

Minutes of the meeting of the Footpath and Countryside/Cheddleton Playing Field Committee held at the Cheddleton Community Centre, Hollow Lane Cheddleton on Tuesday 11th November 2025 at 7.30pm

Attendance: Councillors Harvey (Chair), Shaw (Vice chair), Rogers, Beardmore,

Members: Mr Beresford

Not present: Councillors Salt, Cunningham,

Cllr Harvey opened the meeting by introducing himself, stating that he was to chair the meeting in the absence of Cllr Worthington whose wife was very ill and in need of his attendance at this time. Cllr Harvey invited Cllr Johnson to join the table, Cllr Johnson rightly declined as he is not on the committee and stayed sitting on the edge of the meeting.

1. Apologies

Gwyn Higginson, Cllr Ahmad, Cllr K. Grocott, Cllr Worthington - these were accepted.

Mr Green – Has indicated that he is no longer able to attend due to ill-health and resigns from this committee. It was resolved to send a letter to Mr Green thanking him for his service and commitment.

Action: Cllr Harvey

2. Public Questions

A question was raised about a missing bench that was mentioned at the last meeting. These benches are not cheap £300.

Action: Cllr Shaw

3. Minutes of the meeting 15/10/25

It was agreed that these were a true record of the last meeting. Proposed by Cllr Rogers seconded by Cllr Harvey. The minutes were accepted.

It was asked that the minutes be made available on the website correctly. The website issues were acknowledged; this is a priority to rectify.

Action: Cllr Harvey – Val Cornes as interim clerk

4. Matters arising

None – all actions outstanding are agenda items.

5. Correspondence

None

6. Butter Cross

Cllr Harvey reported that the grass around the Butter Cross was growing rapidly. He and his team would be cleaning and tidying it up shortly before the winter. The cross is now off the risk register. Historic England will continue to check it on an annual basis. The PC are required to maintain it to a satisfactory standard for five years. A question was raised about after the five years Cllr Harvey indicated that this maintenance will be ongoing. Historic England have approved the wording for the information board. The sign will be pursued in the future. The works cost around £12,000; an additional cost was incurred because of an amendment to the grouting method. All financial details will be collated. The celebration of the Cross is in hand, Full council will be informed, next spring is favoured.

Action: Cllr Harvey

7. Himalayan Balsam CRT

Formal thanks should be given to the Hopedale children.

Action: Cllr Harvey

Cllr Shaw will liaise with CRT for next year.

Action: Cllr Shaw

8. Community Paths Initiative Funding Project

Cllr Harvey indicated that he was in receipt of the application form for this funding. A one-off grant, up to £2000, which must be match funded, for one project. The right project is required. Path 38 improvement suggested, the monies could provide the materials and work could be undertaken in sections.

Action: Cllr Harvey – pursue – to be put to full council

Cllr Rogers clarified that the re-writing of the booklet was also applicable for the grant. Additionally, the website could include these walks, which would remove the printing costs, individuals could download for themselves. Both options could be pursued. A copy of the old booklet to be acquired. This is called 'Circular Walks Around the Parish

of Cheddleton'. Connection with the schools could be encouraged. The level of difficulty of the walks needs to be acknowledged.

No time limit on the funding, but the pot is limited.

Action: Cllr Rogers – booklet matters

9. Survey of paths – updated progress report

The latest footpath report was circulated. Actions required identified by the volunteer footpath checkers and then repairs are completed by the repair volunteers. Yellow markers for the tops of stiles to be considered. 90 paths are tended. A vote of thanks was proposed to the volunteers by Mrs Barr, member of the public. Additionally, this work should be acknowledged on the website or even social media.

Action: Cllr Harvey – Val Cornes as interim clerk

10. Footpath obstructions/ROW reports

No obstructions have been reported. Cllr Harvey will chase up Scott Crawford regarding Coalford Farm.

Action: Cllr Harvey

Cllr Rogers mentioned that you cannot get through Wainwright's coal yard. Cllr Harvey mentioned that there has been an alternative option in the past but this has been shied away from. This entrance and exit through the Wainwright's coal yard may be affected by solar planning matters. Cllr Harvey to raise again with Scott Crawford.

Action: Cllr Harvey

Cllr Beardmore reported that a couple of paths that run round the substation and come onto Thorney Edge Road have been shut by Staffs CC because of the solar panel work. These actions are to allow for planned alterations to the sub-station layout. Notification has been posted.

