

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STAPELEY & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 20 JULY 2020
(THE MEETING WAS HELD VIA VIDEO-LINK IN ACCORDANCE WITH
REGULATIONS INTRODUCED UNDER THE CORONAVIRUS ACT 2020)**

PRESENT:	Councillor M Theobald	Chairman
	Councillor J Davenport	Councillor M Docker
	Councillor S Ford	Councillor P Groves
	Councillor G Gwinn	Councillor J Hillman
	Councillor K Nord	

165 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.

166 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

There were no members of the public in attendance.

167 MINUTES

167.1 28 May 2020 and 8 June 2020

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings held on 28 May and 8 June 2020 be approved as correct records.

167.2 16 March 2020

It was accepted that Councillor Georgina Gwinn had been present at the meeting held on 16 March 2020. She was not recorded on the list of those being present and at the next meeting (28 May 2020), the Minutes of 16 March 2020 had been approved without amendment.

It was not possible to change the Minutes at this stage, but it was important to record the error. If not, this would have meant that if Councillor Gwinn had failed to attend this evening's meeting, she would have been disqualified under S.85 of the Local Government Act 1972 as a result of failure to attend for a continuous period of six months, without prior approval of the Council. Her last recorded attendance was January 2020. By noting the error, Councillor Gwinn had been absent from meetings for three months only (April, May and June).

The practical operation of S.85 was that where a councillor knows that he/she would be unable to attend a meeting for a period of six months, the Council must approve the reasons for absence in the fifth month as the requirement is approval before the six months had elapsed.

168 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

There were no members of the public in attendance.

169 INSURANCE COVER

As requested at the previous meeting, the full policy document had now been provided by Came & Company and was submitted to the Parish Council.

Members expressed misgivings about the contents and were concerned about some of the provisions relating to the Community Hall and whether these were the responsibility of Cheshire East Council, as the landlord, or the Parish Council. The Clerk was asked to follow-up with Cheshire East Council.

Members agreed that it may be prudent to take the opportunity during the year to consider other insurance providers.

170 SCHEME OF DELEGATION – REVISION

In view of the current difficulties in making payments meetings, the Parish Council was asked to approve the following additions to the Scheme of Delegation to enable the Clerk to make payments to avoid loss of services.

Where possible, prior approval of the Parish Council would be sought.

- a) Authorisation of routine recurring expenditure within the agreed budget.
- b) Incur expenditure not exceeding £1,000, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council provided there was evidence to support the expenditure, e.g. quote/estimate or invoice and such expenditure fell within an appropriate budget head.

RESOLVED: That amendments to the Scheme of Delegation be approved, as indicated.

171 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2019-2020

171.1 Internal Audit – JDH Business Services Ltd.

The accounts had now been received following the internal audit; the Internal Auditor's report was submitted.

The Parish Council was invited to give responses to the points raised. The schedule had been annotated to include the Clerk's comments on the various recommendations.

On the basis of the internal audit work carried out, the Internal Auditor's view was that the Council's system of internal controls was in place and adequate and effective for the purpose intended.

The recommendations in the action plan were as follows:

- The cleaning contract had expired and there should be market testing. The contract had rolled over annually since the contract was let in November 2013 and should have been reviewed 12 months after.
- Exercise of public rights. The reason for the failure to comply was that this was a new requirement and the Clerk had been unable to confirm that the notice had been displayed as this needed to be evidenced by a dated photograph of the notice displayed in the notice-board, and she had not been made aware of this until after the notice had been displayed. The notice was displayed on 30 June 2019 with the exercise of public rights commencing on 1 July 2019.
- Update the Fixed Assets Register to include the CCTV equipment.
- Failure to update the Clerk's monthly salary payment until part-way through the financial year.
- Donation made but no voucher provided. This related to a donation to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Trust.

- RESOLVED:** (a) That the highlighted issues in the Internal Auditor's report be noted;
- (b) That at its meeting to be held on 16 November 2020, the Parish Council review the specification for the cleaning contract with the aim of market-testing;
- (c) That in due course, a list of potential local contractors be prepared, possibly by advertising in the notice-board; and
- (d) That a continuing review of the various outstanding issues be addressed before the end of the calendar year.

