

Bilbrook Parish Council, Bilbrook Village Hall  
Annual Parish Meeting held on  
Wednesday 4th April 2018, 6:00pm  
Minutes

Present:

**Councillors:**

D Allen, M Barrow, G Burnett, V Chapman (Chairman), I Fieldhouse, P Fieldhouse, A Hill, D Hutchinson, P Hutchinson, J Michell (Part of the meeting) A Morrison, G Price

Also present: Mrs K Daker (Parish Clerk). Representatives from Codsall Community Arts Festival, Staffordshire Police Cadets, Holy Cross Church, St Nicholas Church Codsall, Codsall and Bilbrook Twinning Association. No members of the public.

**1.0 Apologies**

Holy Cross Church

**2.0 Minutes**

Minutes of meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2017, having previously agreed were distributed for review. No further comments received.

**6.05pm: Cllrs D Allen & G Price Arrived.**

**3.0 Chairman's Report – presented by Cllr Mrs V Chapman**

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, and a warm welcome from myself and fellow parish councillors to the 2018 Annual Parish Meeting. My name is Val Chapman and I will introduce my fellow parish councillors.

It has been my privilege to be Chairman of Bilbrook Parish Council for the last 10 years – a time of improvement within the parish of Bilbrook on behalf of the residents of Bilbrook.

During the year 2017/18, we have gained two new parish councillors, Dan Allan was co-opted in 2017 and Gary Burnett, who was elected at the bye-election on 8th February 2018, both councillors have joined the various sub-committees on the parish council for the betterment of Bilbrook.

Sadly, the bye-election was caused due to the passing of our Vice Chairman of Bilbrook Parish Council, Cllr Robert Marshall, in November 2017 which affected this Parish Council greatly for he was a councillor who had genuine feelings for the welfare of others and threw himself into whatever he was involved with. I know the councillors will agree with me that Robert Marshall was a big man with a huge presence and we miss him.

Our parish councillors work hard and with dedication on behalf of Bilbrook parish. We continue to raise our profile in the community and grateful for the support we receive from various local organisations as well as South Staffordshire District Council and Staffordshire County Council.

It has been a busy year with new and experienced parish councillors and the parish clerk attending training, seminars and forums in order to ensure the best representation for the residents of Bilbrook. There have been the usual 12 Council meetings with additional committee meetings, site meetings and seminars to attend.

Parish re-branding (new logo) We have re-branded the parish council logo which used the Bilbrook War Memorial as a reference point but taking into account the Bilers weed/watercress (which is how

Bilbrook got its name), the Brook, farming area, wildlife, the Boulton & Paul plane and the Staffordshire knot.

Bilbrook Parish Flag – it was long felt that we should have a parish flag on the village green and 2017 brought this project to fruition. The parish council thought it was appropriate to have our own flag to be displayed on important local occasions to bring a sense of civic pride to the residents of Bilbrook. The design of the Standard represents the history of Bilbrook. The plane represents the Defiant fighter plane built by Boulton Paul in Bilbrook and plays such an important part in the history of Bilbrook. The plant is the “Billars” (watercress) and the blue represents the Brook from where the name “Bilbrook” comes from. The Brown represents the long farming history in the area. The Staffordshire Knot and the predominance of Green in the flag symbolises our rural parish environment.

Bilbrook Parish Standard – A Remembrance Day procession takes place in the Parish of Bilbrook on Remembrance Sunday every year in honour of those who lost their lives in armed conflict. The procession marches from The Church of the Holy Cross to Bilbrook Village Green for the Act of Remembrance at 11.00a.m. I believe that our new Bilbrook Parish Council Standard Flag will have a very beneficial effect on all residents in Bilbrook, bring the local community together and bring all age groups together

On a general note, there will be two new benches in April, we have also commissioned a tree survey on the Twentyman Playing Fields, put plastic bollards in Joeys Lane and pleased to report that all the Bilbrook allotments are rented out.

Grants awarded are as follows:

£425.00	Codsall & Bilbrook Twinning Association
£600.00	Codsall Arts Festival
£2,000	Holy Cross Church, Bilbrook
£1,900	St Nicholas Church, Codsall
£667.90	Staffordshire Police Cadets

Total grants = £5,592.90

Over the past 10 years, Bilbrook Parish Council has been forward thinking and, will continue to be, in its approach to meeting the needs of parishioners of all ages in Bilbrook and will continue in its work with local partnerships for the continued development and improvement of facilities in Bilbrook.

