

**Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
for Perton held at Perton Civic Centre, on  
Monday 25th April 2016 at 7.00 p.m.**

R Moreton [Chairman]  
P Davis [Vice-Chairman]  
Mrs RA Heseltine  
Mrs P Allen  
Mrs AM James  
Mrs L Turner  
Mrs G Davis  
Naomi Caine  
AK James  
NP Caine  
AA Bourke  
C Evans  
D Glynn  
M Francis

Also in attendance:-

Recently Retired Civic Centre Employee: Anne-Marie Baynham (from 7.15pm)  
Special Recognition Award Winners: Mr & Mrs Bennett MBE  
Citizen of the Year: Keith Elder  
Parish Clerk - Tony Tappenden  
Parish Clerk Designate – Becky Hodgetts  
Members of the public – 12

1. **WELCOME**

The Chairman, Cllr Roy Moreton welcomed everyone present to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr R Simonds.

2. **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 27<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 2015**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 27th April 2015 be confirmed as a true record and the Chairman of the Council duly signed them.

3. **PERTON CIVIC AWARDS PRESENTATION & CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

**a) Recently Retired Employee: Mrs Anne-Marie Baynham**

*This item took place out of sequence following the Chairman's Annual report due to the late arrival of Mrs Anne-Marie Baynham.*

The Chairman said he was very pleased to thank Anne-Marie for her contribution to Perton Parish Council Civic Centre over a period in excess of 24 years. He wished her a long and happy retirement and presented her with a PPC 'Coat of Arms' plaque and a gift of National Garden Vouchers purchased principally from the proceeds of a private collection amongst the Councillors plus a small contribution from PPC.

**b) Special Recognition Award**

The Chairman said he was very pleased to have the opportunity to make a joint special recognition award to Alan & Jackie Bennett in recognition of their recent inclusion on the New Years Honours List with MBEs awarded to them both in acknowledgment of their child fostering work. The Chairman presented them with a certificate of award, a PPC 'Coat of Arms' plaque and a mixed bouquet of flowers. Cllr Mrs P Allen made a personal tribute to Mr & Mrs Bennett stating, amongst other things, that they had fostered 179 children over the last forty plus years and, on top of this, they had played a full and active role within the parish community.

### **c) Citizen of the Year**

The Chairman said that this year there had been no nominations in regard to Young Citizen of the Year but there had been several nominations in respect to Citizen of the Year which had required considerable thoughtful deliberation from the Council Members to reach a decision: The Chairman said he was delighted to award Citizen of the Year to Keith Elder for his work with 'Wild About Perton' which is long overdue for recognition. The Chairman congratulated Keith and presented him with a certificate of award, a PPC 'Coat of Arms' plaque, a mixed bouquet of flowers and a small cash award of £50.00

In accepting his award Keith thanked both the Chairman and the PPC Councillors for recognising his efforts and he gave a brief history of 'Wild About Perton' and said that some ten years ago he had the idea to form this group and the early meetings were held in the Civic Centre and at the time he had no idea whether or not other people would share his vision or even show up for the meeting!

## **4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT 2015 / 2016**

### **WELCOME**

Welcome to all members of the public who have come along this evening and fellow members of the Council. 2015 / 16 has been a particularly busy year for Perton Parish Council with significant effort in several key areas; a good deal of improvements and refurbishment work has been carried out at our Civic Centre together with some significant improvements around the village.

### **PERTON CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

This year no nominations were received for the junior category but multiple nominations competed for the senior award category, several had significant merits which therefore gave us a difficult decision to make.

Perton Citizen of the Year is awarded to Keith Elder in recognition of his work with 'Wild About Perton' which, in many ways, highlights numerous wonders literally on our own doorstep.

A special award was made to Alan & Jackie Bennett in recognition of their recent inclusion on the New Years Honours List with MBEs awarded to them both in respect to their child fostering work.

Additionally a retirement presentation was made to Anne-Marie Baynham following employment at Perton Civic Centre in excess of 24 years.

