

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STAPELEY & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 3 OCTOBER 2013 AT BROAD LANE METHODIST CHAPEL, AUDLEM ROAD, NANTWICH**

PRESENT: Councillor S Gwinn-Freemantle Chairman
Councillor R Samra Vice-Chairman

Councillor S Clough Councillor J Davenport
Councillor M Docker Councillor P Groves
Councillor J Hillman Councillor M Malbon
Councillor K Nord

IN ATTENDANCE: Borough Councillor A Martin

122 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to make any declarations of interest in any item of business on the agenda. No declarations were made.

123 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 September 2013 be approved as a correct record.

124 POLICE MATTERS

Mark Cotton, Crime Reduction Adviser, had been invited to attend the meeting to advise in respect of anti-social behaviour and vandalism at the community hall. This was the third occasion he had been invited to the meeting but had been unable to attend.

(Note: Councillor M Malbon arrived at this point in the proceedings.)

125 CHESHIRE EAST BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

Borough Councillors A Martin and P Groves reported on Cheshire East matters of interest; in particular the current status of the Local Plan. It had been expected to be adopted by the Borough Council in October, but had been delayed.

126 OPEN FORUM (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.

A member of the public addressed the Parish Council in respect of the following:

- The Parish Council's preparedness to be represented at the Public Inquiry in respect of the Muller Homes planning applications. The speaker was referred to Parish Council minutes which gave details of the decisions made on this matter.

The Chairman used her discretion and allowed the Open Forum to extend beyond the 10 minutes permitted.

(Note: Councillor P Groves withdrew from the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

127 CO-OPTION

Following the resignation of Darren Willetts, the casual vacancy had been advertised in accordance with electoral regulations. No election had been called and the Parish Council was invited to consider arrangements for co-option to the vacancy.¹

RESOLVED: (a) That candidates be invited (by e-mail and/or through the newsletter) to attend the November meeting as observers; and

(b) That the Parish Council co-opt to the parish council vacancy at the December meeting.

128 COMMUNITY HALL

Following the Parish Council's agreement that the lease with Cheshire East Council be renewed in November 2013, Members were invited to consider the following:

- Management of the Hall

Nantwich Town Council had been asked if it would be able to assist in operating the hall. The Town Council had advised that Civic Hall staff would be able to –

- (a) Operate the on-line booking system
- (b) Deal with booking enquiries
- (c) Receive cheque and cash payments (at the Civic Hall)
- (d) Retain a key which casual users would arrange to collect from the Civic Hall on a weekday during office opening hours and return either the following day, or, in the case of weekend bookings, on a Monday

The Clerk would report in Part 2 of the meeting further details which could not be discussed in public as they related (a) to the financial dealings of Nantwich Town Council, and (b) to decisions which had yet to be taken by the Town Council.

The following duties would also need to be carried out as part of the administration of the hall, but had not been included as part of the service offered by the Town Council.

- Signing of hire agreement by user and representative of the Parish Council
- Casual users to be made aware of safety requirements.
- Checking the hall for cleanliness after use.

It was suggested that consideration of these matters would be an appropriate task for a Working Group of Members which could report back to the Parish Council.

- Additional Duties for the Clerk

As the hall was a Parish Council asset, the following residual duties would fall to the Clerk and the financial implications of this would be considered by the Finance and Grants Committee at its meeting in November.

- Banking of cheques and cash (part of RFO role).
- Maintain overview of income and submit quarterly reports to the Parish Council.
- Issue weekly list of bookings to cleaning contractor.
- Periodic checks of community hall to ascertain any maintenance/repair requirements.
- Meet potential users on site to show them around the hall.

¹ Arrangements for co-option were also discussed as part of Minute No. 132.1 'Parish Newsletter' but have been included here for completeness.

- Fees and Charges

During discussion, it was AGREED that it would be appropriate for the Finance and Grants Committee to consider this matter.

- Finance

The Clerk had suggested that at a future meeting, Members might wish to consider financial projections over the next two years to identify potential income and any shortfall which required to be met from the precept. There was no discussion on this item.

- Regular Use

It was noted that the hall was now in regular use on four evenings a week and on Saturday mornings.

- Signage

Cheshire East Council had indicated that it would be willing to grant approval (either planning permission or highways consent) to the installation of a free-standing sign at the boundary to the community hall. This would be considered at a future meeting. The purchase of a brown information sign could also be considered at a future meeting.

RESOLVED: (a) That the fees and charges be reviewed by the Finance and Grants Committee at its meeting on 21 November 2013;

(b) That, in principle, the offer of Nantwich Town Council to assist in managing the community hall be accepted. (Note: This matter would be discussed further in Part 2 of the meeting.)