171.2 Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit

The Parish Council was asked to review the effectiveness of the internal audit process using page 1 of the Internal Auditor's report as the checklist against which the process should be judged.

RESOLVED: That the Internal Audit showed that a robust audit had been carried out, and the audit had been effective with all requirements being met.

172 COVID-19 UPDATES

The following up-dated guidance had been issued.

172.1 Re-opening of Multi-purpose Community Buildings

A guidance document issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Guidance on the Re-opening of multi-purpose community facilities was submitted.

The Parish Council considered when and if the community hall should be re-opened, taking account of this guidance.

Members expressed concern that the guidance placed significant responsibility on the Parish Council for some aspects of safety and commented that it would not be practical as the Council could not police the various activities which took place in the hall.

It was agreed that responsibility should be shared with community hall regular users and that they should be asked how soon they would wish to re-commence their activities and what sort of measures they would be putting in place for the protection of their clients. The following should also be conveyed to the users.

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| 1 | Re-opening | The Council did not feel able to re-open the hall yet as the guidance places responsibility on the Parish Council to police the activities in the hall and as there is only one employee, it would be impossible for the Council to attend every activity to make sure that (a) social distancing is observed; (b) there are fewer numbers attending the activities than they would normally have; and (c) there is a one-way system for access and egress (this is probably achievable if one of the fire doors is used, but having a fire door open during activities is a breach of the lease, so this would need to be reviewed). |
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The Council would be considering this further on 17 August 2020 with the aim of sharing responsibility with the users of the hall.

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| 2 | Risk Assessment | The Council is required to carry out a risk assessment and a professional company is to be employed to undertake this to ensure that it is robust.

You will need to provide a copy of your own risk assessment for your activities. |
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3	Nominated Person	The users would need to nominate someone who would be accountable for the health and safety of their clients and let the Clerk have the name and contact details for that person.
4	Contact details for all clients	Members have also requested the contact names and details for all the clients who attend your classes/activities.
5	Masks	Everybody must wear a face mask. If they are disposed of, they must be disposed of correctly.
7	Signage	Appropriate reminder signage will be installed.
8	Hand drier	A decision has not yet been made about whether the hand drier should be on or off as there were two views expressed; (1) as the virus is now deemed to be airborne also, having a drier switched on could spread it; and (2) hand driers remain switched on in hospitals.

Councillor Groves reported that Nantwich Town Council had recently engaged Rhino Safety to conduct a risk assessment of its markets and considered that this had been carried out to a high standard.

RESOLVED: (a) That a risk assessment (Covid-19 compliant) be carried out; and

(b) That Rhino Safety be asked to quote for a risk assessment; and

(c) That arrangements be made for the risk assessment be carried out at the earliest opportunity (subject to the cost being within limits in accordance with the Financial Regulations)

172.2 Continuation of Remote Council Meetings

The latest advice from the National Association of Local Councils was that where a local council had identified a need to hold a physical meeting, as it was unable to conduct Council business in any other way, they could consider doing so from 4 July 2020. These meetings must be managed within social distancing and safer workplaces guidance produced by the government, which included the requirement to conduct a risk assessment to determine if it was feasible and safe to hold a physical meeting.

It was important that this risk assessment be carried out and any identified actions to reduce risk to attendees were implemented before any face-to-face meetings resumed. Councils must keep documentation of this risk assessment and the reasons why that Council had taken the decision to return to face-to-face meetings.

The Clerk emphasised that where local councils were able to continue to hold meetings remotely, this was the preferred method, and the regulations provided for this to continue until May 2021.

173 AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

(a) RESOLVED: That the following payments be approved:

£104.50	C M Jones – Contribution to membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks The fee was calculated by the SLCC based on the number of contracted hours per week. As the Clerk was also employed by another Council the payment had been divided 54% and 46%, with 46% relating to Stapeley The total cost of membership was £227.00 and an invoice was submitted.
£13.80	Shires Pay Services Ltd. – payroll service
£480.98	HMRC – Tax/NI on Clerk's salary. May and June 2020.