### **INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2015/2016**

The Parish Precept income was reduced this year to £181.94k and the Parish Council also generated £85.5k of additional income primarily via Civic Centre bookings which were a little increased on the previous year. Bank interest generated from cash holdings amounted to just £1,007 which is due to the continued lowest interest rates in history with no imminent change expected. Additionally we received a total of £3,000 via incoming grants from Staffordshire County Council Community Fund of which £1,500 was directed at a landscaping project at the inner Parkway South roundabout and a further £1,500 towards the refurbishment of our older bus shelters. Also we received a grant from SSDC in the sum of £500.00 as a contribution towards the provision of a defibrillator kit at Perton Civic Centre. Our total expenditure for the year ending 31st March, 2016 was a little under £361k which excludes additional sums 'ring-fenced' for future provisions.

### **PRECEPT**

The Parish Precept income had remained constant at £200k for seven years from 2008/09 to 2014/15 however for 2015/16 a change was forced upon us since the government Council Tax Support Grant was not passed on to Parish Councils this year meaning that we either had to increase the Precept to maintain our budget or

reduce the budget in order to maintain the Precept levels for local households. Eventually it was decided that the PPC budget would be reduced from £200k to £181.94k to avoid an increase to the Precept, but clearly this entailed a reduction in local spending. This will be the case going forward so future spending will be limited to income directly raised from the Parish Precept together with any additional revenues that can be generated; principally from room hire bookings at the Civic Centre.

In consideration of the limitations detailed above the Parish Council were very keen to minimise the additional burden on local taxpayers for the coming year and have set the precept for 2016/2017 at £190k which is still £10k below our previous seven years of financial stability despite the usual pressures of rising prices and continuing maintenance issues at our Civic Centre. The £190k Parish Council Precept means that the annual charge on a band D property will increase by £1.91 for the year to £55.91, equating to £1.08 per week.

### **ELECTIONS**

The cost of our much valued democracy is continually rising and the formula for the costs passed back to the Parish Council has been modified since the previous election. Electors will know that in May 2015 the General Election took place at the same time as the District Council Elections and the Parish Council Elections. Hitherto the General Election would have borne 50% of the total cost with the remaining half split on a 50/50 basis between the District Council and the Parish Council. However modification to the recharge formula now means an equal three way split resulting in a recharge to the Parish Council of £9,736.66. Furthermore, following the resignation of Parish Councillors in both East and Dippons Wards, electors in those two wards exercised their democratic rights and requested By-Elections and the subsequent recharge costs of £3,527.64 was wholly the responsibility of Perton Parish Council.

### **CHAIRMAN'S' CIVIC SUNDAY**

The Chairman declined to hold a Civic Sunday reception this year.

### **THE CIVIC CENTRE**

Over the last twelve months Perton Civic Centre has been a vibrant and busy place due to the regular customer base which provides a wide range of activities from Clubbercise to Dance Academies and suchlike. Our regular hirers are generally increasing in number and customer feedback tells us that we are seen as a safe and welcoming centre with good facilities with a fair and competitive price structure. Private functions, parties and wedding celebrations are again similar to recent years though not yet back to the levels experienced pre 'credit crunch'. Additionally a number of worthwhile charities and local public groups have received benefit by way of 'Concessionary' room hire rates which are subsidised beyond the 'break even' approach that generally prevails with Civic Centre budgeting.

The Centre Management Committee has been diligently working over the year to determine that appropriate actions are taken to ensure that the Centre is well maintained, secure, inviting and cost effective. Following a small rise and reconfiguration of room hire rates in April 2015 the current rates will be held at the present level and reviewed again in April 2017.

Ongoing building maintenance continues to be both reactive and proactive with both breakdowns and the constant need for refurbishment and redecoration always on the agenda.

