

# Newbold Astbury cum Moreton Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council meeting - Wednesday 11 May 2022 at 7.30pm

## Present

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Councillor J Critchlow (Chair)  
Councillor N Plant (vice Chair)  
Councillor N Barton  
Councillor P Cliff  
Councillor R Sutton  
Councillor J Ward  
Councillor Ian Parry (arrived 2015 hrs)  
Councillor P Critchlow  
Councillor B Jelf  
Councillor M Bailey  
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)

## Election of the Chair

The Council **resolved** unanimously that Cllr J Critchlow should be elected Chairman for 2022-2023, and she duly read out and signed the acceptance of office.

## Part 1

### Public and Press Forum

Two members of the public were present. One complained about the extensive mowing/stripping that had taken place at the Common Land as he believed it had severely disrupted the bird nesting season and destroyed plants and habitats for other wildlife. Tree branches that had been cut had also been taken away, leaving fewer places for wildlife to colonise. Councillors apologised for any distress caused, but it had not been possible for the contractor to get on site earlier. As the site improves it will be easier to manage with fewer maintenance cuts and limit them mostly to the pathways, more in keeping with the nature of the site. In future the parish council will try to ensure that any works are completed earlier/later in the year, outside the bird nesting season.

The other parishioner complained that Cheshire East were not willing to close Wallhill Lane to traffic. The recent temporary closure had been successful, he felt, and should be made permanent. He didn't understand why Cheshire East took a different view especially given previous undertakings. The Clerk explained that he had received an email that day advising that there would be an additional traffic survey in June so that a picture of the situation both before, during and after the closure could be established. The parishioner felt that Cheshire East had already decided not to close the Lane so additional data would not be useful, even though the temporary closure had shown that thousands of cars had been removed from the lanes of the parish onto the A34 (and Padgbury Lane) where they should be. He felt a proper, longer test closure was warranted. The Chair repeated that there should be additional data available in June which could be discussed at a future meeting, but that other undertakings such as better signage away from the area and a 20mph limit on the lane that had not been fulfilled will be followed up.

#### **Apologies:**

- Cllr R Lomas (illness)
- Cllr A Banks (travel)
- Cllr N Sharman (travel)
- Cllr P Redstone (family illness)
- Cllr L Wardlaw (leave)

#### **60/22 Minutes**

The Council **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 April are a true and accurate record.

#### **61/22 Election of the vice Chair**

The council **resolved** unanimously that Cllr N Plant should be elected as vice-Chair for 2022-2023 and he duly read out and signed the acceptance of office.

#### **62/22 Register of interests**

Councillors updated their Registers of Interest where appropriate or confirmed that no changes were needed.

#### **63/22 Councillor Responsibilities**

The Council proposed some minor changes to the list of Councillor responsibilities which the Clerk will update on the Parish website.

#### **64/22 Risk Assessment**

The Council resolved to accept the revised Risk Assessment subject to one small typo about the level of personal accident cover.

#### **65/22 Accounts**

The Council noted the balance of accounts as of 1 May: £20,843.43

The Council **resolved** to approve the following payments:

- £60 – TCS Management to end April 2022
- £246.60 – Andrew Thomson for Neighbourhood Plan
- £45 – Congleton Museum for presentation at annual parish meeting

The Council noted the following receipts

- £7,500 Cheshire East Precept

The Council noted the following payments:

- £375.84 – Clerk's April Salary
- £32.22 – Clerk's April Pension

### **66/22 Planning Applications**

22/1050C – proposed new stables etc. and amended field access for the field off Mow Lane, Astbury. The Council **resolved** to object to the proposal not on the grounds of the plans for the buildings but because access through the gate means cars will have to park in the roadway on the brow of the hill presenting a danger to traffic and themselves. The gate should be set back enough so that a car can safely pull off the road while opening the gate.

### **67/22 Report from Cheshire East**

No report in the absence of the Ward Councillors

### **68/22 Neighbourhood Plan Refresh**

In the absence of Cllr Sharman the Clerk reported on his behalf. The grant application for the refresh of the NP has been put in, and the company providing financial support has asked for some further clarifications. Cllr Sharman will seek quotes for the costs of publication. Residents had been consulted at the recent open meeting and a questionnaire is being finalised for distribution in the parish. The working group is actively considering applying for an externally funded design code – to help maintain the local character in new developments or building design. The Council **resolved** that this application should be discussed at a future meeting.

