

# Newbold Astbury cum Moreton Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting - Wednesday 9 February 2022 at 7.30pm

## Present

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Councillor J Critchlow (Chair)  
Councillor N Plant (vice Chair)  
Councillor P Cliff  
Councillor N Barton  
Councillor R Sutton  
Councillor P Critchlow  
Councillor N Sharman  
Councillor M Bailey  
Councillor J Ward  
Councillor B Jelf  
Councillor I Parry  
Mr C Evans (Clerk)

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## Declarations of Interest

Councillor B Jelf (Walhill Lane)  
Councillor R Sutton (Walhill Lane)  
Councillor J Critchlow (Walhill Lane)  
Councillor P Critchlow (Walhill Lane)

## Part 1

### Public and Press Forum

Two members of the Astbury WI were present and wanted to ask about the parish council's plans for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. They wanted to make sure that their own plans dovetailed with them. Their ideas included knitted bunting at various locations, possibly around the bench on the Green or crowns around the bench finials, toppers on post boxes etc. The Church had asked for help with bunting for the Village Hall and Church. All ideas were at a formative stage and Cllr Parry offered to liaise with the May Day Committee and find out what the school's plans are.

### Apologies:

- Cllr R Lomas (prior engagement)
- Cllr A Banks (work commitments)
- Cllr L Wardlaw (conflicting engagement)
- Cllr P Redstone (conflicting engagement)

## 18/22 Minutes

The council **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January should be amended to include a record of the discussion on the Memorial Bench and a clarification on the works proposed at the Common Land.

### **19/22 – Common Land/Sandy Lane**

**Application to the William Dean Trust** - Cllr Plant reported that Forest Stump had set aside time at the end of February to do the planting of saplings, mixed hedging etc. and that the application to the William Dean Trust would be made soon for consideration at their March meeting. Cllrs **resolved** that Cllr Cliff should go ahead and order the saplings etc. as soon as possible based on previously approved costings and liaise with the Clerk on planting dates.

**Unauthorised vehicular access to Sandy Lane** – the Clerk reported that the Cheshire East PROW team had inspected the site and insisted that 2 logs which had appeared across the lane itself be removed as soon as possible. Cllr Ward offered to move the two logs so that Forest Stump could access the site and undertake the planting by the end of the month, regardless of whose responsibility it should be to do so. The Clerk will continue discussions with the PROW team about permanent barriers.

The council also discussed the logs across the face of the Common Land which needed to provide sufficient access for walkers and others as well as a more permanent and larger exit/entrance arrangement for machinery, preferably at the southern end of the lane which was currently blocked. Cllr Ward offered to chainsaw some of the logs to make two gaps between them larger.

### **20/22 Planning Applications**

**20/3059C** – Great Moreton Hall - appeal against refusal: Demolition of three existing buildings and construction of three dwellings together with the repair and reinstatement of the garden walls and associated original lean-to structures within the Walled Garden

Cllr Sharman pointed out that there were 4 separate planning applications under appeal for the same buildings at present, none detailed enough to claim 'enabling development' status. The council had considered another application at its January meeting which simply renovated the existing buildings and had resolved not to object to it. Cllr Sharman offered to draft a response to appeal 20/3059C reiterating the council's previous objections.

### **21/22 Accounts**

The council **resolved** to approve the following invoice:

- £405 for hire of the Village Hall

The council also **resolved** to reimburse Cllr Sharman for 3 payments to Hostinger for the transfer of our web hosting arrangements. These in total were within the £500 limit previously agreed by the council, for the following amounts:

- £114.62
- £13.19
- £12.14

## **22/22 Neighbourhood Plan refresh**

Cllr Sharman reported on latest discussions of the Working Group. They planned to hold a discussion with residents on 9 April and ask for their opinions, come up with a questionnaire for the whole parish and then condense responses into a formal proposal. Then there would need to be a statutory consultation on the proposals themselves. The consultant Andrew Thomson doesn't think the draft will need to go to referendum as the changes will not be significant enough, especially as many of the policies had been overtaken by Cheshire East policies.

The Clerk noted that Jodrell Bank now seemed to be consulted routinely on planning applications in a large 'exclusion zone' around their site. It wasn't yet clear how this would affect the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **23/22 - Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

This had already been discussed earlier but the council also considered some other more permanent ways of marking the event, such as additional signs or plaques around the parish, beacons etc. The council will return to this.

## **24/22 Newsletter**

Cllr P Critchlow reported that the latest newsletter was at the printers and would issue shortly. The next issue is due in March and will publicise the Annual Parishes' meeting. Any additional items are welcome.

## **25/22 War Memorial**

Cllr P Critchlow reported that he had researched 12 soldiers and sent information to Bill Ball. Four had been already approved based on the evidence provided. Cllr P Critchlow was still waiting for a scale drawing of the preferred design for the War Memorial.

## **26/22 Caravans and Railway at Glebe Farm**

Cllr Lomas had informed the Clerk that he was taking forward some of the adjustments the Freedom Caravan Club had recommended to make the site and amenities suitable for caravans. No additional concrete information on proposals for the miniature railway was available. Cllrs discussed the various configurations that were under consideration and whether they would hinder entry/exit, but no decisions were reached.