In the closing year we have completed a significant project costing £20,616.40 to the Civic Centre roof which required re-felting and realignment of the roof tiles. Two other very significant projects were planned and executed during the course of the year. Firstly we completed a total refurbishment and refit to the main toilets at a total cost of £30,851.40 and then a similar project was completed in the kitchen at a total cost of £34,121.85. In both cases this work was very necessary due to the age and state of the previous aged facilities but now completed they considerably

enhance both the appeal and usefulness of the Civic Centre. A further £850.00 was spent as a result of issues that developed with the automatic front door mechanism. Looking forward consideration needs to be given to the main foyer flooring where the tiling is either broken or detached from the under floor possibly as a result of some foundation shift over the years.

### **CIVIC CENTRE: AUTOMATIC EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR (AED)**

The Parish Council has recently installed an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) at Perton Civic Centre at a total cost of £1,330.00. This unit is registered on the 999 callout system and is intended for public use and an access code will be issued by the 999 callout operator if deemed necessary in respect to the nature of the emergency call. With the wellbeing of parishioners and visitors in mind Perton residents are being consulted to determine if they would be interested in participating in a free non-certified First Aid course covering Basic Life Support (BLS) and AED. If there is sufficient interest the course will take place at Perton Civic Centre and takes about three hours to complete.

### **PLAYGROUND , MULTI-USE GAMES AREA & OUTDOOR GYM**

Our children's playground and the Multi-Use Games Area were again very well utilised over the last twelve months and it is gratifying to see both of these facilities so well visited and enjoyed. Minor amounts of maintenance were required during the year as would be expected but generally these facilities are stable, popular and widely used. As these areas are still relatively new they have not required a great deal of support expenditure over the year, however, the ongoing issues in all three areas is the constant littering despite a very large number of litter bins being in-place, and occasionally some petty vandalism.

### **LITTER**

A recurring concern year on year is the continual source of complaints from residents relating to littering, broken glass and dog fouling. Our own Litter Warden patrol continues to operate in two shifts and thus provides cover seven days a week subject to warden availability. This service is principally focussed on central Perton to ensure that litter is cleared from local public areas but sadly even a doubling of these shifts would not be sufficient to keep on top of the problem village wide. Unfortunately litter issues seem to be increasing and it is important that this matter is given high profile in the education of youngsters both in the home and at school since many young people are amongst the worst offenders; our children's play area being a typical example of how the litter bins are so often ignored. New portable signs have been purchased and deployed at various locations around the village highlighting the issue of dog fouling but at best such measures only seem to show short term benefits.

### **POLICING**

Policing at Perton is often an emotive topic but monthly crime reports tend to indicate that crime and anti-social behaviour trends are decreasing rather than the opposite. It should be noted that the Neighbourhood Police Team have closed their office within our Civic Centre that was provided to them at no cost by Perton Parish Council.

### **COMMUNICATING WITH PARISHIONERS**

Aside from our Notice Boards the Parish website remains a principal source of information for parishioners and provides a broad array of details which we strive to keep up to date and interesting. Our website will, in the coming year, be refreshed and enhanced to support mobile communication. Additionally, any newsworthy items are passed on to the local press where possible and to communicate events and information we provide regular updates to the local advertising magazines which are delivered free to all homes in the village.

### **NOTICE BOARDS & SIGNAGE**

We have Parish Council notice boards at Kingswood, Trescott, Anders Square in central Perton and additional boards at locations around The Parkway together with lots of information located within the Civic Centre. All notice boards are visited on a regular basis to ensure that parishioners are kept well informed regarding events and current affairs relating to Council matters and also activities at the Civic Centre. Due to space limitations The Parkway, Trescott and Kingswood boards are generally reserved for Parish Council matters whilst the Civic Centre and Anders Square boards are more comprehensive in respect to items displayed.

### **SUBWAYS**

Continued maintenance and cleaning of the subways has had a positive effect in terms of reducing the number of complaints and overall this work makes Perton a cleaner and better place to live. During the last fiscal year we spent a total of £2,352.00 on graffiti cleaning primarily at the various subways, this is a cost that is almost totally associated with vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

### **PERTON BUS SERVICES & SHELTERS**

Further to the route changes imposed upon Perton residents by the bus operating companies some while ago it has become clear that there is now little chance of any solution being made available by the operating companies themselves. Following numerous concerns raised by residents in regard to bus shelter provision necessitated by the route changes we have recently provided seven new shelters at various locations around the village at a total cost of £20,923.33. A further £3,000.00 was spent on the refurbishment, cleaning and painting of seven existing shelters.

