launched operation 'Chantelle' to apprehend the day time offenders. The Chairman thanked PC Frank Hossack for his attendance and he left the meeting.

b) **South Staffordshire Community Partnership – Strategic Risk Assessment 08/09**

The Council reviewed the above consultation document. Cllr Mrs Allen commented on the thefts of SatNavs which are then used to locate the owner's home address and said the report was not detailed enough for our own area and asked if more details appertaining to our Parish, particular with regard to incidents of arson could be provided. Cllr DJ Billson remarked that a percentage increase does not give the full facts whereas a percentage of a stated number of incidents would be more informative. These observations to be forwarded on to the Community Partnership.

c) **Correspondence from Supt. Adrian Bloor**

The correspondence was received and the Chairman informed the meeting that she had recently met with the new Inspector and top of his agenda would be Youth issues around the area.

174/09 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Cllr Mrs P Allen declared a personal and prejudicial interest in cheque number 103747 and Cllr DJ Billson declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 8a (minute number 177/09a) correspondence from Codsall Parish Council regarding SSDC Local Development Framework.

175/09 **MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9th FEBRUARY, 2009**

The Chairman stated that following legal advice the meeting of the Management Committee of 19th January, 2009 was null and void, and therefore the minutes, as presented, are accurate. Cllr Bourke reminded Members that there was a valid discussion regarding the Management Committee meeting and the minutes were temporarily published on our own website. He had expected to see the original minute followed by the reason for rendering the Management meeting null and void. Cllr Bourke asked for his name to be recorded as not accepting the minutes as a true record in his opinion.

It was proposed by Cllr DJ Billson, seconded by Cllr AK James and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9th February 2009 be confirmed as a true record and the Chairman of the Council duly signed them.

176/09 **DRAFT MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 3rd March 2009 together with February income statement be accepted for information.

177/09 **SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

a) **Correspondence from Codsall Parish Council regarding SSDC Local Development Framework 'Settlement Hierarchy'**

Cllr Billson informed the meeting that the Regional Spatial Strategy and Consultation Paper on the Settlement Hierarchy to build 3,500 between now and 2026 ,was out to consultation and included several suggestions where they should be built shared across the whole of South Staffordshire. He explained that the Main Services Villages should have in proportion more than Local or Small Service Villages but Codsall Parish Council do not agree with this and think that a 'mini Perton' should be built. Having declared a prejudicial interest in this item, Cllr Billson left the room and took no further part in the discussion.

Cllr Black advised the Members that he had attended an informal meeting at Codsall on the Local Development Framework and reported the numbers were down to 1,400 as a number of the properties had already been built. Five potential sites have been identified in Perton but as yet are not developable as they are all on green belt land. Cllr Mrs Allen remarked that Codsall has the capacity with the schooling and infrastructure to absorb the additional allocation.

It was **RESOLVED** to write to Codsall Parish Council to inform them that the decision was not to support their concerns at this stage of the consultation and to await any firm proposals.

b) **SUSSED – Easter & Summer 2009**

The proposals to address the issues regarding the booking procedure were noted. The new process is to limit one activity per child at Easter and a maximum of two sessions for Summer, for the first two weeks of bookings. Cllr Bourke commented that he was pleased to hear the District Council had listened to our concerns and this should bring about a great improvement.

c) **Locality Member Forums – 15th June,2009**

The Chairman would be attending. Cllr DJ Billson encouraged Members to attend the forums as they provided useful information about demographics of our area.

d) **District Councillors Report**

- Cllr AK James referred to the last Parish Meeting where Members supported the objection of the Rambler's Society in re-routing the Public footpath at Cranmoor Lodge. A revised diversion order for the permanent diversion of the footpath had now been received and a copy of the plan was shown to the Members who raised no objections.
- Cllr Mrs RA Heseltine reported that she had attended a Regulatory Meeting and resolved a couple of problems raised by residents.
- Cllr R Moreton announced that the Inter-Parish Games Competition had begun and Perton had won the opening event Table-tennis. The next round would be on Sunday 29th March where crib, dominoes, darts and chess would take place and he was busy putting together teams for these events.

