Minutes of Great Budworth Parish Council meeting held on 7th May 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), Cllr Chris Wise (CW), Cllr Steve Coppell (SC), and Cllr Karen Williams (KW)

Ward Cllr: Lynn Gibbon (LG)

Reverend Alec Brown (Rev.Alec)

Clerk: Caroline Constable (CC)

**Apologies**:

No apologies received

**Declarations of interest:**

Declaration of interest received from JC, discussions over solicitor to be appointed for sale of land behind the upper pump house (see agenda item 4) as he is the partner of the solicitor who has been suggested for the conveyancing

**Dispensations:**

There were no dispensations

**Public Forum:**

Nine members of the public present including Mr Richard Chandler a resident of Comberbach who attended to raise concerns over the developments at Crownest Lane. He asked that the parish council be proactive over dealing with the new owner of Box Hedge Farm who he believes is steam rolling a development under the radar. He stated that hardcore that was supposed to have been placed on the lane is builder’s rubble and the trees removed that were claimed to be dead did not appear dead. Two other residents were also present to express their concerns.

KH responded that the parish council were well aware of the situation and had responded in an appropriate manner and escalated the issue as much as possible. Clerk advised that planning enforcement had been contacted raising concerns especially over the large gateway that had been erected.

LG advised that she had put representation to CW&C sending all of the evidence gathered by residents and that an officer had been down and visited the area. They advised that as the land where the trees were cut down is private and the trees did not have any TPO’s that the owner was within their right to remove them. Planning have stated that the new gate probably does need planning permission and the pc and LG have requested enforcement. LG stated that enforcement are slow to deal with cases and she is looking into how many are currently outstanding, but as yet has had no reply.

MT asked whether we could encourage the Tree Officer to visit the site with a view to adding TPO’s for the remaining trees, but LG advised that it would be difficult to force the owner to apply for TPO’s. She will however, contact the Tree Officer.

One resident stated that they were not sure that all the trees removed were on private land and that some may have fallen within the boundary of the lane which is an adopted highway. She also stated that whilst CW&C have a duty to maintain the lane no maintenance has ever been done and it was effectively a grass track and had never had hard standing.

Clerk advised that at the moment little else could be done other than being vigilant and reporting any further developments.

CW asked whether it would be prudent to contact the owner of Box Hedge Farm, all were in agreement to do so. Clerk will make contact.

Mr Bill Anderson, commented on the state of the kerbs along the High Street, many of which have become damaged due primarily to cars parking on them. He also stated that at least one of the flagstones were loose. Clerk to make a report to CW&C.

LG asked about the road closure sign that was out for closure of part of High Street for the 7/5/24 as no sign of any work. She asked why it appeared that only part of the road was to be repaired when there were potholes along the whole length of the High Street. Cllrs advised that all potholes had been reported but only some had so far been marked for repair. LG will contact CW&C asking why the whole road isn’t being repaired in one go.

**Minutes:**

The minutes from the parish council meeting of 18/03/24 were agreed and approved

**Actions from last meeting:**

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| Action Point | Action | Assigned to | Comments |
| 1 | Report fallen leaves issues to CW&C | CC | √ Report SS605904214 & leaves cleared |
| 2 | Contact Aston by Budworth pc – road repairs Westage Lane | CC | √ no reply as yet, will chase |
| 3 | Contact Madeleine Davies CW&C re water testing | CC | √ told ‘water not safe to drink signs’ needed. See agenda item 3.a. for further details |
| 4 | Chase contractor re solar powered CCTV for pump house | SJ | √ As no electric supply not much more can be done |
| 5 | Contact owners of 50 Church Street – proposal for sale of land | KH | √ See agenda item 4 for further details |
| 6 | Chase CW&C re filming database | KH | V |
| 7 | Create Planning Register | CC | Outstanding |
| 8 | Destroy finance documents prior to 2016 | CC | Outstanding |
| 9 | Create draft Mission Statement | JC | See agenda item 3.d. for further details |
| 10 | Look into investment accounts | CC | Outstanding |
| 11 | Set up a SO for salary payments | CC | Unable to do as online registration failed. Clerk to investigate further |
| 12 | Draft notice for the Bulletin about sale of land adjacent to 50 Church Street | SJ | √ |

