

**663**  
**MINUTES of THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Held ONLINE**

**2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021**

**PART A – PUBLIC AGENDA**

**1. ATTENDANCE**

<b>Present</b>	<b>AS (Chair), AB, PD, SF, SR, CT,</b>
<b>Apologies</b>	<b>HS, Cllr K Parkinson (CEC)</b>
<b>Police</b>	<b>Sgt Craig Hodson</b>
<b>Public</b>	<b>14 members of the public for much of the meeting</b>

**2. MINUTES**

**2.1 Approval of Minutes - meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020** The minutes were agreed with the replacement of the word 'would' by 'may' in the penultimate line of item 5.

**2.2 Matters arising - meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020** **8.2 – Clover Drive Play Area** – SR noted that the working group discussing the play area had met and are taking forward thinking about the future of the area; they will report back on progress so far to the March Council meeting.

**7.1 – Planning application** update – CT noted that the footpath link through The Elms site had now been reopened.

**2.3 Approval of Minutes – Extraordinary meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021** The minutes were agreed.

**2.4 Matters arising – Extraordinary meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021** Nil

**3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS** Nil

**4. PUBLIC FORUM**

**4.1 Public Forum** One item of correspondence had been received under this heading. A resident of Sunnyside, Pickmere Lane had copied to the Clerk the representations of his household and other residents of this cul-de-sac in respect of current planning application 20/5757M. The Clerk summarised the main issues raised in these representations and also the request of those residents that the Parish Council *"consider brokering and hosting a meeting with Cheshire East Planning Department, the landowner and residents to attempt to provide a resolution that is acceptable to all parties in respect of the on-going issues with the land at Sunnyside, Pickmere Lane?"* The Clerk commented that this question will be considered at agenda item 7.2 later in the meeting.

**4.2 Report from PCSO** Sgt Craig Hodson introduced himself; he has taken over the local policing team – temporarily at the moment, but hopefully permanently. He has noted the events that occurred in Pickmere last summer.

In respect of crime generally, only 12 incidents have been reported in Pickmere since 1<sup>st</sup> October, none of them with significant general implications. He commented that this figure is very low in comparison with e.g. High Legh (50 incidents), Ashley (35), etc.

AS commented that in the last couple of months it appeared (e.g. from PCSO media posts) that greater emphasis, e.g. on policing parking problems, was being given to other settlements e.g. Little Bollington. Sgt Hodson said that in relation to complaints about parking issues in Pickmere he has only found 1 telephone call logged (in early/mid-January).

Sgt Hodson would like further discussion of this issue via a joint working group involving a variety of agencies, and is considering some form of survey of Pickmere residents.

SF noted that one particular concern last summer was the lack of communication between the Police's Knutsford and Northwich stations. Sgt Hodson agreed that such communication was crucial.

Sgt Hodson concluded by saying that he would authorise the PCSO to attend future Council's Zoom meetings.

**5. REPORT FROM CLLR K PARKINSON** Cllr Parkinson could not attend this evening because of a highways meeting. She had sent in a report on the following matters:

- She had walked round Pickmere roads earlier today with CT looking particularly at pothole-type issues. She will pursue these issues further at CEC.
- Contractors will be installing cables on Park Lane for BT and KP is discussing temporary traffic diversion routes with the developers.
- Spinks Lane – KP has had communication with CEC's Portfolio holder on the matter. [The matter is to be discussed later on this agenda.]
- KP has spoken to concerned residents about the possibility of double yellow lines being installed on various roads in the village. Any proposals will require public consultation with all Pickmere residents. [The Parish Council is endeavouring to arrange a discussion with CEC about this possibility.]
- KP is still unable to report back on the S106 agreement for the lake; she is still awaiting officers' feedback and this is slow because of the complex background to the matter.

SR expressed thanks to KP for spending the time to consider these matters and in particular for spending time in the village looking at the condition of the roads etc. Members concurred with this view.