Strategic Services Report March 25-02-2009

I have had several meetings with officers from the county and district concerning the Youth Club. We were as you may recall promised £5,000 by the funders for the youth provision. Following a meeting on 13th this was increased to £10,000.

I have had several meeting with Simon Hobbs and his replacement Sarah Charles concerning C.L.P.funding and its impact on the youth club.

I have previously mentioned a Table Tennis Club willing to put cash into the scheme. Unfortunately we are unable to pursue this avenue any further as they would require use five nights a week.

I have a meeting on 12th March with Graham Bott and a representative of the Army Cadet Corps. It would seem from the indications given that they may wish to put funding into the scheme.

There will be alterations to the manner in which the district link to tourism. In future only those venues which are AA of English Heritage inspected will be linked to the council's web site.

You will be pleased to note that the District Council will not be making anyone redundant as a result of the economic slowdown.

There is to be introduced around April a secure network to which all government and local authority councils will have to conform with. This will enable confidential data involving housing support and various payments to be passed between the various organisations. As a result of this all district councillors are being issued with lap top computers to replace the ageing one which are at present in use.

I have been chosen to be part of the interview panel for the appointment of the new Chief Executive. Long listing took place over the weekend of 28th 29th of February. It is hoped that the vacancy will be filled prior to Mr Levesley leaving in June.

On Weekend 21st 22nd February I attended the first part of a four part course for Senior Leaders. The next dates are 21st & 22nd March, 18th & 19th April with the final Module in September

DJ Billson

Cllr Billson briefly went through his report and added the following:

- Planning applications had reduced dramatically and this department had lost two members of staff through natural wastage who would not be replaced.
- Rolf Levesley would be leaving in June and 28 applications had been received for this post, which would be reduced to a shortlist of 13 by psychometric testing. The shortlist interviews would take place on 19th March.

Cllr AA Bourke informed Members that, along with Cllrs Duffel, Black and Pitt, he had attended a Parish/District Liaison Meeting where Phil Cooper had answered questions about the budget.

178/09 **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Planning Applications received from South Staffordshire Council and reviewed by the Parish since the last Parish Council meeting on Monday 9th February, 2009.

Application No.	Proposals
09/00090/FUL	Two storey side, single storey rear, conservatory, canopy and bow window to front – 18 Cheriton Grove, Perton

The Council raised no objections to the above proposals.

DECISIONS - The following decisions received from South Staffordshire Council:

Application No.	Proposals	Decision
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08/01181/FUL	Stables, tack room and access drive – Land at Westcroft Road	Grant of Planning Permission
08/01187/FUL	Agricultural grain store building – Wrottesley Lodge Farm, Holyhead Road, Kingswood	
08/01186/FUL	Two storey rear extension – 33 Beverston Road	Refusal of Planning Permission

179/09 **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

- a) The Clerk reported that the following accounts duly authorized by designated Member signatories had been paid:

List of Payments since last reviewed at the meeting of the Council on 9th February 2009

02/02/09	STO	Kalidescope Limited	47.00
02/02/09	DD	TV Licensing	139.50
02/02/09	103732	Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation	86.25
02/02/09	103733	RHF Heating Co Ltd	533.11
04/02/09	BACS	Wages Week 44	1149.16
11/02/09	BACS	Wages Week 45	1130.43
11/02/09	BACS	Inland Revenue	2714.66
11/02/09	BACS	Staffordshire CC Pension Fund	1381.70
11/02/09	103734	South Staffordshire District Council	87.33
11/02/09	103735	Industrial Safety Birmingham	59.11
11/02/09	103736	IRIS Business Software Ltd	27.92
11/02/09	103737	Marches Energy Agency	1543.30
13/02/09	103738	Veolia ES (UK) Limited	123.05
16/02/09	103739	Jane Williams - Deposit Refund	50.00
17/02/09	103740	Nobisco Limited	31.58
18/02/09	BACS	Wages Week 46 / Month 11	4137.59
19/02/09	103741	Mrs Jan Playford - Deposit Refund	200.00
19/02/09	103742	RHF Heating Co Ltd	874.00
20/02/09	103743	Computacenter (UK) Limited	232.28
24/02/09	103744	MGD Solutions	196.00
24/02/09	103745	MGD Solutions	740.00
24/02/09	DD	Unicom	58.75
24/02/09	103746	Post Office Limited	228.19
25/02/09	BACS	Wages Week 47	1035.57
26/02/09	103747	David Allen - the handyman	70.00
27/02/09	DD	British Gas - Gas	825.37
27/02/09	DD	British Gas - Electricity	468.48
		TOTALS	18170.33

