Minutes of Great Budworth Parish Council meeting held on 18th March 2024

The meeting opened at 19:00

**Present**:

Parish Cllrs; Chair Karen Hammond (KH), Vice-Chair Dave Wilkinson (DW), Cllr Malcolm Torrance (MT), Cllr Justin Culver (JC), Cllr Steven Jennings (SJ) and Cllr Karen Williams (KW)

Ward Cllr: Lynn Gibbon (LG)

Clerk: Caroline Constable (CC)

**Apologies**:

Apologies received from Cllr’s Chris Wise (CW) and Steve Coppell (SC), and Ward Cllrs Norman Wright (NW) and Phil Marshall (PM)

**Declarations of interest:**

There were no declarations of interest

**Dispensations:**

There were no dispensations

**Public Forum:**

Four members of the public were present, one of whom raised the issue of fallen leaves on the footpaths along the bottom end of the High Street and Westage Lane. He stated that the leaves were last cleared on 9/5/23 and were in need of clearing again. Residents were reminded that they could report such issues through the ‘Report It’ app with CW&C. Clerk offered to report it on behalf of the resident

**Minutes:**

The minutes from the parish council meeting of 08/01/24 were agreed and approved. Minor changes due to misspelling of Cllr Torrance’s surname and change of date of next meeting from 12/3/24 to 18/3/24.

