

658
MINUTES of THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Held ONLINE

8th September 2020

AGENDA

1. ATTENDANCE

Present	AS (Chair), AB, PD, SF, SR, HS, CT
Apologies	Cllr K Parkinson (CEC); PCSO
Police	Nil
Public	14 members of the public for most of the meeting

2. MINUTES

2.1 Approval of Minutes – The minutes of the meeting of 14th July and 11th August 2020 were agreed.

2.2 Matters arising from Minutes – 14th July minutes item 8.4 - the Clerk noted that CEC Cllr Parkinson had informed him that the Parish Council's request that the Park Lane faded yellow lines be repainted had been considered by the relevant CEC officer group and had been authorised, so that that should proceed in due course.

14th July minutes item 8.5 – **Security at the IROS** – The Clerk noted that he has a meeting arranged with a contractor this week to discuss a potential CCTV installation.

11th August minutes item 5.2 – **Website renewal** - The Clerk confirmed in response to AB's question, that progress had quickly been made on the setting up of the new website, and that an initial skeleton website was now being 'populated' with data.

11th August minutes Item 5.1 **Neighbourhood Plan** – The Clerk said in response to a question that he had had little time to move this matter forward significantly since the previous meeting, but that in addition the consultant had been on holiday.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS SF declared an interest in consideration of planning application 20/3593M – Amended layout of housing at Clover Drive.

4. PUBLIC FORUM

4.1 Public Forum The Clerk had prior to the meeting circulated to councillors two emails received from members of the public commenting or asking questions in relation to various matters. In the first email only one matter related to an agenda item - viz. the reopening of the

play area - asking what the Council was doing about reopening the area. This matter is discussed further below. The second email offered the view that in the light of the agreement between the Council and Pickmere Community Group for the use of the Pavilion, responsibility for maintenance should fall upon the Group rather than the Council.

These comments/questions were noted. Other questions/comments made in these emails and not relating to agenda items were responded to by the Clerk in email to the correspondents prior to the meeting.

- 4.2 PCSO** The Clerk reported that the PCSO had confirmed by email that there had been no reportable incidents in the parish in the past month. In reply to a question from the Clerk, the PCSO said that she had no access to global numbers of parking tickets issued in Pickmere during the summer, but that she had personally issued 15-20. In reply to another question she said that she was unable to pass on records of road traffic accidents recorded by the Police in the parish due to GDPR restrictions. The Clerk was asked to write further to the PCSO to ask why GDPR prevents summary details of accidents being given to the Council.

5. REPORT FROM CEC CLLR K PARKINSON RE CEC MATTERS Nil

6. FINANCE

- 6.1 Current financial position** The monthly financial summary was noted.

- 6.2 New payments** The schedule of payments was noted and authorised, including additional late items/amendments:

- Clerk's expenses increased to £112.38 in the light of late receipt of a further Zoom invoice.
- The Hall cleaner's bill for August was £10 not £18
- WAP Lawton and Son Ltd - £72 excl. VAT – cutting back vegetation on Buttercup Way footpath
- Cheshire Tree Surgeons Ltd - £300 excl. VAT – tree work at the IROS

- 7. PLANNING APPLICATION UPDATE** The schedule was noted; the Clerk added reference to 20/3299M which had been inadvertently omitted from the list, where comments had been submitted to CEC on behalf of the Parish Council (see minutes of 11 August meeting), but the application remained undetermined. The Clerk was asked to respond to CEC on the following applications:

- 20/1938M – One dwelling – Frog Lane – members noted the reduction in the size of the proposed workshop but remained concerned at the scope for potential commercial use of that and the proposed garage, and wished to be reassured that this could be prevented by planning condition.
- 20/3593M – Amended layout – 4 dwellings – Clover Drive – no comments except that members welcomed the fact that the views of the neighbour had been taken into account. SF did not speak or vote on that matter.

The Chair suggested that it was an appropriate moment at which to seek to revisit CEC's position in relation to the unauthorised travellers' site at Spinks Lane, as it is some time since there has been any discussion of the issue with CEC. This was agreed and the Clerk was asked to write to CEC to request the current position.

