

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of Comberbach Parish Council held on Tuesday 15th September 2020

Present

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

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

The Meeting started at 7.15pm.

1. Public Open Forum

No Members of the Public were present.

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

3. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest – none

4. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 14th July 2020

(20/46) RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5th May 2020 be approved as a correct record.

5. Progress Reports and Updates

5.1 Land Adjacent to the Recreation Area:

Members discussed options for the area of land adjacent to the Recreation Area. A resident had approached the Parish Council in July requesting the area be developed as a Skate Park. Views from residents had been sought via the Newsletter and Facebook. There had been support for a Skate Park and for a Pump Park, other suggestions included a wildflower meadow, picnic area and community garden. Members discussed how this issue had been one of the main issues raised during the consultation on a Neighbourhood Plan – insufficient provision for young people.

The Parish Clerk advised she had sought views of the PCSO who was supportive of a Skate Park and had approached Northwich Town Council who also ran Skate Parks and felt they were a good asset and did not cause issues. The Chairman referred to an article in the Northwich Guardian in 2019 which had looked at Skate Parks in Northwich, he had visited existing facilities in the local area and suggested concrete was a better material to use as it was less noisy.

Members discussed the need to take into account any insurance implications. There may be funding opportunities via the Police and Crime Commissioner Safer Communities fund or the Proceeds of Crime Initiative.

(20/47) RESOLVED that further investigations be carried out based on discussions at the meeting including further consideration of costings, insurance implications, maintenance implications and the resident who raised the issue be asked for his view of a Pump Park rather than Skate Park. The financial aspects be discussed at a meeting of the Finance Committee prior to further discussion at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

5.2 Parish Council logo – the Council considered designs for a logo.

(20/48) RESOLVED that the Clerk circulate examples of how the designs would look on a letterhead for Members' views and the matter be considered at the next meeting.

6. Cheshire West and Chester Councillors' reports

In the absence of any CWAC Councillors there was no update available.

7. Planning

7.1 Planning decisions were listed in Appendix 3.

7.2 There were no enforcement matters.

Members noted that works appeared to be taking place in the field off Cogshall Lane and the Clerk agreed to raise this with CWAC Councillors.

(20/49) RESOLVED: That the planning update be noted.

8. Recreation Area

8.1. The Council considered the quarterly inspection report from Northwich Town Council. Two issues had been raised relating to the footboards on the Multi Play unit and the fastenings for the new benches. The Chairman had responded to Northwich Town Council explaining how that the Rospa Inspector and a playground supplier had both confirmed the phenolic buffalo board used on the Multi Unit was acceptable. The fixings for the picnic benches were placed on the outside so that they could be screwed into existing bracket concrete; the supplier had confirmed the benches did not need to be screwed down for safety reasons.

8.2 Following the reopening of the Recreation Area there were no issues reported.

8.3 A request had been received to install a storage bin and a supply of footballs for use by visitors in the Recreation Area. Members agreed a 'keep net' was a low cost option and would donate a couple of footballs for general use; a storage bin could attract litter.

8.4 Footpath – due to reduced usage and better weather the footpath had been less muddy and it was suggested the project to resurface could be deferred to the next financial year; Members supported this.

(20/50) RESOLVED: That:

(a) the Council confirms its support for the replacement footboard on the Multi Play Unit being phenolic buffalo board; and the RFO will contact the insurance company with the specification. The Council also confirms its support for the fastening of the benches and additional fastenings will be placed over winter;

(b) the Council will purchase a 'keep net' and some footballs to a maximum cost of £20 to keep at the Recreation Area for general use; and

(c) the resurfacing of the footpath be deferred to the next financial year and the Chairman will contact the interested companies to advise them.

9. Highways

9.1 Traffic issues in the village – the Vice Chairman updated on a site visit with CWAC Councillors and Highways officers on 3rd September which had looked at various highways issues in Comberbach and Marbury. The site meeting had considered the speeding concerns through Comberbach and Highways officers had agreed to contact the Road Safety Team to ask for another traffic survey; this would not take place before traffic volumes were expected to return to normal which was 2021 at the earliest. In the meantime, road markings would be refreshed including the SLOW marking on Warrington Road. At the site meeting CWAC officers had confirmed that the Council policy was not to fund traffic calming measures but Officers would work with the Police to ensure enforcement of speeding. Members discussed options including funding average speed cameras. The proposal to make Budworth Lane a one way road would be raised with CWAC Highways by CWAC Councillor Gibbon.

9.2 Footpath on Budworth Lane – a resident had contacted the Parish Council about whether a footpath could be instated the full length of Budworth Lane. Members noted that a footpath had not been present for many years but CWAC would be asked about the possibility.

9.3 Replacement street name sign for The Moss – residents had contacted the Parish Council to ask about a replacement street name sign for The Moss. It was noted that as this was an unadopted road CWAC would not fund signage. CWAC had confirmed the cost of a replacement sign was £120 and removal of the old sign and fitting a new sign would cost £150.

(20/51) RESOLVED That:

- (a) The Clerk contact CWAC to progress the use of a Speed Indicator Device in the village;
- (b) Councillor Hornby explore options of speed cameras to record average speeds through the village including costings and residents views on funding through the precept;
- (c) The Clerk contact CWAC Highways regarding the possibility of a footpath on Budworth Lane and request that consideration be given to cutting back the overgrown lengths of footpath in the meantime, in a similar way to the proposed action at Marbury Hollows; and
- (d) the Council will fund the street name sign for The Moss at a cost of £120 and residents be asked to pay for installation.

