



SEIGHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

*Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on
Monday 28th April 2025 at Derrington Village Hall
Starting at 7.30pm*

Kelly Day & RFO: Tel: 07931 167 081 E-mail: clerk@seighford-pc.org.uk

Present: Cllr John Busby (Chairman), Cllr Mark Hayward (Vice-chair), Cllr David Price, Cllr Peter Brown, Cllr David Burgess, Cllr Mark Hodgkins, Cllr Richard Wilkes, Cllr Christine Blackmore.

In attendance: Kelly Day (Clerk), SCC Mark Winnington, SBC Cllr Jack Rose + 23 members of the public

Apologies: SCC Cllr Jeremy Pert, Sally Churchill (Derrington VH), Amanda Cameron (Seighford VH, Seighford Speed Watch)

1) Introduction and welcome by the Chairman

The chairman opened the meeting at 19.33 and welcomed residents. He explained that he would be giving his annual report and receiving local community reports before taking any questions from the public.

The Chair said he wanted to share and celebrate the achievements of Seighford Parish Council (SPC) working with its local communities over the past year and to show that the SPC has listened and taken action where possible. Some of the general highlights included:

- Offering financial help to local churches, village hall and local charities, such as Katharine House Hospice.
- Clerk has recently passed the Introduction to Local Council Administration (ILCA) and this year will be starting the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA).
- Kept precept at the same level as past two years.

The Chair introduced the councillors and went onto explain some of the achievements in each of the wards.

2) To receive the Annual Report of the Parish Council from the Chairman

Derrington

- **Speeding cyclists on The Greenway:** Speeding cyclists remain a concern. SPC, working alongside Stafford Borough Council (SBC) Cllr Jack Rose and Staffordshire County Councillor (SCC) Cllr Mark Winnington, installed signage urging cyclists to slow down. Initial signs were removed shortly after installation, but two new signs have since remained in place. SPC will continue to monitor the situation. The Chair thanked Cllrs Rose and Winnington for their help with this.
- **Derrington playfield:** Dedicated Derrington playfield in memory of former councillor Gill Cox recognising her hard work in the community. An official ceremony was held in February with the Mayor in attendance who made a speech.
- **Playfield maintenance:** replaced old goal net, topped up safety bark, repaired multi-frame and replaced benches. The Chair gave a special thank you to the volunteers from The Millennium Green for their help.

- **Bus shelter repair:** Following a letter about the condition of the bus shelter, SPC employed David Vincent to replace it.
- Other community support includes: continued provision of dog fouling bags, funding two annual civic amenity visits and supporting the village fete by providing playfield and volunteers.
- **CPR Training:** Cllr Peter Brown organised a CPR and defibrillator training session at Derrington Village Hall delivered by Gnosall First Responders.
- Two hazelnut trees removed from Blackhole Lane were replanted.

Seighford

The chair acknowledged SPC's ongoing work with residents to make progress on a few long-standing issues. Of note was the progress that had been made regarding the Section 106 piece of land in Seighford, with solicitors now finalising the transfer of ownership back to SPC. The chair thanked Peter Simmons and Phil Horton for their support with this matter. Over the past year improvements to the Seighford kickabout field had been a key focus and the Chair was pleased to announce the installation of the new multi-play equipment as well as a goal net and two new picnic benches. Other highlights included:

- Two new benches by the church, including one dedicated to the late Cllr George Brown. The Chair thanked Phil Hortin for funding these benches.
- Cllr Mark Hayward continues to represent SPC at Cooper Perry Primary School and continues to work hard to help improve the parking issues within the village during school pick-up periods.
- The Chair was honoured to switch on the village Christmas lights.
- Seighford was also the starting point for the Young Farmers Christmas tractor run, which raised over £10,200 for local charities.
- Funded two civic amenity visits last year with a further two planned this year.

Great Bridgeford

- The Chair welcomed new members David Burgess and Christine Blackmore.
- Thanked Mark Turnbull, who stepped down as a councillor, for his hard work and effort in supporting the council and Great Bridgeford.
- Cllr Hodgkins was thanked for removing a fallen tree from the playing field that had landed in a resident's garden.
- Have been working alongside SCC Cllr Pert to explore improving accessibility around Jasmine Road for people with limited mobility.
- The new bus stop has been well received and is proving popular with residents.

