

Minutes of the Meeting of Comberbach Parish Council held on Tuesday 26 November 2024

Present

Councillors:

Jill Johnston (Vice Chairman in the Chair)

Bill Briggs

Sandy Cameron

Richard Chandler

John Darwin

Bob Holt

Val McDermott (from 7.05pm)

Denise French (Clerk)

The Meeting started at 6.45pm.

Public Open Forum

There were no members of the public present.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and approved from the Chairman, Councillor Ryder due to family reasons.

An apology for absence was also received from the RFO, Stephen Penwill.

Apologies for absence were noted from the Cheshire West and Chester Councillors Gibbon, Marshall and Wright.

2. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 15 October 2024

(24/66) RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 15 October 2024 be approved as a correct record.

4. Progress Reports and Updates

4.1 Resilience Plan – it was agreed to defer consideration of the Resilience Plan to the next meeting on 14 January 2025.

4.2 Freedom Fibre – Councillor Cameron updated on a virtual meeting he had attended with the Chairman, representatives of Freedom Fibre and Mike Dugine, Digital Sector Specialist CWAC. The representatives from Freedom Fibre had explained that there had been low take up to date of the offer of fibre broadband with only 75 active connections which represented 18% of the total community. This

could be due to contract commitments with existing suppliers. During the meeting a number of postcodes had been tested and were included within the Freedom Fibre network coverage. It was agreed that a note would be included within the Chairman's update for the next Newsletter to encourage residents to register their interest; this would then complete the Parish Council's involvement with the matter.

4.3 Comberbach Village News – the new volunteer who would be taking over the Newsletter had met with the current coordinator to discuss handover. The printer company would be able to undertake formatting at an additional cost if required. Members agreed to place on record their thanks and appreciation to Kath Wharfe for all her work on the Comberbach Village News.

(24/67) RESOLVED: that:

- (a) The Resilience Plan be considered at the next meeting.
- (b) The Chairman will include a note in the Comberbach Village News updating the current position on Freedom Fibre's coverage and service.
- (c) The information on the Newsletter be noted.

5.0 Cheshire West and Chester Councillors updates

There were no CWAC Councillors in attendance; Councillor Marshall had intended to attend but had been delayed due to traffic.

6.0 PCSO Update

PCSO Di Wiggins was in attendance. There were no issues to bring to the Council's attention. She had attended at the Primary School to talk to the pupils about various matters; she had also been monitoring the parking situation during school hours and there was less anti-social parking taking place. She referred to current media focus on scams and said she had a booklet available if this would be useful.

7.0 Recreation Area and Pump Track

7.1 The Chairman had provided a report that noted the inspection from Northwich Town Council in October had identified some rotting on the junior slide beam and Hags had been contacted to order a replacement which would be delivered in early December. There was also flaking paint on the junior slide which had now been sanded down and painted. Shane Ross had put weed killer on the path and the MUGA court had been sprayed with Algon. There were no other issues.

7.2 The inspection report for November was noted; there were no issues identified.

7.3 The gate to the Recreation Area needed repair and a budget of £100 was agreed for materials and labour by Shane Ross.

(24/68) RESOLVED: that:

(a) The update and recent inspection be noted.

(b) A budget of £100 for materials and labour for the gate repair be approved.

8. Highways and Streetscene

8.1 Members noted information that had been recently circulated that the 'Report It' section of the CWAC website had been improved and information should now be up to date. Members agreed that the issue of gulley cleaning remain on the agenda.

8.2 Members were informed that the Clerk to Antrobus Parish Council had written to CWAC Highways regarding the current issue of blocked grids on Gibb Hill which was felt could be a result of the loose grit washed off the new surface. Councillor Chandler had shared photos with the Clerk to Antrobus PC and had also separately reported the issues.

8.3 The Council noted that two damaged road signs had been reported in April and follow up communications had not resulted in any update and issues with the website meant it was not possible to ascertain information that way. Members had also reported a full litter bin but this had not been addressed and a flickering speed sign had been reported to a Member by a resident.