Thank you to our employees for their hard work throughout the last 12 months. But, my closing words are heartfelt thanks to Bilbrook parish councillors for their work on behalf of the residents of Bilbrook, for it is the betterment of Bilbrook that is of paramount importance. The parish councillors are volunteers, receiving no remuneration at all, who give themselves to the community here in Bilbrook – thank you.

#### **4.0 Community Reports.** (Organisations who have received grants from Bilbrook Parish Council from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.)

##### **4.1 Codsall Community Arts Festival – presented by R Chapman (Trustee and Treasurer)**

The Trustees and Committee are grateful to the Bilbrook Parish Council for its support of the 2018 Festival. We were pleased to be able to stage two events in the Parish of Bilbrook this year, both being geared to the community of Bilbrook. We are delighted to report that both were successful.

The first event took place on Thursday 8 March when we were privileged to have the Birmingham Royal Ballet with us all day. Their artists attended Bilbrook Middle School and delivered 3 workshops to a total of 48 pupils, exploring the themes of Sleeping Beauty (Middle School pupils)

and Macbeth (High School pupils), familiarising the participants with the ballet's steps, gestures and their meanings, and developing their performance and critical skills. The lead lady from the Birmingham Royal Ballet, Jenny, was delighted with the enthusiasm of the pupils and how well they responded and all the pupils who participated, although sceptical to begin with, were saying at the end of the day how much they had enjoyed it. The School Staff were also pleased with the response of the pupils. Our Committee member who attended the day, herself a retired school teacher, enjoyed the whole day and judged it very worthwhile.

The second event was held at the Bilbrook Village Hall and formed part of the Festival's "Community Day" on Saturday, 17 May. We welcomed the Exotic Zoo to the Village Hall starting at 10.00am through to 3.00pm. A wide variety of animals included armadillos, snakes, a crocodile and meerkats were on display in a reasonably natural habitat. We had a zoo vet on hand, but happily he was not needed. There was a steady stream of visitors throughout the day, partly perhaps because entry was free. Many came to the Bilbrook Village Hall first on their way to other attractions at various locations around Codsall. My thanks go to Iris and Paul Fieldhouse and their helpers for the provision of refreshments throughout the day.

What was different about both the events held in the Parish of Bilbrook, in contrast to all the others, is that entry was free of charge and that was possible only because we had the benefit of the grant from the Parish Council, so on behalf of the Arts Festival Committee, thank you.

#### 4.2 Staffordshire Police Cadets – presented by Kevin Elscey

The Staffordshire Police Cadet scheme was initiated by the Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Ellis when he took office in 2010. Since then the number of units have grown, with our 10th unit in Leek going live in April.

Each unit will ideally have 30 cadets ranging from 13-18 years old. The units meet once a week usually between 18:30hrs and 21:30hrs depending on location. One third of the cadets come from troubled/vulnerable backgrounds, giving them the opportunity to develop into the good citizens of tomorrow in a safe, protected environment.

No money from the Staffordshire Police budget is directed to the Cadets and as a charity they exist on donations from businesses and individuals to enable the leaders to deliver the program of events. The staff within each unit consists of Special Constable, Police Support Volunteers, Police Community Support Officers and Regular Officers who give their time voluntarily.

South Staffs (Codsall) Cadet Unit has been running since February 2016 and started meeting every Tuesday evening in Codsall and Bilbrook Fire Station. With the number of young people wanting to join the unit increasing and the restriction on the number of people allowed in the fire station at any one time, we found it necessary to relocate to larger premises. I felt it necessary to keep the unit within the Codsall and Bilbrook area as this seemed to be the ideal location for anyone wanting to join within the south Staffordshire area, as it is geographically central within South Staffs.

With this in mind and the need to be able to meet every Tuesday evening, the locations were quite limited. However, we approached Bilbrook Middle School and explained to them about the cadets and our need for larger premises. They were more than happy to assist with our request and in January 2018. The unit moved into Bilbrook Middle School and are reaping the benefits as we are now able to offer more places for young people. The current number at Codsall being 21, with more enquiries coming in all the time.

The chairman commented that on her visit to the Police Cadets meeting last year she was very impressed with the work being done. Cllr I Fieldhouse also recently attended an event and thought it was excellent.

#### **6.25 Cllr J Michell arrived**

#### 4.3 Holy Cross Church - written by M Spragg and Presented by Cllr Mrs V Chapman

We are very grateful for the generous grant that the Parish Council made to the Church in 2017.

There have been problems with various parts of the roof over several years. Because of anticipated great expense these problems had been tackled with 'quick-fix' solutions and inevitably the problems have increased. Last year we had the whole roof inspected and it was obvious that unless we acted speedily the damage to the church would worsen.

