

MINUTES of the GREAT BUDWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL MEETING

held by Zoom video at 7.00pm on WEDNESDAY 5th MAY 2021

Meeting opened at 7.05pm

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN 2021-2022

ACTION

Cllr. R. Collier was elected Chairman of the Parish Council.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR 2021-2022

Cllr. A. Lee was elected Vice-Chair of the Parish Council.

3. WELCOME & ATTENDANCE

Present: Cllr. R. Collier (RC); Cllr. A. Lee (AL); Cllr. R. Wilkinson (RW); Cllr. D. Hammond (DH); Cllr. M. Torrance (MT); Cllr. J. Robins (JR); Cllr. S. Coppel (SC)

CWAC Marbury Ward: Cllr. P. Marshall

Also present: G. Ayres, (Parish Clerk - GA)

4. APOLOGIES

Cllr. J. Bowman; Cllr. N. Wright.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Collier; Hammond; Torrance; & Wilkinson for discussions on Parish Hall and Field.

6. APPOINTMENTS

i) The current Terms of Reference for the Planning, Finance, Staffing and Risk Assessment Committees were reviewed and approved. All Councillors will be members of all these Committees and the Chairman and Vice-Chair of the Parish Council will in each case preside as Chairman and Vice-Chair. These Committees will only meet by exception when there are specific issues to discuss.

ALL

RC, AL

ii) The following Councillors were appointed to Local Organisations:

Bowling & Tennis Club – Cllr. R. Wilkinson

Heritage Society – Cllr. J. Robins

Parish Hall Committee / CIO – Cllr. R. Collier

RW

JR

RC

7. PORTFOLIOS

It was agreed that the following Councillors should lead on specific matters of business, attend external meetings and report back to Council:

Airport – Cllr. D. Hammond

HS2 – Cllr. A. Lee

Website – Cllr. J. Robins

Health – Cllr. S. Coppel

DH

AL

JR

SC

8. POLICIES

The current Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct were reviewed and adopted.

9. ASSETS

a) The Asset Report was not reviewed in 2020 due to Covid restrictions. It needs updating in 2021 to meet Annual Governance and Accountability requirements. Before he was elected to the Parish Council, Cllr. Collier reviewed the Report annually and kept it up to date. However, for him to continue to do this might be seen as a conflict of interest. Before seeking quotes to do the work from independent surveyors, Councillors will see if there are any suitably qualified residents in the village who might be prepared to do the work pro bono.

ALL

b) The report explaining the difference between how assets are valued in the above Asset Report and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) was approved. It was noted that the Avenue has now been added as a Community Asset.

c) The proper insurance of the Parish Hall / Field and Bowling / Tennis facilities will be addressed in the context of ongoing discussions about leases and management agreements. It was noted that lessees may not have an “insurable interest” and so it may be more appropriate for the Parish Council to insure the facilities and reclaim the cost from the lessees. Existing renewal dates differ so it will be important to avoid a gap in insurance cover. The Parish Clerk will seek a quote from Came and Company to add these facilities to the existing Parish Council insurance. Cllr. Wilkinson argued that it would be cheaper and more appropriate to obtain cover for the Bowling Green from a specialist insurer as at present, so this will also be investigated.

GA

RW

10. RISK ASSESSMENT

The updated risk assessment, which now includes reference to water quality at the Lower Pumphouse, was reviewed and approved. All Councillors were urged to consider their own roles in implementing the specified control measures to avoid / mitigate risks.

ALL

11. REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None and no members of the public present at the meeting.

12. UPDATE FROM CWAC COUNCILLORS

Cllr. Marshall highlighted

- the recent consultation on waste strategy. Responses are now being considered;
- proposals for Winnington bridge will be released after the local elections;
- CWAC services are hoping to get back on a more normal footing after 17th May;
- the High Court rejected the continuation of Council meeting by zoom on the grounds that it would require primary legislation to do this. But this is not the end of the debate as the option to attend remotely has increased participation and saved on travel, thereby impacting on the climate change agenda;
- concerns about HGVs through the village. This is discussed under item 15f below;
- a new CWAC Head of Highways has recently been appointed;
- fears that Marbury Ward, which is essentially rural in character, is losing out to urban areas in terms of highways investment. Parish Councillors drew his attention to the poor state of roads and pavements in and around the village and asked him to flag this to CWAC as a priority. There are many potholes. Cllr, Robins asked what the threshold is for resurfacing rather than merely patching, which is no more than a “sticking plaster”. Cllr. Coppell was concerned that there could be a serious accident caused by the poor road surface, especially as the village is on the Cheshire Cycle Route.

13. FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) Payments. All payments were approved. Parish Clerk expenses include the cost of “no cycling” signs for the Avenue, printer ink and Microsoft annual renewal.

b) Budget 2020-21. This was reviewed and approved.

c) Internal Audit Report. The report was received by the Council and the two outstanding issues noted. The Risk Assessment will be updated to include supplier / procurement fraud and the Financial Regulations will be amended to remove the need for a rolling three year financial plan.

GA

d) Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 18/19.

i) The Certificate of Exemption was approved and will be signed by the Chairman.

RC

ii) The ten categories of internal control in Section 1 were reviewed and agreed. The Annual Governance Statement was approved and will be signed by the Chairman.

RC

iii) The Accounting Statement in Section 2 was approved and will be signed by the Chairman.

RC

iv) The bank reconciliation was approved.

v) The dates of the period for the exercise of public rights to inspect the accounts were approved as Monday 14th June to Friday 23rd July 2021. The Clerk will advertise this as required.

GA

vi) The explanation of significant variances was approved.

14. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 1st March 2021 were approved.

15. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

a) Lower Pumphouse.

- Cllr. Lee has received a set of questions from CWAC regarding the water quality risk assessment. She will endeavour to find the relevant information to answer them.
- Cllr. Torrance has spoken with the culvert landowner who has agreed to take steps to avoid the flooding problem occurring again in the future.
- Cllr. Hammond has arranged and overseen repairs to the floor.

AL

b) Pleached Lime Trees

Cllrs Torrance and Wilkinson were thanked, together with the owner of Noah’s Ark and Mr Dunkerley, for their financial contributions and hard work in digging out and replanting the new tree.

c) Trees for Climate Project

An update on this will be carried forward to the next meeting.

MT

d) Cyclists on the Avenue

The Parish Clerk purchased “no cycling” signs and Cllr. Coppell installed them. John Eaton is unable to repair the Kissing Gate, so Lawtons have been instructed to do the work.

e) Filming in the Village

The Parish Clerk confirmed that £750 has been received from the company filming the Ipress File in the village.

f) HGVs in the Village

Recent unfortunate events with HGVs causing damage to vehicles and property were discussed. CWAC has been contacted and a meeting will be arranged to press for action to address the problem. There is already a weight restriction in place but the following suggestions may help and will be investigated:

GA

- width restriction (but this is problematic for waste disposal lorries that need access and would require intrusive signage in the heart of the conservation area);
- better signage on the A559 to alert lorries before they turn;
- improved enforcement action to catch lorries passing through. This might include residents advising the Parish Council of the details of any offending trucks so we can contact the relevant business and / or notify the police;
- challenging the sat nav companies.

g) Parish Hall and Parish Field Agreement

Various outstanding issues raised by trustees were discussed and it was agreed that:

- a 25 year management agreement would be acceptable as long as there is a six month break clause (see items 1 and 8 of the draft agreement). Cllr. Lee disagreed on this and asked that her dissent be noted;
- once the management agreement is signed, the Parish Council will insure the building and reclaim the premium from the CIO.

Next steps are that the existing Parish Hall Committee will meet to formalise the dissolution of the existing Charity and transfer to a CIO. Also, the whole village will be given the opportunity to vote on the matter at the Annual Parish Meeting. Hopefully this will be held when covid restrictions are eased after June 21st.

DH

16. TOP PUMPHOUSE TREES

In response to an email from the Parish Clerk, the CWAC Tree Officer advised that his manager would get in touch to arrange a meeting. This has not happened so the Clerk will chase it again. It appears that CWAC’s decision to refuse permission to remove and replace the trees was primarily based on a lack of evidence that the trees are the source of the damage to property. A structural report may be required as evidence and it would be up to the property owner to obtain this. The Parish Council has already had a basic tree survey done, which recommended pruning, but this would not preclude the property owner obtaining their own arboricultural report to analyse root samples etc in more detail.

GA

17. POST COVID EVENT

Cllr. Hammond will investigate the possibility of making a grant application for funding to assist with an event planned for 2nd July to celebrate the unlocking of covid restrictions.

DH

18.QUEEN'S JUBILEE 2022

Cllr Robins drew attention to the Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) campaign to celebrate the platinum jubilee by planting new trees and protecting ancient woodlands and forests. The Parish Council will revisit this at its next meeting. In the meantime the next issue of the Budworth Bulletin will ask for ideas on other ways to mark the occasion and for volunteers to plan for it.

AL

Meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Signed as a true record
Chairman