

Minutes of the Virtual Annual Meeting of Comberbach Parish Council held on Tuesday 4th May 2021

Present

Councillors:

John Ryder (Chairman in the Chair)

John Bradley

Rena Bradley

Richard Chandler

Val McDermott

Bob Holt

Steven Hornby

Jill Johnston

Denise French (Clerk)

Stephen Penwill (RFO)

Cheshire West and Chester Councillor Lynn Gibbon

The Meeting started at 7.15pm.

Public Open Forum

No Members of the Public were present.

1. Appointment of Chairman

(21/20) RESOLVED: That Councillor John Ryder be appointed Chairman for the ensuing year.

2. Apologies for absence – CWAC Councillors Phil Marshall and Norman Wright

3. Appointment of Vice Chairman

(21/21) RESOLVED: That Councillor Steven Hornby be appointed Vice Chairman for the ensuing year.

4. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest

Councillor Jim Bradley declared an interest in item 15.3 grant application for the Comberbach Memorial Hall on the grounds that he was a Trustee of the Hall.

5. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9th March 2021

(21/22) RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

6. Progress Reports and Updates

6.1 Comberbach Pump Track

The Parish Council considered an update on the Pump Track. The start date for the installation was now confirmed as Monday 24th May.

(21/23) RESOLVED: that:

- (a) Clark and Kent were confirmed as the supplier of the Pump Track;
- (b) the total price of the project be confirmed as £19,285 plus VAT;
- (c) the additional funding required will be taken from Reserves under the heading of Recreation Area;
- (d) an additional payment be approved for the insurance cover in the sum of £58.97 and the RFO check with the Insurance Company whether the signage impacts the premium;
- (e) the Pump Track be added to the Recreation Area Inspection Schedule including for Northwich Town Council's quarterly inspection;
- (f) the amended Risk Assessment be approved;
- (g) a budget of maximum £400 be approved for signage at the Pump Track; and
- (h) Clark and Kent be asked to provide a programme for the installation.

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

CWAC Councillor Gibbon updated as follows:

- A consultation was underway on increasing the height of phone masts;
- She had attended a site meeting at Comberbach with a Highways Officer and a resident who had experienced flooding issues affecting their and neighbours' properties in January due to blocked grids. Councillor Gibbon had asked the Highways Officer to ensure that the affected grids be added to the maintenance schedule. The issues would be feedback to the Flood Risk Action Group. The Group had not yet met.

8. Finance Committee

The minutes of the meeting of Finance Committee held on 20th April were considered.

(21/24) RESOLVED: That the minutes of Finance Committee held on 20th April be received.

9. Annual Audit

The RFO presented the Annual Audit documents. The Annual Governance Statement confirmed that the Council had a sound system of internal control. The Accounting Statements were presented and were prepared on a receipts and payments basis. The RFO explained the restated figures for 2019/20 due to the reclassification of Staff Expenses.

The file of documents was required to be submitted to the Internal Auditor and it was proposed that these be sent by recorded delivery.

(21/25) RESOLVED: that

- (a) the Annual Governance Statement be approved;
- (b) the Annual Return be approved; and
- (c) the cost for transporting the Audit file to the Internal Auditor including return in the sum of £20 be approved.

10. Governance Items

The Clerk presented the suite of documents for annual review. The current membership list and terms of reference of the Council's Committees was considered. The RFO had prepared an Internal Controls document which set out how the Council monitored the effectiveness of its financial procedures. A Grant Policy was proposed.

(21/26) RESOLVED: that

- (a) the Terms of Reference for Finance Committee be approved:

Finance Committee – To act on behalf of the Parish Council to review and recommend to Council all aspects of Parish Council finances, including: (i) to propose a draft budget; (ii) to propose a precept based on the draft budget; (iii) To perform a quarterly review of performance against budget (iv) to consider finance policy including Financial Regulations and Reserves Policy. (v) to consider requirements for future costs, liabilities and projects and ensure adequate reserves are funded. Quorum is 3 Councillors;

- (b) membership of Finance Committee be approved as Councillors J Bradley, Hornby, Johnston and Ryder;

- (c) the Chairman be appointed at the first meeting;

- (d) the Terms of Reference for Staffing Committee be approved:

- (i) To deal with staffing matters including recruitment and appraisals
- (ii) To deal with complaints based on the Complaints Policy.