The work was undertaken last Autumn by Allied Technical Services of Stoke-on-Trent, a company that specialises in the maintenance of church buildings, and we were very pleased with the work that was done.

The total cost of the work was in excess of £30,000. To pay for this we secured a low-interest loan of £20,000 from the Diocese of Lichfield and the remaining money was raised through fund-raising events and grants, such as the one you gave us. We are now able to concentrate our resources on the redecoration of the Sanctuary area of the church which was affected by the ingress of water.

I am grateful to the Parish Council for the donation and particularly to Paul and Iris Fieldhouse for their advice on Grant Applications. This advice has been very useful and will continue to be so as we start on the long overdue task of refurbishing our Church Hall later this year.

#### 4.4 St. Nicholas Church - written by R Marsh and Presented by Janice Simmons (Church Warden)

I have produced a quick summary below of the work undertaken in previous years. The number of burials and interment of ashes have been calculated from the fees received. These do not include child burials for which there is no charge, or reburials.

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
Burials	28	34	24	30	20
Burial of Ashes	26	47	36	33	34
Grass Cutting	£6,020	£6,625	£7,040	£7,040	£7,480
Moles + path spray	£455	£410	£410	£550	£410
Hedges	£3,898	£180	£180	£0	£180
Trees	£930	£0	£330	£0	£300
Sundries	£1,804	£455	£1,308	£247	£5,690
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>£13,107</b>	<b>£7,670</b>	<b>£9,268</b>	<b>£7,837</b>	<b>£14,160</b>

There has been considerable work undertaken in the churchyard in the last 12 months clearing a lot of low lying branches. This has made a considerable improvement to the general condition and appearance and we are most grateful to a small but dedicated team of volunteers which has meant that this has not been reflected in high costs.

Sundries included the Lytch gate in the Mill Lane section of the churchyard which was renovated in 2017 and at a cost in excess of £5,000. The path around the back of the church is also due to be renovated but work on the church building is hopefully due to take place shortly which will involve digging up a part of this path, so this is on hold pending completion of the other work.

A notice is due to be installed by the war graves commission to commemorate the 10 war graves in the churchyard and health and Safety signs are to be placed to warn of the danger of traffic when crossing Mill Lane.

The churchyard has continued to be well visited in the last year and we have had our usual bi annual clean ups. The relatively newly consecrated area is being well used and thoughts are

underway to increase the area further into the land bought by Codsall PCC for this purpose. The land will need to be prepared to be made suitable for burials with appropriate fencing and pathways being created. The land is then transferred to the benefice, so is no longer owned by the PCC.

It is difficult to tell the exact numbers of people from Bilbrook who are buried in the church yard as many come from nursing homes, however it is estimated as 30-40% of burials. The contribution of the Parish Council are very important to the church.

Planning has been going through for the Bell Tower which will include a disabled toilet and a raised bell ringing platform.

#### 4.5 Codsall and Bilbrook Twinning Association – Presented by Brian Charnley (Chairman)

In 2017, the CBTA hosted a visit from Les Grenouilles. The French party arrived by coach at lunchtime on Easter Saturday, then spent the day with host families.

On Sunday, we organised a Barn Dance and meal at the Codsall Village Hall, including an Easter Bonnet Parade. There were many splendid entries and this made choosing the winners rather difficult. However, Councillor Megan Barrow skilfully made the necessary diplomatic selections.

A full coach party of French and British travelled to the ancient City of Worcester on Easter Monday. After visiting the Museum of Royal Worcester, we enjoyed an excellent lunch at the King's Head pub before spending time walking around the City. By Tuesday, it was time for the French to return to St Pryvé and they thanked us for a thoroughly enjoyable visit.

Hosting is expensive and we budget between £2½ and 3K for each visit. The funds are raised by the Association organising events (Quizzes, Skittles, Meals, Carnival stalls) each month over two years.

Next month we shall be visiting St Pryvé to celebrate 20 Years since the signing of the official Twinning Agreement between our villages. A coach has been booked and 35 members of the Association will be travelling. The full cost of the coach is covered by those members attending. However, I am delighted that we will be transporting a gift of a road sign, produced by a local craftsman, to mark this special anniversary. The cost is being met by the Parish Councils of Bilbrook and Codsall and it will be a permanent reminder to the citizens of St Pryvé of the link between our villages.

#### 5.0 **Community Reports.** (Other Organisations who have not received grants from Bilbrook Parish Council from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.)

No other organisations present.

#### 6.0 **Open Discussion**

The issue of potholes was raised. The chairman requested these be discussed in the April parish meeting.

Meeting closed at 6.42pm

Signed: ..... Dated: .....