

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of Comberbach Parish Council held on Tuesday 14th July 2020

Present

Mr J Ryder (Chairman in the Chair)
Mr J Bradley
Mrs R Bradley
Mr S Hornby
Mrs J Johnston

Ms DJ French (Clerk)
Mr S Penwill (RFO)

CWAC Cllr L Gibbon

The Meeting started at 7.15pm.

1. Public Open Forum

No Members of the Public were present.

2. Apologies for absence – CWAC Councillors P Marshall and N Wright

3. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest – none

4. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5th May 2020

(20/33) RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5th May 2020 be approved as a correct record.

5. Progress Reports and Updates

The Parish Clerk updated:

- The new picnic tables were now installed;
- The RFO had notified all current advertisers of the decision not to charge for adverts in the Village Newsletter for the remainder of the year and a number of advertisers had responded with thanks to the Council for its support. There had been one new advertiser.

(20/34) RESOLVED that the update be noted.

6. Cheshire West and Chester Councillors' reports

CWAC Councillor Gibbon updated:

- She had been appointed onto a cross party commission that was looking at rejuvenating town centres and high streets and welcomed any views and suggestions;
- A consultation was underway regarding the Highways service;
- There was funding of £161k to undertake initiatives around pop up walking and cycling routes;
- She was a member of the Covid-19 Outbreak Board that would look at addressing any flare ups of the virus; the Board had representation from various partners including Police and Public Health. All Members of the Board were on call 24 hours a day;

- The Scrutiny Committee, of which she was a Member, was looking at the response to the pandemic and views had been sought from various sources including Parish Councils. The Committee would have a wide ranging remit with initial focus being on education and service provision for vulnerable children. The Committee would identify lessons learned.

7. Finance Committee

The Council considered the minutes of meetings of Finance Committee held on 23rd April and 8th July 2020.

(20/35) RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of Finance Committee held on 23rd April and 8th July be received.

8. Planning

8.1 Planning decisions were listed in Appendix 3.

8.2 There were no enforcement matters.

(20/36) RESOLVED: That the planning update be noted.

9. Recreation Area

9.1. The Council had reopened the Recreation Area in accordance with Government guidelines, on 4th July. The Chairman, Councillor J Ryder, together with Councillors J Bradley and J Johnston and the Clerk and RFO had undertaken a site visit on 2nd July to consider the Risk Assessment. An inspection of the equipment had also been undertaken. A Guidance Note had been displayed on noticeboards, on social media and the website; various signs had been installed and CWAC had been asked to ensure the bins were emptied on a regular basis. The Chairman reported that he had been carrying out site visits and feedback was positive with visitors taking their own hand sanitiser and wipes.

9.2 The Risk Assessment was considered. The Clerk advised that an alternative Risk Assessment had been circulated from CWAC. She suggested using the CWAC version which was very detailed. She had asked CWAC for any recommendations around cleaning and sanitising equipment and CWAC had advised that they were not undertaking cleaning of equipment but were using signage. They were also looking to use picture signage which would be helpful for younger children and for those with additional needs.

9.3 Various expenditure had been incurred in relation to the Recreation Area including signage; sand, cement and flagstones as a base for the new Activity Tables; glue for the buffalo boards that were reinforcing the platforms on the Multi Play Area; weed control; and brackets for securing the picnic benches.

(20/37) RESOLVED: That:

(a) the measures to ensure safe opening of the Recreation Area be noted and approved; the cleaning of equipment in the Recreation Area is not done at this point and signs will indicate this;

(b) the first Risk Assessment undertaken during the Site Visit on 2nd July be approved as guidance for the reopening of the Recreation Area but an amended version now be prepared in line with the CWAC version; and

(c) the following payments be approved:

(i) £21.60 to Northwich Town Council for 4 x Foamex signs; and

(ii) Reimbursement to the Chairman for the following sums - £40 for additional signs for the Recreation Area; £100.34 for sand, cement and flags; £15.99 for angle brackets and £64.78 for glue and weed control.

10. Parish Council logo

The Clerk asked Councillors to consider the merits of a specific Parish Council logo. Members discussed the new Gateway signage which incorporated an attractive design and could be used as a basis for a logo to ensure consistency.