b) **Budget-to-date 2008/2009**

The budget report circulated with the agenda was noted.

180/09 **CLERKS REPORT – MARCH 2009**

Matters ongoing / resolved as at 9th March 2009

- Lin Robinson Monitoring Officer of South Staffordshire Council is seeking participation

from eligible Perton Parish Councillors to join South Staffs Council Standards Committee.

- Police In (Green) / Police Out (Red) Sign now erected in Civic Centre to aid visitors and improve building security issues.
- Follow Up Call from Insp Andy Chapman on 12/02/09. PCSO powers do NOT cover bus routes. He has raised 'buses only lane' issue with JOG who have investigated and stated that existing barrier is not repairable but will be replaced with new technology barrier. However, timescale is unknown due to budget constraints!
- £2250.00 received from LMIS for Youth Club Premises Plans / Planning Approval.
- Community Sustainable Energy Programme – Grant of £1242.00 now received for Marches Energy Agency review report. Clerk will obtain quote for recommended technology and check out possibility of 100% grants to cover costs.
- South Staffordshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy; Consultation events to be held at various locations around South Staffordshire including Perton Civic Centre on Tuesday 17th March from 3.00 pm to 7.00 pm. Consultation over an eight week period from 9th February to 6th April 2009. Strategy documents (paper/electronic copies) are available for inspection in the Clerks office together with response sheets or via online consultation facility at <http://sstaffs-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>
- Attended meeting at Perton First School on 23/2/09 to discuss 'geese issues';
 - Culling does not work – An area will attract number of birds it can sustain.
 - Yellow jackets / ribbons etc are short term fixes only.
 - Need 'Partnership' approach to:
 - § Use dogs to continuously frighten birds away
 - § Destroy nests before geese can lay eggs
 - § Prick any eggs that are produced
 - § Stop feeding the birds in all areas
 - § Use any opportunity to get the message across regarding feeding
- Civic Centre hot drink machines to be changed over from reconditioned machines to brand new machines that use simplified 'Sealcup' products. No capital cost or increase in rent but a small reduction in cost per drink.
- PPC 2008/09 employee appraisals completed.
- No further communication from Sainsburys concerning Lighting and Pigeon issues.

The Chairman reported that the Clerk had attended the meeting at Perton First School along with Howard Medicott and the District Council were committed to destroying the nests.

Cllr NP Caine informed the meeting that he had contacted Sainsburys regarding the lighting issues and the Assistant Clerk was asked to follow this up to see what was being done regarding the lighting and pigeon problems. Cllr Billson stated that part of the problem was due to the underground cabling which had been damaged or severed when the car park was re-surfaced.

With regard to the Local Development Framework Spatial Strategy, Cllr Billson informed the Members of a 'drop in' consultation event taking place at Perton Civic Centre on 17th March.

181/09 **OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE MADELINE MOORE ROOM**

The plaque is to be collected soon by the Nursery Chairman, but no further details to report.

182/09 **FLASHING 'SPEED CONTROL' SIGNS**

Correspondence from Staffordshire County Council Highways office was noted. Cllr Mrs P Allen asked that the Clerk reply to M. Keeling saying we were delighted that we are being considered and would welcome the signs.