129 FINANCIAL MATTERS

129.1 Authorisation of Payments

£105.40	HM Revenue and Customs – Tax on Clerk’s salary
£240.00	BDO LLP – external audit of accounts for 2012-2013 (£200 net and £40 vat)
£39.00	Councillor S Clough – reimbursement for ink cartridges etc.
£141.50	LJW Cleaning – cleaning of community hall – September.
£118.80	Mrs C M Jones – travel expenses @ tax-neutral rate of 0.45P per mile. The last claim made was on 7 March 2013 for the period 1 July 2012-11 March 2013. Journeys were Audlem-Nantwich return (12 miles) as indicated on the schedule submitted to Members for the period 20 March 2013 – 20 September 2013
£30.00	Cheshire Association of Local Councils – social media training (Clerk)

129.2 External Audit

The external audit by BDO LLP was now concluded and the auditor’s report was submitted. One issue had been raised as follows:

“Issue

The balances held by the council appear high and have been building up over the years.

Why has the issue been raised?

The Council has no power to hold excessive reserves unless it is saving for something in particular. We do not know whether this is the case in respect of these balances.

BDO's recommended action.

If the Council is not saving for a large purchase, the balances carried forward should be reduced to a more appropriate level. The generally accepted level of reserves is usually no more than the level of the precept or one year's expenditure at the most. Some Councils consider a level of only three months' expenditure is adequate but the amount held varies considerably amongst Councils. "

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that as part of the financial documentation provided to BDO LLP, a schedule of variances had been included showing comparisons with the previous financial year and explanations against each head of expenditure to indicate why there had been either an under-spend or over-spend.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and noted.

129.3 Budget Monitoring

Although submitted to the Parish Council meeting held on 1 August, a further copy of the budget monitoring report (updated) was submitted to show the position as at 31 July 2013. This was presented as a reminder to Members to show how funding would be provided for the Public Inquiry and also to demonstrate that there was sufficient funding to manage the community hall to the end of the financial year.

130 PLANNING

130.1 Applications

The Parish Council is invited to make observations on the following planning applications.

13/3893N – Firbank House, London Road – Conservatory extension and conversion of garage/music room into garden/music room.

13/3939N – 65 London Road, Stapeley (Snowdrop Lodge) – Conversion of garage and side extension, rear extension and three-car garage

13/4048N – 1 Newland Way, Stapeley (Extension)

RESOLVED: That no observations be made on planning applications Nos. 13/3893N, 13/3939N and 13/4048N.

130.2 Planning Application No. 13/1223N – Land to rear of 144 Audlem Road

This planning application had been considered by the Strategic Planning Board (SPB) on 11 September 2013 and the decision was that the Board was "minded to refuse it". The reason for this was that the applicant had already submitted an appeal on the grounds of non-determination. A copy of the Planning Officer's report submitted to the SPB, together with an extract from the Minutes of the meeting, had been provided to Members.

131 REPORT OF MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Members appointed to outside bodies were invited to report on any recent meetings.

- Parish Plan Implementation Group (SPAG) John Davenport

The Minutes of the SPAG meeting held on 16 September 2013 had been e-mailed to Members. Councillor Davenport, who attended the meeting, spoke to the Minutes.

Following reference to unidentified areas of land on the Cronkinson estate where ownership was in doubt, the Clerk was asked to make enquiries of CEC to try to acquire a large-scale plan of the estate.

- ChALC Area Meeting Shaun Clough

Councillor Clough reported on the ChALC meeting which he had attended on 3 October, the focus of which had been planning matters.

- LAP Meeting/Highways Group Peter Groves

Councillor Docker had also attended this meeting and reported on matters relating to public transport.

(Note: Councillor S Clough withdrew from the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

132 COMMUNICATIONS

132.1 A draft newsletter was submitted for approval. Amendments were agreed. The Clerk would submit the final copy to Johnsons for printing, with the aim of distributing the newsletter to each household the third week in October. The following additional articles were agreed for inclusion:

- Community Carols Jo Hillman
- Bus Services Mike Docker
- Loneliness and Isolation Sandy Gwinn-Freemantle

132.2 Facebook (Item requested by Councillor Jo Hillman)

Councillor Hillman sought the Parish Council's approval to the creation of a Facebook page in respect of the community hall. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: That Councillor Hillman prepare a Facebook page for the community hall, but that no action be taken to make it "live" at this stage.

133 PUBLIC DEBATE

The Parish Council was invited to re-schedule the Public Debate which had been postponed from 19 September 2013.