(20/38) RESOLVED:

That R Stephens be requested to design a logo for the Parish Council based on the Gateway signage design with a budget of up to £150.

11. Highways

11.1 Gateway signs - the Clerk reported that the new gateway signs had been delivered and were in storage. CWAC had agreed to install them but could not advise a timescale due to the pandemic.

11.2 Residents' correspondence regarding highways – Councillors considered emails from two residents raising highways issues. Both had also been referred to CWAC Councillors. CWAC Councillor L Gibbon agreed to share with residents the relevant correspondence she had had with CWAC about the issues raised. The Clerk advised that she had obtained information on setting up another Speedwatch scheme including training and loan equipment.

(20/39) RESOLVED: that

- (a) the update be noted;
- (b) the Clerk will contact CWAC regarding an update on the installation date for the Gateway signs; and
- (c) the Speedwatch initiative be promoted further through social media to encourage further volunteers.

12. Accounts and Finances

12.1 The Parish Council accounts to 30th June 2020 were submitted at Appendix 1.

12.2 The annual list of subscriptions was submitted.

12.3 The Council considered the purchase of a reference book “Local Council’s Administration” which would also be useful for the Clerk’s qualification.

12.4 The list of payments was in Appendix 2.

12.5 The Quarter 1 budget report was submitted.

12.6 The Council considered the report and Action Plan of the Internal Auditor. The report had been considered in detail by Finance Committee. The Audit conclusion was that the Council’s system of internal controls was in place, adequate for the purpose intended and effective. There were 2 recommendations and a guidance note. The actions related to publishing the Notice of Public Rights on the council website and authority to spend. The RFO advised that both would be addressed – the Notice had been on the website for the statutory timescale but then removed; this practice would be amended for future years. The second recommendation related to authority to spend and establishing a Purchase Order system. The RFO advised that an Order Book had been set up and was being used on the Council’s financial system, Scribe, which he felt was appropriate for larger items of expenditure but smaller sums he felt were covered by the current system of approvals and recording in the minutes. The guidance note related to categorisation of travelling expenses and this would be amended as advised by the Auditor.

12.7 The Council considered the general Risk Assessment which had been reviewed at the Finance Committee on 8th July and a number of amendments made. The Clerk had circulated the amended version.

(20/40) RESOLVED: That

- (a) the accounts in Appendix 1 with a balance of £20,582.92 and £36,657.55 in reserves be noted;
- (b) the list of subscriptions be approved – Cheshire Association of Local Councils; Cheshire Community Action; Campaign for the Protection of Rural England; Mid Cheshire Footpath Society; Society of Local Council Clerks (membership for both the Clerk and the RFO) and the Information Commissioner’s Office;
- (c) the reference book “Local Council’s Administration” be purchased;
- (d) the payments in Appendix 2 be approved;
- (e) the Quarter 1 budget report be approved;
- (f) The Internal Audit report be received;
- (g) The recommendations in the Audit Report be approved as follows: the Notice of Public Rights be retained on the website to confirm this action has been taken; all orders for works over £500 will be included in the Order Book through the Scribe system, items under £500 will be included in the current payment approval system; and staff expenses be reclassified in budget reporting and the AGAR form in accordance with the Internal Audit recommendation.
- (h) The general Risk Assessment be amended as follows:

- (i) To refer to bi-weekly checks of the Recreation Area;
- (ii) To refer to use of Dropbox to save documents rather than a hard drive;
- (iii) To refer to health and safety requirements/risk assessments;
- (iv) To include reference to Finance Committee;
- (v) To refer to monthly Bank Reconciliations.

13. Website

The RFO presented a report on the creation of a Compliant Website. By September 2020 it would be mandatory for the Council website to be compliant with the Accessibility Regulations introduced in 2018.

The current website was part of the village website, Comberbach.com. A review suggested the comberbach.com website was broadly compliant but work was required to identify those areas that were non-compliant along with action to rework where necessary.

