

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STAPELEY & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD ON 15 FEBRUARY 2021**

**(THE MEETING WAS HELD VIA VIDEO-LINK IN ACCORDANCE WITH  
REGULATIONS INTRODUCED UNDER REGULATION 78 OF THE CORONAVIRUS ACT 2020)**

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**PRESENT:** Councillor M Theobald Chairman  
Councillor M Docker  
Councillor J Gibbs  
Councillor P Groves  
Councillor J Hillman  
Councillor A Jacobs  
Councillor K Nord

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors J Davenport, S Ford and G Gwinn

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**275 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest or non-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.

**276 MINUTES**

**276.1 RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2021 be approved as a correct record.

**276.2** The Minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting held on 9 February 2021 and the Minutes of the Complaints Committee meeting held on 8 February 2021 would be submitted to the meeting to be held on 15 March 2021.

**277 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Members of the public were able to ask a question of the Parish Council or make a statement.

There were no questions from members of the public.

**278 COMMUNITY HALL – RE-OPENING**

**278.1 Re-opening for Police Officers only**

As agreed at the meeting held on 9 February 2021, the Clerk had written to PC Marc Harley to set out the conditions for permitting Police Officers to have use of the Community Hall.

A response was awaited.

**278.2 Monthly Review - Re-opening for other Clients**

The Parish Council reviewed the situation in respect of the re-opening of the Community Hall. It was expected that there may be a revision to the regulations in March 2021.

**RESOLVED:** That the Community Hall remain closed for the time being.

**278.3 Cleaning Contract – Community Hall**

When the Parish Council approved the cleaning/caretaking contract for the Community Hall, it did not specify a term, and this was something which had been highlighted by the Internal Auditor.

The Parish Council reviewed the contract and –

**RESOLVED:** (a) That the contract which had been awarded to Crystal Clean (South Cheshire) Ltd. be for a period of two years, with effect from the commencement date (1 January 2021); and

(b) That at the end of the two-year period, the Council consider extending the contract for a further 12 month period.

(Note: Councillor Peter Groves joined the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

## **279 REPORT OF BOROUGH COUNCILLORS**

Borough Councillor Peter Groves reported on (a) the forthcoming meeting of Cheshire East Council when the budget for 2021-2022 would be set. A proposed 4.99% Council Tax increase was expected; and (b) a highways works matter.

## **280 RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Parish Council was required to carry out a risk assessment annually. This was a statutory requirement<sup>1</sup> and must be undertaken before 31 March 2021.

The Clerk had amended the current risk assessment/management schedule to reflect the Covid-19 risk assessment carried out in 2020.

During discussion, Members commented that the schedule did not include all the Parish Council's assets; for example, the six wooden benches.

Councillors Jacobs and Theobald, who both had previous experience of preparing risk management strategies, agreed to produce a more meaningful document for the next meeting.

**RESOLVED:** (a) That the Clerk update the risk assessment/management schedule to ensure that all assets had been included; and

(b) That Councillors Matthew Theobald and Andrea Jacobs prepare a revised risk management strategy for the next meeting.

## **281 WEBSITE – MONTHLY REVIEW**

The Website Group had been unable to meet since the last meeting and would report to the Parish Council meeting to be held on 15 March 2021.

## **282 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

### **282.1 Authorisation of Payments**

**RESOLVED:** That the following payments be approved.

£548.76            C M Jones – reimbursement for payment to HMRC for tax/NI for December 2020 and January 2021  
Evidence of payment from the Clerk's personal account was provided.

£895.00            Jof's Mowing – two invoices (0520 and 1120) – to cover grounds maintenance for the period end of April 2020 to November 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011.

### **282.2 Ratification of Clerk's Action**

In error, the Clerk had authorised ASB Electrical to carry out the inspection of the wiring at the Community Hall. This should have been approved by the Parish Council.

The Parish Council was asked to ratify the action taken by the Clerk and to authorise payment for the work.

£200.00 ASB Electrical – this is for inspection of the wiring in the Community Hall. The Clerk has asked Mr Bonell (the proprietor) to provide a certificate as evidence of the work undertaken.

**RESOLVED:** That the Clerk's action in authorising ASB Electrical to inspect the wiring at the Community Hall, and the payment of £200 for the work, be ratified.

### **282.3 Switching from Royal Bank of Scotland to Other Bank**

The Parish Council was invited to consider switching its banking service from the Royal Bank of Scotland to an alternative bank. The deadline date for application was 28 February 2021.

The background to this proposal was that banks had been trying to attract businesses to switch away from the Royal Bank of Scotland as part of a scheme to boost competition in the sector. As a condition of the Royal Bank of Scotland's £45 billion government bailout during the financial crisis, £350m of a state-aid package was provided to ten other banks to help them to attract business.

