

REPORT TO PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL

19th June 2020

AGENDA ITEM 4.1 Problems relating to visitors to the lake

1. Background

1.1 At your meeting on 2nd June, members discussed the well-known problems that occurred recently and noted that the Parish Council depended heavily on other bodies – principally Cheshire East Council and Cheshire Police – to help deal with such problems. Members agreed:

- to seek some potential short-term measures that might help alleviate future occurrences;
- that the Clerk would seek to organise appropriate meeting(s) with relevant key stakeholders to discuss how problems might be comprehensively dealt with in the longer term;
- to establish a Parish Council Facebook page so as to provide a rapid means of communicating Council matters to the Pickmere community.

2. Report

2.1 The following actions have been implemented since that meeting:

- The Parish Council's Facebook page is now up and running and will be used to disseminate Parish Council news publicly and quickly.
- Through strong pressure on Cheshire East Council (CEC), 100 traffic cones have been supplied to the Parish Council and have been distributed throughout the village.
- A site meeting has been held with Cheshire Police Knutsford Division.
- Efforts have been made through CEC Councillor Kate Parkinson, and through direct contact with both the Leader and the Deputy Leader of CEC to identify relevant officers of CEC to attend an online meeting to discuss how future problems relating to excessive numbers of visitors might be avoided or ameliorated, however without success at the time of writing.
- Your Chair and Clerk attended an online meeting with representatives of Wincham Parish Council, Cheshire Police (Northwich Division), Cheshire West and Chester District Council (CWAC) (Highways/Youth Services/Community Safety), a key landowner, and Esther McVey MP.

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- Two members of the Parish Council attended a meeting in Wincham/Marston involving members of the relevant Parish Councils, Esther McVey MP and CWAC.
- Indicative financial figures have been received for the provision of fencing, both temporary site fencing, and permanent stock-type fencing, at the IROS, with a view to enhancing the Parish Council's ability to 'close' the IROS temporarily when circumstances require it.
- A scheme has been prepared for the drawing of white circles on the main IROS field.

2.2 The conclusions of the various actions referred to above are as follows:

- Whilst the traffic cones have been distributed, it is understood from both Cheshire Police and CEC that their presence does not assist any enforcement action to be taken. They can only operate as a visual deterrent to parking, but they are often just moved out of the way by vehicle drivers, or drivers park between them, and further, some of the cones have disappeared from the street, perhaps in some cases moved or taken by Pickmere residents.
- The Police can only act in cases of obstruction of the highway, and that on roads which do not have yellow lines; the enforcement of yellow line restrictions relies on CEC community wardens. Despite substantial efforts, the Parish Council has not been able to speak to any officer responsible for the community warden service at CEC. The Parish Council has been advised that whilst parking on residential roads may cause difficulties for residents, such problems may not be actionable by CEC or the Police. The Parish Council is very conscious of the recent accident that occurred on Clover Drive requiring attendance by several large fire appliances, as well as ambulance/paramedic vehicles.
- CEC at the time of writing have not offered any participant who would discuss these problems in a comprehensive manner with the Parish Council. Cheshire Police were not able to attend an online meeting but have attended a personal site meeting to discuss the issues.
- The online meeting that focussed on problems in Wincham/Marston, while helpful in the sense that it brought many different interests together, did not come to any helpful conclusions – rather just an elaboration by CWAC officers and also the Police representative of the powers that they did not have.

2.3 At the time of writing, your Parish Council is still endeavouring to organise a meeting with the various parts of CEC. Whilst experience seems to indicate that even if this was achieved it might result in limited action by that body, it is a process that should continue.

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- 2.4 The Parish Council will continue to seek to use the traffic cones it has to best effect; in doing so it is acknowledged that they do not enhance the appearance of the village.

Possible additional measures

- 2.5 The Parish Council is also able, should it wish, to lobby Cheshire East Council to repaint those of the existing yellow lines that may not be enforceable (e.g. parts of Park Lane), but also to extend the yellow lines to seek to push on-street parking, at least at weekends and Bank Holidays, further away from the lake. Potentially that might include The Orchards and Clover Drive. However CEC will be very conscious that extending the lines increases the demands that might be placed on their community wardens to enforce them. Further, the painting of yellow lines on residential roads will also impact on residents of the affected houses and when they would be able to park on-street.
- 2.6 CEC could hypothetically also be asked to extend the time restrictions relating to the current (and any future) yellow lines beyond summer weekends and bank holidays. However this then will impact even more on local residents' own parking arrangements and would need to be very carefully considered, if put forward.
- 2.7 Reference has also been made to the possible establishment of a residents' parking permit scheme on the principal residential roads. This again relies on Cheshire East Council. Members may recall that on 4 December 2018 you considered a request from a local resident to support such a scheme. However, having considered the complexities relating to the establishment of such a scheme, and the criteria that CEC use to assess the suitability of such a scheme, your Council resolved not to pursue the idea with CEC.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider at this meeting whether it wishes, with local volunteer help, to paint white social distancing circles on the IROS field, as a short-term way of trying to limit the numbers visiting the field. Depending on the size and number of the circles, the cost might be in the order of £300, assuming that the circles are spray painted by volunteers. It would be sensible to cut the grass before they are painted to maximise their longevity.
- 3.2 Members are asked to consider at this meeting whether to proceed further with any form of fencing at the IROS; a temporary and partial fence for part of the summer might cost in the order of £1500; a more comprehensive permanent fence around the

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lower parts of the IROS field, and also the open area to the north of the access down to the lake (i.e. on the permissive path side of the lake access) would cost in the order of £10,000. A listing of the various potential costings is at item 5.1.

3.3 Members are asked to suggest any further possible measures which might be pursued.

4. Recommendation

4.1 That members note the report and make appropriate decisions as to the various measures mentioned.