



PARISH COUNCIL BULLETIN – 1st May 2020

This document summarises the matters which would have been reported to an ordinary meeting of the Parish Council; a meeting was due to be held on 5 May 2020 but has been cancelled as a result of the Coronavirus crisis.

1 Finance – Monthly financial summary

The monthly summary is appended to this bulletin. This is the first month of the new financial year. Points to note are as follows:

- There is a new item - 'Community Infrastructure (Levy)' – this reflects the payment to the Parish Council of a sum of £6469 which arises from the housing development now proceeding on Clover Drive. Recent legislation makes provision for local planning authorities to establish a system for requiring such a levy in connection with new developments, with the aim of assisting the funding of infrastructure in the locality of the development in question. Cheshire East have over the last couple of years established such a regime (on which the Parish Council has been consulted from time to time), and this is the first development in Pickmere to have been required to make such a contribution. The development now proceeding at the Elms PH site was granted planning permission prior to this regime coming into effect. The proceeds of this levy can be used only for certain categories of development, and the question of how this money should be used will be considered at the next available meeting of the Parish Council (see further below).
- Clover Drive Open Space – payment for maintenance of the Clover Drive sites during 2019.
- Village Hall – utilities payments and payments for cleaning (up to lockdown).
- VAT – VAT has been reclaimed up to the end of March 2020.

2 Finance – new payments

2.1 Payments already made (by virtue of Standing Order powers of Clerk in association with Chair)

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- N Nitescu – cleaning Village Hall and spring-cleaning Pavilion (n.b. cleaning of the Village Hall since lockdown has been reduced to a monthly rather than a weekly cycle) £60.00
- Clerk’s expenses (schedule appended to this Bulletin) £21.35
incl. VAT

3 Finance – general

The annual accounts for 2019-20 have been prepared and the Council’s financial procedures are awaiting assessment by the Internal Auditor, as is usual. In a normal year, the Council’s annual accounts would normally be presented for approval to Council at its June meeting, so as to comply with controlling legislation. However because of the current crisis, Government has relaxed the deadlines by a period of 3 months or so. See further below.

4 Planning matters

CEC’s planning officers are largely or wholly working from home, and this is resulting in delays in processing planning applications and dealing with unauthorised developments.

- **19/2660M** - Extensions – Rose Cottage, Park Lane – not yet determined - amended plans submitted
- **19/5621M; 19/5562M; 19/5563M** – Housing proposals at Hall Lane – no decision
- **20/0980M** – Extensions and erection of garage – High Garth, Park Lane – no decision
- **20/0965M** – Reserved matters – 2 dwellings at Park Lane (opposite Frog Lane) – no decision

Planning enforcement referrals to CEC:

- Siting of mobile home and freight container, Sunnyside/Meadowcroft, Pickmere Lane – Contravention notices were served on 2nd October – no further information received from CEC.

5 Other matters

5.1 Coronavirus

5.1.1 Use of Council properties - As a result of the Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Government advice/instruction, the Village Hall and the Clover Drive play area remain closed. The car parking areas at the IROS (Jacob’s Way) have been closed off to dissuade persons from driving to the site. As previously, the Council relies on members of the public using this land to respect Government advice in terms of social distancing, and not to gather in groups.

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5.1.2 Social distancing around the Lake – Contact has been with the Police several times in respect of persons ignoring social distancing advice at or near the Lake. It is understood that the Police do visit the area from time to time.

5.1.3 Operation of the Council during the crisis - The Council’s scheduled meeting of 5 May 2020 is cancelled, and extraordinary meetings cannot be called due to the current crisis. The business of the Council will continue as far as possible as normal, relying on Standing Order Emergency Provisions that in such circumstances the Clerk in association with the Chair of the Council is authorised to take decisions on behalf of the Council. These provisions will operate bearing in mind that the Clerk works from home, and that social distancing protocols will be observed.

The Council’s consideration of its annual accounts is normally required to be carried out in the June/July period to enable advertising of the accounts to the public in July. This timescale has been relaxed to some extent by the Government. However despite the crisis, Government is still requiring that parish councils consider their accounts in a formal meeting, which can be a virtual meeting, and accordingly it is hoped to organise a virtual meeting of the Council in early June. It is hoped that provision can be made for observation of the meeting by members of the public. Relevant arrangements will be advertised in advance on the Council’s noticeboards and the website.

The normal statutory requirement for the election of officers of the Council at the May meeting has been relaxed such that Councils may continue to operate until May 2021 with their present officers and are not required to re-elect officers this year. Councils may re-elect officers if they so wish and are able to do so via a virtual meeting, so long as it is arranged in accordance with current regulations.

5.2 Establishment of Community Group system to help local vulnerable residents – The Community Group’s WhatsApp group of volunteers continues to help those residents who have difficulties in shopping, dog walking etc as a result of current quarantine/lockdown/social distancing restrictions, and have also been extremely active in various ways in supporting NHS/social care staff in nearby hospitals and other units. The Parish Council is grateful to those who are helping the local community in this or any other way during the current situation.

5.3 Table Tennis at the Village Hall – A number of people have expressed interest in playing table tennis once present restrictions are lifted. Any others who wish to put their name down are asked to contact the Clerk.

5.4 Traffic speeds on Pickmere Lane – Cheshire East Council have been supplied with a list of recent traffic incidents/accidents that have occurred on Pickmere Lane, some of them apparently because reduced traffic flows have encouraged faster vehicle speeds.

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