The Clerk's briefing note was submitted and set out offers from two banks.

Members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of switching and, on balance, agreed that remaining with Royal Bank of Scotland was the preferred option; however, in the longer term, the Council could consider moving away from the current cheque system for payments, and possibly opt for on-line banking.

**RESOLVED:** (a) That the Parish Council retain its account with Royal Bank of Scotland; and  
(b) That, in the longer term, the option to use on-line banking be explored.

## **283 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Parish Council received a copy of the most up-to-date NALC Model Financial Regulations. These had been revised in 2016. The Clerk had not yet incorporated them into the complete document which was the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

### **Financial Regulations**

**RESOLVED:** That the Model Financial Regulations be adopted, subject to amendments to financial limits as agreed in Minute No. 284 below.

## **284 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY**

At the meeting held on 21 December 2020 and again on 18 January 2021, Members discussed the need for a Procurement Strategy.

At the January meeting, suggested amendments were agreed, and the Clerk undertook to prepare a further draft document. This was now submitted.

The following financial limits were agreed:

- Paragraph 1.5 Procurement of goods or services up to £300.  
Revise the figure to £500.

- Paragraph 1.7 Procurement of goods or services in excess of £500 but less than £25,000. (Retain the limit)
- Paragraph 1.8 Formal Tender Policy. This stipulated provisions where a contract exceeded £50,000.  
Amend the figure from £50,000 to £25,000.

Include a reference to '*....the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.*'

Arising out of discussion, it was suggested that the Parish Council should review all its contract arrangements currently in place.

- RESOLVED:** (a) That the draft Procurement Strategy be approved, as amended in the meeting;
- (b) That the Parish Council consider an evaluation model for tenders, at a later date; and
- (c) That the Parish Council review all its arrangements with regular contractors.

**285 DOG-FOULING**  
**(Item requested by Councillor Peter Groves)**

Councillor Groves had been discussing with Cheshire East Council (CEC) Officers and also at a CEC Scrutiny Committee, the issue of dog-fouling.

The Parish Council was asked to consider this matter and make suggestions to tackle the problem.

Although dog-fouling was a problem across the whole of the Cronkinson Estate, the most notable areas were the footpaths from the Community Hall and Pear Tree School. The estate had now been added to the Community Team's patrol plan and they intended to visit the area when they were able, given the current restrictions.

Members were informed that CEC received requests direct from members of the public regarding irresponsible dog ownership across neighbourhoods and in particular, open spaces and park areas. This was possibly as a consequence of people taking more local walks during the lockdown periods, and there was a minority which disrespected their local area by not picking up after their dog had fouled.

There were three Officers for south of the Borough and they covered patrols in respect of the Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) alongside investigations of fly-tipping, littering and abandoned vehicles. Patrol times were limited. The Service was doing its best to visit the areas as often as possible, based on demand/reports.

It would be of help to the Service if they could be provided with information relating to times of day when fouling took place; particular dog-walkers (description of dogs etc.). This would assist the Team to target the patrols and times. The phone number was 0300 123 5021 and there was a web-reporting form on the CEC website at [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk). This was the most effective way to report these matters as the Team was driven by jobs loaded onto the system and then tasked out to them.

This matter had been raised with the Clerk by a resident who had complained to Cheshire East Council about the problem but did not wish to take advantage of the Public Question Time facility at the meeting. A 7-year old girl had also recently written to complain about the dog-fouling.

- RESOLVED:** (a) That an item be added to the next newsletter to highlight the issue of dog-fouling;
- (b) Publicise the problem on Nantwich News, CAT Radio and Facebook;
- (c) That the local schools be asked if they would like to participate in the campaign;

(d) That the 7-year old child referenced above be asked for permission to produce her letter as part of a campaign to reduce dog-fouling.

**286 PLANNING**

The Parish Council was invited to comment on the following planning applications:

21/0212N Five Oaks Farm, Second Dig Lane, CW6 7QR  
Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling.

**RESOLVED:** That the following comments be made on planning application No. 21/0212N:

- Cheshire East Council be asked to include a weight limit for HCVs entering Second Dig Lane from the A529.
- Existing access to be used during construction, closest to the junction of First Dig Lane with Broad Lane to minimise construction traffic.
- No access to be permitted down Second Dig Lane from London Road as the road surface was inadequate.
- Retain the trees on the entire site.

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21/0603N Broadoaks, Wybunbury Lane, CW5 7JP  
Proposed single-storey garage extension.

**RESOLVED:** That no observations be made in respect of planning application No. 21/0603N.

**287 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

15 March 2021

.....Chairman

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm and concluded at 10.00 pm