

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF HANKELOW PARISH COUNCIL
HELD IN HANKELOW METHODIST CHAPEL SCHOOLROOM, HANKELOW
ON 7 JULY 2014**

PRESENT: Councillor G Foster Chairman
Councillor C Ainley
Councillor G Cope
Councillor I Jones
Councillor A Lee

IN ATTENDANCE: Borough Councillor R A Bailey

18 BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Councillor Bailey reported on Cheshire East Council matters of interest; in particular the new 'Resident First' fast-tracked Neighbourhood Plan process, details of which had been outlined in a letter from Borough Councillor Michael Jones (Leader of Cheshire East Council) which had been sent to all town and parish council clerks in Cheshire East.

Councillor Bailey suggested that if the Parish Council was minded to prepare a Village Design Statement as a precursor to a Neighbourhood Plan, Tom Evans in the Spatial Planning Team, would be able to offer advice.

19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any non-pecuniary or disclosable pecuniary interest which they had in any item of business on the agenda, the nature of that interest, and in respect of disclosable interests to leave the meeting prior to the discussion of that item.

No declarations were made.

20 MINUTES – 12 MAY 2014

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting and the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting, both of which had been held on 12 May 2014, be approved as correct records.

21 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk submitted an information report which was to replace both 'Correspondence' and 'Shared Items'.

At a recent training workshop arranged by the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC), Jackie Weaver, Chief Officer of ChALC, emphasised that the role of local councils was to make decisions and that it was not a good use of parish council time to discuss correspondence, unless a decision was required. Mrs Weaver had favoured the use of a 'Clerk's Report' which could provide an update in respect of any relevant correspondence received and provide information about the activities in the parish.

The report included the following:

Outstanding Matters

- Permissive Path – Hankelow to Audlem. The Clerk sent a letter to Mr Morris of Morris Care, in March 2014. This letter was followed-up on 10 June and was acknowledged by Mr Morris's PA but a definitive response was still awaited.

- Local Area Partnerships (LAPs)

It had previously been reported that the LAPs were reconfiguring. The Borough Council was changing the way in which it engaged with parish councils and communities generally, and to this end, community hubs were being established.

The aim of the hubs was to provide spaces, services and activities where they were needed and would be used locally. Networks of community hubs would be developed across Cheshire East by 2017, starting with establishing five pilots in 2014-2015, one of which would be in Nantwich.

- Public Right of Way – Woolfall Farm. The public footpath had been inspected by Public Rights of Way Officers who had found them to be un-obstructed. However, the new fence and gate, plus a lack of way-marking probably contributed to difficulties in navigating the path without a map. The Officer had way-marked the paths including the new fence and gate. The e-mail had been forwarded to Members on 22 May with a copy to the resident who raised this matter.

- Flooding on The Green

The Clerk reported the flooding along Hall Lane/The Green. (This matter was reported at the Parish meeting). A CE Highways engineer had inspected the site and had observed that in normal rainfall conditions the water soaked away into The Green, but in extreme weather there was a flooding issue. There did not appear to be a highway drain in this location.

The Engineer had undertaken to forward this to the appropriate department suggesting that it be considered for funding either in this year or next year's drainage schemes.

- White Lining on Longhill Lane (Item 7 – Parish Meeting)

The Clerk had e-mailed CE Highways to ask about white lining along Longhill Lane to create a visual width reduction of the road to make it safer for pedestrians.

The Highways Officer's response was that it would depend on the precise location, but he was of the view that unless the road was wide, it was unlikely that permission could be granted. He would consider the matter further if additional information could be provided.

Planning

As requested at the Parish Meeting (Item 6.2) the Clerk asked the CEC Spatial Planning Team if one of its Officers could meet with the Parish Council, or, alternatively, a small group of parish councillors could visit CEC Offices to discuss development in the parish in general terms. The response was to the effect that there were insufficient staff available.

Planning Application – 14/2483N – Hankelow Manor, Hall Lane – Variation of Condition

The Clerk forwarded electronic notification of this application to Members on 30 May with a request that as the deadline for observations was 20 June, if the application was deemed controversial, a special meeting of the Parish Council would need to be called. No responses were received.

22 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN/VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENT

Cheshire East Council was proposing to 'fast-track' the Neighbourhood Plan process for any local council which wished to become involved in the process. Hankelow had been registered as a parish council which wished to participate. The Clerk now submitted a report on Neighbourhood Planning which outlined the usual process for preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish Council was invited to consider if a Neighbourhood Plan or Village Design Statement (VDS) should be prepared. Members were also invited to re-appoint the VDS working group. As working groups had no delegated powers to make decisions, the Clerk also suggested that the Parish Council might wish to consider holding monthly meetings until the process was well under-way.

It was acknowledged that CEC could offer advice and funding for local councils who were preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, but such funding and advice was not available for those preparing a Village Design Statement.

RESOLVED: (a) That the Village Design Statement working group be re-appointed;

(b) That the VDS group comprise Councillors G Foster, C Ainley, I Jones and A Lee, together with any local residents who wished to be co-opted;

(c) That an early meeting of the VDS working group be arranged to carry out preparatory work on a Village Design Statement with the aim of converting it into a Neighbourhood Plan, if required, at a future date; and

(d) That arrangements be made for Tom Evans (Spatial Planning Team) to meet with the Parish Council in September at which time the working document could be presented to him for advice.

