

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STAPELEY & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2014 AT STAPELEY COMMUNITY HALL, PEAR TREE FIELD, STAPELEY**

**PRESENT:** Councillor S Gwinn-Freemantle Chairman  
Councillor S Clough  
Councillor J Davenport  
Councillor J Hillman  
Councillor K Lawrence  
Councillor K Nord  
Councillor M Malbon  
Councillor M Theobald

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Borough Councillor A Martin (Nantwich South and Stapeley)

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors M Docker and P Groves

**57 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

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.

**58 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**59 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (10 MINUTES)**

In accordance with the Parish Council's Standing Order No.1, members of the public were able to submit a question, either in writing prior to the meeting, or orally at the meeting, or to make a statement.

There were no questions from members of the public.

**60 CHESHIRE EAST BOROUGH COUNCILLORS**

Borough Councillor Andrew Martin invited the Parish Council to consider taking over responsibility for some of the small pieces of land in the parish which had become neglected over time. He made specific reference to the area of land in the vicinity of Cherry Tree Court. The Parish Council had previously considered this matter (Minute No. 264 – 3 April 2014) and had resolved that no action be taken for the reasons given in the minutes.

Councillor Martin was asked to establish the current situation regarding the transfer of land on the Stapeley estate.

**61 CLERK'S REPORT**

The Clerk's report for September was submitted for information and included the following items.

- Community hall update on various matters.
- Defibrillator unit
- Speed Watch – future analysis of data

As part of the tabled agenda update, the following items were also included:

- The Parish Council was invited to consider nominating Members to attend the Community Partnerships event for Local Councils in October. It was agreed that no nominations be made.
- A telephone communication had been received from a resident whose house was in close proximity to the community hall. He had complained about the noise nuisance from groups which congregated around the front of the hall on weekday evenings. He was of the view that if the outside lights were turned off earlier than 11.00 pm, this would discourage them from staying late in the evening. The Clerk had informed him that the lighting had been introduced for security reasons.

Notwithstanding that the report was for information only, a number of Officer-instructions were given to the Clerk to take action as appropriate.

## **62 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

### **62.1 Working Group Notes**

The notes of the meetings of the Working Group which met on 23 July 2014 and 3 September 2014 were submitted.

The Working Group had arranged for a meeting to be held on 23 September. Key stakeholders had been invited to the meeting, together with representatives from Audlem Parish Council which was preparing its own Neighbourhood Plan. As there would be no opportunity to report back to the Parish Council prior to the Parish Meeting, other Members of the Council were encouraged to attend on the 23 September to enable them to be fully prepared for 29 September.

Information was also provided in respect of Audlem Parish Council's means of engaging its community.

### **62.2 Meeting hosted by Cheshire East Council – 2 September 2014**

The Clerk had forwarded to Members copies of the Power-Point presentation used at the meeting for town and parish councils, held on 2 September hosted by Cheshire East Council. Councillors Hillman and Theobald who had attended the meeting reported briefly.

### **62.3 Parish Meeting – 29 September 2014**

Members were invited to consider arrangements for the Parish Meeting to be held on 29 September 2014.

John Heselwood (Cheshire Community Action) would be in attendance. The Clerk had invited him [prior to issue of the special edition newsletter] to make a presentation similar to that which he had made at the Audlem Parish Council extra-ordinary meeting in July 2014. Members now agreed that his role should be limited to answering questions and to clarify any technical and legal aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan process if required.

It was noted that although John Heselwood would attend the meeting, the lead Officer and main point of contact for future support from Cheshire Community Action, would be Andrew Thomson. This was part of the Neighbourhood Planning support provided by Cheshire Community Action (funded by Cheshire East Council).

**RESOLVED:** That the outline agenda for the meeting be agreed as follows:

- (i) Welcome and introduction by Chairman.
- (ii) Brief introduction to Neighbourhood Planning and its relevance to Stapeley and Batherton: Members of the working group to address the meeting.

- (iii) Participation by residents in attendance (by the use of post-it notes etc.) to gather evidence on the community's vision for the future of the parish.
- (iv) A 'Skills Board' to be displayed at the meeting to identify various skills required to achieve a Neighbourhood Plan. Residents in attendance would be invited to put their name against any appropriate skills they consider they had and could offer in preparing the Plan.
- (v) Business representatives would be asked to express their views from both a commercial perspective and a personal perspective.
- (vi) Finally, if the Secretary of State's decision in respect of the Muller Homes Public Inquiry had been received, this would be reported.