The Chair outlined SPC's priorities for the coming year, emphasising a commitment to taking action or following up on issues raised by the community. Key issues include: speeding concerns in Seighford and exploring installing adult fitness equipment on the playing fields. The Chair actively encouraged residents to contact the council with any matters requiring attention.

3) Village Hall Committees

Seighford Village Hall – a statement was read by Jo Humphries on behalf of Chair, Mandy Cameron:

- Mandy Cameron became Chair at the October 24 AGM, succeeding Robert Eld.
- Have a small, yet willing and capable committee who are active and hands on ensuring the hall is used and managed appropriately.
- Strong community support to assist with events.
Ken Anderson maintains the garden areas at the front and back of the hall which provides a pleasant space to sit in during the summer.
- Cooper Perry Primary performed at the Christmas 'Light up the Village' event, held in the church bringing together the village hall, school and church committees.
- The hall is used with increasing frequency for events such as yoga, pilates, the Seighford gardening group and a Friday café, supported by students and staff from Walton High School.
- Several quizzes are held each year, including an Easter quiz, organised by Sarah and Richard Law who are not on the committee, but proactive in the community.
- The hall is regularly used for Birthday parties, as a polling station and for community meetings.
- Future events include a dog show with the Friends of St Chads, a games evening and a summer night social.
- While there was a proposal for a larger hall, it was agreed that the current committee lacks the capacity to manage a larger venue. It was also felt that Great Bridgeford and Derrington Village Hall were available if the community needed a larger facility.

Great Bridgeford Village Hall - report by Chair, Phil Causer

- Another successful year and continue to receive lots of regular bookings
- Village show was a success with another one taking place in August.
- First Christmas event was over-subscribed alongside several other successful events through the year.
- The hall is in good condition, but always striving to make it more environmentally greener.
- Recent upgrades include: new plumbing and central heating with old storage tanks removed. The heating can now also be controlled using WIFI.
- Future upgrades include improving security and refurbishing the toilet facilities.
- Leslie Longstaff retired as secretary this year; Amanda has now taken over and has introduced an electronic booking system, which is working well.
- Has a very good and committed team.
- Thanked SPC for their continued support, especially noting Cllr Burgess who has attended all committee meetings.

Derrington Village Hall – a statement was read by Roy Wood on behalf of Frances Sutherland.

- The AGM was attended by 15 residents.
- Reported losses of £10,513 for the year.
- £15,598 was invested in hall improvements, including new tables radiators, cooker and automatic access door.
- Received grant funding of £7,078 from Severn Trent Community Foundation and other grants from the Community Fund and National Grid for the Warm Spaces Initiative.
- Current Trustees had served for two years, so appealed for more committee members, noting that the current arrangement was not sustainable.

- Extraordinary meeting, held in April, had an excellent turnout of 53 villagers and four new committee members. Fundraising ideas were discussed
- The village hall is now eligible to claim Gift Aid to boost funds further.

4) Community Speed Watch Groups at Derrington, Great Bridgeford and Seighford

Seighford – report read by Jo Humphries on behalf of Amanda Cameron

- Not currently active, but hope to resume activity.
- Parking outside Cooper Perry Primary School remains a major hazard.
- A key concern is cars entering the village directly from a 60mph into a 30mph. If entry to the village was reduced to 30mph it would significantly reduce the speed in which cars enter the village.
- Speed watch signs have been a welcome addition, but believe flashing signs would have a better impact.

Great Bridgeford – report read by Denise Perry-Miller

- Two volunteers left in 2024, but 3 volunteers have since be recruited.
- Faulty device was replaced with funding from SPC.
- Attended nine sessions between May-August 2024 and counted over 5,000 vehicles during that period. Of these, 174 vehicles were recorded as speeding – an average of 19 per average of 560 vehicles.
- Results have been shared with the Police Community Speed Watch Coordinator which has resulted in visits from the police camera van.
- The group feels that their efforts are helping to reduce speeding within the village, making it safer.