### **SENIOR CITIZENS' FILM SHOWS**

In support of our Senior Citizens we continue to provide 'Movie Magic' film shows which are screened for the Parish Council via the charity Arts Alive with their brand 'Flicks in the Sticks'. The movie shows continue to gain popularity and see our Lakeside Hall transformed into a daytime cinema theatre and the audience invariably looks forward to the next showing with keen anticipation. Whilst the various films are open to all comers on payment of the appropriate ticket price, our target audience of Senior Citizens enjoy free admission, however due to the continuing success of this venture with rising attendances from outside of the local area the free admission has now been restricted to seniors from within our own Parish. We have introduced a free 'Movie Magic Pass' for qualifying residents. The format, which usually includes an intermission for tea and biscuits has been very well received and typically takes place on selected Thursday afternoons which the OAPs prefer rather than venture out at night. We have screened nine films in the last year at a total cost of £2,250 and an average attendance of 97. Films screened over the last twelve months included 'The Theory of Everything', 'The Imitation Game', 'Suffragette' and the much requested 'The Lady in the Van' which attracted an audience of 209. High demand films will again be scheduled in the forthcoming new season.

### **YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES**

Over the last twelve months we again supported the 'Sussed' activities programme operated by South Staffordshire Council at a total cost of £789.00. These were once again delivered at Perton for local children but this time utilised a different format deploying local hosts providing a mix of either various sports / games sessions or alternatively dance based sessions of varying types. Following the closure of Perton Youth Club, as a result of cutbacks and apparently diminishing interest, Perton Parish Council has been considering some form of replacement activities but the ongoing issue is what can be delivered and by whom. The Parish Council does not employ people with the necessary aptitude and skill set in this area nor is it likely to be able to do so in the future and skilled volunteers are not

coming forward. At the current time the entire local youth programme is under review and the Parish Council is seeking ways to ensure a new programme of youth social and learning opportunities is made available but premises and suitable volunteer workers are just two of a number of issues that must be solved.

### **GRANT AID**

Outgoing grants made by Perton Parish Council over the year totalled £7,260.00 compared to £4,803.54 in the previous year. This figure comprised the following payments:

£1,500.00	Community Council of Staffordshire (Voluntary Car Scheme)
£120.00	Friends of Staffordshire & Stoke Archive (FoSSA)
£300.00	Perton and District Diabetes Support
£300.00	Perton Carnival (2015)
£2,000.00	Perton Playing Fields Association 1 <sup>st</sup> half
£500.00	Perton First School PTFA
£40.00	Royal British Legion - Poppy Appeal
£200.00	South Staffordshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
£2,000.00	Perton Playing Fields Association 2 <sup>nd</sup> half
£300.00	Perton Carnival (2016)

Additional to outgoing grant aid, Perton Parish Council are grateful to acknowledge with thanks two grants received by the Parish Council from Staffs CC Cllr A.K.James Local Community Fund, each in the sum of £1,500.00 firstly as contribution towards the landscape and planting project at The Parkway South roundabout and secondly the refurbishment and painting of seven local bus shelters. A further sum of £500.00 was received from South Staffordshire District Members Budget Grants from Cllr A. Bourke as contribution towards the provision of a public defibrillator at Perton Civic Centre.

### **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Perton Parish Council processed 38 planning applications during the year against 30 recorded last year.

### **FUTURE HOUSING**

An earlier Central Government directive requires that Perton will need to have a further 166 dwellings constructed before 2028. Following consultation exercises conducted by both Perton Parish Council and South Staffordshire District Council (SSDC) the determination took a step forward when last December the Local Planning office published their Preferred Options Site Allocations Document (SAD) for public consultation. Of the six site allocations around Perton preference has been shown for Site 239: Land west of Wrottesley Park Road (south). Five exhibitions were carried out at different local venues in January / February 2016 to support consultation on the preferred sites. Following the input determined from the consultation period SSDC will then publish a Publication or Pre-submission SAD that will contain the sites intended for inclusion in the final SAD which will be subject to further public consultation prior to a public Examination which will be held by an independent Inspector.

