

Newbold Astbury cum Moreton Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting - Wednesday 28 September 2022 at 7.30pm

Present

Councillor J Critchlow (Chair)

Councillor R Sutton

Councillor N Sharman

Councillor B Jelf

Councillor P Critchlow

Mr C Evans (Clerk)

Declarations of Interest

Councillor B Jelf (Walhill Lane)

Councillor R Sutton (Walhill Lane)

Part 1

Public and Press Forum

One member of the public was present. He spoke in support of the temporary closure of Walhill Lane and more effective traffic calming measures. He wanted the Parish Council to vote in favour of such a closure and put additional pressure on Cheshire East to take further steps and offered to make some video evidence of the problems available to Councillors. This topic will be put on the agenda for the November meeting.

Apologies:

- Councillor R Lomas (conflicting engagement)
- Councillor I Parry (Covid)
- Councillor A Banks (travel commitments)
- Councillor P Cliff (conflicting engagement)
- Councillor N Barton (unexpected circumstances)
- Councillor M Bailey (work/training commitments)
- Councillor J Ward (medical reasons)
- Councillor N Plant (conflicting engagement)
- Ward Councillor P Redstone (no apology)
- Ward Councillor L Wardlaw (no apology)

121/22 Minutes

The Council **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 August 2022 are a true and accurate record.

122/22 Accounts

The Council **noted** the balance of accounts as of 16 September:

- **Bank Account £30,304.69**
 - **Of which: £6,642.00 (Neighbourhood Plan grant)**

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

- £20.98 replacement laptop battery
- £171.00 Clerk SLCC membership
- £368.20 Thomson Planning Partnership (Neighbourhood Plan)
- £25.00 - ChALC for Cllr Bailey course
- £287.94 – Cllr P Critchlow for bulbs etc.

The Council noted the following income:

- £7,500.00 – Precept

The Council **noted** the following payments:

- £32.22 – Clerk NEST pension
- £375.84 – Clerk August Salary
- £136.80 – Clerk for new Defibrillator Battery purchase
- £63.00 – TCS Payroll Management services

123/22 Planning Applications

22/3049C - Advertisement consent for three signs at the entrance to Walhill CLR Roundabout. The Council **resolved** to object to this proposal because of driver distraction and consequent safety concerns.

Cllr Sharman gave a roundup of previous planning applications. One application for Great Moreton Hall had been withdrawn as it had been superseded. The application for a new miniature railway at Glebe Farm had been rejected.

124/22 Congleton Waste Recycling Centre

Councillors considered a note from Cllr Robert Douglas (Congleton Town Council) and regretted the decision to close tips in Congleton and neighbouring areas such as Arclid. The Council **resolved** to support attempts to find a suitable alternative for Congleton and agreed to sign the petition proposed by Cllr Douglas.

125/22 St Mary's Church Development

Cllr Sharman reported on engagement sessions on developing new facilities at the Church. Cllr Sharman will draft a letter of support for the Chair to review. There is currently no detailed planning application.

126/22 Donation to the Village Fair for Gazebos

Councillors discussed the costs of gazebo hire which were significantly higher than the amount previously applied for by the Village Fair Committee. The Council **resolved** to donate £500 towards the cost (the maximum permitted under the grants and donations policy) subject to confirmation of income and expenditure and the need for a contribution.

127/22 Cheshire East Report

No report in Ward Councillors' absences.

128/22 Neighbourhood Plan Refresh

Cllr Sharman reported that the Working Group would next meet at the end of October. Some progress had been made on the design code.

The questionnaire is a little delayed but some 450 copies should be sufficient which would be inserted with the parish newsletter and come in at around £400. The additional postage costs would be marginal and would largely come from the Neighbourhood Plan grant. The Council **resolved** to pay these costs.

129/22 Parish Online

Cllr Sharman reported on the trial of Parish Online which can use numerous layers of data to build a picture of the parish, its assets, footpaths, trees, household addresses etc. and attach notes such as maintenance schedules. Councillors **resolved** to approve a full subscription to the service (some £96 per annum).

130/22 Highways

Astbury Motorhome Stopover site - there appear to be a number of caravans being stored on the site which is for motor homes stopping over. Councillors asked the Clerk to investigate.

The Clerk had been in touch with Cheshire East and will circulate the latest data on Wallhill Lane traffic volumes/speed in time for discussion at the November meeting. The additional information should allow a better picture of the situation showing before/during/after closure comparisons.

131/22 A34 Siding Out

The Clerk reminded the Council that the estimate from John Harding for the siding out of the A34, extending the contract from 2021, was significantly lower than the estimates from two other contractors, by over £10k. The Clerk will explore a multi-annual contract for the future and see if the next works could be delayed to the Spring of 2023.

132/22 New Financial Regulations

The Clerk introduced a proposal to amend the Financial Regulations to bring them more into line with the NALC guidance and model Regulations. At present the current regulations are highly restrictive for expenditure below £500. The proposal is that any expenditure below £500 can be agreed by the Clerk in conjunction with the Chair (as per NALC guidance). For anything between £501 and £3,000 three estimates will be sought and approval of the

Council needed. For anything between £3,001 and £25,000, three formal quotes will be sought and approval of the Council needed. The Council **resolved** to agree this change.

133/22 Common Land

Chair J Critchlow reported that the hedge is growing well and only a few whips haven't taken. There is a lot of goose grass and the space is very congested with nettles. The site is too big to tackle all at once so will be done in sections. This will entail selective/spot weeding, strimming, preparing the ground and planting daffodils, bluebells and wildflowers. The Council **resolved** to approve £850 plus VAT for this work from money earmarked in the budget. The Clerk will discuss continuing the current contract with a longer-term maintenance plan. Cllr B Jelf will buy two wild flower mixes in consultation with Cllr J Ward.

134/22 War Memorial

Cllr P Critchlow reported no further progress.

135/22 Budget use for Financial Year 22/23

Cllr P Critchlow said that additional/replacement defibrillators might be needed as some are now 11 years old and spare parts are difficult to source. The Council **resolved** to approach the Horseshoe Arms to discuss the one already there. The Clerk will investigate this further including whether Robinson's brewery would be prepared to make a contribution. The Clerk will also contact the Egerton Arms, Peck's Restaurant and Glebe Farm about replacements.

More parish signs could be provided including at Ackers Crossing, and new ones purchased at Wallhill Lane to replace the existing mis-named signs. The Clerk will investigate better bus stop signage and standing areas around the parish.

136/22 Plans for seasonal Daffodil Planting

Cllr P Critchlow has contacted Sibelco who will dig holes ready for planting on 29 October.

137/22 Chairman and Members' Report

The next Sibelco liaison meeting is scheduled for 3 October. A scoping proposal for the Somerford Farm area is under consideration which would bring sand back through tunnels into Bent Farm Quarry for processing. Cllr R Sutton will investigate the provision of Christmas lights on the Green. The Council **resolved** to postpone the October meeting.

138/22 Clerk's Report

The Clerk noted that a planning session is likely to go ahead on 20 October with Somerford Councillors invited. New external auditors will be appointed by the Local Government Association and the Council **resolved** not to opt out of these arrangements.

The Council resolved to refresh the website, better to inform parishioners on the current state of play with each of the projects/areas listed under Councillor responsibilities.

The Meeting closed at 2140 hrs