

659
MINUTES of THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Held ONLINE

6th October 2020

AGENDA

1. ATTENDANCE

Present	AS (Chair), AB, SF, SR, HS, CT
Apologies	PD, 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 8th September 2020 were agreed.

2.2 Matters arising from Minutes – 4.2 – PCSO – the Clerk had as requested written again to the PCSO asking why summary details of road accidents in Pickmere could not be supplied but had not received a reply.

7 – Planning matters – In response to a question, the Clerk confirmed that a letter had gone from the Chair to Cheshire East Council (CEC) requesting an update as to the Spinks Lane situation. The Clerk was asked to write also to Esther McVey MP to express the Council's continuing concerns about this matter.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS Nil

4. PUBLIC FORUM

4.1 Public Forum No communications in relation to the forum had been received from members of the public.

4.2 PCSO The PCSO had informed the Clerk that there had been no reportable incidents in Pickmere in the last month.

5. REPORT FROM CEC CLLR K PARKINSON RE CEC MATTERS Cllr Parkinson had informed the Clerk that the refreshing of the existing faded yellow lines in the village was likely to be approved by CEC very shortly.

6. FINANCE

6.1 Current financial position The monthly financial summary was noted. The Clerk clarified that this was the position half way through the financial year. In response to a question he said that the 'VAT refund' line just above the 'Village Hall' line in the monthly summary was a superfluous line, and that the current VAT position was that at the bottom of the table (just below 'Total for all Cost Centres'), where so far in the current year, £243.12 VAT had been reclaimed by the Council and a further £311.06 incurred. The Clerk requests reclaims from time to time and a further reclaim will be submitted shortly.

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

- Clerk's expenses increased to £28.64 in the light of late receipt of a monthly Zoom invoice.
- The Hall cleaner's bill for August was £12.
- Replacement of a lock that had been stolen from the play area, plus purchase of varnish for the notice boards – payable to Cllr Read - £41.98. Cllr Read commented on the unacceptability of locks at the play area and the black gates having been broken/stolen by vandals, and regretted that precept moneys had to be expended to remedy these problems.

6.3 Adoption of Accounts for 2019-20 The annual accounts for 2019-20 were formally adopted.

7. PLANNING APPLICATION UPDATE The schedule was noted; the Council made the following comments in relation to application 20/4021M:

- Green Belt policy accepts the re-use of buildings provided they are of permanent and substantial construction; CEC's policy defines that as being constructed predominantly of brick, which these buildings are not. Therefore the change of use is not appropriate in planning terms.
- Members are concerned at the additional traffic the proposed use will generate, entering/exiting onto Park Lane near the severe bend where two additional houses are being built, contrary to the Parish Council's views.
- The application building is very close to a dwellinghouse, which could be significantly affected by noise/disturbance, particularly if the use and hours of operation of the proposed use are not closely controlled. CEC should ensure that the views of neighbours to the site should be fully taken into account.
- CEC's Conservation Officer had expressed concern about the impact of the proposal on the setting of the listed farmhouse/building group and Great Budworth Church.

8. REPORTS FROM CLERK AND FROM COUNCILLORS

8.1 Request from Knutsford Town Council for a contribution to Knutsford Citizens Advice service

Members were generally supportive of the service provided by CA, and they discussed the merits of the particular proposal and the funding of the CA service, and the relationship

between the Town Council's annual income and the costs relating to this service. The Clerk was requested to seek any further information on the extent of use of the service by Pickmere residents.

8.2 New approach to Community Policing Various comments were made:

- The PCSO had been asked to explain how exactly this will impact on Pickmere, and also for contact details for the PC mentioned in the publicity material – however no response had been received to this request.
- A £1000 funding pot for 122 communities has no real meaning.
- Council Tax bills have recently incorporated a significantly increased element to fund police activities in the district, so there is an argument that this initiative should have been in operation already.
- Concern that the PC still has no direct form of contact with the Police at Knutsford.
- In general, if this means a better service then this is welcomed.

The report was noted.

8.3 National Clerks' salary award and Clerk's working hours The report was noted and Council agreed to implement the recent national pay award.

8.4 Reopening of Village Hall – The Clerk summarised the current position – a group of councillors (AB, SF and HS) has drafted the various documents that would be required if the hall was to be opened. AB commented that the Hall can be made Covid secure but as important was to manage its use by hirers, and also that all members were conscious that at any time Government could change the rules that apply to Cheshire East, making it impossible to re-open the Hall. There was discussion about the costs of providing the various materials required to do this, and the potential benefit/value for money if only two groups were to choose to restart meetings, but it was generally felt that such material would be required whenever the Hall was reopened (whether now or in several months' time) and would therefore not be wasted even if Pickmere was shortly to be subject to harsher restrictions. It may be that we will have a period when Pickmere will move into and out of severe restrictions. In addition it may be that if the Hall was reopened to a few users it may encourage other users to return.

Council resolved that the Village Hall should be reopened as soon as appropriate arrangements in line with the information described above can be implemented and that expenditure of up to £500 in connection with measures required to reopen the Hall in a Covid-safe way be authorised, subject to the following:

- That Government guidance or regulation does not act to prevent such reopening;
- The provision and use of an appropriate set of documents and protocols based on those circulated with this report, together with any others thought necessary, and the compliance of Hall users with the requirements set out therein;
- The implementation of the various physical measures as described above;

- That it is understood that the principal responsibility for the establishment, implementation and management of the system described falls upon one or more members of Council.

8.5 Maintenance of Council assets The report was noted, including the fact that in the last financial year the Council spent over £6500 on the maintenance of its assets. The idea of a regularly updated maintenance schedule was accepted. It was considered that this would also give a framework for involving members of the Pickmere community to assist with certain of the tasks highlighted. The Clerk noted that he had received two quotations for the repair of the Pavilion gutters. **It was resolved that:**

- That the attached schedule be noted.
- That a sub-group of councillors, in conjunction with the Clerk, be responsible for maintaining the schedule, and for leading the implementation of agreed items by a working group and/or local volunteers.
- That the items included be taken into account in preparation for the Council's budget for 2021-22.
- That the Clerk report back in relation to the possibility of creating an arrangement with a local contractor able and willing to carry out some of the tasks that were too large/technical for community volunteers to handle, yet too small to warrant a formal quotation/tender process.
- The Clerk is authorised to select one of the two contractors mentioned and to proceed with the gutter repair/replacement at the Pavilion.

8.6 Security at the IROS parking spaces The merits of CCTV and additional lighting were discussed. SF queried whether a request could be made to Cheshire Police for a contribution to any costs from the funding mentioned above in item 8.2. If additional lighting was installed, it was considered undesirable for it unduly to affect the neighbouring house. However, if lighting alone was implemented now, it would be possible to reconsider the idea of CCTV if thought necessary in future. The Clerk pointed out that depending on whichever solution was agreed, it would be necessary to supplement the quotation received with at least one further quotation, because of the requirements of the Council's Financial Regulations. **It was resolved that:**

- The Council agreed the principle of additional lighting along the lines referred to.
- The Council would not proceed with a CCTV proposal at the present time.
- The Council would not proceed with a joint CCTV and lighting proposal at the present time.

The meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.

Jack Steel
Parish Clerk