

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STAPELEY & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD ON 16 DECEMBER 2019 IN STAPELEY COMMUNITY HALL, PEAR TREE FIELD,  
STAPELEY, NANTWICH**

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**PRESENT:** Councillor M Theobald Chairman  
Councillor M Docker Councillor S Ford  
Councillor J Hillman

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors E Boughey, J Davenport, S Ford, P Groves,  
G Gwinn and S Gwinn-Freemantle

**IN ATTENDANCE:** One member of the public

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**96 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.

**97 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 November 2019 be approved as a correct record.

**98 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

In accordance with the Parish Council's Standing Order No. 1 members of the public were able to ask a question or make a statement.

There was one member of the public in attendance. He raised an issue in respect of gully drainage/emptying in Stapeley.

This was a long-standing issue in the vicinity of Wybunbury Lane and had been reported to Cheshire East Highways via the website on three occasions in the previous three weeks, and by phone on three occasions. It was a recurring problem because the gullies had been cleared in the previous three months.

The Clerk was asked to follow up this matter with Cheshire East Highways, to ask if repairs were to be carried out soon and to seek clarification in respect of the priority currently being given to this issue.

**99 CHESHIRE EAST BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

There were no Borough Councillors in attendance.

**100 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

**100.1 AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS**

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

£243.90	HMRC	Tax on Clerk's salary and employer's NI
£834.00	Crystal Clean South Cheshire	Cleaning Community Hall (Invoice 208 - £702.50 net and £140.50 VAT) £562.50 cleaning (net) £120.00 Opening and closing for events (net)

£20.00	Target Windows	Cleaning of Community Hall windows.
£40.00	ASB Electrical	Repair of outside light
£240.00	PKF Littlejohn LLP	External audit (2018-2019) (£200.00 net and £40.00 VAT)

**100.2 DONATION TO THE SW CHESHIRE SCOUTS – CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING PROGRAMME**

The SW Cheshire Scouts had offered to remove the Christmas Tree as part of its annual recycling programme. They would collect trees on Saturday, 11 January 2020 and had requested a donation in excess of £5 towards local Scout funds.

**RESOLVED:** That a donation of £20 be made to SW Cheshire Scouts in return for removal of the Christmas tree for recycling.

**100.3 BUDGET PROPOSALS – 2020-2021**

This was the Parish Council's third consideration of the budget proposals for 2020-2021. The following documents were submitted.

- Clerk's covering report
- Budget Monitoring Statement (as reported to the September meeting), together with draft budget proposals for 2020-2021

Members made the following changes to the proposals.

Line 33	Cleaning of Community Hall	Amend revised estimate to:	£4,800
Line 51a	Maintenance/repair of benches	ADD	£500
Line 52	Reinstatement of hedgerows	To be considered as a project in 2021-2022.	
Line 54	Noticeboard at Conservation Area	To be considered as a project in 2021-2022.	
Line 55	Conservation projects	Inventory and work on Victorian Orchard	£5,000
		Survey of pond area to the rear of Clarendon Court. Finance to cover the cost of a survey. The Clerk to establish the legal implications of undertaking improvement work on land which did not belong to the Parish Council	£1,000

Budget		£79,800.00
LESS	Expected balance available on 1 April 2020	£35,580.00
	Precept requirement:	<u>£44,220.00</u>

The Clerk requested the opportunity to re-calculate the budget proposals and present a revised document to the next meeting. Although precept requests were expected to be submitted by 17 January 2020, the Clerk was of the view that Cheshire East Council would agree to the request being submitted the day after the January 2020 Parish Council meeting, i.e. 21 January 2020.

**RESOLVED:** (a) That the Clerk re-calculate the budget proposal for 2020-2021 and re-submit to the meeting to be held on 20 January 2020;

(b) That in the event of the Borough Council not able to accept a late precept request, the precept be agreed at £45,000;

(c) That the Clerk's salary be increased to £13,330 with effect from 1 April 2020; and

(d) That the figure of £45,000 be regarded as a provisional precept figure, to be reviewed, if possible, at the January 2020 meeting.

#### **100.4 EXTERNAL AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS – 2018-2019**

The Parish Council received the external auditor's report on the accounts for 2018-2019.

The sign-off would usually be in September each year, but as the Clerk had received no notification, other than the informal advice submitted to the Parish Council at the September meeting, a follow-up email was sent. It appeared that PKF Littlejohn did send the necessary paperwork by email on 30 September 2019, but the Clerk did not receive it.