Quorum is 3 Councillors;

- (e) the membership of Staffing Committee be approved as Councillors Ryder (Chairman) R Bradley, Hornby and Johnston;

- (f) the arrangements for dealing with Planning applications be confirmed as follows with the Clerk having delegated power to respond:

The arrangements are that the Clerk has delegated power to respond to planning applications by taking soundings from members of the Planning Committee which will be given due consideration when drafting the response. If Members of the Committee do not agree on their response or the application would have a serious impact on the community then the application will be considered by the Planning Committee.

(g) membership of Planning Committee be agreed as Councillors J Bradley, R Chandler, R Holt, S Hornby and J Ryder;

(h) the Standing Orders be approved;

(i) the Financial Regulations be approved;

(j) the Internal Controls document be approved;

(k) the Data Protection Policy be approved;

(l) the Complaints Policy be approved;

(m) the proposed Grant Policy be approved subject to two amendments to add in reference to sport and leisure groups and to clarify the procedure and timescale;

(n) the Publication Scheme be approved; and

(o) the Code of Conduct be noted.

11. Insurance

The Council considered the insurance cover for the year ahead. The RFO explained that the Council was in year 3 of a 3-year deal with Zurich Municipal which had meant the Council achieved best value. The insurance cover would be amended to include the Pump Track as previously agreed.

(21/27) RESOLVED: that the Insurance Cover for 2021-22 be confirmed as suitable.

12. Planning

12.1 Planning decisions were listed in Appendix 3.

12.2 There were no enforcement matters.

(21/28) RESOLVED: That the planning update be noted.

13. Recreation Area

13.1. The Chairman updated that the ROSPA report received in late April and circulated to all Councillors, had identified no major issues. He had attended the inspection and the Inspector had made comment that for equipment 20 years old the regular maintenance provided by the Council had endured its life expectancy.

The footpath was identified as in need of some repair and the recently installed buffalo boards on the climbing frame needed their edges rounded. The zip line matting would need work in due course to replace the steel pins and relay the matting. New matting was expected to cost £1500.

13.2 The Council was recommended to approve a budget to purchase new wood to replace the decking on the zip line as identified by the Rospa Inspector.

13.3 The Council had investigated costs to resurface the pathway which often flooded. A quote for £2300 plus VAT had been received from Clark and Kent.

13.4 The fascia boards at the storage unit were in need of replacement and this was expected to cost £70 plus VAT.

(21/29) RESOLVED That:

- (a) the Rospa Inspection report be received;
- (b) a budget of £80 plus VAT be approved for wood to replace the decking on the zip line;
- (c) a contract be approved with Clark and Kent to resurface the footpath at the Recreation Area at a cost of £2300 plus VAT; and
- (d) a budget of £70 plus VAT be approved for replacement fascia boards at the storage unit.

14. Highways

The Council considered:

- A budget for repainting the fingerpost signs with paint provided by CWAC;
- Whether to purchase lamp post poppies to display during the Poppy Appeal.

(21/30) RESOLVED: That

- (a) a budget of £50 be approved for the purchase of painting materials to paint the fingerpost signs; and
- (b) a supply of lamp post poppies be purchased for display during the Poppy Appeal and the Clerk liaise with the Chairman regarding the number of poppies to be purchased.