**6. FINANCE**

**6.1 Current financial position** The Clerk drew attention to the receipt in the last month of significant further moneys from Government via CEC as part of the Covid relief measures for organisations and companies possessing business-rated premises. The Clerk is seeking assurance that the Parish Council is eligible to receive such grants and will report on this to Council's March meeting.

The monthly financial summary was noted.

- 6.2 New payments** The schedule of new payments was agreed, with the addition of a sum of £12 for cleaning of the VH during January, and also payment of 50% of the bill (£1737.96) for provision of replacement parish noticeboards (which was agreed at the 12 January meeting), such payment being required to secure the order.

## **7. PLANNING MATTERS**

- 7.1 Planning application update** The schedule was noted. In particular members noted that CEC had imposed conditions restricting the hours of use, and the potential for future changes of use, in relation to application 20/4021M, which conditions had been suggested by the Parish Council.

- 7.2 20/5757M – Provision of 2 mobile homes on land at Sunnyside, Pickmere Lane** The Clerk introduced the application and pointed to some of the issues that might be seen to arise with it, in relation to technical issues relating to the application's validity, the absence of information in the application, and the planning context for the proposal. Members were also conscious of the request from adjoining residents noted at agenda item 4.1 above.

After a discussion of the application, members resolved to object to the application on the following grounds:

- The validity of the application: the application's red line does not extend to the public highway and does not therefore include the ability to access it; it is therefore impossible for CEC to attach a planning condition relating to any matters relating to the provision or potentially the design of such access. Further the applicant's agent has certified that the applicant owns all the land within the red line, whereas the residents state that a part of the site is not owned by the applicant. A planning application which contains an inaccurate ownership certificate is invalid and should not be entertained by the district council. At the least the relevant residents should have been formally notified by the applicant of submission of the application if the application included their land.
- The proposal conflicts with Government guidance and Local Plan policy in respect of development in the Green Belt, and no special circumstances have been put forward to justify such development.
- As with the previous application on the land, no analysis of nature conservation impacts has been submitted.
- No detail has provided of how the proposed units would be drained.
- The proposed units have an extremely large footprint and are completely out of character with other dwellings on this cul-de-sac; further the amount of garden area provided is very small.
- The potential removal of the existing mobile homes on the site is no justification for approving this application – one of the existing units is unauthorised/unlawful; the second, while possibly lawful, is dilapidated and unusable and should be removed from the site.

Members went on to discuss the request made by the local residents referred to in item 4.1 above. It was agreed that it might be difficult for the Parish Council to 'broker a deal' between the various parties, but did agree that the PC should continue to assist the residents to resolve this matter satisfactorily. Council therefore resolved to support the residents of Sunnyside in their dialogue

with the district council and the landowner, and to do what it can to assist in bringing together the various parties to seek a satisfactory resolution.

## **8. REPORTS FROM CLERK AND FROM COUNCILLORS**

**8.1 Report re Asset maintenance issues** The report noted progress with regard to the provision of:

- Replacement parish council noticeboards (see agenda item 7.2 above)
- Refurbishment of VH noticeboard – contractor instructed to proceed – subject to weather
- VH - replacement of skirting board – contractor instructed to proceed
- Minor maintenance of VH roof – contractor instructed to proceed
- Provision of co-ordinated signs at the IROS – order submitted – see further below
- Replacement Pavilion doors – order to be submitted imminently
- Open lakeside land – awaiting response from potential adviser
- Erection of lamp standard at the IROS – work completed earlier today; black gates to be opened tomorrow 3 February.

In discussing the above topics members agreed:

- To amend slightly some of the wording on the co-ordinated signs
- Otherwise to approve the artwork and colours on those signs and the locations proposed in the report
- To approve the artwork and colours of the proposed PC noticeboards, except that the Clerk is asked to query the possibility of including the PC's logo on the boards; members resolved to delegate power to the Clerk in conjunction with the Chair to agree any additional costs to do so if the solution appeared to be acceptable and the additional cost of including this amendment was reasonable.