Mr Barr raised the ROW issues. He asked about the outstanding applications for new footpaths. An update from Cllr Beardmore was requested. Mr Barr reiterated that these applications had been made by Cheddleton PC and asked that this should be a standing item until resolved. Cllr Harvey stated that he would look at the way we do that. Applications are being considered more quickly, what is not happening is that the applications are not being confirmed so they get on the map. Cllr Beardmore reported that she has spoken to an individual regarding the email sent about this and she has a meeting Friday next week after which she will update fully. It was reported that three of the applications by the PC have been approved by the Rights of Way Committee. Mr Barr felt that new applications are not being considered at the moment, that they

are just looking at upgrades and diversions. A policy does appear to be operating but is unpublished, this should be transparent. Mr Barr reiterated the need to not lose sight of these applications with Staffs CC despite membership of the PC changing. All that is required now is that they should be put in the paper, landowners need to be notified and then after 42 days they can go on the definitive plan. Cllr Harvey mentioned a new path at the back of Deep Hays, which needs signing off.

Cllr Beardmore spoke about a blockage the new members of Staffs CC had inherited, the panel is small, a few meetings had been booked then cancelled. A recent meeting cancellation was due to a family bereavement. The new committee at Staffs CC have offered to sit more frequently than once a month to attempt to move the backlog. It is the process after confirmation that seems to be failing. Mr Barr offered to draft the press notifications himself. Cllr Harvey agreed that highlighting this problem was important and that success should be pursued.

Action: Cllr Harvey

Action: Cllr Beardmore

11. Deep Hayes

The walks are being improved all the time and are excellent, the lakes are silting up. Staffs CC seem to have little involvement in its maintenance. The ranger who patrols the park is doing a good job and is enthusiastic. Requires additional funding.

Cllr Beardmore stated that Deep Hayes are giving free trees away, date to be confirmed. She will put the detail on Facebook.

Action: Cllr Beardmore

12. Playing field – condition update, actions required – working group update

The conditions were reported on, various areas have been tidied up, strimming around the children's play area, including the tennis courts. Cllr Harvey reported that it was a large area, not a lot for adults to do but activities for children are present.

Cllr Shaw reported that progress is being made and the zip wire has been measured up for repair. Information about the length of the wire and the weight it could take was detailed. Cllr Harvey indicated that he favoured Cllr Johnson joining the committee to enable this work, to use his assessment skills, to determine the maintenance of standards to meet safety conditions and insurance compliance across all our parks. Cllr Rogers stated that this was already being done by Cllr Shaw and much has been achieved since the last meeting on 11th September. Cllr Shaw updated the meeting on the progress made with the zip wire; various companies have been contacted. The experience of a company called Commercial Play was reported, they offer a free quotation to complete maintenance, painting, everything. It was agreed to send the risk assessment to this company. Alternative quotes will be required before this is taken to full council.

The trees at the back which are overhanging equipment are normally completed by Gibsons – quote for cutting back the trees received £225. Cllr Harvey suggested his volunteers could do it. Cllr Shaw asked if the volunteers would have the correct climbing equipment. Cllr Harvey will inspect this work.

The tennis courts could also be resurfaced and remarked by this company. An option for a ball court was discussed with a powder coated net for tennis which is more robust. Financial help from Industrial Agricultural Engineers, IAE, Mossfield Road, Adderley Green, could be pursued. The right contacts are required. The amounts for repairs should be available prior to the budget consideration to ensure repairs can be completed on a priority basis. Some areas are more urgent than others as identified by the recent risk assessment. Cllr Rogers reminded those present of the removal of the skateboard facility at Pointon's Park. Insurance costs may be high but the use of the equipment should be considered, Cllr Cunningham had suggested that the equipment may be free to a good home.

Action: Cllr Harvey – trees – skatepark equipment

13. Grange Pond

The fencing is now nice and secure. Cllr Harvey feels this is a dangerous place, not a clear pond, mud and water and it should be closed off until the summer. Its location was confirmed. A discussion developed about the pond, RHS advice about when this should be done was provided by Cllr Shaw, early Autumn. Mr Whiston asked who would be responsible should an accident happen at the pond. It is not deep, no signs in place.

Action: Cllr Harvey/Shaw – to inspect again

14. Bridge Ey

Cllr Harvey acknowledged the receipt of the email sent to all councillors by Cllr Johnson. Cllr Johnson clarified his skill set. The subject of repairs and maintenance was returned to. Cllr Harvey repeated his request to get Cllr Johnson on the Footpaths committee to organise the contractors, volunteers and lengthsman. Cllr Johnson will consider this request. Cllr Rogers reminded the chair that at the last meeting Cllr Worthington set up a small group of himself, Cllrs Rogers and Shaw to complete this very task. Additionally, the need for all repairs and equipment must meet health and safety standards and British safety standards and be carried out by certificated individuals/companies. A maintenance plan has already been discussed and is most definitely required.

Action: Cllr Harvey

Mr Robbie Beresford reported that the well has been cleaned and is flowing. It was not known who had done this. The positive element of having a well dressing involving the schools, local children was approved.

