

**Cheddleton Parish Council**

**MINUTES OF THE FOOTPATHS & COUNTRYSIDE COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD VIA ZOOM ON TUESDAY, 9<sup>th</sup>. MARCH 2021**

**ATTENDANCE** Chairman - K. Harvey.  
Vice-Chairman - Ms. C.Y. Ball.  
Councillor - M.T. Bowen, N. Belson, H.R. Jennings, G.W. Salt,  
Mrs. L.M. Salt.  
Member - Mr. P.H. Green.

18. **APOLOGIES** - No Apologies as there was 100% attendance.
19. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING 10<sup>th</sup>. NOVEMBER 2020** - It was resolved to accept these as a true record.
20. **MATTERS ARISING THEREFROM** - No matters were raised.
21. **CORRESPONDENCE: -**
- a. Case ID - 20009775 Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman. The Clerk reported that this was the outcome of Cheddleton Parish Council lodging a case against Staffordshire County Council for not dealing with the directions issued by the secretary of state with regards to 4 Footpath modifications orders that have been outstanding for many years. The letter stated that we cannot investigate this complaint. This is because the complaint is on behalf of a Parish Council and these bodies are not eligible to make complaints to the Ombudsman.
  - b. Definitive Map application LG659G Churnet Valley Railway. Dealt with under agenda item 27.
22. **UPDATE ON COMMUNITY PATHS INITIATIVE FUNDING PROJECT** - This will remain in abeyance due to Covid 19 and will remain as a future agenda item.
23. **ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES FOOTPATH 62 - CHEDDLETON** - Councillor Harvey reported that when this was inspected there is neither an entrance nor an exit from this footpath. The mapping shows that it starts from Rock End in Wetley Rocks and runs through the fields to Folly Lane and should exit between 78 & 80 but is blocked off. Mr. Green stated that he has the old list of definitive maps from his time as Chairman of the F&C Committee and it is marked as extinguished. Councillor Harvey stated it is showing on the current map of Rights of Way. We will have to contact SCC for advice as to how it stands. The Clerk reported that she had already contacted them and SMDC as the mapping shows the footpath going through a building at Rock End and both 78 & 80 Folly Lane have been extended so would have required planning permission. Councillor Harvey state that there are still stones in situation that shows the direction of the footpath and asked if Mr. Green could send a copy of the document he has.
24. **UPDATE ON FOOTPATH 19 - CHEDDLETON** - The Clerk reported she had contacted Ben Haywood at SMDC as he was going to write to the owner and that she last chased it up with him 11<sup>th</sup>. February, there has been no response. Councillor Bowen will follow this up with Ben.

25. **UPDATE ON FOOTPATH 23 - CHEDDLETON** - The Clerk reported that the footpath starts in the middle of nowhere. As agreed, an email was sent to the Chairman of the Countryside and Rights of Way Panel, Councillor Mark Winnington before the meeting and no response has been received. The next Meeting is scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup>. March so a follow up email has been sent. Councillor Bowen suggested that a copy be sent to Councillor Alan White the leader at SCC. It continues to be an eyesore where the pigs are situated. Councillor Ms. Ball stated that the trees are dying off because of the waste that was tipped on it many years ago.
26. **UPDATE ON THE RESTORATION OF THE BUTTERCROSS** - Councillor Harvey stated that with Covid 19 nothing has progressed but that the volunteers will look at it as a first job when they start back. The Clerk reported that she had received enquiries from the Leek & Moorlands Historic Buildings Trust asking what was happening and advised that Historic England are moving on with grants so I got in touch with Nick Carter today and he has gone as far as getting quotes for the works based on the specification he had written, and that Historic England would like to assist and hopefully provide funding. Councillor Harvey asked for a copy of the specification.
27. **UPDATE ON STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL OUTSTANDING DIRECTIONS** - Mr. Green reported that the correspondence b) concerning LG659G alleged footpath 41 which Cheddleton Parish Council put in a modification in 1998 and are still awaiting a decision. This should have been resolved by September 2019 as ordered by the secretary of state. He reported that Churnet Valley Railway(CVR) are having issues with trespass on the railway line. This footpath and railway line belongs to Network Rail and not CVR. A complaint has been received from members of the public and this has resulted in both Network Rail and CVR as a leaseholder of Leekbrook to Ipstones line being threatened with prosecution and closure by the Office of the Rail Regulator(ORR). Therefore, CVR have started to fence off where they can at their cost, but that Network Rail could remove the crossing from the other part of the line from Leekbrook through to Stoke as the Footpath in question is not currently defined as a Right of Way. Therefore, we could be in a situation where the footpath is closed. Councillor Bowen suggested that to stop children, by closing the fencing and Mr. Green stated that residents have removed fencing when Network Rail have put it up. Councillor Bowen suggested that Mr. Green send this through to him to send to Councillor Sybil Ralphs as leader of SMDC are trying to get the railway reinstated between Leek & Stoke-on-Trent as she is in talks to achieve this. The Clerk reported that John Henderson had stated in his reply that our order of the 4 applications will be completed next year therefore she has requested a timescale as to when next year and not had a reply. She also reported that David Rice has advised that the Ombudsman should investigate the matter and has sent a response that he feels we could respond with to challenge his decision. The Clerk will confer with Councillor Harvey and forward this response to the Ombudsman and chase up CEO of SCC too.
28. **UPDATE ON APPEAL FPS/D3450/14A/4 - ASHCOMBE PARK, CHEDDLETON** - The Clerk reported that she has not received any further update so will continue to ask SCC.
29. **UPDATE/SURVEY OF PATHS IN THE PARISH CONDUCTED BY VOLUNTEERS** Councillor Harvey reported that the volunteers will commence from this week but only in pairs and there are lots of works required as additional use of the paths as part of lockdown. There will be risk assessment under Covid-19 legislation. All paths will be continually surveyed for obstructions and issues. Materials have been supplied by Werrington and therefore we have a stock of them.

