

666
MINUTES of THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Held ONLINE

6th April 2021

PART A – PUBLIC AGENDA

1. ATTENDANCE

Present	SR (Chair), AB, PD, SF, CT,
Apologies	AS, Cllr K Parkinson (CEC)
Police	Nil
Public	13 members of the public for much of the meeting

2. MINUTES

2.1 Approval of Minutes The minutes of the meeting of 2nd March 2021 were agreed.

2.2 Matters arising from minutes of meeting of 2nd March 2021 – nil

2.3 Approval of Minutes The minutes of the meeting of 23rd March 2021 were agreed.

2.2 Matters arising from minutes of meeting of 23rd March 2021 – nil

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS AB declared a personal interest in part of agenda item 8.1 (lakeside land r/o houses on Jacob's Way).

4. PUBLIC FORUM

4.1 Public Forum Nil

4.2 Report from PCSO No report had been received.

5. Report from CEC Cllr Parkinson Cllr Parkinson had submitted a report referring to 3 items:

- Planning issues at Sunnyside/Meadowcroft, Pickmere Lane – she is liaising with the CEC Planning Enforcement Team leader about this matter [although the Clerk pointed out that KP's report contains no acknowledgement of the residents' and Parish Council's repeated request for a meeting with CEC planning officers with a view to permanently resolving this planning problem].
- Highways issues in the parish – she noted the liaison that is continuing between herself, Cllr Chris Tarrant, and a CEC highways officer about pothole and other highway issues in the parish. CT confirmed that he is in touch with the highways officer and has agreed to meet again to pursue the issues.

- S106 restrictions on use of the lake by powerboats – CEC and CWAC are still seeking the relevant long-established legal documents. KP requested access to the information held by the Clerk on this topic. [The Clerk commented that again this issue requires a detailed dialogue involving the Parish Council and CEC/CWAC.]

Under this item, SF asked if CEC's Area Highways Group was still operating, or had it been superseded by the recently announced CEC system of highway works money allocated to each CEC Ward Councillor, and consequently had there been a CEC decision about renewing the existing yellow lines on Park Lane? The Clerk was asked to enquire with CEC.

6. FINANCE

6.1 Current financial position The monthly financial summary was noted.

6.2 New payments The payments referred to on the updated schedule circulated on 5 April were authorised/noted.

6.3 Draft year end accounts and budget implications for 2021-22 The Clerk summarised this report, concluding that he saw no particular need to amend the agreed budget for 2021-22, nor the schedule of contingency and earmarked items agreed by Council at its December 2020 meeting. The Clerk also noted the current position (set out in the accompanying report) with regard to expenditure of the 'windfall' items provided through the Community Infrastructure Levy and also Covid Business Grants. Members noted the report.

SF noted the recent announcement re the availability of Covid Business Restart grants and agreed with the Clerk's view that it appeared that the Parish Council would not be eligible to apply for them. The Clerk was asked to check the point with ACRE.

6.4 Change of bank The Clerk summarised his report, noting the shortcomings relating to the current banking service, and the merits of switching the Council's bank account to Unity Trust Bank. Following discussion, Council resolved to:

- Switch its bank accounts to Unity Trust Bank at the earliest suitable opportunity, at the relevant cost (currently £6 per month, paid quarterly), and that at an appropriate time the accounts with Barclays Bank be closed.
- The Clerk also stated the view that it was no longer necessary to keep 'physically' separate the moneys allocated by the Council to the Land Asset account (this being a relic of the transfer of various plots of land and property to the Council some years ago, together with sums of money for their maintenance for a subsequent period). Council resolved (by a vote of 4 to 1) that in switching the Council's accounts to Unity, there was no objection to the combining of the main and Land Asset accounts.

The Clerk was also asked to look at Unity's 90-day Deposit account. *[However on subsequent examination, the deposit accounts require very substantial minimum deposits, beyond the capacity of this council.]*

It was agreed that for the present, presently approved bank signatories would be confirmed in the switchover process, although the question of signatories could be reviewed in due course.

6.5 Financial arrangements re Play Area refurbishment project and Neighbourhood Plan project

Following discussion, Council resolved:

- That power be delegated to the Clerk/RFO, in consultation with the Chair, to authorise expenditure of up to £500 (excluding VAT) on any appropriate item relating to either the Clover Drive Play Area refurbishment project, or the Neighbourhood Plan project. Any such expenditure is to be reported to the Council at the earliest appropriate opportunity.
- That Council's Financial Regulations be amended accordingly.

7. PLANNING MATTERS

7.1 Planning update The update of planning application decisions etc was noted. In relation to 21/1449M, members agreed to offer the observation to CEC that whilst the Parish Council is aware that this is not a planning application, the Council hopes that CEC will be able to ensure that the proposed building is constructed of external materials appropriate in nature and colour to its setting in the rural Green Belt landscape.

