

Minutes of the Meeting of Comberbach Parish Council held on Tuesday 8 March 2022

Present

Councillors:

John Ryder (Chairman in the Chair)

Richard Chandler

John Darwin

Bob Holt

Jill Johnston

Val McDermott

Denise French (Clerk)

Stephen Penwill (RFO)

CWAC Cllr Lynn Gibbon

The Meeting started at 7.15pm.

Public Open Forum

There were no Members of the Public present.

1. Apologies for Absence

An Apology for Absence was received and approved from Councillor Bradley for a 3 month period due to illness; and from CWAC Councillor Marshall.

It was noted that Steven Hornby had recently submitted his resignation to the Chairman and had left the Council.

2. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 18 January 2022

(22/13) RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 18 January 2022 be approved as a correct record.

4. Progress Reports and Updates

4.1 Road safety Budworth Lane and Cock Lane – the Chairman updated that he had discussed this with the Clerk to Great Budworth Parish Council who confirmed that they were not progressing this matter any further at the moment. It was agreed to remove this item from future agendas.

4.2 BT Exchange, Senna Lane – the Clerk had sent a reminder email about the appearance of the BT exchange on Senna Lane but there had been no further response; the Clerk would send a further reminder to BT.

4.3 Climate Change – Councillor McDermott had written an article for the Comberbach Village News inviting interested people to get in touch and suggesting an Open Day to discuss ideas and initiatives. An update would be made to the next meeting.

5. Cheshire West and Chester Councillors' (CWAC) reports

CWAC Councillor Gibbon updated:

- CWAC had approved the budget with a 2.99% increase, of which 1% was towards social care.
- Soot Hill landslip – there were regular updates on CWAC website. She had met with officers about progress and timescales. It had taken a number of weeks to prepare drawings and shoring was now taking place. The next stage was for cranes and slings to lift the metal barrier out of the way to assess the cause and assess the stability of the wall. Wires would be transferred to the opposite side of the road. Then necessary repairs could be undertaken. Councillor Gibbon had asked to be given weekly updates. She was concerned about ongoing impact on local businesses, residents and the local highways infrastructure.
- She encouraged the Parish Council to consider preparing a Resilience Plan and had shared a good example from Ashton Hayes.
- New bins had now been delivered in Comberbach. A number of roadshows were taking place at various locations. Old recycling boxes could be used at Great Budworth to pack up supplies for Ukraine.
- Bulb planting – she would ask for primulas for volunteers to plant across the village
- HyNet – the pipeline proposal was out to consultation regarding which of 2 routes would be used for the underground pipe.
- She had met with the Environment Agency, Canal and River Trust and Esther McVey MP regarding flooding issues in Northwich.
- There was some financial support available towards the installation of electric charging points and she would circulate information once available.
- The backlog in planning applications was 750 cases in February.
- A site meeting had been held regarding the possibility of installing 2 small bridges at Marbury Hollows to go over the streams at either side. This was being explored with Public Rights of Way officers and Marbury Park.

6. Recreation Area and Pump Track

6.1 The Chairman updated:

- High winds had caused damage to one of the benches which was now in the storage unit pending repair.
- He plus Councillors Chandler and Darwin had put up new fencing.
- Shane Ross had visited the week before to undertake winter maintenance.

6.2 The latest inspection report was considered. It was noted that the Wet Pour would benefit from being jet washed once there was a period of dry weather.

6.3 The Council considered a proposal to purchase paint, brushes and materials to repaint the play equipment.

(22/14) RESOLVED: that

(a) the update on the Recreation Area be noted; and

(b) a sum of maximum £250 be approved towards the purchase of paint, brushes and materials to repaint the play equipment.

7. Highways and Streetscene

7.1 The Parish Council considered the CWAC wildflower programme and whether to plant and maintain its own wildflower area. Members agreed to wait for the next round of funding and request that CWAC plant and maintain an area in Comberbach.

7.2 The Council discussed the impact of the ongoing closure of Soot Hill; this was affecting residents who were having to follow diversions which resulted in increased journey times; local businesses due to access difficulties; and the local highways network due to additional traffic using local roads. The Council discussed the data from the SID which would be useful for comparing traffic data.

7.3 Councillors Darwin and McDermott raised concerns about highways safety on Cogshall Lane. Members discussed issues relating to poor drainage and the surface often being polished and icy. It was suggested that signage indicating a sharp bend or chevron markings could help improve road safety.

7.4 Members considered the latest data from the Speed Indicator Device which had been located on Gibb Hill in January. It was currently installed on Marbury Road. The average speed in January was 31.5mph. The presence of the SID appeared to be having a positive impact on traffic speeds.