**8.2 Spinks Lane** The report was noted. A further discussion of the topic took place at agenda item 9 below.

**8.3 Cheshire Community Homes – Community Housing Initiative** The press release was noted.

**8.4 Requests for memorial items** Request 1 (tree) – members generally agreed the principle of this though one member wondered whether a better location might be on the Mere Lane/Park Lane land, where several dead trees had recently been removed (if located in the rear corner of the IROS the tree might over time become subsumed in the woodland). The Clerk will continue discussions with the family and will report back in due course.

Request 2 – members considered that the idea of a further interpretation board, containing information about the history of Pickmere Lake and the activities it used to accommodate, was an excellent thought. One suggestion was that such a board might be located on the external wall of the Pavilion. Certainly the board should avoid a location under trees. The Clerk will explore these ideas further with the family concerned and report back in due course.

- 8.5 Possible use of the VH for coffee mornings** SR introduced the suggestion, emanating from the Pickmere Covid helpers WhatsApp group, for a regular (monthly or weekly) free coffee morning to be held at the VH, once this was possible. This would be aimed at those in the community who would welcome the opportunity for personal contact during the week. During the discussion, two particular points were raised: it was believed that Pickmere Methodist Church normally operated such an event; care needed to be taken to avoid conflict/competition with that or with the Church. Also, the Parish Council would need to satisfy itself that if it offered the VH for such events without charge, that that was compatible with a situation where it currently requires a hire fee from groups such as the Art Group or the proposed Table Tennis Group, both of which are also essentially non profit-making social organisations. Further the PC also has an arrangement where it allows Pickmere Community Group use of the Pavilion without payment of a hire fee. Might that be a preferable location for another social activity? SR agreed to contact the Methodist Church to discuss his idea and will report back to Council in due course.
- 8.6 Letter from Police and Crime Commissioner re police funding** SF noted that this is the third successive year that such a request for additional precept funding has been made by the Commissioner, without any perceptible improvement in the service received by Pickmere. A response had been submitted to the Commissioner before the deadline that had been set. The report was noted.
- 8.7 Operation of foraging courses at the IROS** Members considered this request but resolved that it was considered inappropriate and that consent be refused, for the following reasons:
- The activity appears to be a commercial enterprise and the Council has consistently opposed the use of the IROS for commercial events;
  - The request appears to assume that the Pavilion toilets will be available and open to course members, which they would not be. (If there were no toilets available there is the question of which other such facility course members would use over a several hour-long course.)
  - The PC does not permit fires, cooking, or BBQs on the IROS and this would conflict with that policy.
- 8.8 Village Halls Domesday Book** The report was noted. Members were agreeable with the idea of contributing to the book, and the Clerk was asked to confirm this to the organisers.
- 8.9 Resolution to exclude the public** Members made such a resolution to enable the discussion of a matter which was confidential (see the report on item 8.2 above).

## **PART B – PRIVATE AGENDA**

### **9. SPINKS LANE – RESPONSES OF CEC TO PC COMMUNICATIONS**

An extensive discussion took place regarding the content of CEC's responses and about whether, and if so what, action the PC could take to try to bring about the appropriate resolution of this longstanding problem. It was noted that the continued occupation of this land contravened Green Belt policy and that this had been emphasised through the refusal of planning permission and the

service of Planning enforcement notices. Taking no action runs the risk of the use becoming permanent despite that conflict, which (inter alia) could impact on future applications in Pickmere for inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

- It was resolved that the possibility and implications of seeking Counsel's opinion on CEC's stated position and the potential for further action being taken to end the occupation of this site be further pursued.
- In that context, it was agreed that the Clerk should prepare for the next Council meeting a skeleton of a potential Brief to Counsel which would set out the context and establish questions to be put to Counsel.

**The meeting concluded at 9.45 p.m.**

**Jack Steel**  
**Clerk to the Parish Council**