### **WAR MEMORIAL**

The much valued War Memorial, which physically marks the end of the old airfield runway, was previously maintained by members of the Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA - Wolverhampton & District Branch). Late in 2012 the Parish Council agreed to take on responsibility for maintenance of the memorial since RAFA were no longer able to do so. Since that time we have added gated fencing and will ensure that it is kept tidy and well maintained on a regular basis.

### **CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS**

Following the positive comments received last year the Parish Council again decided to opt for the installation of ten 'solar-powered' Christmas trees around the

central areas of Anders Square. These trees were provided on a rental basis which eliminates the need for storage outside of the Christmas period. The solar trees were provided at a cost of £1,900 which included delivery, erection, takedown and collection. Over the Christmas period this coming December ten 'solar-powered' Christmas trees will again be installed around Anders Square and we have contracted this service for three years at a fixed price of £1,900.00 per annum. Additionally the Parish Council provided support to the local independent 'Christmas Lights' committee and we are now starting to see this initiative delivering some significant enhancement to the Christmas period illuminations.

#### **ANDERS SQUARE SPRING & SUMMER PLANTING**

For the second consecutive year and following wide vocal support from around the village, the Parish Council again arranged for the provision of eight multi-tier planters to be located around the central areas of Perton village. Each tub provides an array of mixed coloured flowers to brighten up the place and make it more welcoming to all visitors. The total cost of the eight tubs was reduced from the previous year to £2,960.00 which included tub delivery and collection and season long maintenance and watering, this equates to £30.83 per tub per week when viewed over a season of twelve weeks. I am delighted to say that the Parish Council has recently agreed to again supply these tubs for the forthcoming spring and summer season and the following two years at a fixed price contract of £2,960.00 per annum and the tubs this year will have a red, white and blue theme in recognition of the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

#### **HARLEQUIN PANTOMIME PRODUCTIONS 2016**

In January 2016 Harlequin Pantomime Productions returned again for their celebratory 10th season at Perton Civic Centre with a production of 'Cinderella'. This was again a wonderful success being very well received by the sell out crowds and we are delighted to confirm that Harlequin will return once again in January 2017 with a production of Puss in Boots.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, I am pleased to say that the last twelve months has again been very busy and very productive and, as this report demonstrates, we have made some very real progress for Perton making this an even better place to live. Accordingly I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for their support and involvement during the last year whilst also recognising that the next twelve months will again be very busy and also present new challenges as yet unseen.

The help from my Parish Clerk Tony Tappenden has been gratefully received and his office has had a great deal of involvement in all of our projects and Tony assures me that his efforts rely very heavily on the support that he receives from both the Assistant Clerk Alison Moreton and Administration Assistant Becky Hodgetts so I thank them all for their efforts and dedication. I would also like to commend the efforts of all the Council and Centre staff who have worked very hard to ensure good results, and seek on every occasion to be supportive and welcoming to customers old and new and recognise that they have just one chance to create a good 'first impression' showing attention to detail and a very helpful and co-operative attitude, I thank them all.....Thank You.

The Chairman additionally noted that the Parish Clerk, Tony Tappenden, had been in post in excess of ten years and would be retiring later in the year. He thanked him for this support and diligence and attention to detail over his period of employment and also introduced Becky Hodgetts who, after ten years as PPC Administration Assistant, would be taking over as Parish Clerk in July.

5. **PARISHIONERS' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS ARISING FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT**

The Chairman invited comments or questions from parishioners but there were no questions, comments or matters arising.

6. **DATE OF NEXT ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – MONDAY 24<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 2017**

The information was noted.

7. **LIGHT REFRESHMENTS**

The Chairman invited all present to join him in the Airmans lounge for light refreshments.

The Meeting closed at 7.25pm

Chairman  
9<sup>th</sup> May 2016