#### **62.4 'Keeping It Simple' (Neighbourhood Planning)**

A copy of the publication 'Keeping it Simple' by Tony Burton (Locality UK) was provided for all Members.

### **63 SOCIAL MEDIA PROTOCOL**

In view of the decision to operate Facebook and a Twitter account (on the Neighbourhood Planning website) and in the absence of a Parish Council policy, the draft policy which the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC) currently observed was submitted for guidance. It was noted that this was still in draft form and had not yet been ratified by the ChALC Board.

### **64 COMMUNITY HALL**

The guttering had been removed by vandals and there was existing damage to the masonry work, also through vandalism. In accordance with the terms of the lease, the Parish Council was responsible for damage to the outside of the building. CEC had replaced guttering on three previous occasions as a goodwill gesture. The Clerk would be seeking quotations in due course for robust guttering and repair to the masonry work.

(Note: Borough Councillor A Martin withdrew from the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

#### General Risk Assessment

It was noted that Cheshire East Council did not hold a general risk assessment for the building and the Parish Council would need to consider carrying out its own assessment, taking into account the mixed-use of the building.

The Clerk was asked to obtain a general risk assessment 'template' or similar from Cheshire East Council or Crystal Clean.

### **65 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

#### **65.1 Authorisation of Payments**

**RESOLVED:** That the following payments be authorised:

£50.00	Cheshire Community Action – purchase of Stapeley Profile to assist in the Neighbourhood Plan process
£421.50	Crystal Clean – cleaning of community hall – August (including £16 for two openings/closings of the hall for one-off events). Note: cheque payable to Mrs C Black.
£240.00	BDO LLP – fee for audit of accounts 2013-2014 (£200 net: £40 VAT)
£243.00	Johnsons Printers, Nantwich – printing of special edition newsletter

£216.00	Fusion Logistics – distribution of special edition newsletter (£180 net and £36 VAT)
£161.10	Mrs C M Jones – travel expenses (October 2013 – September 2014)
£74.66	Holdfast Security Systems – replacement of community hall kitchen lock (£62.22 plus £12.44 VAT)

**Payment of the following account was ratified:**

£48.00	CVS Cheshire East – Ratification of payment (the cheque had been issued).
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**65.2 Receipts and Payments Statement (First Quarter)  
Budget Monitoring (2014-2015)**

At the previous meeting there appeared to be an additional £25 in the Parish Council's bank account. Having reviewed the accounts, the Clerk had issued a revised document to Members showing that the accounts now balanced. That document, together with the following, was submitted:

- Budget monitoring statement showing the expected out-turn on 31 March 2015
- Draft variances schedule showing the difference between spend in 2013-2014 compared with expected spend in 2014-2015.

**RESOLVED:** That the financial position at 30 June 2014 be noted, together with the anticipated out-turn on 31 March 2015.

**65.3 External Auditor's Report – BDO LLP (Accounts 2013-2014)**

The report of the external auditor was submitted. The report stated '*the Internal Auditor has noted a few issues in the financial systems of the Council.*'

The Clerk had written to BDO LLP to state that this was inaccurate. The Internal Auditor had not been concerned about the *financial systems* but rather that they had not been observed on one occasion. The *systems* of the Council were satisfactory; however, the Parish Council failed to observe its own financial regulations in respect of the collection of VAT which should be once a year. BDO's recommendation was that the Council must '*implement the recommendations made by the Internal Auditor to improve the financial systems of the Council as soon as possible, or in any event before the end of the current financial year.....*'. The VAT would be re-claimed, but this would not improve the financial systems, as they were already in place.

The other issue raised had been a suggestion (by the Internal Auditor) that in view of the repeal of S.150 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Parish Council might wish to consider its method of payment of invoices. It appeared unnecessary for the external auditor to reference this as the Parish Council had a duty to consider the Internal Auditor's recommendations and had, in fact, considered this particular recommendation at its June meeting when it decided to continue with the current practice of signature of accounts by two parish councillors, but to review the matter in the longer term.

**66 CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (ChALC)**

As part of its review of Area Working, ChALC had established a number of thematic boards, one of which was 'Rural Matters Board (East)'. The others were (1) Community and Environment and (2) Economic Development.

The Rural Matters Board was holding its first meeting on 30 September 2014 at Byley Village Hall, Middlewich at 7.00 pm and the Parish Council was invited to nominate two representatives to attend the meeting.

Councillor Clough, as the Parish Council's representative had already notified ChALC of his intention to attend. Councillor Hillman indicated that she would attend if she was available.

