



Minutes of the Meeting of Lapley, Stretton & Wheaton Aston Parish Council held on Thursday 25th January 2018 at Lapley and Wheaton Aston Village Hall

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| In Attendance: | Cllr T Noblett | Wheaton Aston (Chairman) |
| | Cllr. M. Griffiths | Lapley |
| | Cllr P Elson | Wheaton Aston |
| | Cllr M Fox | Lapley |
| | Cllr P Timson | Wheaton Aston |
| | Cllr S Whittingham | Wheaton Aston |
| | Cllr B Wells | Stretton |

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| Also in Attendance: | Mrs A Watson | Parish Clerk |
| | 29 members of the public | |

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| Apologies: | Cllr W Millington | Wheaton Aston |
| | Cllr H Jones | Wheaton Aston |
| | Cllr Mrs B Cox | Wheaton Aston |

The Chairman welcomed and informed all that whilst the meeting is an informal meeting of the Parish Council and residents of Lapley to discuss the required level of tree work at Lapley Green, all are invited to speak and the meeting will be minuted for audit purposes by the Clerk.

An application was put in in October 2017 following discussion for approx. two years and a decision reached to remove the trees in the area with the exception of one as the area is overgrown and in disrepair.

The application is required due to the green being within a conservation area, a period of six weeks is required for the SSDC to consider the application.

The Parish Council have received a response to application (17/00962/TREE) to clear Lapley Green of trees with the exception of the retention of the large Maple with a crown reduction of up to 20%. South Staffordshire District Council advised that they do not wish to impose any Tree Protection Orders on the area, however they do wish that the Parish Council would retain the holly hedge, Purple Maple, a Cedar as identified in the response.

In the conclusion from the officer it was stated that the officer considered the green to be over planted and therefore the trees cannot reach natural specimen size and form. Some form has been delayed by pruning because of over head cables. The officer is unclear if the concerns expressed to the lack of consultation are aimed at the Parish Council or SDCC. This opinion on the work would not have altered if further consultation had taken place. The recommendation (7.1) there is no objection to the removal of trees but suggested that three are retained along with the holly hedge and the pc consider consulting with residents on further proposals on landscaping of the green.

Once the trees are felled then the proposal is to replant the area. The Parish Council wish that the area should remain a green and not be reverted back to copse

A number of residents of Lapley have formed the 'Lapley Green Committee' and hold an alternative view to the Parish Council to clear the area of trees. The Committee appreciate that a level of tree work is required and instructed John A Booth Chartered Arboriculturist, Chartered Surveyor and Chartered Environmentalist, Certified Expert Witness to conduct a tree survey. This report indicated that only four trees are in a condition that requires removal- Larch, Holly and two Lawson's Cypress'. The Committee wish to suggest to the Parish Council; as has it has been suggested to South Staffordshire District Council; as follows (extracted from the Lapley Green Committee's letter to the Planning Department on 9th January 2018)

'in detail, the Committee want the four dead trees, highlighted in Mr Booths Report, to be felled together with the two very large conifers, to the left of the telephone box. These two conifers have been severely damaged by the removal of large branches in order to avoid Western Power's cables and now look very unsightly. Additionally, the Committee want the dead Ivy stems removed from all trunks, especially on the Atlantic Cedar and also along the wall to the left of the telephone box. Mr Booth and the Lapley Green Committee also see no reason to prune the Acer by 20%. The Committee regard the Acer tree as naturally handsome and it should remain untouched. Repairs to walls and gates repainting, which are mentioned in the above planning document, should also be undertaken.'

The Committee advised that 27 residents signed letters to agree with the plans put forward by the Lapley Green Committee. 15 parishioners in attendance at the meeting agreed with the Lapley Green Committees plans. Suggested that this is over 50% of the households in Lapley. Chairman advised that this is not a uniform decision as some residents have advised the Parish Council that they do wish for the area to be cleared.

Queries on number of subjects surrounding how the decision to clear the area was reached were raised by Parishioners which were responded to by members of the Parish Council. Chairman confirmed that there is a budget to complete the work and re-landscape the area. Additional funds can be requested in the precept if needed.

A Councillor with substantial Arboricultural knowledge advised that in removing some trees and retaining others such as leylandis they will be open to the elements and likely to fall as they are shallow rooted. The Parish Council have to consider the safety aspect of the remaining trees. A parishioner advised that recent winds have led to damage.

A parishioner shared a painting from 1976 of the land. There were not any trees, just a hedge, wall and potting shed. The wall needs attention. Appreciates that the trees will come down and seeks reassurance that trees are replaced by a considered specimen appropriate for the area and are maintained. Parishioners seek a promise from the pc to clear the area, replant and maintain.

A parishioner advised the Parish Council that he is concerned about behaviour in the copse during the night time, a number of times he has reported this to the police.

A parishioner advised that he feels the green currently inhibits views when driving and would like to see the holy bush removed as feels it is a safety issue.

He proposed that the area needs considerable work resulting in a proper green for people to sit in. this view was seconded by another parishioner.

Parishioner view- relatively new to the area and feels that the Parish Council haven't provided the residents with a plan of what the area will look like.

Parishioner view - historically the green was a pleasant small copse, feels that there have been varied and opposing views at the meeting, however feels a proposal for the future is required.

Concerns that the area will remain in disrepair in a similar manner to the work recently conducted by

Western Power. In 15 years the various Councils have not conducted any remedial work to the area and have been negligent. Suggested that a joint consultation with the parishioner's should take place, combination of ideas will secure a solution.

A Cllr suggested that the work is approached in steps, proposal to clear the area and the regeneration will be considered once the level of work is known. It was agreed that regeneration is required. A period of 12 months to allow the land to settle would be required and during this period a plan for landscaping will be decided. Parishioner does not agree with this view and is concerned that the PC will not undertake further works.

In conclusion the residents asked if the PC are able to conduct a health and safety report on the trees and then to consider the next step to remove any at consultation. Parishioners are welcome to suggest ideas on landscaping.

Clerk will seek advice from the Officers on SSDC on if a further health and safety (in addition to the suggestions from SSDC) report can be obtained

Meeting closed 9:10 pm

Signed.....Chairman.....

DRAFT

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