8.4 The Council noted that the Chairman had sought information about weed spraying of highway verges and whether it was being carried out in accordance with the schedule. The Chairman had been informed that limited spraying had taken place in November as weeds were showing no deterioration in November; Members commented that spraying had been undertaken when there were leaves on the ground which was felt to be ineffective. It was also noted that there had been a fault with some machinery.

8.5 The Speed Indicator Device (SID) had been damaged by the weather when being moved to the new location. Members of Finance Committee had recommended that the repair be paid by the Council rather than claimed on the insurance and this was confirmed.

(24/69) RESOLVED: that

(a) The issues relating to gulley clearing and the online portal remain on the agenda for consideration at the next meeting.

(b) The Clerk contact CWAC Councillors to raise the Council's concerns around the issues discussed at the meeting – blocked grids; the time taken to repair signs and empty litter bins; the lack of adherence to the weed spraying schedule and defective equipment.

(c) The Parish Council fund the repair to the SID and an insurance claim is not submitted.

9. Accounts and financial matters

9.1 The accounts for 30 October 2024 were listed in Appendix 1.

9.2 The list of payments was in Appendix 2.

9.3 The National Association of Local Councils had advised that the annual pay award had been agreed and new salary scales had been issued with effect from 1 April 2024. Members noted the new hourly rate for the Clerk and the RFO and that back pay would also be paid. Members asked that the minutes record the Council's appreciation of the work of the Clerk and the RFO in supporting the Council.

9.4 Members approved a budget of £150 towards the purchase of additional poppies and 'Tommy' remembrance signage. It was agreed to remove the lamppost poppies and remembrance signage at the beginning of December.

9.5 The Council approved a budget of £220 towards the village Christmas Tree that would be located by the Methodist Church.

(24/70) RESOLVED: that:

(a) The accounts in Appendix 1 with a balance of £17,678.76 and £28,616.42 in reserves be noted.

(b) The list of payments in Appendix 2 be approved.

(c) The budget of £150 for additional poppies and 'Tommy' remembrance signage be approved.

(d) The budget of £220 for the village Christmas Tree be approved.

10. Projects

10.1 The Christmas Music concert had taken place on Saturday 23 November when Barnton Silver Band had played various Christmas carols and music. Members agreed the performance had been excellent and well received by the audience. The Clerk had emailed the Band to thank them for their show.

10.2 Members noted the Keep Britain Tidy event to take place between 21 March and 6 April 2025 and agreed to discuss this at a future meeting.

10.3 Information had been included in the Newsletter about a further Defib training session in the new year which would be free of charge for residents. To date, 3 residents had expressed an interest. It was agreed to do a further promotion in the next Newsletter to try to encourage increased take up.

(24/71) RESOLVED: that the Keep Britain Tidy event be considered at future meetings.

11. Planning

11.1 Planning decisions were listed in Appendix 3

11.2 There were no enforcement matters.

11.3 The Clerk had contacted CWAC Planning and Highways regarding the dropped kerb by 12 Cogshall Lane and lack of footpath reinstatement with tarmac. A response had been received from Planning Enforcement referring to a substantial backlog which meant that a Case Officer could not be assigned at the moment; when a Case Officer was assigned the Clerk would be notified. CWAC Highways had responded that the resident had been reminded by Highways of the need to ensure the footway (and pedestrian users) were kept safe during any works being undertaken at the property and that any footway re-instatement must be completed in line with the highways specification.

(24/72) RESOLVED: That:

(a) The update be noted.

(b) The Clerk include the Council's concerns about the enforcement backlog with the list of issues to be raised with the CWAC Ward Councillors.

12. Correspondence

The list of correspondence had been circulated.

(24/73) RESOLVED: that the correspondence be noted.

