

MINUTES OF THE TETTENHALL COMMUNITY FORUM
Parish Rooms, Tettenhall
5th June 2025
at 6.30 pm

APOLOGIES

None recorded

There were 8 residents, including 2 Ward Councillors, in attendance.

MATTERS ARISING

ROCK JUNCTION

All the evidence now points to the fact that the Rock Junction TTRO dated December 2023 is unlikely to proceed. Whereas residents have been concerned, and still are, regarding the lack of communication from the council on this issue it now appears to be pointless and counterproductive to pursue any formal actions with the council and we would now therefore hope to return to a more constructive dialogue with the council on this and all the other matters relating to our dealings with them.

REGISTRATION

See Steering Group Update below.

910 AD BATTLES

Becky Cresswell continues to work on our application to various funding bodies and in particular the application to the Arts Council. Progress on this will be reported at our next meeting on 26th June.

PLANNING

There is no further information available on the Avenue House development following the council's order to cease work and depositing of detritus.

STEERING GROUP UPDATE

REGISTRATION

Registration has still not been achieved. Following Ian Culley's email in late April asking us to seek to join our application with the one in the name of the 6 Ward Councillors Steering Group have worked assiduously to engage with the Regis councillors to no avail. The Wightwick councillors continue to engage with us and we will record our appreciation for this and any embarrassment they may have at being joined with the application in the name of the Regis councillors where there appears to have little involvement or consultation. The Steering Group continues to seek collaboration with the Regis councillors and an approach has also been made via the Conservative Political Group to ask for their co-operation and engagement.

COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY (CIC)

The necessary documentation has been forwarded to Companies House regarding the continuation of the company's activities. It will be necessary to formulate and submit financial accounts later this year or early next year and Matt Caffrey will organise the production of these accounts and their approval by an appropriately qualified body in due course.

PETITION

Notwithstanding the Trust's current position on the Rock Junction TTRO it will be desirable and necessary to find some way of re-engaging with the council on the petition given that at the moment it is in abeyance subject to the council being in receipt of their consultant's advice on the junction in general.

The Steering Group will need to construct a new approach to the council regarding quietly and positively pursuing the aims of the petition without reawakening the TTRO issue.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Sally Garner explained the council's responsibilities in regard to maintenance of closed churchyards such as the St Michael's and All Angels churchyard. She offered to send a copy of the council's obligations to the Chair which I have attached for information to these minutes.

Sally Garner and Jonathan Crofts also explained the steps being taken by local councillors regarding a potential meeting between all 6 councillors to agree a common position on supporting the Trust in its desire to start work on updating the Neighbourhood Plan.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 20.00 hours.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Our next scheduled meeting is on 26th June at 18.30 in the Parish Rooms.

The agenda at this meeting will be;

- APOLOGIES
- MATTERS ARISING
 - Rock Junction
 - Registration
 - 910AD Battles, Art Trail
- PLANNING
 - Specifically the Avenue House situation
- SMESTOW VALLEY SUMMER FESTIVAL
- ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS CHURCHYARD
- NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING
 - Specifically speeding and other traffic violations and anti-social behaviour (eg Avenue House)
- STEERING GROUP UPDATE
- ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dear Councillor Sally Garner,

I have been asked to contact you regarding the above matter and the significant date of Sunday, 1st June, which marks the beginning of the official 70th Anniversary celebrations of the Church's reconsecration and the visit of the Bishop of Lichfield.

In preparation for this important occasion, our teams will be attending the site prior to the event to carry out grass cutting, general cleansing, and a tree inspection. The tree inspection will focus on identifying any potential risks and prioritising any necessary works to ensure the site is safe and presentable for the event.

The management of closed churchyards by local authorities is essentially custodial in nature and tends to be fairly low level, reflecting the limited statutory responsibilities placed upon councils. When a churchyard is formally closed for burials and the responsibility for its upkeep is transferred to the local authority—typically under Section 215 of the Local Government Act 1972—the council assumes a duty to maintain the site in a safe and decent condition. However, this duty is narrowly defined.

In practice, this means that the council is expected to carry out basic maintenance tasks such as:

- Periodic 4 frequency grass cuts.
- Ensuring that paths and access routes are safe and unobstructed.
- Maintaining boundary walls, fences, and gates to prevent hazards.
- Addressing any immediate safety concerns, such as unstable gravestones or damaged trees.

The legislation does not require the council to undertake more extensive or aesthetic improvements, such as landscaping, planting schemes, or restoration of historic features. As a result, the level of care provided is often minimal enough to meet legal obligations and ensure public safety.

This approach can sometimes fall short of community expectations, particularly where the churchyard holds historical or sentimental value. While we understand and appreciate these concerns, any enhancements beyond the statutory minimum would typically require additional funding.

We are, however, happy to support the local community and parish by assisting with the removal and disposal of any waste or arisings collected during clean-up events organised by them.

I hope this is of assistance to you, but should you have any further questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig

Craig Watkins

Environmental Place Based Development Manager