183/09 **Citizen of the Year Award**

Following consideration of the nominations it was proposed by Cllr D Fereday and seconded by Cllr DJ Billson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Citizen of the Year be awarded to Paul Chapman and the Clerk will write to invite him to receive the award at the Annual Parish Meeting on 27th April, 2009.

184/09 **REQUEST FOR GRANT**

(a) **CFC – Cheerleaders Fundraising Committee**

Members considered a request from CFC for a grant towards a Cheer Camp in Florida. Although in favour of young people doing physical activities it was felt that the Council could not fund this type of application. A grant towards equipment or uniforms would be a more suitable request and therefore it was **RESOLVED** not to award a grant on this occasion.

185/09 **CORRESPONDENCE**

(a) **South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust – World Class Commissioning for S.Staffs.**

The correspondence for information was noted.

(b) **Codsall Community Arts Festival – Letters of thanks.**

Letters had been received thanking the Council for its donation of £100 towards the event.

(c) **Dept. for Children, Schools & Families – Consultation: Young People & Alcohol**

Correspondence noted.

186/09 **STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

(a) **Bus Lane**

Cllr Billson advised the meeting that due to finance constraints nothing would be done on the bus lane until well into the financial year 2009/10 but the new Police Inspector had shown an interest in this issue. Cllr James asked if the local Police could draw attention to the problems as it is the only way of protecting the bus lane from misuse.

(b) **County Councillor's Report**

Political needs are starting to take priority over council priorities! The first example of this was at the full council meeting on February 12th. The Labour group had based all their calculations on a 3.5% rise in the Council tax. This had gone to full Cabinet and been agreed unanimously and then the papers had been sent out to all members with this same proposition.

However, when the alternative budget was proposed by the opposition stating a 2% rise in the Council tax a panic message was sent out to all departments to "Find more savings" and, sure enough, the Labour group "Found" some savings and proposed a council tax rise of 2.45%. The excuse given was that the "assumptions on inflation were changed...." And "some last minute savings were

discovered....” All in all, a good result for the Staffordshire Council tax payer!

There is still a problem with the Bus lane and the Barrier is permanently out of service – and has been for weeks. The latest answer on its repair is “hopefully soon, but no firm date” The problem is well known, but the Highway people simply have not found a solution and the money has probably run out. I will update everyone – as best I can at the meeting.

I have had numerous conversations with both Mark Keeling, Dave Wright and Steve Mellings about the possibility of various speed signs in Perton. There is an unwritten policy of not allowing Parish Councils to erect their own signs because then the places where the County Highway people consider to be the priority spots lose some of their “shock value” because there are many signs about – some of which are possibly placed wrongly. For the record, a sign like that on Histons Hill (near the District Council Offices) costs about £3000-00 to put up and about £500-00 per year to maintain.

A better possibility (according to Mark Keeling) would be the use of SIDs (Speed Indication Devices). These are much cheaper (about £1000-00) and are battery powered. The batteries last about three weeks and then need changing. This has to be done by a Highway engineer or the issue of Health and Safety comes in etc, and the SIDs are usually move at this point to another location. The Highway authority’s view is that short “shock” periods are more effective than a long sustained period and this way each site can have a SID about four times per year. Personally I do not agree, and if it is the view of the parish that (say) two on the Parkway would be a good idea then I will try to secure this. It may require some Financial help from the Parish.

Final point from Mark Keeling is that there is financial help for any parish that is interested in Community Speedwatch....

All LMIS requests have now been paid. This year I funded three projects in Pattingham totalling £4000-00 and Four in Perton totalling £5200-00. The rest went in two different applications to the CAB totalling £800-00.

There have been numerous comments about the problems that were experienced in the very cold weather a few weeks ago. I have some sympathy with the County on this because, although they had to slightly reduce their overall level of gritting, it was still much higher than most other authorities (almost double that of Shropshire, for example). There were, however a lot of examples of places where more gritting was needed – lots of problems in Pattingham etc and this is an area that really must be looked at when the new council forms in June. I would appreciate the view of the Parish on this subject.