13. Representative Reports

- Comberbach Memorial Hall Management Committee – the Clerk would contact the Management Committee to advise them that Councillor McDermott is the Parish Council contact for any issues.
- Police Liaison – the Vice Chairman had attended a meeting hosted by Frodsham Town Council and attended by Dan Price, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire. Mr Price had explained that he was not involved in operational matters but his role was to hold the Chief Constable to account. He would be the voice of the public. He was currently in the process of setting budgets and targets. The SWAP fund was now open for applications from the voluntary and not for profit sector. Funding of between £1k - £5k was available for projects that focused on one or more of the PCC's priorities. The requirement for match funding had been removed and applicants could pledge volunteer hours instead. At the meeting, the PCC had discussed measuring success and that the focus would be on outcomes rather than numbers and data. He had outlined a government objective to increase the numbers of Police Officers through the Police Uplift Programme. He was also looking at acoustic cameras that would help with addressing noise issues.

- Comberbach Fete – a successful meeting had taken place that had identified some additional volunteers and a new Fete Committee was to be formed.
- School Liaison – the Clerk would contact the school to advise them that Councillor McDermott is the Parish Council contact for any issues.
- Bowling Club – Councillor Darwin said the bowling season had now ended. The Club Bar remained open on a Friday evening.

13. Exclusion of Public and Press – Part 2

None

The Meeting closed at 8.10pm.

The next meeting of Comberbach Parish Council will be on Tuesday 14 January 2025 at 6.45pm.

Signed
Chairman

Appendix 1 Accounts for 30 October 2024

Current account	£17,678.76	Reserve	£28,616.42
Cash book	£46,295.18	Reconciliation:	0

Appendix 2 Payments

Item	Amount	Power
Northwich Town Council – Inv 7993, Inspection	£60.00	LGA 1972 s 111
HMRC – PAYE Q2 24/25 (overdue, inc 99p interest)	£305.99	LGA 1972 s 111
J Ryder – RBL lamp post poppies and Tommies	£146.98	LGA 1972 s 111
Synchroprint – Inv 7027, CVN Nov 24	£232.32	LGA 1972 s 111
V McDermott, food for 23 Nov event	£37.00	LGA 1972 s 111
Synchroprint – Inv 7064, Pull-up banner	£132.86	LGA 1972 s 111

Pre-Authorised Payments

Item	Amount	Power
PAP2417, BWP Creative inv 3093, website costs	£273.60	LGA 1972 s 111
DD – Babble, MS Office license Oct 24	£23.50	LGA 1972 s 111
DD – Tesco Mobile, Sep 24	£7.50	LGA 1972 s 111

Appendix 3 Recent planning decisions by CW&C

APPLICATION DETAILS	DATE OF VALIDATION	CURRENT POSITION
21/05070/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	Wed 22 Dec 2021	Awaiting decision
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	Fri 30 Apr 2021	Awaiting decision
24/00177/FUL - <u>Two storey, part single storey side extension, single storey rear extension, front canopy porch and detached garage to replace existing.</u> 18 Senna Lane Comberbach	23 January 2024	Approved
24/00595/FUL - Relocation of existing equine building and the siting of a new stable block with access track and hardstanding area Land Off Senna Lane, Comberbach	26 February 2024	Awaiting decision
24/00958/FUL - Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a replacement dwelling -	28 May 2024	Approved

Resubmission of planning application 23/02023/FUL, Hill View, Hough Lane		
24/00647/FUL - steel framed building, Ivy Lodge Farm	3 June 2024	Refused
24/02049/FUL – single storey garden room, 11 Kennelwood Road	12 July 2024	Awaiting decision
24/01734/FUL - Demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings, including removal of the mobile home, and the erection of a replacement dwelling - Brookside Farm, Cogshall Lane	27 June 2024	Awaiting decision
24/03284/TPO - 1x Maple - crown reduce by 1m back to previous cuts. 2 x Oak - crown reduce by 1.5m back to previous cuts and crown lift to 5m. Small area of field Maples - reduce back into former hedgerow – 2 Freshfields	4 November 2024	Awaiting decision