Action: Cllr Harvey/ Shaw

15. Public Questions

Cllr Johnson informed those present that the furniture on Bridge Ey will be in place on 20th November, installed by Charles Taylor, access to the gate has been provided. The insurance of the items needs to be upgraded. Photographs will be shared on social media, to thank everyone who campaigned to save this space. Cllr Harvey stated that any wording needs to be passed through the chairman prior to it going on social media, for the benefit of all interested parties. This was then clarified to ensure that the chairman was aware, wording from Mr Johnson as an individual does not need approval.

Helen Bridgett asked regarding the use of Charles Piggot by the council and stated that he had a good reputation, especially in Wetley Rocks. The question was asked if he had been dropped by the council. Cllr Shaw indicated that several tree surgeons were used. Cllr Harvey stated that the selection of who does a job, trees or other work, must be by quote and is then voted on.

Helen Bridgett asked a question on behalf of David Blakeman of Fingerpost Farm, there used to be a path from just beyond the sundial in Wetley Rocks to Folly Lane. Cllr Harvey stated Footpath 62 has been closed by pathways, Staffs CC, due to its underfoot conditions.

Mr Whiston said that he had expected a few people who are on the Cautionary Lands Trust to be present this evening, particularly as Bridge Ey was on the agenda tonight. As one member had suggested that Bridge Ey be sold to benefit the church that resulted in a lot of concern, interest, anger and worry. Nearly 800 people signed the petition to save Bridge Ey. On the 15th of October people were told that Cllr Worthington had spoken to the vicar and that the vicar no longer wanted Bridge Ey to be sold. Cllr Harvey agreed with this and thought the sale was an intended good deed by someone else. A question was asked about why the public are now not welcome at the next Cautionary Land Trust meeting. The goal posts appear to keep moving. All people are asking for is transparency, to be kept in the loop. He felt the loop was turning into a noose. Mr Whiston felt that tomorrow night's meeting should be cancelled until good reason is given to the public of Cheddleton as to why they are not welcome. Cllr Harvey said that individuals do not need to be on Cautionary Lands to be on the footpaths Committee, this meeting discusses bridge Ey with regards to its use. As regards anything else the sale of it etc, those decisions lay with the trust and should be addressed to the chair of the trust. It's the chairman of the trusts decision not to let the public attend the meeting. Cllr Harvey was unable to answer the direct question of why the meeting will be held behind closed doors, as it is a separate entity over which the PC has no control. Concern was expressed that three members of the footpaths who are also on the Cautionary Lands Trust were absent this evening. It was repeated that it appears somewhat coincidental that those individuals were absent this evening. Cllr Rogers did clarify the attendance of herself and that of Cllr Beardmore at the Trust meeting, and the purpose of their attendance. Cllr Worthington should be addressed

with these questions. Wendy Johnson drew attention to the conflict of interest of the footpaths committee and the Cautionary Lands Trust. The chair of both is the same person Cllr Worthington. Both committees deal with Bridge Ey, one being the owner, the other leasing the land. The chair being the same person is surely a conflict of interest. Cllr Harvey indicated he hadn't really given it any thought. Cllr Harvey had been asked to chair the meeting tonight by Cllr Worthington and was asked if he felt this was odd. The role of the vice-chair was raised and what happened between Cllr Harvey and Shaw was shared. The matter was briefly discussed and the issue of no women being on the Cautionary Lands Trust was also brought into the discussion. Mrs Sue Arnold had spoken to an ex-chair of the Cautionary Lands Trust today regarding the question of the public not being invited, are we allowed to go. He replied not tomorrow but that the question of public attendance should be voted upon by the all the trustees and that things that have happened in the past that should not have.

Mrs Barr raised a question that she had put to Cllr Rogers. Cllr Rogers confessed that she had put this request with the papers for the meeting tomorrow and apologised. Three things are hoped for it to be designated as a village green, as a community asset and established on the local plan as a local green space. Once established on the local plan it would be very difficult to get planning permission on the land. An application has been submitted on behalf of our group, the Preservation of Bridge Ey Community Group: but support was sought from the PC regarding the application. Concern was expressed as to why it was not already established as such, as it has been a recreation ground since 1939. The motion that this committee supports the application for the preservation of Bridge Ey to be a local green space on the local plan was put forward and that this majority support then be passed to Full Council, which could then additionally go forward to SMDC to support it as a local green space. Proposed Cllr Rogers seconded by Cllr Shaw. Agreed. The Footpaths committee support this application and recommend that Full Council do the same. Cllr Harvey then indicated that this was not what he expected and that he would report as such. He wants to ensure that the Full Council are aware and that those members not present tonight who are on both the Cautionary Land Charity and the PC have the opportunity to vote. It will be put on the agenda of the next Full Council.

Action: Cllr Harvey/Shaw

16. Forward Agenda items

None.

Cllr Harvey concluded the meeting by reiterating the invitation to the public to attend.

Meeting closed at 9.05pm

17. Date of next meeting 10th February 7.30pm