8. REPORTS FROM CLERK AND FROM COUNCILLORS

8.1 Government White Paper on Planning "Planning for the Future" The Clerk summarised some of the key features of the consultation paper, which proposes radical changes to the national planning system, and the potential implications for Pickmere, including:

- The increased role of Government in writing planning policies, in operating a new Community Infrastructure Levy system on a national not local basis, and the loss of the powers and abilities of local councils in determining planning issues, to the potential detriment of local influence over how the planning system operates locally.
- The conflict between the Paper's emphasis on emphasising the need for "beauty" in building design, which contradicts completely with Government's recent approval of 'Permitted development' changes which allow the construction of two storey vertical extensions to existing houses, with reduced planning controls (see agenda item 8.2).
- The emphasis on the need for increased building densities.
- The uncertainty as to how the proposed system of 'Growth', 'Renewal', and 'Protection' Zoning would affect the village and the wider parish.

Members noted the report and Paper.

8.2 Changes to Planning Permitted Development rights and the Use Classes Order – these changes could affect Pickmere. The report was noted.

8.3 Reopening of Clover Drive Play Area The Clerk summarised his report noting that Government remained cautious about the potential for spread of Coronavirus in play areas. It was noted that person(s) unknown had in the last week taken it upon themselves to break and or remove locks keeping the area closed, and to remove related signage. This was to be regretted. The Chair pointed out that if an issue had arisen as a result of that, then that person would have been legally liable for any damage that might have occurred.

SR reported that he had prepared a risk assessment in relation to the possible reopening, and also related warning signs, which he had erected over the weekend. It was considered impractical for the Council, in common with many other councils nationally, to carry out the regular cleaning of equipment that Government guidance would ideally like to see. Members commented that if our insurers were content with the situation – i.e. the preparation of a risk assessment and the erection of appropriate signage (which they had indicated was so) – then it was open to the Council to formally reopen the area should it wish. A councillor pointed out that even without the forced reopening mentioned, the Council may well have come to the same conclusion at this meeting. A quotation in the sum of £75.60 had been received for the

provision of a banner for erection at the area making reference to relevant precautionary guidance.

Members unanimously resolved:

- That the principle of reopening the play area be accepted, subject to compliance with the risk assessment and the erection of appropriate signage.
- That expenditure of up to £150 be authorised in relation to the provision of signage or other requirements to secure this end.

8.4 Reopening of Village Hall – The Clerk summarised the current position, which has changed little since the matter was last considered. Reference was made to a request from one group who hire the Hall that it is very keen to recommence meetings, with appropriate Covid safeguards, and to the social benefits of doing so. Views were expressed that the Council should seek to move toward a future reopening, and possibly aim for a potential opening date. The Clerk was therefore requested to report to the October meeting with further information, including a risk assessment and possibly a protocol for the reopening of the hall, so that the matter could be reconsidered.

***N.B.** The morning after this meeting Government announced that in view of recent increases in the spread of Covid-19, a law is shortly to be passed requiring that no more than 6 persons can meet (in most circumstances, which may include in a village hall situation). Such a provision may mean that there is no possibility of the hall reopening until this situation changes.*

8.5 Proposed temporary road closures - M6 J19 and A556 The report was noted and the Highways Agency to be notified that Council's preference is for such closures to be made in the New Year, as closures over the Christmas period might unduly impact on local pubs and restaurants which are seeking to recover from the current Covid crisis.

8.6 Replacement of Pavilion doors and gutter repair – there was discussion of different ways of replacing the doors so as to provide a solution that was visually acceptable while being secure. The Chair commented on the question posed by a resident in the Public Forum above, that his own understanding of the situation regarding maintenance of the Pavilion was that the Community Group had accepted responsibility for dealing with wear and tear-type issues at the building, whereas the Council as owner of the building retained responsibility for more structural elements such as the potential renewal of doors and gutters. The Clerk reported that he was already awaiting a quote for repair of the gutter (as well as the small platform adjoining the lake), and he was asked to seek appropriate quotations in relation to the doors.

The meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.

Jack Steel
Parish Clerk