## **27/22 Highways**

Cllr Jelf reported that the closure of Walhill Lane was still in place. Contractors had arrived with traffic monitoring equipment but it had now been removed as it seems the wrong time to monitor. Cllrs noted that there was a lot more traffic and speeding cars elsewhere as a consequence, especially at school start/finish times.

**Footpaths on A34** – Cheshire East are planning to cut back trees along a stretch of the road but it's not clear precisely where or the timetable for completion. The Clerk will report 4 trees on the other side of the road that are potentially dangerous.

**Damage to the southern boundary sign** - the Clerk pointed to the information on the Cheshire East website that they were responsible for boundary signs, but some councillors questioned this. The Clerk will research further whether we can source a sign elsewhere and make separate arrangements for installation.

**Bollards** - the Clerk presented several quotes for a replacement bollard, but since there was no like-for-like replacement we would need to replace both if we wanted them to match. The Council **resolved** not to pursue a replacement as there was still one bollard there.

**Congleton Link Road** – the Clerk is still waiting to hear about adoption from Congleton Town Council as their proposed designs are not costed.

**Ward councillors’ discretionary infrastructure budget** –the Clerk had discussed this with neighbouring parishes, Odd Rode and Scholar Green, who had proposed allocating shares of the budgets in proportion to the tax bases, which would give Astbury cum Moreton roughly 11%. Since we have no ready to go proposals and Odd Road has a well-advanced proposal for a central refuge so people can cross the road there safely, he proposed that we forego this year’s opportunity to free up more money for Odd Road. The council **resolved** to agree to this suggestion and look to develop something more concrete for the next round of funding but noted that we might want to claim a disproportionate share of the money available to the three parishes next time.

**Flooding and Gritting** – the Clerk and Cllr Wardlaw have had numerous exchanges with Cheshire East about flooding and ice at Chance Hall Lane but without resolution. Flooding at Watery Lane has been reported already to Cheshire East. The Clerk will continue to investigate remedial action for the covered drain on Peel Lane.

**Accident blackspot** at the Village Green - the Clerk and Cllr Wardlaw have been in touch several times with CE Highways and will continue to press them for a satisfactory response.

### **28/22 Forgotten Footpaths**

The Clerk had been in touch with Cheshire East about making a map modification order and reinstating the footpath at the Common Land. A request for this had been made in 1953 and rejected, though Cheshire East could not say on what grounds. As a consequence, they would accept no evidence prior to 1953 to support a new MMO application. Given the absence of documentary evidence that it had been a public footpath before or since then, we would have to rely on personal testimony alone of 20 years uninterrupted use immediately prior to access being challenged. Even if a path had existed and had been used, this was unlikely to be sufficient to confer public footpath rights. Any application would be a lengthy process over several years. Given the likelihood of success the council **resolved** not to pursue this further.

### **29/22 Email and Web Hosting Problems**

Cllr Sharman reported on the changeover to the new web host. The speed of loading the website was now much quicker and ‘forwarders’ seemed to be working. He will try to help councillors resolve any outstanding problems.

**30/22 NALC 'Points of Light'** - Cllr Barton will discuss the possibility of electric vehicle charging points at the Village Hall at their next committee meeting.

**31/22 Annual Meeting of the Parishes** - Ian Doughty from Congleton Museum is happy to attend the annual parish meeting and give a talk. The cost will be £45. The council **resolved** to ask him to attend and **resolved** to cover these costs.

Councillor Sharman advised that our Neighbourhood Plan consultant, Andrew Thomson, is also available to speak at the meeting. His costs will be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan Grant. The council **resolved** to ask Andrew Thomson to attend.

The owners of the Egerton Arms might be willing to provide refreshments and Cllr Barton will investigate costs. The meeting will be advertised on the website and in the Newsletter.

**32/22 Cheshire East report** – in Cllr Wardlaw's absence Cllr J Critchlow reported that she had been pressing Cheshire East about monitoring traffic at Walhill Lane, and about accidents at the Brownlow crossroads. Some potholes on School Lane had been filled but poorly, the Clerk will pursue.

### **33/22 Chairman and Members' Report**

Cllr Parry reported back on the May Day committee discussions. They had asked if the parish council could support the purchase of some gazebos for stalls etc. which until now had to be rented each time. Cllr Sutton suggested the parish council made clear that they sought ideas for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations which the parish council would consider supporting, subject to budgets etc. This could be advertised in the Newsletter. The council unanimously agreed. Cllr Parry will investigate the costs of gazebos and the Clerk will investigate the cost of commemorative mugs for parishioners.

Cllr Jelf reported that the trees on the bund along the sand quarry are being cleared while the land there is reinstated.

Cllr Sharman reported that the Church is hoping to improve its facilities to encourage greater attendance and participation. He will propose something for the website and Newsletter to publicise this.

Cllr Jelf offered to liaise with Astbury School on their plans for the Jubilee.

### **34/22 Clerk's Report**

The Clerk reported on the likely costs of achieving the CiLCA qualification which would take around 200 hrs over the course of a year. It would not be feasible to do this additional training within his contracted hours so it would have to be claimed as additional hours. The costs would be split with Somerford parish and the Clerk would seek to start towards the end of next financial year so the costs would also be spread over two financial years. The council **resolved** to agree to fund their share of the costs.

The Clerk noted that the core parish policies would need to be reviewed at the next meeting as part of the annual audit process.

A date will be set for the Clerk's appraisal in the next few weeks.

**Meeting closed at 2155hrs**