7.5 Members discussed issues with the streetscene and walking their area to identify any problem areas.

(22/15) RESOLVED: that:

(a) the Council does not progress the option of planting and maintaining its own wildflower area;

(b) the impact of the Soot Hill road closure be deferred to the next meeting to enable the Council to consider comparative traffic data from the SID;

(c) the Clerk write to CWAC Highways regarding highways safety issues at Cogshall Lane and making suggestions for improvements, including photographs to show problem areas;

- (d) the latest data from the SID be noted; and
- (e) Members will walk their area to identify any properties where there are issues and make contact with the relevant householder.

8. Local Police Matters

The Chairman had been contacted by a local resident suggesting that the Parish Council requests a regular update from the Police and PCSO on local matters including the use of the speed gun; an example from Warrington was circulated.

(22/16) RESOLVED: That the Chairman will respond to the resident that the Councillors are aware of the updates available on the internet and that the PCSO holds regular surgeries in Comberbach for anyone who wishes to attend.

9. Accounts and Financial Matters

9.1 The Parish Council Accounts at 28 February 2022 were submitted at Appendix 1. The RFO anticipated that £8k would be available to transfer to Reserves at year end.

9.2 The list of payments was in Appendix 2.

(22/17) RESOLVED That

- (a) the accounts in Appendix 1 with a balance of £15,738.41 and £21,377.64 in reserves be noted;
- (b) the payments in Appendix 2 be approved;

10. Review of Policies

The Council considered a number of policies for their annual review:

- (a) Standing Orders - the Clerk explained that the Standing Orders were based on the latest model document from the National Association of Local Councils and had been adapted where required to fit the Council's procedures.
- (b) Financial Regulations – the RFO did not propose any changes to the current Financial Regulations.
- (c) Risk Assessment – the Risk Assessment had been updated based on the comments of the Internal Auditor in 2021 regarding supplier fraud including the adequacy of supplier onboarding controls; there was also reference to the online banking procedures and cloud storage system.
- (d) Online Banking Policy – there were a number of proposed amendments to the policy to reflect current practice.

(e) Asset Register – the Chairman and RFO undertook an annual review of the Assets prior to submitting the Asset Register for approval by the Council.

(22/18) RESOLVED: That:

- (a) the Standing Orders be approved;
- (b) the Financial Regulations be approved;
- (c) the Risk Assessment be approved;
- (d) the Online Banking Policy be approved; and
- (e) the Asset Register be approved.

11. Staff Salaries

11.1 The Finance Committee had reviewed staff salaries taking into account advice from Cheshire Association of Local Councils which had advised that current grades/SCP levels were considered appropriate based on relevant staff experience, qualifications and the Council's level of activity and responsibility. The Committee had agreed to recommend that the RFO should receive one final increment based on responsibility for IT systems and website.

11.2 As both staff were now at the top of their grades it was proposed that contracts should be amended to reflect this.

(22/19) RESOLVED:

- (a) that the RFO be awarded one increment with effect from 1 May 2021 and he will be on SCP 11; and
- (b) the contracts of the Clerk and the RFO be amended to reflect they are at the top of their grade.

12. Projects

12.1 Village Task Force – a number of volunteers had contacted the Chairman to offer to help tidy verges throughout the village. The Chairman would liaise with residents and supervise on the day including providing hi vis jackets.

12.2 Queen's Jubilee 2022

The Council gave further consideration to supporting the village in the commemoration of the Queen's Jubilee in June.

(a) Councillor McDermott updated on the Working Group set up to plan an event which was proposed to take place on the field by the Spinner and Bergamot and would be free of charge to attend. The Group had looked at souvenir options and were minded to source environmentally friendly products. The Group had discussed

a permanent memorial such as a Jubilee bench. There was also a suggestion to produce a booklet of letters from children to the Queen.

(b) The Council considered the purchase of roundels which could be attached to gateway signs at the village entrances.

(c) The Council considered whether to purchase Jubilee bunting; Councillor McDermott suggested that residents be invited to make their own bunting and environmental options be encouraged; and

(d) The Council considered the purchase of a Jubilee beacon which could be loaned to the Working Group to display and light at the Jubilee event on 2 June.

(22/20) RESOLVED That:

(a) the update on the Working Group be received and any request for funding be subject to a detailed list of proposed expenditure;

(b) the Clerk purchase 5 x roundels at a cost of £5 each plus delivery and VAT to attach to the village gateway signs; and

(c) the purchase of a beacon be approved.

13. Memorial Hall Car Park

Comberbach Memorial Hall had requested that the Parish Council consider taking action to address flooding issues at the car park. Members noted that the storms in February had caused flooding issues but the main issues were near the entrance to the hall at the disabled parking spaces where the land was on a slope.