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|  | Agenda Point | Assigned to.. |
| **1** | **Parish Cllr Reports**  Cllr KW – action from last meeting was to report on the flooding issue reported by the owner of Little Dene. KW visited the property and was surprised at the amount of water around the property and stated that if the front door to the property was on the road-side, the house would likely have been flooded. KW arranged a meeting with the landowner of the land behind the property (which is causing much of the run-off) and met with him and an Agricultural Consultant on 13th March. The consultant was well prepared and produced maps showing the 21 drains/grids that are sited on the particular piece of road under investigation, many of which are blocked with silt. There is also a United Utilities (UU) grid at the junction with Belmont Road which is blocked and is leaking onto the highway, this has been reported many times in the past.  The landowner proposed a number of solutions: he will contact CW&C to get the drains cleared (this has now been done and a job raised with a 10 day turnaround) and contact UU (this has also been done with a job raised, UU promise a 2 day turnaround). The landowner has also proposed to add a ‘crop covering’ to the fields whilst they are in ‘fallow’ to prevent so much water running off them and will plough ridges along the edges of the fields and plant wildflowers in an attempt to bind the soil. |  |
| **2** | **Ward Cllr Reports**  Ward Cllr LG:   * Confirmed the 4.4% overall raise to the Council Tax * Meeting with CEO of CW&C on 29/2/24 went well and all questions and answers have been reported back to parish councils. LG urged parish councils to direct any further queries back to her if they feel that their issues were not adequately dealt with * Members Budget Grants have been rolled over as not all funding was spent * Funding from cancelled HS2 link; £185M will be made available over the next 12 years, majority has been allocated to Highways but needs to be ringfenced to ensure correct spending * Space Hive Crowd Funding is continuing. £85000 has been put into the funds and is available for applications * Poor road conditions and flooding continue to be an issue, CW&C do not have the funding to deal with every issue. Resident raised issue of responsibility of road repairs down Westage Lane; Great Budworth side has been repaired but repairs still needed to Aston by Budworth side. LG stated that it is responsibility of Cheshire East. Clerk will contact Aston by Budworth pc to ask that work be requested * Operation ‘Park Safe’ has been started. Residents can report bad parking * Consultations: Local Plan Framework closed but still available for comment. Housing Engagement Strategy available til 2/4/24. Adult Social Care Strategy available til 19/5/24, important to comment on as social care takes 70% of council tax. Survey into Safety of Women and Girls still active * Aston by Budworth School has recently had an ‘good’ Ofsted inspection | CC |
| **3** | **Progress Reports**   1. Village/School Field – Cllr KH reported that her email of 15/12/23 to governors and head teacher had still not been replied to, she emailed again last week but again no response. She has spoken to Rev. Alec due to the issue over public access and the locking of the gates. A set of keys is to be given to the PC and the padlock to the gate nearest to the school is to be left unlocked at the end of the school day, weekends and school holidays. The fencing around the field has now been completed 2. Trees on The Avenue – Cllr DW has filled in the holes along the track and cut back the ivy 3. The Pump House – the results from testing by Madeline Davis from CW&C are still not back. Clerk to chase. With regards to adding CCTV, Cllr SJ reports that after consulting with a contractor there is the issue of an electricity supply, the contractor was going to look into the feasibility of solar power. SJ to chase 4. D-Day 80th Anniversary event – 6/6/24 – Cllr KH met with Rev. Alec and a proposal has been taken to the Parochial Church Council to base all events around the church; it is proposed that there is a 30 minute peel of bells from 6.30pm followed by a simplified ‘beer & burgers with music’ which will then be followed by a service in the church at 8.30pm with the lighting of candles 5. Website – there has been some training on the website but clerk advises that it is not user friendly and is difficult to update and would suggest that at some point the website be redesigned by a professional hosting company. The contract with Nicholas Baron-Morgan (current developer) has just been renewed and so any major changes will be looked at towards the end of the year. Anna Lee has agreed to keep updating the website with The Budworth Bulletin and other updates will be actioned by the clerk 6. Car Park Signs – clerk ordered the signs and they are now in place 7. Filming in Village – Cllr KH has contacted CW&C with regards to being added to a database but as yet no response from them. KH to chase. There is filming going ahead in the village on 23/3/24 mostly at Bakery Cottage but the road will be closed during the day to accommodate vehicles and a small amount of filming outside. £1000 has been offered to the parish council for the inconvenience. | CC  SJ  KH |
| **4** | **Land at Side/Rear of Upper Pump House**  The new residents of 50 Church Street which is adjacent to the pump house have enquired about purchasing the piece of land. Cllr KH read out an email sent from the owners stating their offer (£5000) and the fact that they would cover the parish council’s costs. Cllr JC stated that for full transparency and to ensure we comply with legislation that the sale should be opened up for tender but saying that due to the nature of the land (small, only accessible via 50 Church Street) he does not feel that anyone else would consider purchasing it. There are 2 Holm Oaks on the piece of land which are subject to a TPO, only concern is that this order will be maintained. Cllr JC stated that the TPO is against the land no matter who owns it and so there should be no concerns about selling it. Cllr KH confirmed that the owners have stated that they would comply with the TPO. Cllr MT suggested that in the PC’s perspective it is a win/win situation as we would no longer be responsible for the land and would get some funds into the PC. Consensus is that the sale could go ahead once it was offered for tenders. Cllr KH to contact the owners of 50 Church Street with the proposal, a notice would then be placed in The Bulletin and the process continue as necessary. Cllr SJ to draft a notice for the Bulletin | KH  SJ |