15. Accounts and Financial Matters

15.1 The Parish Council Accounts at 31st March 2021 were submitted at Appendix 1.

15.2 The list of payments was in Appendix 2.

15.3 The Council considered a Grant Application from Comberbach Memorial Hall towards the cost of a new heating system.

(21/31) RESOLVED That

- (a) the accounts in Appendix 1 with a balance of £7,218.89 and £36,739.67 in reserves be noted;
- (b) the payments in Appendix 2 be approved;
- (c) the grant application from Comberbach Memorial Hall be deferred to the next meeting to await the outcome of the grant funding applications by the Trustees and to seek further information from the Trustees on quotes sought for the work.

(NOTE: Councillor Jim Bradley had declared an interest in item 15.3 – the grant application from Comberbach Memorial Hall – on the grounds that he was a Trustee of the Hall; he left the meeting during discussion of this item and took no part in the vote).

16. Subscriptions

The proposed list of subscriptions was submitted.

(21/32) RESOLVED: that the list of subscriptions be approved subject to seeking further information on the role of Cheshire Community Action and how its work is relevant to this Council:

- Cheshire Association of Local Councils
- Society of Local Council Clerks
- Campaign to Protect Rural England
- Mid Cheshire Footpath Society
- Cheshire Community Action.

17. Tree Planting

Councillor McDermott had requested the Council consider seeking replacement tree planting in the event that any tree on public land needed to be felled. The Clerk explained that she had contacted the Tree Officer at CWAC to ask whether a replacement tree could be planted to replace the one felled at Freshfields.

(21/33) RESOLVED: that the Council supports replacement tree planting subject to advice on suitability of location and species.

18. Community Resilience Plan

The Council considered an offer from CWAC for assistance to develop a Community Resilience Plan to use in any emergency.

(21/34) RESOLVED: that the Clerk be authorised to respond to CWAC to express initial interest in developing a Community Resilience Plan for Comberbach.

19. Correspondence

The list of correspondence was noted. Members agreed to keep the issues raised in relation to the Spinner and Bergamot under review.

(21/35) RESOLVED: That the correspondence be noted.

20. Exclusion of Public and Press – Part 2

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 details of an individual.

Part 2**21. Parish Council Award**

The Council considered the recipient of this year's Parish Council Award.

(21/36) RESOLVED:

That the Award be given to the recipient as discussed at the meeting.

The Meeting closed at 9.00pm

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Tuesday 13th July 2021.

Signed
Chairman

Appendix 1 Accounts for 31st March 2021 were approved

Current account: £7,218.89	Reserves: £36,739.67
Cash book: £5,936.59	Unpresented cheques: £1,282.30 (5 cheques)

Appendix 2 Payments

Item	Amount	Power
Zurich Municipal – Insurance premium 2021/22	£786.39	LGA 1972 s 111
SLCC – annual membership, RFO	£67.00	LGA 1972 s 111
Stephens Design Direction – Logo artwork	£108.00	LGA 1972 s 111
D French – Clerk expenses to April 2021 inc Microsoft 365, mileage & phone top up	£94.94	LGA 1972 s 111
SLCC – annual membership, Clerk	£95.00	LGA 1972 s 111
Synchroprint – CVN May 2021	£182.00	LGA 1972 s 111
CHALC - Annual subscription 2021/22	£284.40	LGA 1972 s 111

Appendix 2b Pre-Authorised Payments

Item	Amount	Power
Change in monthly Salary Standing Order for Clerk to reflect 2021/22 payroll calculation	£0.13	LGA 1972 s 111
Change in monthly Salary Standing Order for RFO to reflect 2021/22 payroll calculation	£0.10	LGA 1972 s 111
Transfer end-of-year funds from Current Account to Savings Account	£4000.00	

Appendix 3 Recent planning decisions by CW&C

20/03702/OUT - demolition of the existing garage and passageway of Senna House and erection of two four	Pending
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bedroom detached houses15 Senna Lane	
20/03809/FUL - <u>Removal of existing garage, two storey side and single storey rear extension and new dormer to roof</u> , 5 Mather Drive	Pending
21/00584/TPO - Oak on boundary line in hedge - Fell to low stump due to poor previous Pruning, 17 Goosebrook Close	Approved