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|  | Agenda Point | Assigned to.. |
| **1** | **Parish Cllr Reports**  SC – advised that the school field gate has at times over the last few weeks been padlocked when it should have been open. KH stated that she has again spoken with the school and Rev. Alec who assured that the gate would remain unlocked after school, at weekends and during holidays. They have however not yet provided the PC with a key.  Rev. Alec was surprised that the gate had been reported as being locked as he had seen that it had been open all bank holiday weekend. KH asked that he contact the school to ensure that it is opened after school and reminded him that the PC still did not have a key  DW – has noticed the state of the black and white fingerposts through out the village and most need cleaning. He has asked his brother-in-law who is a contractor for a quote for cleaning them all (7 in total). He has also asked them for a quote for the maintenance of The Avenue  KW – reports for the flooding at Little Dene on the A559 by United Utilities & Highways have still not been actioned. The landowner is now stating that his land is getting flooded due to the blocked grids and gulleys. LG stated that the ‘grids and gulleys’ maps are now available and that we should all check that each grid & gulley is clear and if they are not to report it to CW&C. Clerk advised that she will add this as an agenda item for the next meeting | DW  CC |
| **2** | **Ward Cllr Reports**  Cllr LG:   * Police & Crime Commissioners election – John Dwyer voted out * Consultations:   + Lets talk about adult social care – it is important for people to reply to this as social care counts for 70% of CW&C budget   + Planning Policy Framework – still available   + Day Care Services   + Working together for climate change * LG stated that parish council’s replies to consultations is very low and she would encourage all pcs to complete them as they impact everyone in the borough * Newly voted in borough council started 06/5/24 |  |
| **3** | **Progress Reports**   1. The Pump House – after further advice from CW&C on 16/4/24 clerk put up signs on the pumphouse gate and the trough to advise that the water was not fit to drink, these signs were removed within the day. JC stated that as long as we have a paper trail showing our due diligence then there was little else we could do. He suggested that we also put a notice on the website. Clerk will action. JC was concerned that only villagers would see this notice.   KH stated that she felt the issue would never be resolved easily and that we needed to ask the residents what they wanted to be done about the situation especially as she felt that few residents actually take the water. CW advised that he believes commercial enterprises are taking the water as he has seen people with many large canisters and that it was a waste of pc funds to keep retesting the water.  Clerk stated that she would contact CW&C to ascertain what our legal requirements were in regard to putting up signs in light of the fact that they keep getting taken down.   1. Website – clerk stated that she has now obtained further access to changing the website and would be making some changes in the near future. She also advised that the contacts form on the site was receiving large volumes of spam mail and that she wanted to remove it and replace with a contact list. She has been contacted legitimately through the site for parish hall bookings and the WI and so will ask them whether they are happy to have their details listed.   LG advised that her details appeared in at least two places on the website and that her telephone number was incorrect. Clerk advised that she was in the process of tidying up the site and would correct the errors.   1. Filming in Village – filming in the village for a Netflix programme was moved from 22nd March to 23rd causing some disruption to the village. £1000 has been offered as payment to the pc and the film company have been invoiced. Don Hammond was also approached recently for filming in the village hall but as it had already been booked out they were not able to accommodate them. 2. Mission Statement – JC has been working on a number of themes and will produce a draft for agreement before the next pc meeting 3. Clerk’s Admin – clerk advised that some clean up admin was still needed in regards to emails and the 2 pc laptops. She requested that she continue on 9 hours per week until the work was completed. All were in agreement. | CC  CC  CC  CC  JC |