The report confirmed the informal comments reported to the September meeting:

*The smaller authority failed to approve the AGAR in time to publish it before 1 July 2019, the date required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and did not disclose this by answering 'No' to Section 1, Box 1.*

The following 'other' matter has also been raised.

*We note that the smaller authority did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and it failed to make proper provision during the year 2019/20 for the exercise of public rights, since the approval date was after the start of the period for the exercise of public rights. As a result, the smaller authority must answer 'No' to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2020/21.*

No action was required, but the Parish Council must ensure that the correct procedures would be followed in 2019-2020.

#### **100.5 ENERGY SUPPLIES**

The Utility Supplier contacted the Clerk to ask about the possibility of seeking quotations from various energy suppliers on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Parish Council was asked to consider this request. If the Parish Council agreed, the Clerk would need to provide a bill from Scottish Power (for street lighting), West Mercia Energy (for Community Hall charges) and a gas bill. The process would be for the Clerk to sign a letter of authority which would entitle the company to make those enquiries.

The company was paid a commission for any business it brought to the successful energy supplier.

**RESOLVED:** That the Parish Council decline the offer made by The Utility Supplier.

#### **100.6 ST CHAD'S CHURCH, WYBUNBURY**

St Chad's Church PCC had asked the Parish Council to consider making a grant towards the upkeep of both of its churchyards.

Whilst deceased residents of Stapeley were entitled to be buried there, both churchyards were now full for new burials and the only capacity was for the interment of ashes and burial in existing family graves, if space was available.

In view of this, the Parish Council was asked to consider if there would be any benefit to residents of Stapeley (and Batherton) in making a donation.

**RESOLVED:** That the Parish Council decline to donate to St Chad's Church, Wybunbury towards the cost of both its churchyards.

## 101 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

This item had been listed on the agenda at the meeting held on 18 November 2019, but no observations were made. It was agreed that formal comments be forwarded after further consideration at this meeting.

Cheshire East Council (CEC) was conducting a review of town and parish council governance arrangements across the Cheshire East Borough to *ensure that these continue to reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government*.

The Borough Council had undertaken some preliminary analysis of each of the town/parish council wards within the borough. A small number of requests have been received from parish councils asking for their specific governance arrangements to be considered.

It was expected that the review would be concluded well before the May 2023 local elections.

The Parish Council was invited to submit comments by **31 January 2020** and was specifically invited to consider (a) how effective the current governance arrangements were; and (b) were there any changes required, and if so, what changes, and the reasons for those changes.

Once this stage of the review had been completed, CEC would develop draft proposals which will be the subject of a formal consultation at a later date.<sup>1</sup>

## 102 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Parish Council is asked to submit observations on the following planning applications:

19/5480N Batherton Hall, Mill Lane, Batherton CW5 7QN  
Proposed alterations to Batherton Hall

19/5481N Batherton Hall, Mill Lane, Batherton, CW5 7QN  
Listed building consent in respect of 19/5480N above.

**RESOLVED:** That no observations be made on planning applications Nos. 19/5480N and 19/5481N.

19/5488N The Pig Farm, Wybunbury Lane, Stapeley CW5 7HH  
Replacement of agricultural building to provide equestrian building to form a manège and erection of part agricultural/part equestrian building.

**RESOLVED:** That the following objections be made in respect of planning application No. 19/5488N:

<sup>1</sup> The Clerk's notes are insufficient to record the observations to be made. This will be referred to the Parish Council at its meeting on 20 January 2020.

