

MINUTES of THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

7th June 2022

PART A – PUBLIC AGENDA

1. ATTENDANCE

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| Present | Councillors Read (Chair), Bold, Carson, Dobson, Flannery, Shore, Tarrant |
| Apologies | Cllr K Parkinson (CEC) (health) |
| Police | PC L Price |
| Public | 7 members of the public |

2. MINUTES

2.1 Approval of Minutes The minutes of the meeting of 3rd May 2022 were agreed.

2.2 Matters arising from minutes

9.2. HS2 – Cllr Flannery reported that an FOI request had been sent to the Dept for Transport; she has spoken at a meeting of CWAC and, with the Clerk, has met the Deputy Leader of CEC (together with KP). She felt that both representatives were wanting in terms of their knowledge of and understanding of the project. KP is on a CEC HS2 working group, but there remains no evidence of a CEC- or CWAC-generated mitigation strategy to pursue with HS2 Ltd.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS Nil

4. PUBLIC FORUM A member of the public (MOP) introduced the current campaign for the retention of Knutsford & District Memorial Hospital. After some years of objection the site has been disposed of to a developer and demolition/construction work is now imminent, with some features having already been removed. She has lobbied all relevant authorities and now requests the support of the PC in her efforts to retain what is Pickmere's only war memorial. The matter is discussed below at agenda item 9.6.

A MOP expressed disappointment that the PC had done nothing to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee. The Chair responded, saying that the Council had made some efforts to secure community involvement in an event, but there had been no response from the local community.

A MOP referred to her very recent email requesting the omission of item 9.9 from the Agenda. She believed that the Council has hitherto not taken into account the views of residents. The matter is discussed below at agenda item 9.9.

A MOP referred to agenda item 9.8 and said she would be interested to hear the discussion that takes place.

5. REPORT FROM POLICE OFFICER The police representative had emailed since he could not attend. He reported that there were no crimes to report, but that on a recent hot weekend he had issued 'a large number of [parking] tickets', and that CEC parking enforcement had also attended and issued tickets at the same time.

6. REPORT FROM CLLR K Parkinson (CEC) Nil

7. FINANCE

7.1 Annual Governance Provisions In accordance with the report and the Clerk's introduction, Council RESOLVED as follows (numbering as per the report):

3.1 Council noted that its accounting procedures have been successfully internally audited;

3.2 That the Annual Governance Statement be approved and the Chair and Clerk be authorised to sign the return;

3.3 That the Accounting Statement for 2021-22 be approved and the Chair be authorised to sign the return;

3.4 That the relevant documents be submitted to the External Auditor in the appropriate timescale;

3.5 That the Council's Asset Register as at 31 March 2022 be approved;

3.6 To approve the proposals for providing appropriate publicity to its accounts of 2021-22.

7.2 Current Financial position Council NOTED the monthly financial summary and reserves balance.

7.3 New payments Council AUTHORISED payment of the items on the schedule together with the following payments:

- Cheshire Community Action – annual membership £20.00
- Cheshire Community Action – Community Buildings membership £40.00
- Payment already made – purchase of ink cartridges £34.07 incl. VAT

8. PLANNING MATTERS

8.1 Update on Planning Applications Members noted the Planning update that was tabled. No direct comments were made in relation to applications 22/1750M or 22/2021M. A member did comment that the number of CLEUD applications submitted in recent years did emphasise the lack of enforcement resource at CEC. The Clerk was asked to write to CEC to express concern on this point, cc to Cllr Parkinson and Esther McVey MP.

Cllr Tarrant reported to Council a summary of the situation in respect of the field of 'small plots' on Spinks Lane, where CEC had been asked to investigate the removal of a significant length of hedgerow. The complaint is to be copied to Cllr Parkinson and Esther McVey MP.

8.2 Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Bold reported that an application for Government grant for the current year is under preparation.

8.3 CEC response to PC letter re Spinks Lane

The report was noted. In view of the lack of clarity as to which CEC councillor has responsibility for the Spinks Lane situation, the Clerk was asked to write to CEC's Leader to seek clarification.