### **69/22 Highways**

The Council discussed the Cheshire East winter gritting survey and how to respond. They felt it was wrong of Cheshire East to reduce gritting plans and expect Parish Councils to fill the financial gap. Completing the survey would be a tacit agreement that Cheshire East were right to withdraw their own gritting plans. The Council **resolved** that the Clerk should write to Cheshire East accordingly, objecting to the survey. Cllr Ward reported that Watery Lane had flooded again, and the Clerk will contact Cheshire East to press them to address the problem. The Clerk will also report the signage on Wallhill Lane which has been turned the wrong way round. The vehicle priority sign southbound is obscured by the hedge again which the Clerk will investigate.

### **70/22 Common Land**

Cllr Jelf reported on her discussions with Forest Stump. The site does look rather bare but we will see how it develops and will need to decide what logs/brash should be left for ground cover etc. It will need close monitoring in this first phase of reclamation as we see which species of flowers and plants we want to nurture and which to remove. There's a fine balance to be struck, for example leaving the ground too bare will encourage weeds such as docks and thistles but allow birds to feed, while letting it get out of hand will provide competition for the weeds but discourage some wildlife. The Council will consider in the Autumn which flowers to plant for a spring showing.

Cllr Jelf noted the email that had been received from a parishioner suggesting the Parish Council install CCTV cameras at the entrance to Sandy Lane and finance signs to mark the area as 'residents parking only'. Neither suggestion is feasible.

### **71/22 Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

The Council **resolved** to purchase an English oak to plant at Ackers Crossing, subject to affordability. The Clerk will investigate costs from suppliers. It will likely be available for planting in the Autumn, and at a future date the Council will consider installing a circular bench to mirror that at Astbury Green. Cllr Ward suggested the Council might like to approach the William Dean Trust for support.

### **72/22 NALC 'Points of Light'**

Cllr Barton reported that the idea for an electric vehicle charging point had been cautiously received by the Village Hall committee, who had some concerns about costs and whether there was adequate electricity supply. But they will go ahead and investigate the feasibility of the idea.

### **73/22 War Memorial**

No further report from Cllr P Critchlow due to recent ill health.

### **74/22 Chairman and Members' Report**

Cllr Plant noted there were yet more instances of fly tipping in the parish, including at The Flash. Parishioners should report these to Cheshire East on their website.

Cllr Jelf reported on the CGR discussions in which Cheshire East had proposed re-warding and reducing the number of Councillors, but they had listened to the parish council's objections and had in the end proposed no changes. Cllr Parry noted that the May Day Committee were looking for volunteers to help out on the day with parking etc. Cllr P Critchlow noted that the A34 footpath needs siding out again. The Clerk reported that Cheshire East had decided it wouldn't be doing the stretch in the parish and the Clerk will investigate costs for a further round of clearance. The Clerk reported that on 4 June Glebe Farm would screen the live concert outside Buckingham Palace, food will be available and a bar provided. On 5 June Glebe Farm will be joining in with the 'Jubilee Street Parties'. Tickets

for both are available from Mark Bailey. Cllr Jelf asked whether a dog bin should be purchased for Sandy Lane and the Clerk will investigate costs.

### **75/22 Clerk's Report**

The Clerk noted that the Parish Council insurance renewal price seemed very high. The Council asked him to seek alternative quotes but given the impending deadline for renewal they **resolved** that he should purchase the insurance as quoted if a better deal could not be secured. Cheshire East had emailed about the accident blackspot at Astbury Green. They will do a traffic survey and look at incident figures over a long stretch of the A34 but weren't specific on timing. The next meeting will need to approve the audit and associated returns. The Clerk will investigate employing a locum clerk for the July meeting while he will be on holiday. He flagged up an anomaly in our financial regulations which are more restrictive than the NALC model. He will discuss it with Cllr Plant before putting a proposal to the Council.

**Meeting closed at 2115 hrs**