23 FINANCIAL MATTERS

23.1 Authorisation of Payment

RESOLVED: That the following payment be approved.

£50.00 Allen Davenport – Internal Auditor – audit of accounts 2013-2014

23.2 Internal Auditor's Report

The Internal Auditor's report was received. His only comment had been to suggest that The Green be added to the list of assets.

23.3 Ratification of Payments

The Parish Council was asked to ratify the following payment which had been made after the last meeting:

RESOLVED: That the following payment be ratified.

£50.00 Reimbursement to Councillor I Jones for purchase of compost.
(To be funded from the £100 grant made by Cheshire Community Action in 2012-2013).

23.4 Receipts and Payments – 1 April 2014 – 30 June 2014

The Clerk had not received bank statements for the current quarter and had not, therefore, been able to prepare a quarterly statement.

23.5 Insurance Arrangements

At the Annual Council meeting, the Parish Council authorised a payment to Came and Company for insurance cover for the year commencing 1 June 2014. At the time, there was also an offer to enter into a long-term agreement of 3 years which would reduce the annual premium from £278.95 to £265 per annum. The Clerk's hand-written notes did not record if the Parish Council approved the long-term agreement, or agreed to pay the £278.95 for the current year only.

Subsequent to the meeting, a cheque for £265.00 was issued to Came and Company on the basis of a 3 year long-term agreement. The Parish Council was now asked to ratify this arrangement.

RESOLVED: That the Parish Council ratify the 3-year long-term arrangement with Came and Company for provision of insurance cover commencing 1 June 2014.

24 RISK ASSESSMENT

The Parish Council was required to undertake an assessment of risks and identify a means of managing those risks on an annual basis.

A risk assessment/management schedule was submitted for consideration. Members' attention was specifically drawn to line 23 'Village Green' where the Clerk had not set out the risks. Members agreed that the following were the likely risks:

- Maintenance of The Green to ensure the safety of the public.
Line 22 (Health and Safety) covered this risk which stated that although there was no formal inspection/maintenance scheme in place, parish councillors inspected on a regular basis and action was taken as and when required in accordance with Parish Council procedures.
- Public liability – the Clerk would notify the insurance company to add this to the schedule.
- Incumbent grounds maintenance arrangements. These were currently carried out by Cheshire East Council (CEC). If CEC withdrew this service, the Parish Council would be required to put in place an alternative. It was expected that in these circumstances, CEC would be likely to give at least 12 months' notice of such action, and the risk was therefore low.

RESOLVED: That the Risk Assessment/Management Schedule be approved, subject to the agreed amendments to Line 23.

25 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME

The Information Commissioner's Office introduced a model publication scheme which all public sector organisations were required to adopt from 1st January 2009.

The Parish Council did not currently have such a scheme in place. The Clerk submitted a proposed scheme based on the Model Publication Scheme and the Parish Council was recommended to adopt it.

RESOLVED: That the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme be adopted with immediate effect.

26 AUDLEM PUBLIC HALL COMMITTEE

Audlem Public Hall Annexe Committee had obtained funding for a new annexe to the hall. One of the conditions of funding was that the current management committee must become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The CIO would comprise twelve trustees, nine of them elected and three appointed by each of the local Parish Councils.

The Parish Council is invited to appoint a trustee (which need not, necessarily, be a parish councillor).

RESOLVED: That, subject to his agreement, Malcolm Lees be appointed as trustee to the Audlem Public Hall Annexe Committee.

27 RURAL HOUSING QUESTIONNAIRE

The Cheshire Association of Local Councils had forwarded an e-mail from the National Rural Housing Policy Review which was exploring changes since the production of key reports into rural affordable housing published 2005-2008.

A survey form had been issued under separate cover to Members and the Parish Council was invited to consider if it wished to participate in the survey.

RESOLVED: That the Parish Council decline to complete the rural housing questionnaire.

28 DRAINAGE SYSTEM – THE GREEN

The issue of drainage on The Green had been raised at the Parish meeting at which time it was agreed that this matter be considered by the Parish Council.

Members were now invited to consider if a system of drainage should be installed on The Green, and if so, to consider inviting appropriate contractors to carry out a survey and submit quotations. As this had not been included in the budget for the current year, this could be considered for implementation in 2015-2016.

In view of the Cheshire East Highways Engineer’s undertaking to forward this to the appropriate department for funding consideration either in this year or next year’s drainage schemes (Minute 21 above) it was -

RESOLVED: (a) That no action be taken to install a drainage system on The Green at this time; and

(b) That in the event of Cheshire East Council not providing for this in its drainage schemes budget, the matter be re-considered by the Parish Council at the appropriate time.

29 PROVISION OF INTERNET CAPABILITY IN THE CHAPEL

At the Annual Council meeting it had been agreed that this be included on the agenda for consideration at the July meeting.

RESOLVED: That no action be taken.

30 SPEED WATCH

Councillor Ainley updated the Parish Council on recent speed watch activity.

31 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday, 1 September 2014

.....Chairman

The meeting commenced at 9.05 pm and concluded at 9.50 pm