The RFO and Clerk proposed an alternative solution which was to segregate the Parish Council content to a separate compliant website. The Finance Committee supported this option. The RFO had contacted a number of suppliers with a specification of requirements and a summary of costs was presented along with links to example websites from each supplier. The suppliers would provide email addresses which meant Councillors would have a dedicated Council email address; this was best practice. The Council was also recommended to register its own domain name which would avoid being locked into a single supplier.

The costs for a new website were not anticipated in the budget. It would therefore be necessary to vire the funding from another budget and Finance Committee recommended this be from the Noticeboards budget.

RESOLVED (20/41) That

- (a) Supplier 2 be appointed to provide the Parish Council website in accordance with all terms and conditions as presented;
- (b) The RFO will progress a domain name for the Parish Council incorporating Gov.UK in the address which will be funded from the IT budget; and
- (c) The required funding for the website supplier will be vired from the Noticeboards budget.

14. Correspondence

The list of correspondence was received.

The Clerk reported one additional item of correspondence inviting a representative to attend a virtual meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Members had been circulated with a presentation from a resident of the village regarding the possible provision of skateboarding facilities next to the Recreation Area. Members discussed the feedback that had been received during the Neighbourhood Plan consultation and noted that this had included lack of provision for older children; along with suggestions for a wildflower meadow and outdoor gym equipment. Members discussed seeking further information on the skatepark proposal including likely usage and costings, possible grant funding opportunities and seeking views on what residents would like to see in the current vacant site.

(20/42) RESOLVED: That:

- (a) the correspondence be noted; and
- (b) the Clerk contact the resident regarding the proposal for a skatepark, to thank him for his excellent presentation and advise that the Council will investigate further information on the proposals, including likely usage and costings and will seek wider views on residents' ideas for the spare area of land at the Recreation Area through the Newsletter and social media.

15. Exclusion of Public and Press

(20/43) RESOLVED That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed – matters relating to an individual or of a sensitive nature.

Part 2

16. Parish Council Annual Award

Members discussed the recipient of the Annual Award. Members discussed a number of options and recipients who could be recognised for their work during the current pandemic.

(20/44) RESOLVED That the Award be given to the heroes of Comberbach during Covid-19 as discussed at the meeting.

17. Protocol

The Council discussed the Protocol and Action Plan. Members agreed liaison should be undertaken with the Chapel which would be the commemorative location for the village.

(20/45) RESOLVED: that the Clerk be authorised to purchase the items discussed at the meeting and liaise with the Chapel regarding arrangements.

The Meeting closed at 8.37pm

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 15th September 2020.

Signed
Chairman

Appendix 1 Accounts for 30th June 2020 were approved

Current account: £20,582.92	Reserves: £36,657.55
Cash book: £20,582.92	Unpresented cheques: £0

Appendix 2 Payments

Item	Amount	Cheque	Power
Synchroprint – May CVN	£170.00	22651	LGA 1972 s 111
Northwich Town Council – swings/gate	£235.20	22652	LGA 1972 s 111
JDH Business Services – Int. Audit	£216.00	22653	LGA 1972 s 111
Cheshire Community Action - subs	£20.00	22654	LGA 1972 s 111
J Ryder – maintenance materials/signs	£221.07	22655	LGA 1972 s 111
Northwich Town Council – Covid signs	£21.60	22656	LGA 1972 s 111
S Penwill – stationery, paper, zoom	£113.95	22657	LGA 1972 s 111
CHALC – Subs 2020/21	£284.40	22658	LGA 1972 s 111
Information Commissioner - subs	£35.00	DD	LGA 1972 s 111

Appendix 2b Pre-Authorised Payments

Item	Amount	Cheque	Power
Prism Parfums – sanitiser (PAP2001)	£432.00	22648	LGA 1972 s 111
NBB Ltd- picnic tables etc (PAP 2002)	£4902.12	22649	LGA 1972 s 111
J Ryder – Buffalo Boards (PAP 2003)	£215.78	22650	LGA 1972 s 111

Appendix 3 Recent planning decisions by CW&C

Erection of greenhouse/summer room (retrospective)	Appeal submitted
Erection of garden shed - retrospective	
Removal of existing tile hung cladding and replacement with render, 21 Burgamot Lane	Approved
Single storey side extension, conversion of garage and widen access to provide 3 car spaces, Woodcroft, Marbury Road	Approved