

Newbold Astbury cum Moreton Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting - Wednesday 8 March 2023 at 7.30pm

Present

Councillor N Plant (vice-Chair)
Councillor N Barton
Councillor Ian Parry
Councillor B Jelf
Councillor R Sutton
Councillor N Sharman
Councillor J Ward
Councillor M Bailey
Mr C Evans (Clerk)

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Jelf (Wallhill Lane)
Cllr Sutton (Wallhill Lane/Sibelco)

Part 1

Public and Press Forum

Two members of the public were present, one to discuss traffic on Wallhill Lane. Cllr Parry explained that discussions with Cheshire East were ongoing and various matters are being considered such as improved signage, additional road markings, the possibility of a new SID device to record speeds which would provide more evidence of driver behaviour etc. Some other options would be more complex and could for example need installation of street lighting. Once the Council has received comments from Cheshire East it will schedule a discussion. The member of the public also referred to a letter that had been sent to Cheshire East from the Ward councillor about traffic on Wallhill lane. Only one Councillor present was aware of this letter so it was not discussed further.

Apologies:

- Councillor P Cliff (no apologies offered)
- Councillor A Banks (travel)
- Councillor R Lomas (travel)
- Councillor P Critchlow (conflicting appointment)
- Councillor J Critchlow (conflicting appointment)

27/23 Minutes

The Council **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2023 are a true and accurate record.

28/23 Accounts

See annex 1.

29/23 Planning Applications

None received.

30/23 Astbury School report

The Council discussed the challenges and opportunities facing Astbury Primary School with the head teacher. She set out how the school had had an 'inadequate' rating from Ofsted in 2017. School numbers dropped as a result and the school decided to become a Sponsored Academy Trust in 2019. Curriculum improvements had been implemented and there was a focus on staff training and development. The school roll was now increasing and the aim was to reach four classes of 30 pupils each. The pandemic had had a negative impact on the pupils' progress and the focus now was on resilience and confidence building. SATs results this year had been above average in reading and maths and stable in writing. A new track had been built and there were lots of extracurricular sports activities taking place and a popular 'explorer' group on Fridays. The Council looked forward to continuing engagement with the head teacher to see where the Council itself could support the school.

31/23 Parish Newsletter

No discussion in the absence of Cllr P Critchlow.

32/23 Policies to Review

Councillors reviewed the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Complaints Policy and Training Policy. There were no substantive changes to the Training Policy, Standing Orders or Complaints Policy, just some spell-checking and formatting etc. The Council asked Cllr Sharman and the Clerk to review the texts and **resolved** to adopt these three policies on that basis. The Clerk urged Councillors to update the Council training log. Cllr Sharman and the Clerk had reviewed the Financial Regulations and proposed some similar tidying up and deletion of certain paragraphs that are not currently applicable. The Council **resolved** to accept these changes subject to an indication of the version control so that any changes could be reversed in future, if needed. Future versions will be compared against the model regulations that are in force at that time to make sure all relevant sections are reflected.

33/23 Elections update

Cllr Jelf updated the meeting on the forthcoming elections. Nomination forms need to be delivered, in person, by 4pm on 4 April. The Clerk has circulated a presentation given by Cheshire East which includes contact details if there are any queries. If Councillors give their forms to the Clerk by Friday 24 March he will deliver these to Cheshire East's offices.

34/23 Preparations for the Annual Meeting of the Parishes

The meeting will be held on 12 April at, 7.30pm. Refreshments will be offered. Mr Harold Gilman has confirmed that he can give his presentation about the Macclesfield Canal. A 'regular' Parish Council meeting will be held beforehand starting at 6.30pm.

35/23 Coronation Bench

The Clerk reported that the total costs for purchase and installation of a bench at Ackers Crossing would be in the region of £1,000 – for the bench, wood treatment, laying a concrete pad and fixing the bench to the pad etc. The Council **resolved** to approve this amount and the Clerk will seek additional estimates from different bench suppliers.

36/23 Neighbourhood Plan Refresh

Cllr Sharman reported that the draft design code will be presented for Council approval in April. A consultation report on how residents' comments had been addressed will be provided. The pictures in the document will need to be replaced/updated and so a 'final' draft in black and white without pictures will be circulated to parishioners inviting comments. Any unspent grant monies will need to be returned at the end of the Financial Year. The Council **resolved** to support Cllr Sharman in his attempts to get Cheshire East to share their mapping data (such as footpaths, conservation areas etc.) for local use via Parish Online.

37/23 Highways

Councillors discussed the fact that there had been three road traffic incidents recently on Peel Lane.

38/23 Caravans at The Flash

Cllr Parry reported that he had contacted the owner of the site who was seeking an alternative location for the caravans stored there.

39/23 Common Land

No further report.

40/23 War Memorial

No report in Cllr P Critchlow's absence.

41/23 Cheshire East

No report in the absence of Ward Councillors.

42/23 Chairman and Members' Reports

Cllr Jelf said that Sibelco will be holding a consultation on their proposed new quarry site in Somerford which she will attend. Cllr Bailey will help man the raffle stall at Astbury May Day. Cllr Ward had approached the garden centre about a floral display by the boundary sign near Peck's. Cllr Ward will source a tractor tyre as a planter and the Garden Centre has agreed to provide the plants and soil.

43/23 Clerk's Report

On the Clerk's suggestion the Council **resolved** to appoint Mr Gary Roberts as this year's Internal Auditor. Mr Roberts had been the Internal Auditor in previous years and so was familiar with the specific operations of Astbury Parish Council. The Clerk has approached Forest Stump about this year's weeding and a longer-term contract or plan for the Common Land. The Clerk will look into reports of some dangerous trees down Sandy Lane which will need attention. The Clerk has also approached John Harding about a longer-term contract for siding out and weeding along the A34.

The Meeting closed at 9.45pm

Annex 1 - Accounts

The Council **noted** the Bank balance as of 01 March 2023:

Account: **£19,313.04**

Of which: **£5,602.30** - Unspent Neighbourhood Plan Grant

The Council **noted** the following receipts since 1 February 2023:

- £nil

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

- £63.50 – Cllr P Critchlow for mileage and expenses

The Council **noted** the following payments:

- £35.90 – Clerk pension
- £13.19 – Domain Name Renewal
- £415.63 – Clerk February Salary