10. Accounts and Financial Matters

10.1 The External Audit had now concluded and no issues had been raised. The Council had also been selected for an Intermediate Audit which meant providing some additional information which had all been accepted.

10.2 The Council considered a letter of appointment from JDH Business Services outlining the terms of engagement.

10.3 The Parish Council Accounts at 31st August 202 were submitted at Appendix 1.

10.4 The list of payments was in Appendix 2.

10.5 Members considered a contribution towards the Remembrance Sunday wreath.

RESOLVED (20/52) That

- (a) the successful conclusion of the External Audit and the Intermediate Audit be noted and the RFO be thanked for his work on both audits;
- (b) the Council confirms the appointment of JDH Business Services as Internal Auditor for one year and the RFO sign and return the letter of appointment;
- (c) the accounts in Appendix 1 with a balance of £18,353.40 and £36,657.55 in reserves be noted;
- (d) the payments in Appendix 2 be approved; and
- (e) a contribution of £50 be made towards the wreath for Remembrance Sunday.

11. Website

11.1 The Clerk had circulated the link to the draft website. Members agreed the website should focus on Parish Council issues and not duplicate the village website.

Members agreed the website was visually pleasing and easy to navigate. The website company would also arrange for all Councillors and the Clerk and RFO to have a Gov.Uk email address.

11.2 Members reviewed the following documents;

- (a) Standing Orders
- (b) Financial Regulations
- (c) Publication Scheme
- (d) Data Protection Policy.

The Clerk explained that the Standing Orders and Data Protection Policy were still applicable, the Financial Regulations were based on the model version from NALC and had been reviewed by the Finance Committee and the Publication Scheme was based on the NALC model; it listed which information was available and how it could be obtained.

(20/53) RESOLVED: that

- (a) the format of emails be initial/dot/surname and advice be sought on whether a standard signature should be included on Councillor emails;
- (b) the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Data Protection Policy be approved without amendment;
- (c) the Publication Scheme be approved and a copying charge of £1.00 plus actual cost of postage be included for any requests for paper copies of documents in the Scheme.

12. CWAC Member Budgets

The Parish Council considered whether there were any projects for which funding could be sought under the CWAC Member Budget scheme.

(20/54) RESOLVED: that the Clerk complete an application form for funding towards the project to develop the land at the Recreation Area for amenity use.

13. Suggestion Box

The Chairman noted that a suggestion had been received regarding painting the fingerpost signs in the village. It was noted that CWAC had supplied paint for this but due to Covid it had not been progressed.

(20/55) RESOLVED: That the painting of the fingerpost signs will be carried out as soon as safe to do so and volunteers be sought to help with the project.

14. Salaries

The Clerk reported that NALC had issued new payscales with effect from 1st April 2020.

The Clerk and RFO had both completed successful appraisals and the Council was asked to consider progressing both the Clerk and RFO by one increment each.

(20/56) RESOLVED that:

- (a) the new payscales be noted;
- (b) the Clerk and RFO be each granted one increment meaning the Clerk is on SCP 20, hourly rate of £13.51 and the RFO is on SCP 10, hourly rate of £11.08, with effect from 1st May 2020.
- (c) The RFO will liaise with the payroll company regarding the new salary payments and prepare a letter of authority for the bank to implement the changes to the Standing Orders to be signed by the authorised signatories.

15. Correspondence

The list of correspondence was received.

The Clerk reported on additional items of correspondence from CWAC requesting information about any planned bonfire events in the village, to which the Clerk had responded that the Parish Council was not organising any such events. A resident had offered to help with any Speedwatch scheme and reported a defective speed sign. The Chairman confirmed the sign was now working and the Clerk would advise the resident. CWAC Cllr Gibbon had drawn the Council's attention to a planning consultation which had been circulated to all Members.

(20/57) RESOLVED: That the correspondence be noted.

16. Exclusion of Public and Press – Part 2

None

The Meeting closed at 8.54pm

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 27th October 2020.

Signed
Chairman

Appendix 1 Accounts for 31st August 2020 were approved

Current account: £18,353.40	Reserves: £36,657.55
Cash book: £18,353.40	Unpresented cheques: £0

Appendix 2 Payments

Item	Amount	Cheque	Power
Synchroprint – July CVN	£194.00	22660	LGA 1972 s 111
Parish Noticeboard Co – new locks	£96.00	22661	LGA 1972 s 111
Northwich Town Council – zipwire tyres	£887.04	22662	LGA 1972 s 111
Northwich Town Council – inspection	£58.80	22663	LGA 1972 s 111
Shane Ross – Grounds mtce Invoice 2	£600.00	22664	LGA 1972 s 111
PKF Littlejohn LLP – Ext Audit 2019/20	£240.00	22665	LGA 1972 s 111
CPRE – subscription 2020/21	£36.00	22666	LGA 1972 s 111
Cheshire West & Chester – Install signs	£700.00	22667	LGA 1972 s 111
D French – stationery, paper	£89.07	22668	LGA 1972 s 111

Appendix 2b Pre-Authorised Payments

Item	Amount	Cheque	Power
BWP Creative – Website deposit	£287.64	22659	LGA 1972 s 111

Appendix 3 Recent planning decisions by CW&C

Erection of greenhouse/summer room (retrospective)	Appeal dismissed
Erection of garden shed - retrospective	
Removal of existing tile hung cladding and replacement with render, 2 Goosebrook Close	Pending