Members agreed that until the situation regarding the Public Inquiry (Muller Homes) was clearer, there was little purpose in arranging a debate at this time.

134 LAND AT TALBOT WAY

Councillor Hillman reported on her inspection of Talbot Way.

- The setts required further work as they had become loosened. (The Clerk had yet to contact James Thompson (Greenspaces) about this matter.)
- The Clerk was asked to provide details of the management plan for the conservation area.
- Although United Utilities had informed the Council that it was carrying out emergency work in the vicinity of No. 40 Talbot Way, there was no evidence that this had been undertaken. The work had been due to start on 16 September and completed within 5 days. The Clerk agreed to make enquiries of United Utilities.

135 COMMUNITY CAROLS

The Working Group had not yet met. The following arrangements were agreed/noted:

- Tuesday, 10 December at the Community Hall at 6.30 pm
- Councillor Groves had offered to provide refreshments (vol-aux-vents and mulled wine)

- A band or choir was required (Councillor Samra agreed to contact Nantwich Voices and Councillor Docker would make enquiries in respect of a band.)

Other arrangements required would be considered by Councillors Docker and Hillman, as the lead councillors on this event. *(It was noted that although Councillor Gwinn-Freemantle was a member of the Working Group, she was now using crutches and would be unable to assist at this time.)*

136 CORRESPONDENCE

The following items of correspondence had been received since the last meeting.

Cheshire East Council

- Loneliness and Social Isolation – letter from Councillor J Clowes (Portfolio Holder for Health and Adult Social Care)
- Traffic and Management Report – works planned and in progress
- Community Resilience Speed Training event – Thursday, 31 October (Malbank School) 5.30 pm 6.30 pm
- Nantwich LAP Highways Group meeting – 2 October – 5.00 pm – 7.00 pm Goodwill Hall, Faddiley
- Partnerships Newsletter (PACE)
- Town and Parish Councils Conference – Monday, 4 November at Alsager Civic Centre, Lawton Road – 6.00m for 6.30 pm start – finish at 8.30 pm.
(Councillor Docker agreed to attend the Conference.)

Cheshire Association of Local Councils

- ChALC Crewe and Nantwich Area meeting – 2 October – 7.30 pm – Wychwood Village Hall

137 OPEN FORUM

There were no members of the public in attendance at this point in the meeting.

138 SHARED ITEMS

Parish Councillors were invited to share information or request the inclusion of items on the agenda for the next meeting. The following item was raised.²

A Member reported on circulating rumours about the date of the Public Inquiry on the Muller Homes planning applications (12/3746N and 12/3747N: Appeal references APP/R0660/A13/2197529 and APP/R0660/A13/2197534). Indications from Cheshire East Council were that this would not be held before November/December and possibly as late as January 2014. The Clerk had made further enquiries of Cheshire East Council and was awaiting a response.

In the event of the Public Inquiry being held in October, the Clerk was asked to make arrangements for an extra-ordinary meeting to be convened prior to the scheduled November meeting.

139 NOVEMBER MEETINGS

7 November 2013	Parish Council
21 November 2013	Finance and Grants Committee

² This topic had been raised during the meeting under an unrelated item, but for completeness is included here.

140 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That in accordance with Paragraph 1 (2) of 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 or special nature of the business to be transacted and the public interest would not be served in disclosing that information.

141 COMMUNITY HALL – FUTURE USE

Following a request by the Parish Council, Nantwich Town Council had indicated that it could assist in managing the community hall as discussed in Minute No. 128 above. The Clerk now reported the cost to the Parish Council. This had been withheld from publication as the matter had yet to be approved by one of the Town Council committees.

There were no confidential matters to discuss arising out of the meeting with the Legal Adviser held prior to the start of the meeting.

The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2013 were submitted for information.

RESOLVED: (a) That the Parish Council accept the provisional offer made on behalf of Nantwich Town Council, as detailed in Minute No. 128 above; and

(b) That it be noted that the cost quoted was subject to approval by the Town Council.

Reasons for exclusion:

- (i) The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2013 were additional to the formal Minutes which were in the public domain. They named one of the users of the hall and contained commercially-sensitive information and it was not in the public interest to disclose that information.
- (ii) The Minutes had been prepared for the benefit of those Members who were not present at the meeting on 5 September to enable them to understand the rationale behind the decisions made.
- (iii) The financial terms offered on behalf of Nantwich Town Council were yet to be approved by the Town Council.

.....Chairman

The meeting commenced at 7.35 pm and concluded at 10.20 pm