- 1) The application shows a range of buildings of different styles heights, sizes and different finishes for varying uses within the site and connected with the applicant's business. The Parish Council requests that all roof finishes be in rural green; any timber finishes to be in a mid-brown stain and the same for all timber doors, or of a gloss finish to match. This is because this is an open rural location and visible for a significant distance and to protect adjoining neighbours' aspect of the site. Screening of the buildings should be carried out either by trees or hedging of appropriate type for the area; this will also soften the view of the buildings.
- 2) The land and buildings should be solely for equestrian and agricultural use only as stated in the supporting document by the applicant. Any other type of use by the applicant or third parties should require separate planning approval.
- 3) The manege is shown without any lighting. This will be necessary if this is to be a 24 hour a day, seven days a week site as the applicant states that the horses will need regular exercising. During the winter months this could require the manege to be illuminated. The Parish Council suggests low-intensity lighting with shields to ensure that there is no light spill-out of the immediate area of the manege.
- 4) The applicant has not referenced how wastewater from the site is to be treated or disposed of; how is this to be achieved? Any waste generated on site should be contained adequately until either used on the land or removed from the site. The Parish Council requests that care is taken so as not to affect the current bio-diverse ecology which exists in and around the application site. Such measures should be acceptable to Cheshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England.
- 5) Any external lighting to buildings, access roads, work areas, etc. should be of low energy use with the lighting being controlled to avoid light pollution to other areas.
- 6) Site staffing and health and welfare provision on the site is referenced, but in view of the proposed use, there will be times when on-site 24-hour staff availability is required. Is there an intention to provide sleep accommodation or use staff from elsewhere?
- 7) There is no reference to energy-saving measures within the site to reduce energy use, nor provision for the recharging of electric vehicles within the site.
- 8) The site falls on the peripheral edges of both the Combined Wybunbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan and the Stapeley & District Neighbourhood Plan and the policies in both plans should be considered by the Planning Case Officer when considering this application.
- 9) If the application is approved, the Parish Council would expect relevant conditions to be applied to ensure compliance with the Neighbourhood Plan.

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19/5380N      Oak Farm Cottage, London Road, CW5 7JU  
Demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of a replacement  
dwelling and ancillary works.

**RESOLVED:** That the following observations be submitted in respect of planning application No. 19/5380N.

The application has not demonstrated knowledge or compliance with the extant Neighbourhood Plan, including Policies, GS1, GS4, GS5 and H4.

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The following planning application was received after the November Parish Council meeting. An extra-ordinary meeting was scheduled for 28 November 2019, but there were insufficient Members available and the application could not, therefore, be considered.

19/4861N      59 Talbot Way, Stapeley CW5 7RR  
Proposed two-storey rear extension with garage conversion into  
'granny' annexe with single-storey side wet room extension and new  
single-storey garage front/side extension.

### **103      PLAQUES FOR BENCHES**

Members were asked to consider if plaques should be added to the benches already purchased and if so, what materials should be used, and what inscription.

This item had been scheduled for discussion on several occasions, but no decision taken.

**RESOLVED:** That this item be withdrawn from the agenda.

### **104      NOTICE-BOARD – COMPLAINT BY RESIDENT**

The Clerk had forwarded under separate cover an e-mail from a resident who had complained that the noticeboard and the website were not up-to-date and that it did not hold sufficient community information.

Some of her complaints were reasonable and the Clerk was making arrangements to add the following to the noticeboard. Some of the issues raised were more appropriate for the PCSO to deal with, or for inclusion on the community noticeboard which the Co-op had previously indicated it would be adding to its outside wall:

- Full schedule of community hall activities.
- Broad Lane Coffee Club.
- New Youth Club poster.
- Schedule of Litter-pick activities.
- Notice stating that the defibrillator is on the wall of the Cronkinson Farm Pub and is rescue-ready.
- Up-dated schedule of parish councillor contact details.

Regarding the website, the resident was not specific about this and Members were asked to review the website for themselves and make suggestions for updating. In the meantime, the Clerk would review the statutory requirements and the requirements under the Parish Council's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme.

### **105      PONDS IN STAPELEY**

The Clerk had not received a response from the Duchy of Lancaster about the pond area adjacent to the Clarendon Court on Beechwood Close; however, funding had now been added into the budget to address this and legal advice would be sought in respect of the implications of carrying out improvement work on land which did not belong to the Parish Council.

### **106      QUOTATIONS FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA, TALBOT WAY**

The Clerk had contacted a total of four organisations for a quote for the maintenance of the conservation area at Talbot Way.

Two responses had been received and these were submitted to the November 2019 meeting for information. The remaining two were outstanding.

This matter was first considered at the July 2019 meeting. The growing season had now stopped. The Parish Council would need to decide in the next two months or so, ready for the Spring.

The two quotations would be submitted to the January 2020 meeting for decision.

**107 CLERK'S INFORMATION REPORT  
(Cheshire Association of Local Councils – Town and Parish Councils Conference)**

The only information report was from Councillor Mike Docker. This had already been issued to Members by e-mail.

**108 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**20 January 2020**

DRAFT

.....Chairman

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm and concluded at 9.25 pm