**67 COMMUNITY RESILIENCE and FLOOD RESPONSE – WORKSHOP**

The Parish Council was invited to participate in a table-top workshop to be held on 22 October (Westfields, Sandbach) from 1.30 pm – 4.30 pm. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss and participate in a simulated emergency situation.

Places were limited and offered on a 'first come, first served' basis.

**RESOLVED:** That the Parish Council decline to be represented at the Community Resilience and Flood Response workshop on 22 October 2014.

**68 COMMUNITY HALL SIGN**

At the previous meeting, the Parish Council approved a quotation submitted by Ken White Signs Ltd. for the provision of a free-standing 'Community Hall' sign.

Subsequent to that, the Clerk had contacted Cheshire East Council (CEC) requesting approval to erect the sign. This required a formal planning application and would cost £110.00 to submit the application. Legal advice from CEC was to the effect that as the Parish Council was occupying the hall 'at will' it would be unwise to submit a formal application at this stage; the Parish Council should wait until a new lease had been signed.

**RESOLVED:** That no action be taken at present to submit an application for permission to erect a 'community hall' sign.

**69 REVIEW OF WEBSITE**

The Chairman had suggested that as the new website had been operational for some time, Members might wish to review the content and design.

It was agreed that Members submit suggestions to Councillor Jo Hillman, who had been one of the lead councillors on this project when the website was re-designed.

The matter would be scheduled for discussion at a future Parish Council meeting.

**70 PLANNING MATTERS**

**70.1** The Parish Council was invited to comment on the following planning applications.

14/3885N 122 London Road, Stapeley  
Bedroom attic conversion requiring new roof pitch and gables

14/3862N Horse Shoe Inn, Newcastle Road, Willaston  
Outline application for the demolition of the former public house and outbuildings and erection of up to four residential units with all matters reserved, except for means of access.

**RESOLVED:** (a) That no objections be raised on planning application No. 14/3885N; and

(b) That in respect of planning application No. 14/3862N, as the application was outline, the Parish Council had no specific observations other than a general comment that demolition of a building such as the Horse Shoe Inn, rather than its renovation, was not in the interests of sustainability.

**70.2 Planning Appeals**

The following planning appeals had been notified:

14/0622N The Cedars, Wybunbury Lane, Stapeley –  
Outline application with all matters reserved for erection of dwelling.

13/4904N Land off Wrens Close, Stapeley, Nantwich  
Full planning permission for 11 dwellings

14/1139N Land between 65 and 81 London Road – outline application for proposed  
development of four houses.

(Note: Councillor S Clough withdrew from the meeting during discussion of the planning applications.)

### **70.3 Technical Planning Consultation**

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had published a number of new proposals to make practical improvements on earlier planning reforms. A copy was submitted.

DCLG required comments by 26 September; the National Association of Local Councils had invited comments from town and parish councils to inform its own submission and required comments by 19 September 2014.

**RESOLVED:** That no observations be made on the DCLG Technical Planning Consultation document.

### **71 PARISH NEWSLETTER**

The first (incomplete) draft of the Parish Newsletter was submitted.

### **72 FUTURE MEETINGS**

- Neighbourhood Plan Working Group - 23 September 2014  
For parish councillors only.
- Parish Council meeting 20 October 2014

(Note: Councillor K Lawrence withdrew from the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

### **73 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** That in accordance with The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items owing to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and the public interest would not be served in disclosing that information.

### **74 COMMUNITY HALL LEASE**

The new lease had not yet been received from Cheshire East Council. In the meantime, the Parish Council was asked to authorise two signatories to the lease:

**RESOLVED:** That Councillors J Hillman and K Nord be authorised to sign the community hall lease with Cheshire East Borough Council, on behalf of the Parish Council.

### **75 PAYMENTS TO HMRC – CLERK'S SALARY**

CVS Cheshire East, which managed the Council's payroll service, had now reviewed payments to HMRC for the tax years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. A schedule showing the calculations was submitted.

Members noted –

- There was an outstanding amount of £202.03 for the tax year 2013-2014.
- There was an outstanding amount of £213.19 for the current tax year. This took into account the payment due at this meeting for the September payroll.

The Parish Council was asked to approve a total payment of £415.22 to HMRC which represented tax and employer's NI contributions as shown on the schedule.

**RESOLVED:** That payment of £415.22 to HM Revenue and Customs be authorised, representing due amounts (tax and employer's National Insurance contribution) for the years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015

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.....Chairman

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm and concluded at 9.45 pm