£274.80	JDH Business Services Ltd. Audit of the accounts 2019-2020.
£96.00	Johnsons Printers (Invoice 088482 - £80.00 net and £16.00 VAT) Design of newsletter which was published on-line only.
£220.80	Crystal Clean South Cheshire Ltd. (£184.00 net and £40 VAT) This related to a deep clean in April, as part of the lockdown arrangements, And a numatic buffer clean. (Invoice SI-1379)
£137.47	Scottish Power – unmetered electricity for street lighting. ¹

(b) Unmetered electricity: The Clerk had contacted Cheshire East Council some time ago to seek clarification that the replaced street-lights in the parish were now the responsibility of the Borough Council and the cost of any repairs and replacements would not fall to the Parish Council. Confirmation was awaited.

174 PLANNING MATTERS

174.1 Decision of Secretary of State to permit Muller Homes to develop on land off Peter de Stapleigh Way Planning Applications Nos. 12/3747N and 12/3746N

It was reported that Muller Homes had been granted permission to build the first phase of a development on land off Peter de Stapleigh Way. The details were contained in the 133-page letter from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government which was now submitted.

The Chairman had issued a statement to the local press, on behalf of the Council, and this was also submitted for information.

In view of the decision, it was agreed that a Working Group be established to consider the implications of this decision and to submit its report to the next meeting.

RESOLVED: (a) That a Working Group be established to consider the implications of the decision in respect of Muller Homes;

(b) That the Working Group comprise Councillors John Davenport, Peter Groves, Georgina Gwinn, Jo Hillman and Matthew Theobald; and

(c) That the group report to the next Parish Council meeting.

174.2 Planning Applications

There were no planning applications for consultation.

175 BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Councillors Peter Groves reported on the following Cheshire East Council matters.

- There had been financial investment in flood alleviation.
- The problems encountered on Wybunbury Lane were owing to a pipe in the road and this was to be replaced.
- Double yellow lines were to be installed at Halfpenny Close (Nantwich).

¹ Note: Payment on this invoice was collected via direct debit.

176 INFORMATION ITEMS

176.1 Website Accessibility (The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018)

Enclosed was a copy of the NALC Guidance on the above regulations with which local councils must comply by 23 September 2020. These had already been issued to Members, and a copy had been sent to Andrew Shepherd (Website Manager) to carry out the audit to ensure that the Council could comply by the due date.

176.2 The following documents were received for information.

- Police and Crime Commissioner Stakeholder Update
- CEC Strategic Planning Update

176.3 Public Space Protection Orders

Cheshire East Council was currently carrying out a general consultation on a number of its Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) but was not specifically consulting local councils. Members would be able to comment as individuals by no later than the closing date of 10 August 2020.

A link to the full details of the process and the documents available was given in a link.

176.4 Communications from Residents

- **Speeding traffic on London Road (A51)**

Councillors Peter Groves and Andrew Martin were dealing with this matter as the Ward Councillors.

- **Traffic-Free Wybunbury Lane**

A resident had written to the Clerk and informed her that he had been handing out leaflets to residents on Wybunbury Lane suggesting that following the lockdown, a green agenda may emerge and it was timely to consider closing Wybunbury Lane to traffic on Sundays as there was little commercial need for it.

The Clerk advised him that such a proposal would need to be dealt with by Cheshire East Council.

- **Hedge-cutting on Peter de Stapleigh Way in the vicinity of Hawksey Drive**

Following a request to the Clerk that she send notices to residents on Hawksey Drive to ask them to trim their hedges, Borough Councillor Andrew Martin had now offered to deal with this matter.

- **Painted Stones along footpath adjacent to the Community Hall.**

Comment had recently been made about the painted stones alongside the Community Hall, in view of Jof's Mowing's difficulty in cutting the grass. His suggestion was that the stones be moved temporarily to allow him to mow, unfettered; in the meantime, Members themselves were planning to take action.

It was agreed that this be added as an agenda item for the next meeting.

177 FUTURE MEETINGS

The Parish Council agreed to re-commence meetings in accordance with its calendar of meetings; however, although August was generally a recess month, it was agreed that a meeting be held on 17 August 2020.

Draft

.....Chairman