| **5** | **Finance**   1. P45 and final documents for Janet Bennett (JB) – after some issues with the recording of PAYE and potential under payment of tax, all documents have now been issued to Janet and issues fully resolved. JB confirmed that she has contacted HMRC who state that tax is not due on her Great Budworth income, no further action necessary 2. To finalise Budget for 2024 – 2025 – clerk advised that although precept, spending categories and amounts were agreed at the last meeting she was not happy with the agreed document. After confirming that the precept could be around £3000 short on projected spending, funds would need to be left in the current account to cover the shortfall. Clerk suggests that £5000 be left in the current account for the start of the new tax year (1/4/24) to cover any shortfall, the remainder will be moved into the Business Reserve Account. Cllr SJ asked what interest is on the reserve account, clerk stated that it was negligible. SJ asked whether the remaining funds could be invested. Clerk to look into investment accounts 3. Bank Reconciliations – Cllr’s KW & JC checked and signed the reconciliations for the Business Reserve account and Cllr DW the Current Account (reconciliation was needed for all transactions and statements from 1/4/23 as they had not been done) 4. To sign off direct debit (DD) mandate for ICO registration renewal (due Aug24) – clerk asked that the regular yearly payment for ICO registration be added as a DD, all agreed and Cllrs KH & DW signed the mandate 5. To consider setting up monthly salary payments for Clerk via Standing Order – clerk stated that the HMRC late payment fees generated last year on PAYE were due to the fact that although the clerk’s salary is paid every other month when there is a meeting, PAYE needs to be actioned every month and it was not. Clerk suggests that to make the process easier salary is calculated on a yearly basis based on 6 hours per week and then paid monthly via standing order (SO). Cllr KH queried the current 9 hours being worked per week. Clerk advised that this was due to the extra workload generated via the handover and that once all necessary work was completed, hours would return to 6 per week, any extra hours that were then agreed could be added through PAYE ad hoc. Salary would therefore be £468 per month via SO (based on 6hr\*£18\*52/12). All in agreement. Clerk to set up the mandate once extra hours no longer needed   ***Invoices received & cheques created*:**   1. Clerks Salary – 8/1/24 – 17/3/24   83.81 hrs @ £18ph = £1508.61  Total Salary 8/1/24 – 17/3/24 = £1508.91 chq.no. 1062   1. Clerks Reimbursements (includes £10 per week ‘working from home allowance’, printer ink, slcc manual, stamps, lockbox & external harddrive ) = £290.69 chq.no. 1063 2. Website Support – Nicholas Baron-Morgan - £240 – chq no. 1056 (sent Feb) 3. Cloud Storage – payment taken from Anna Lee – to be reimbursed - £50 chq.no. 1057 4. SLCC Membership - £120 – chq.no.1058 5. Receipt for Grant payment of £400 for Budworth Bulletin 6. Supply of Christmas Tree – Mr R.C. Wilkinson - £215 chq.no.1059 7. Chalc – Good Councillor Guide - £5 chq.no.1060 8. RJ Signs – supply of parking sign - £86.98 chq.no.1061 | CC  CC |
| **6** | **Correspondence**   1. Planning Application 23/03872/FUL – Blackthorn School Lane – Replacement Roof, Windows & Doors – no comments 2. Road Closure notification – Heath Lane – 26/1/24 for 5 days – work done 3. Email from Chalc – Home Upgrade Grant Scheme (homes not heated by gas) 4. Email from CW&C – Local Plan Evidence Base Consultation 5. Road Closure notification – Heath Lane – 6/2/24 for 5 days – work done 6. Road Closure notification – Westage Lane – 7/2/24 for 5 days 7. PSCO Jan/Feb Report – nothing to report for Great Budworth 8. Planning Application 24/00430/CAT – 32 School Lane – Removal of large fir tree, replace with 2 small fruit trees – no comments 9. Email from Keep Britain Tidy – 2024 Spring Clean sign up 10. Email from Lynn Gibbon – Operation Park – report parking on pavements 11. Email from Hynet – Hydrogen Pipeline update – no real concern for Great Budworth 12. Planning Application 24/00576/CAt – The Vicarage High Street – felling 2 Limes & replace with 2 Whitebeams – no comments 13. PCSO Feb/Mar report – no issues for Great Budworth 14. Planning Application 24/00645/CAT – Blackthorn School Lane – Request to reduce boundary leylandii hedge – no comments 15. Road Closure notification – Westage Lane – 13/3/24 for 1 day – work done 16. Planning Application Appeal – 23/01929/FUL – Spinneys Smithy Lane – Construction of a balcony – application approved – appeal is against the approval – the appellant is appealing conditions set by CW&C for the glass surrounding the balcony – no comments 17. Road Closure notification – High Street – 33/3/24 for 1 day |  |
| **7** | **Issues arising from new Clerk’s analysis**   1. Planning Register – clerk advises that the PC should have a register of all planning applications and suggests creating one with applications from the last 3 years, she asked whether this was acceptable or whether the PC felt she should go back further. All in agreement that 3 years records adequate. Clerk to generate 2. Destruction of finance records – having gone through all records held by the PC, clerk has discovered that finance records go back to 2004, only last 7/8 years of records need to be kept (other than agreement of budget documents). Clerk suggests destroying anything prior to 7 years. All in agreement. Cllr KW asked how they would be destroyed, clerk advised that they would be shredded. 3. Committees – clerk advised that there were currently 4 committees mandated; Staffing, Planning, Risk & Finance, most have not met since at least 2016. As planning and finance transactions are so few and as per clerk’s suggested Agenda, these items have been moved to within the ordinary meeting and as such are no longer necessary. Clerk suggest dissolving these 2 committees at the Annual Meeting, all were in agreement. Clerk advised that it was prudent to keep the Staffing and Risk Committees, again all in agreement 4. Mission Statement – clerk advised that when a parish council applies for funding a mission statement is often requested and she can find no evidence that Great Budworth have ever had one and so suggests that one be created. Cllr JC extolled the merits of a mission statement whilst Cllr SJ felt that it is unnecessary. Cllr KH felt that the residents should also be consulted as to what they felt the mission statement should be. Cllr KH put the decision to a vote; 5 for, 1 against. Cllr JC to create a draft | CC  CC  JC |
| **8** | **Any other business**  Cllr DW – passed on Aston by Budworth PC’s thanks for sending objection to Chesire East for planning application at George’s Farm |  |

Confirmed date of next meeting, 07/05/2024, the Annual Parish Meeting will be held before the Ordinary Meeting, starting at 6.15pm

Meeting closed at 20:11

Abbreviations: pc (parish council), cllr (councillor), cllrs (councillors), cllrs’ (councillors’), cllr’s (councillor’s), CW&C (Cheshire West and Chester), GBPC (Great Budworth Parish Council)