9. REPORTS FROM CLERK AND FROM COUNCILLORS

9.1 Co-option of 8th councillor The Clerk reported that no applications or nominations have been received despite the recent further public notice. He was asked to contact the two persons who had previously expressed interest to enquire as to their continued interest.

9.2 Erection of village boundary signs The report was NOTED. Cllr Bold was asked to explore further the price and possible design of a new sign. She was separately asked to do the same in respect of new public footpath finger posts.

In respect of Community Speedwatch matters, Cllr Dobson was asked to send speed data to the Clerk who will send it to CEC, asking for further advice as to the possibility of further traffic calming measures. Council also AGREED that Cllr Dobson should explore the price of a new speed gun.

9.3 Installation of memorial bench Having considered the report, Council RESOLVED that it would fund the provision of a concrete pad in this and (where considered desirable) in future cases.

9.4 CEC parking enforcement visits In response to the PC's FOI request, CEC responded that it did not keep figures of how many visits Parking Enforcement staff made to Pickmere in 2021, but during that year the team had issued a total of 55 Penalty Charge Notices.

9.5 Liaison with CEC on highway matters Council noted the report. It was AGREED that a working group comprising Cllrs Carson, Shore and Tarrant would consider in more detail the merits/demerits of and potential for extending parking restrictions in the village, with a view to seeking liaison with CEC about the topic.

9.6 Knutsford and District War Memorial Hospital Having noted the statement made by a member of the public in the Public Forum, Council RESOLVED to support efforts to prevent demolition of the War Memorial and asked the Clerk to copy in any representations to Cllr Parkinson and Esther McVey MP.

9.7 Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Fund Council NOTED the establishment of this Government fund (about which there was no detail at this time), and that the Clerk had registered with CCA the interest of the PC in applying to the Fund.

9.8 Clover Drive Play Area Cllr Flannery summarised the current position with regard to the comprehensive refurbishment of the Area. In the meantime the Chair proposed, and members AGREED that £300 be allocated to carry out some minor maintenance/re-decoration work.

9.9 Property Asset Strategy A full discussion took place of the merits of pursuing or not the replacement of the Village Hall at the IROS, among which it was noted that:

- After some years of the Parish Council trying to generate a reasoned dialogue with the parish community as a whole about the merits/demerits of such a strategy the problem has always been that the majority of parish residents have never expressed an opinion; there comes a point where in such a circumstance, the community has to tolerate the situation that results.
- There remains an acceptance that the Council owns 2 sub-optimal buildings and cannot practicably bring them up to a high quality without very substantial financial resources – beyond even the Council’s present reserves.
- There is some acceptance that the Covid pandemic and its impacts have to some extent changed the situation with regard to providing a further facility at the IROS.

The Chair proposed, seconded by Cllr Flannery, that “the Council goes forward with a policy to maintain and significantly enhance the existing Village Hall and Pavilion, and not to pursue further the development of a replacement village hall on the IROS.” This proposition was AGREED unanimously.

9.10 Asset Maintenance Programme The Clerk reported on the current position with several elements of the programme, some of which are the subject of quotations on the confidential part of this Agenda. Following discussion, Council RESOLVED that:

- The working group should meet again;
- Before proceeding with any pointing/brickwork repair works, options for constructing a rail screen/insulated cladding to the exterior of the VH be explored;
- This might include work to provide a new dpc;
- The pointing of paving slabs at the front of the VH be proceeded with;
- Exploratory excavation on the exterior of the VH wall near the Gents’ toilets be carried out to explore whether there seems any problem of damp ingress there;
- The options for renewing the kitchen be further explored.

9.11 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

10. QUOTATIONS

Members were reminded of the Council’s Financial Regulations as they covered the acceptance of quotations.

10.1 Replacement of fascias and gutters at the Pavilion The submitted quotation from Advanced Roofline Systems Ltd. was ACCEPTED.

10.2 Replacement of two windows at the VH The submitted quotation from Northwich Glass Ltd was ACCEPTED.

10.3 Installation of external lighting at the VH The submitted quotation from Barlows UK Ltd was accepted.

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.