30. **VOLUNTEERS PROTECTIVE CLOTHING** - Councillor Harvey stated that SCC used to provide clothing but no longer do and as we have a few volunteers the least we can do is provide them with a coat and hi-vis for each volunteer and with identification that they are working on behalf of Cheddleton Parish Council. The cost would be approx. £40 per volunteer and we have 7 volunteers. (4 of which are Parish Councillors). Councillor Belson stated that the public need to know they are working on behalf of the Parish Council to up the profile. Councillor Mrs. Salt suggested some form of I.D. for them too. Councillor Ms. Ball proposed that we go ahead and buy them, seconded by Councillor Jennings. All agreed.
31. **FOOTPATH 38 - CHEDDLETON - TREE THINNING MACHINERY SUPPORT** - Councillor Harvey stated that we have done a lot of works and more people are using the area, but we have loads of the cut down trees which is becoming too much really, and we could do with chipping these up and using along the path. Councillor Belson reported that there is a shredder advertised for daily hire which is on caterpillars, petrol driven, and the hirer lives in Kingsley and will deliver and collect it for £65 a day which would be ideal for use on these cut down trees to shred them. He will give training and it cuts up to 4-inch diameter wood. The only issue is where to leave it ready for collection in a safe and secure place. Councillor Jennings suggested asking the Boat Inn for storage until collection and proposed a trial to see if it proves useful. Councillor Harvey stated that this could be used in other areas and cover balsam areas with chippings. Councillor Ms. Ball seconded, and all agreed as soon as possible to go ahead with a trial.
32. **HIMALAYAN BALSAM/KNOTWEED** - Councillor Harvey stated that if we put the signs up again to ask footpath users to pull it. Councillor Belson stated that this is an issue all through the area and as it spreads downstream, we are fighting a losing battle. Councillor Harvey stated that if it can be compressed and covered to see if this helps. The Clerk reported that the Canal & River Trust organise volunteer days.
33. **UPDATE ON DEEP HAYES COUNTRY PARK** - Councillor Harvey reported that this continues to fall into a state as the number of rangers has been cut down further. A volunteer has written to Karen Bradley and received a reply that it is privately owned. Councillors contradicted that it is SCC responsibility. Councillor Mrs. Salt reported that she is collecting photographs and film footage of how it used to be and try to embarrass them by sharing with residents. Councillor Harvey wants to encourage residents to get involved and will look at starting friends of Deep Hayes by a meeting inviting them to help. The other issue is that there are no litter bins, a volunteer does litter picking around it but there is nowhere to leave the waste and SMDC state it is not on their route. Councillor Bowen stated we cannot put a bin on land that is not our responsibility. Councillor Harvey will continue to push this issue as part of the parish, and he will contact Karen Bradley giving her the correct information. The Clerk asked about the Great Big Nature Boost and Councillor Harvey has not had any response.
34. **ANY NOTED FOOTPATH OBSTRUCTIONS** - The Clerk stated that the fallen tree is still showing as outstanding that we reported at Deep Hayes. Councillor Belson reported that this is still there. He also, mentioned that the footpath through to Cheddleton Playing Field off Jenny's Way has been narrowed by the newly built bungalow. Councillor Bowen stated that this has been reported to Ben Haywood at SMDC and SCC already. The Clerk mentioned Councillor Harvey had reported Footpath 49 and 1R/2248 but SCC have 169 jobs outstanding.

35. **WAYMARKING** - Councillor Harvey reported that the last of the way markers have been completed and are changing ones that have worn away. The Clerk reported the one in front of the Tea Rooms needed attention and so Councillor Harvey will look at it with the volunteers.
36. **COUNTRYSIDE** - We have some beautiful Countryside.
37. **FORWARD AGENDA ITEMS** - No future items.

Chairman.