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**MINUTES of THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
in PICKMERE VILLAGE HALL**

1st November 2016 at 7.30 p.m.

1. **Present:** AS (Chair), CT (Vice-Chair), PG, AB, SF, IK, SR
 Apologies: DH (Work issues)
 Police: PC M Dawber, PC A Roberts
 Public: 3 members of the public
 Absent: Cllr O Hunter

2. **Minutes**

2.1 **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes for the meeting of 4th October 2016 (618) were approved and signed by the Chair.

2.1 **Matters arising**

CT updated the item 9.4 - the artwork relating to Pickmere to be prepared by E Jackson, Artist, was not yet ready but should be available for the next meeting.

CT updated the item 9.5 - painting of Cheshire Railings, Clover Drive - the materials for this have been bought; 3 members of the public have volunteered to help with this work; the start of work depends on suitable weather conditions.

SR entered the meeting at this point

3. **Declaration of Interests**

None

4. **Open Forum (Including PCSO)**

- 4.2 **PCSO** - The meeting agreed to bring this item forward in the agenda. PC Mike Dawber introduced himself as Rural Beat Officer and PC Andy Roberts who also assists but concentrates on town centre issues, which currently present greater problems than rural areas. The Police propose to establish a series of Community First meetings - similar to a surgery session. These will be held at High Legh Garden Centre on a monthly basis. PC Dawber will inform the Clerk of the proposed dates for local publication. PCSO G Fulton is to assist with Speedwatch training at the Village Hall on 10 November.

- 4.1 **Open Forum** - A member of the public explained her wish to provide for the Council a new tree and a replacement public bench on the sites at Clover Drive, in memory of her son, now sadly deceased. The Chair thanked the member for her kind offer and said the Council would consider the request later on the Agenda (item 8.4).

5. **Finance**

- 5.1 Current Financial Position** - the monthly report was noted
- 5.2 Approval of new payments** - Council authorised the payments listed on the attached report.
- 5.3 Budget for 2017/18 and Precept** - The Chair noted that this was the Council's first opportunity to consider the proposed budget and Precept figure for the next financial year. The Council considered the draft budget spreadsheet attached to the agenda. During the discussion which followed it was noted that the Precept represents the sole means by which the whole community of Pickmere contributes to the costs of running the Parish and carrying out the Council's responsibilities. There was discussion of the role of the Council's financial reserves and the extent to which the proceeds of the two historical land transfers, provided to fund several years' maintenance of the land involved, had been expended. The meeting was conscious of the fact that without the work of certain volunteers (both councillors and members of the public) the expenses of the Council would be significantly increased. These contributions in kind cannot be assumed to last forever. Reference was also made to the significant costs to the Council of maintaining its two buildings, its extensive open spaces, and equipped play area, all well used for community purposes.

Members balanced the pressure not to increase the Precept, which had remained unchanged for the last 5 years or so, with the need to ensure that the Council's financial resources remained adequate, in terms of its responsibilities and also the Council's aim to enhance the built facilities it owns in the foreseeable future.

The Council **resolved** that the Precept for 2017/8 should be increased by 5%, which would amount roughly to an annual increase of £1.76 on the Parish Council tax per Band D property.

- 6. Planning Report** - noted
- 7. Reports from Assets Working Group**
- 7.1 Funding Sub-Group** - SF summarised the results of the survey of current users of the Village Hall and Pavilion. The survey would provide useful information in relation to considering any future modifications to the Council's buildings. There remains the question of how to address any unknown/untapped demand. The report was noted.
- 7.2 Planning Sub-Group** - The Sub-group would like to move forward with an outline planning application relating to extension of the Pavilion, in order to establish the planning acceptability of such an option. There is no other way to test this. The Sub-group will take the results of 7.1 into account in proceeding. It proposes the allocation of a sum to cover the preparation of basic outline plans and also specialist planning input into a planning application.

The Council **resolved** that a figure of £1000 be authorised for the purposes described.

- 7.3 Asset Register Sub-Group** - The Sub-group's work had been taken into account in dealing with budget/Precept matters.

8 Reports from Clerk and from Councillors

- 8.1 Relationship between Parish Council and Community Group** - Members unanimously valued the work of the Community Group. However, it was felt that there was scope to enhance the relationship between the Council and the Group so as to facilitate the holding of events and the resultant contributions to the Parish's environment and sense of community.

One current issue is the need to ensure that public events are properly covered by appropriate indemnity insurance. It was therefore proposed that a meeting be held with representatives of the Community Group with a view to establishing a more formal relationship between the two. The nature of any such relationship needs careful consideration so as to avoid constraining the creativity and enthusiasm of the Group, whilst providing the necessary formal structures to permit issues such as insurance to be dealt with.

It was **resolved** that a meeting be arranged between members of the Parish Council and representatives of the Community Group to discuss these matters.

- 8.2 Community Pride Awards** - CT reported that the Awards event was well supported. An award was made to J Robinson for his contribution to the Pickmere community. A 'Little Gem' award was given in respect of the carved bench at the IROS. CT thanked SF and DH for their work in formulating the submission on behalf of the village. He suggested that we should try to maintain momentum, and thus that the Council gives consideration to potential environmental enhancement that can be made, and also in preparing in advance for next year's competition. There was discussion of the detailed scoring that Pickmere achieved, which was provided in the Awards literature. The Council noted the report and agreed with the recommendations of CT and SF that early thought should be given to how the village can prepare for next year's competition.
- 8.3 Annual Parish Council Meeting** - It was agreed that this meeting, where Chair/Vice-Chair and members of sub-committees are elected, would be held on 2nd May 2017. Reference was made to the possibility of arranging a separate Annual Parish Meeting, as envisaged in legislation, where members of the public can make a significant contribution to discussion, and can raise issues in a less formal forum than that of a Parish Council meeting. There is the question of how well attended such an event might be. It was resolved that the Clerk should clarify the legal position in relation to the requirement for the Council to arrange such a meeting, and that the item should be included on next month's agenda for further consideration.
- 8.4 Community Donation** - The attached report relates to the request made by the member of the public referred to at 4.1 of these minutes. The Council was pleased to accept the request of the resident. Following discussion it was agreed that a list of 3 potential tree species would be prepared and presented to the resident, to enable the final choice to be made in conjunction with her. The possibility of an apple tree was generally favoured. Similarly, the potential cost of replacing a bench would be explored and discussed with the resident, with the Council expressing a willingness to contribute to the cost if substantial. The Clerk is to communicate with the resident.
- 8.5 Parliamentary Boundary Review** - Reference was made to the circulated letters from Knutsford Town Council and George Osborne MP. It was agreed that the Council should respond to the consultation, and that it favoured the alternative approach proposed by Mr Osborne, to the extent that a revised constituency boundary should not associate the rural area containing Pickmere with a part of the Greater Manchester conurbation. The Clerk is authorised to respond accordingly to the consultation, and to reply to the letters of Mr Osborne and Knutsford Town Council. The Council noted that members of the public should also be encouraged to respond to the consultation.

Next Meeting: 6 December 2016

Clerk: Jack Steel