8. REPORTS FROM CLERK AND FROM COUNCILLORS

8.1 Asset Maintenance Programme Following a discussion, it was agreed that:

- The proposals for refurbishment of the public footpath at the IROS, and the maintenance regime for the lakeside land r/o the Jacob's Way houses be approved and be implemented as an early priority. [AB did not comment nor vote on the latter matter.]
- The lakeside land referred to be appropriately cut/flailed at a frequency of 1 or 2 years (as appropriate) at a cost of £75 per cut. [AB did not comment nor vote on this matter.]
- The proposed questionnaire relating to the play area refurbishment be approved, including incurring the cost of £72 for its production.

PD proposes to report to the next Council meeting about a further set of maintenance items that should be considered for inclusion in the programme.

8.2 Lakeside boardwalk The Clerk updated Council as to the position in relation to the boardwalk which is now officially closed to users. Discussions are proceeding between the landowner and CWAC about how this section of the public footpath is to be provided into the future. Wincham Parish Council is to some extent involved in this discussion, but primary responsibility lies with the landowner and CWAC.

8.3 Continuation of Online Council meetings The Clerk updated Council as to this topic. The relevant Government Minister had issued a statement saying that councils' ability to hold meetings totally online would expire on 7 May, implying that meetings should from that time

be held in person, and that government was not minded to extend the period involved. The Clerk referred to the considerable debate among local councils about this requirement, and also referred to some implications of this decision – e.g. some local councillors in other parishes had stated that because of continued fears about Covid they would prefer to resign rather than be forced to meet in person. In addition, it may be that in some circumstances, e.g. in Pickmere, it may not be physically possible for the Village Hall to accommodate councillors and Clerk together with all the members of the public who might wish to attend a meeting in person, if appropriate spacing requirements remained in force. Such a circumstance would conflict with other legal requirements.

It is understood that Government is being lobbied to relax its stance and extend the relevant temporary period. Council did not have to make a decision now on how it wishes to react to the change of circumstance on May 7th but will have to make such a decision at its next (online) meeting of 4th May. This report was noted.

8.4 Parish Boundary signs AB suggested that it would present a more attractive image of the parish if the Pickmere signs at the entrances to the parish were to be replaced by new, more visually appealing signs (cf Aston by Budworth's signs). Council authorised AB to investigate this idea further and to report back to Council in due course.

8.5 Speeding issues in the village The Clerk summarised the written report on a meeting held with parish and town councils in Cheshire East and CHALC, key points of which included:

- The widespread incidence of the speeding issue across the County – in some parishes containing very busy A roads where the problem is substantially more serious than in quieter parishes like Pickmere.
- The universally very poor response of CEC and Cheshire Police to parish council approaches to them for assistance in dealing with the issues.
- CHALC was seeking parish council views with a view to seeking a dialogue with the authorities to seek a higher prioritisation of this issue in their work.

SR proposed that the PC seek further volunteers to be trained for Speedwatch; the Clerk was asked to advertise this locally and to confirm with the PCSO that this would be possible. In addition the Clerk was asked to liaise with PD, who would be responsible for coordinating the Speedwatch process in the parish.

The Clerk was also asked to seek a CEC contact with which to discuss getting data from our Speed Indicator Devices, and also the possibility of further traffic calming measures.

8.6 Update from Pickmere Community Group SR reported that, bearing in mind Covid restrictions, the CG had organised Easter Egg deliveries to children in the village. The Group is hoping to proceed with a variation on the usual Party by the Lake, subject to Government restrictions permitting it, and also hopes that it may be able to hold at least some Sunday Teas by the Lake.

8.7 HS2 – Construction traffic The Clerk reported on an online meeting with HS2 and other local parishes about the issue of construction traffic relating to the HS2 construction process. HS2 in the meeting emphasised that it was not a consultation exercise, but an information meeting. In discussing various locations on the route HS2 representatives emphasised that their objective was always to minimise the amount of traffic and disturbance affecting local roads and communities. Full details of the routing of construction traffic (and all other aspects of the HS2b proposals in Pickmere and locally) will be provided when the Hybrid Bill for HS2b is presented to parliament, which is programmed for early 2022. That will provide the last opportunity for the community and the Parish Council to submit objections, whether to the principle of the scheme, the detail of the design, or aspects such as the routing of construction traffic.

SF commented on information that is available in the public arena relating to how the HS2a project is proceeding on the ground – with many problems being highlighted, for instance the disconnect between what HS2 have promised in terms of detailed construction arrangements, and what the individual contractors actually implement. This aspect must be one of the areas covered in any responses to the Hybrid bill for HS2b.

8.8 Memorial items The Clerk reported that the memorial tree, for a member of a parish family, had now been planted at the IROS with a small plaque. In addition, discussions are proceeding with the families of Joan Webb, and of Joe Robinson, with a view to the erection of (an) interpretation sign(s) by the lake. Details of these proposals will be brought back to Council in due course.

8.9 Resolution to exclude the public Council resolved that members of the public should be asked to leave the meeting at this point to enable discussion of confidential matters.

PART B – PRIVATE AGENDA

9. Quotation for refurbishment of lakeside path Council resolved to accept the quotation received for this work from WAP Lawton & Son Ltd. The Clerk was asked to publicise the date that these works are due to take place.

The meeting closed at 8.50 p.m.

J Steel
Clerk to the Parish Council