(22/21) RESOLVED: that a quote for installing a small drainage channel be obtained.

14. Village Ambassador

The Council had been approached with a proposal from the Rose Fete who had decided to change the role of Rose Queen to become a Village Ambassador and requested that the Ambassador attend Parish Council meetings as a representative of young people in the village.

(22/22) RESOLVED: that the Parish Council supports the role of a young person's village ambassador and welcomes attendance at Council meetings.

15. Planning

15.1 Planning decisions were listed in Appendix 3.

15.2 There were no enforcement matters.

(22/23) RESOLVED: That the planning update be noted and the update to the next meeting include columns identifying date of notification to the Parish Council and date of decision.

16. Correspondence

16.1 The list of correspondence had been circulated. The Clerk updated on recent correspondence relating to Planning training sessions; an opportunity to give views to the Boundary Commission on the review of parliamentary boundaries and the consultation on the HyNet pipeline proposal.

16.2 A survey on double taxation had been circulated by Chalc.

(22/24) RESOLVED: That:

(a) the correspondence be noted; and

(b) the Clerk complete the Chalc survey in consultation with the Chairman.

17. Representative Reports

Comberbach Memorial Hall Management Committee – Councillor McDermott was attending Hall Committee meetings which were useful.

Fete Committee – the Fete would be on Saturday 25 June with a Jubilee theme.

Bowling Club – the bowling green remained closed for winter but preparations were underway for the new season.

Police Liaison – the PCSO had held a surgery at the Memorial Hall but it had not been well attended; there was a need to improve publicity for future dates.

School Liaison – no update

Litterpick – a litterpick was due to take place shortly.

Exclusion of Public and Press – Part 2

(22/25) RESOLVED: That in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business due to the confidential nature of the matter to be discussed which relates to financial and business affairs.

Part 2

18. Provision of replacement swing set, Recreation Area

The Council considered quotes received for the replacement swing set at the Recreation Area.

(22/26) RESOLVED: That the quote from Supplier 2 be approved; the Clerk be granted delegated authority in consultation with the Chairman to approve additional costs up to a maximum of £1,000 for the provision of a 'boat' seat to replace one of the flat swing seats.

The Meeting closed at 9.45pm

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 10 May 2022

Signed
Chairman

Appendix 1 Accounts for 28 February 2022 were approved

Current account: £15,738.41	Reserves: £21,377.64
Cash book: £ 37,116.05	Unpresented cheques: none

Appendix 2 Payments

Item	Amount	Power
J Ryder – Fencing Materials reimbursement	£130.25	LGA 1972 s 111
Starboard Systems (Scribe) – subscription 2022/23	£345.60	LGA 1972 s 111
D French – mileage costs Jan – March 2022	£21.60	LGA 1972 s 111

Appendix 2b Pre-Authorised Payments

Item	Amount	Date	Power
PAP2106 – J Ryder, reimburse safety matting	£244.61	14/12/2021	LGA 1972 s 111

Appendix 3 Recent planning decisions by CW&C

21/01937/S73 - Single storey side and rear extension and creation of first floor (Variation of conditions 2 (approved plans) and 3 (materials) of planning permission 19/01832/FUL) 31 Senna Lane	Pending
21/02469/FUL – single storey rear extension and loft conversion, Mill Bank	Pending
Lime (T1) - Reduce crown by approx 1-2m. Dying Ash (G2) - Fell to low stump	Pending

due to decline showing in crown; 7 Freshfields	
21/03798/TPO - 2 x Cherry trees - Fell, due to shading, Three Oaks Marbury Road	Pending
21/03580/LBC - Enlarge the small existing doorway between the kitchen and the library / TV room to the south and the creation of a new opening on the west side of the room, matching the style and proportion of the proposed enlarged opening on the east side, Cogshall Hall Senna Lane	Pending
21/05001/FUL - Creation of an additional storey with new external doors and windows, 57 Senna Lane, 57 Senna Lane	Pending
21/05110/OUT - Erection of two detached houses and the demolition of the existing garage and passageway of Senna House, 15 Senna Lane	Pending
1/05070/OUT - Outline planning permission for a mixed use development of up to 1,550 units of residential dwellings including affordable housing (subject to viability); specialist accommodation for older people including residential care home; local centre and active ground floor uses comprising up to 600 sqm of flexible floorspace for retail (including small convenience food store); up to 275 sqm of health, nursery and community; up to 7,700 sqm of employment space; up to 950 sqm of cafe, restaurant, takeaway and public house floorspace; up to a 2,250sqm (up to 2FE) primary school with associated playing fields (Use Class F1(a)); and associated road infrastructure, landscaping (including Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems), public realm and amenity space (all matters reserved except for vehicular access), land at Winnington Works	Pending