

# Great Budworth

## **MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING for GREAT BUDWORTH held at the Parish Hall on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 7pm**

### **Attendance**

**Present:** 14 electors of the Parish of Great Budworth (incl. 7 Parish Councillors); 4 residents of neighbouring parishes; 3 Marbury Councillors; Parish Clerk.

### **1. Introduction and welcome**

The Chairman welcomed attendees. He explained the difference between this meeting and the Annual Parish Council meeting and why it had not been held earlier in the year due to the pandemic lockdown restrictions.

### **2. Minutes of the last Annual Meeting**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 were agreed as an accurate record

### **3. Report by the Parish Council on its business over the past year**

#### **Report of Chairman 2019-2021**

Update of the headline issues over the period:

1. Several on-going meetings with Highways regarding the following:
  - a. Parking issues within the village
  - b. HGVs using the village as a cut through
  - c. Poor condition of the roads and the poor standard of the repairs
  - d. The lack of maintenance of surrounding footpaths
  - e. The lack of safe pedestrian access between local villages particularly in relation to the transport strategy
  - f. The unsafe junction at the bottom of High Street at the Junction with the A559
  - g. The unsafe bus stop arrangements and the lack of a reliable bus service
  - h. Introduction of yellow lines on High Street
  - i. Flooding as result of failure to maintain drains and gullies
2. On-going discussions to update the Parish Hall agreement
3. Tree survey completed for trees within the ownership of the Parish Council
4. Review of the lease agreement between the Parish Council and the Tennis Club / Bowling Green
5. Completion of the work to the Lower Pumphouse
6. Negotiation of an agreement with CWAC with regard the water checks for the water from the Lower Pumphouse

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7. Work on the Parish Field
8. Work to the pleached lime trees on High Street
9. Filming in the village - £750 income
10. Work to fill the casual vacancy

Special thank you to:

- Bob and team for the work to improve the surface of the Parish Field
- Bob, Malcolm and Team for the work on the pleached lime trees
- Jane and Natasha and Andy Robins for work tidying the pump house, painting the Cheshire railings, clearing leaves and tidying the Avenue
- Bill Anderson for his help with resolving outstanding contractor issues on the Lower Pumphouse.

## Parish Clerk's Report

In April 2020 we carried forward a balance of about **£24,500** and in April 2021 it was much the same - **£24,700** to be exact.

Our **income** in that year April 2020 to 2021 was **£16,400** made up of

- The precept of **£9700** from Cheshire West
- **£750** from the filming of the Ipress File
- **£2400** from reclaiming VAT
- And **£3500** from the Heritage Society

Our **expenditure** was an almost identical amount of **£16,100**

1) Our biggest expenditure at **£8,300** was on maintenance

- **£6,600** of that went on the Lower Pumphouse repairs, and we're very grateful to the Heritage Society for their contribution to that.
- We spent about **£1,000** on a survey of all trees on our land and **£240** on urgent work to make one of them safe.
- Other maintenance works included **£350** for strimming and tidying the Avenue
- And about **£400** for materials for the working party who freely gave their time and skills to improve the surface of the Parish Field.

2) We also gave grants of **£450** and **£500** respectively to the Budworth Bulletin and the Friends of the School towards new play equipment.

3) Our second biggest expenditure, as with all Parish Councils, was administration. This covered things such as

- The insurance of all our assets, costing over **£600**
- Fees, close on **£200** for internal and external audit of our accounts and the Annual Governance and Accountability Review
- Stationery, printer ink, computer software, security and back-up

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- Fees, amounting to over **£250**, to organisations such as the Information Commissioner, and the Cheshire Association of Local Councils, now famous for the Jackie Weaver connection. I should add that she's an extremely helpful lady and we have several times had to contact her about procedural and legal matters, not least about how to continue our operation during the pandemic
- We also spent money getting an outside organisation to assess our website to ensure it meets new government guidelines on accessibility. We have had to commission a few improvements, at further expense, but on the whole we came out of it well, and better than many Parish Councils who have had to install completely new websites.

Administration, of course, also includes my salary. The role of the Parish Clerk has changed a lot since the days when it just meant scribing in long hand the minutes of meetings. In the month of August alone, which is traditionally a quiet month, I've dealt with close on 400 emails. They range from queries about Parish Hall teas and historic buildings in the village to quotations for new defibrillator pads and the insurance of the Parish Hall.

There were legal notices about advertising the vacant post on the Parish Council and then applications for co-option; returns to Cheshire West on Community Infrastructure Levy; consultations on licensing and planning applications; dealings with Cheshire West about water quality at the Dene Spring; communications about the Airport, HS2, policing and Neighbourhood Watch; and attempts to get our Asset Report updated. There have been questions and comments about the introduction of yellow lines on High Street and proposals for Budworth Lane as well requests for input on bus and waste strategies, a new heritage list and new funding streams, jubilee celebrations, Remembrance Day, and regular updates about the coronavirus pandemic.

It's been a busy year, made more difficult by the pandemic and the fact that the Parish Council could not meet. I'm very grateful for the support I've received from Councillors, and in particular the Chair and Vice Chair, and I also want to thank the wide network of Local Council Clerks who share information on issues and initiatives, and whose co-operation and collaboration made the job feel a bit less lonely in lockdown.

## 4. **Public Forum**

Electors of the Parish were given the opportunity to raise issues and the following matters were discussed, which will be considered and taken into account by the Parish Council.

### **Website**

Although the website is currently up-to-date with regard to the listing of Councillors, it still seems possible to pull up a previous 2017-18 listing by mistake. The Clerk will investigate this.

### **Parking**

It was suggested that the long line of parked cars that now exists almost continuously along High St is more deleterious to the village environment than yellow lines would be. It also impedes the flow of traffic, is very dangerous and could restrict access for emergency vehicles. The current proposal for yellow lines at Bakery Cottage / Old Hall is designed to partially alleviate the problem at a pinch point where it also causes problems of access to properties.

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## **Budworth Lane**

It was argued by local farmers and landowners that the proposal to make Budworth Lane one-way would actually make the A559 junction more, rather than less, dangerous. Farm machinery (especially with frequent loads of silage) and caravans (which currently access the site via Cock Lane) will all need to make right hand turning movements across the traffic and up the hill on Budworth Lane.

Cllr Gibbon commented that the Northwich Strategy recognises the existing dangers at the crossroads but no feasible proposals have been put forward to deal with it. The one-way proposal originated from discussions at Comberbach Parish Council about potential bids to create safer walking and cycling routes. This is the only idea to come forward to date and, to help inform their decision whether to support it, both Comberbach and Great Budworth Parish Councils are currently seeking the views of local residents. The comments made at this meeting will be taken into account in reaching this decision.

Various suggestions were made about other potential ways of alleviating the problems at the junction but there was no consensus. Making Budworth Lane one-way for only part of the distance to Cock Lane, rather than all the way, was mentioned. The introduction of interactive signs and reducing the speed limit on the A559 were also suggested.

To improve conditions for pedestrians, the owners of agricultural land along Budworth Lane were asked if they would consider allowing a permissive footpath on their land the other side of the hedge. This would be much safer than walking in the road.

The meeting finished at 7.40pm