I am losing count of the number of meetings and phone calls on the subject of “Youth Matters” and we have another one on 12th of March. There is a reasonable chance that we may have a partner who is interested in sharing some of the building costs in return for some guaranteed space. MDATM.

Finally, an article in the Express and Star on the 26th of February suggested that there could be “Parachute Payments” for highly paid councillors who lose their jobs. This is to avoid “financial hardship!!!!!!” The names quoted are Labour Leader John Taylor and even Deputy Leader Robert Simpson who currently get 45,000-00 and 33,000-00 respectively. This is about the most blatant piece of councillor indulgence that I have ever come across, and, if this is proved to be true, apart from the fact that it strongly suggests Labour has accepted that they will lose the County elections in June, it also shows that lining their own pockets is

becoming a higher priority than running the county properly. There are already at least two questions tabled for the Corporate policy meeting on 9th March, so I will give more information when I have it.

Finally, a bit of progress on the matter of SUSSED events. I realise that this is a District matter, but I think the suggestions are a big improvement. MDATM

Robert J Marshall

Cllr Billson explained Central Government's proposals for Parachute Payments for Leaders, Deputy Leaders and Portfolio holders. It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk write to the Central Government (Communities and Local Government secretary, Hazel Blears) with a copy to the County Council, expressing the Council's objections to these payments.

Cllr. Marshall joined the meeting at this point.

The Council re-iterated that we would like to have the SID's (Speed Indication Devices) on the Parkway for certain periods of the year which was better than not having them at all.

Cllr Mrs Allen commented on the condition of the pavement in Offa's Drive and connecting footpath through to Mercia Drive where the surface is cracking up, other various potholes in roads and footpaths and also on routes to school and asked if there was any money available for repairs. Cllr Marshall responded that it was not merely a matter of money in as much as there were so many potholes everywhere which the County were trying to repair. He reminded Members that potholes could be reported on 0800 23 23 23 obtaining an incidence reference number which could be followed up a week later. Cllr Marshall said there was a long list of repairs but any not completed to forward the details onto to him to follow up.

With regard to parachute payments idea, Cllr Marshall informed Members the plans for these payments had been looked at but were dismissed and would not be taken forward.

Cllr Marshall said that he had the opportunity to give the transport man a grilling. The yellow school buses which pick children up are then parked at school all day and the driver has to stay with the bus for insurance purposes. In his opinion the buses could be used on other routes throughout the day which would work out cheaper than private contract buses. He would speak to the Leader of the Council to get further information.

Cllr Mrs Allen said that the yellow buses come out more costly than private hirer companies and the schools have to go with the cheapest. Cllr Marshall added that almost all school transport were wheelchair accessible but as far as the general public was concerned, buses and coaches are exempt from providing this facility until 2015.

On school transport, Cllr Marshall remarked that of the total cost of provision only a very small amount is recovered in charges. Central Government says local authorities must provide free transport for pupils living more than 3 miles away therefore legally nothing can be done to reduce the cost by spreading it across all pupils.

Cllr James enquired as to the cost of a bus sitting outside a school all day and Cllr Marshall agreed to find out. Cllr Mrs Allen asked, on behalf of the Parish

Council, why the yellow buses could not be used to transport pupils to the baths at Codsall and for other school activities such as out of hours after school and collecting children from sporting venues. Schools are paying through their budgets that should be free.

Cllr Marshall reported on costs and savings associated with the home to school transport service in Staffordshire which can be found on the Staffordshire County Council website.

Cllr SK Bott asked for an update on the walk to school and the suggestion that there may be another review walk. Cllr Marshall confirmed that this might be re-visited sometime after June and informed Members that the trees on this route would be trimmed tomorrow (Tues 10th March).

DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 6th April 2009 @ 7.00 pm

The meeting closed @ 8.35pm

Chairman
6th April 2009