Derrington – report read by Malcolm Kidd,

- Sessions are held once a fortnight for one hour in the mornings, excluding school holidays and winter months.
- Best location is towards village over the old railway line.
- In 2024, monitored over 1,500 vehicles and reported 33 speeding vehicles.
- Highest recorded speed was 46mph, with 7 cars exceeding 40mph.
- Police follow-up included one second warning letter and two third warning letters.
- The group believe their work makes a good contribution to village safety.
- Four active volunteers, but appealing for more to join group.

5) To receive the reports from The Parochial Church Councils of St Chad's and St Matthew's

St Chad's Church - report read by Barry Stamp, Treasurer

- Currently in interregnum following departure of Rev Doug Heming
- Vicarage currently being refurbished, with the Diocese covering part of the costs, including repairs to the tower and re-pointing of the pinnacles.
- A balance of £13,500 is required which will be met through fundraising and grants. Any shortfall will need to be funded by the church itself.
- Thanked SPC for the ongoing churchyard maintenance grant and asked if SPC would consider an increased grant due to rising costs.
- Thanked Ken and Jo for their help maintaining the churchyard.

- The church's ride-on mower is becoming increasingly costly to maintain. While a sinking fund exists, it is reducing each year as running costs exceed income. Some volunteers have been mowing the grounds manually with petrol mowers.

St Matthew's Church – report ready by Rev Cath Brumfitt

- It has been a year of two halves with both challenges and positive developments
- Thanked SPC for its grant to maintain the churchyard. A team of volunteers meet once a month to tidy up the grounds.
- The church shares services and collaborates with three other local churches, including Haughton.
- Successful events include spring and Christmas fayres and concerts, all of which have helped to boost fundraising.
- A monthly evening service featuring a live band is becoming more popular and the church is seeing signs of growth.
- A new toddler group is also becoming more popular.
- Plans to raise money for a new toilet have had to be put on hold after part of the roof fell off. Insurance will cover most of the damage.
- Church is financially struggling as running costs continue to rise, but community support is very strong.

The Millenium Green Trust, Derrington – report read by Roy Wood

- 2024 marks the 25th anniversary of the original 11.5 acres of the Millennium Green. Ethos was to create a breathing space to benefit people, nature and the environment.
- In 2019 an additional 7.5 acres of flood meadow was purchased. The whole 18 acres is now maintained by volunteers.
- The tool store provides an important meeting and social hub for villagers to meet, relax or craft items to sell to raise funds for The Green.
- Despite The Green being run by volunteers, it still has operational costs to cover so donations are needed. Appealing for people to consider making a regular donation to help with the continued running of The Millennium Green.

6) To consider any matters raised by parishioners

- A request was made for the verges on Crossing Lane, Derrington to not be cut back due to birds getting caught in the machinery. SCC Cllr Winnington supported the principle of 'No Mow May' provided road visibility is not compromised.
- Thanks were expressed for the new play equipment in Seighford which is already being used.
- Concerns raised about the ongoing speeding issued across all three villages. Asked if SPC can help any further with this.
- Enquiry regarding when the stolen post box in Great Bridgeford will be replaced.
- It was noted that Worston Bridge has been resurfaced, however no further update on traffic lights being installed on the bridge. SCC Cllr Winnington responded saying that Network Rail will not be installing lights and there has been no further update from HS2 on this matter. Asked SPC to put this on a future agenda.
- Pavement on road towards Eccleshall in Great Bridgeford is in poor condition. Cllr Price noted that the cost to repair this was £37,000 so no funding available to do this. There is also a current embargo on footway repairs due to ongoing cabling infrastructure.
- Footpath 20 and 34 reported having poor accessibility. Cllr Winnington asked the Clerk to follow up with him on this matter.

Stafford Borough Councillor, Jack Rose

- Drew attention to the current state of Dale Lane.
- On the Drive Me site, enforcement officers have deemed the noise monitoring equipment inadequate. However both the enforcement and environmental officers have recently left their roles, so need to wait for new ones to be appointed before can move any further forward.
- Fires reported around Derrington have been passed to environmental health officers.

Staffordshire Council Councillor, Mark Winnington

- Agreed Dale Lane is in poor condition, but it is not all covered by SPC. He agreed it should remain closed for now and explained that only 6% of SCC budget has been allocated to highways and Dale Lane requires significant funding to improve it.

To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15th April 2024

The minutes were approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman. Proposed by Cllr Brown and Seconded by Cllr Burgess.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 20:59.