| **4** | **Land at Side/Rear of Upper Pump House**  The notice for offering the piece of land for sale to public tender was placed in the March Budworth Bulletin with a deadline of 28/4/24. No further tenders were received and the owners of 50 Church Street have now officially submitted their offer of £5000 (plus pc costs). JC’s partner is a conveyancing solicitor and all were in agreement that clerk would instruct her in the sale. Clerk to make contact. | CC |
| **5** | **Crownest Lane**  See ‘public forum’ discussion for full discussion details. |  |
| **6** | **Finance**   1. Bank Reconciliations – reconciliations for the past 2 months were signed off by DW 2. Certificate of Exemption AGAR 2023/2024 – signed off by KH 3. Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 – signed off by KH 4. Exercise of Public Rights 2023/24 – notice to be placed for 3/6/24 -12/7/24 when members of the public can request to view the accounts 5. Accounting Statements 2023/24 – signed off by KH 6. Internal Audit Report – many items on internal audit failed due to historical errors, these will be remedied before next year’s audit 7. Reserves – Clerk stated that she had placed just over £21000 into the reserve account. She stated that between 25% and 100% of yearly expenditure could legitimately be kept in general reserves, last year’s figure was £9874. Clerk had looked back through the accounts and since 2014 £41600 had been received for filming but no documents exist as to what was to be done with this money, and closing 2023-2024 balance only £26269.   CW advised that some had been spent on projects but nothing formally ever said about ‘ring fencing’. Clerk advised that a statement needed to be made as to what was to be done with the current funds in reserve. CW asked whether a separate investment account could be found and filming reserves placed into it. Clerk confirmed that it could and once a decision is made an official statement will need to be created. Clerk to investigate investment accounts with 30 to 90 notice periods with Natwest.  ***Invoices received & cheques created*:**   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Payee | Details | Chq.No. | In | Out | | Clerk | Salary –  18/3/24 – 5/5/24 - 56 hrs @ £18ph | 1069 |  | 1008.00 | | Clerk | Reimbursements (includes working from home allowance (including adjustment for over payment) stamps & Microsoft 365 renewal) | 1068 |  | 92.51 | | Nicholas Baron-Morgan | Website Support | 1064 |  | 30.00 | | Chalc | Membership renewal | 1065 |  | 99.94 | | CW&C | Precept |  | 10462.10 |  | | JDH Business Services | Internal Audit | 1066 |  | 330.00 | | Clerk | Reimbursement - Printer Ink | 1070 |  | 44.99 | | Totals |  |  | 10462.10 | 1605.44 | | CC |
| **7** | **Correspondence**   1. Email from hs2 – High Speed Rail (Crewe-Manchester) Bill 2. Email from PCSO Wiggins – March/April report 3. Planning Application – 24/00762/TPO – land opposite Juniper Lodge – reduce height 1 oak, 3 sycamores & 4 pines – deadline for comments 26/4/24 – no objection. MT stated that he objected but clerk reminded him that to send formal pc objections a quorum was needed 4. Email from Cheshire East – new local plan consultation 5. Email from Helping Hands – request to advertise their services – passed onto Anna Lee for Bulletin 6. Planning Application Decision – 23/02806/FUL – Heath Farm – Proposed roof over existing livestock gathering area – Approved 7. Email from Highways – Temporary road closure Westage Lane 7/5/24 – remedial works. Work not yet completed 8. Email from Highways – Temporary road closure Heath Lane 22/4/24 – Openreach work. Work completed 9. Email from chalc – use of official emails. See agenda item 8 for further details 10. Email from Highways – Temporary road closure – Women’s Tour of Britain – 8/6/24 11. Email from defibstore – AED out of warranty. SC stated that the battery on the unit expires in 2025 and as the unit is no longer produced it may be difficult to source a new one. The supplier stated that a new version will cost approx.. £980 whilst a battery is around £270, we may qualify for a discount for a replacement unit. Further discussions will be had at the next meeting. Clerk to add to agenda. 12. Email from chalc – barriers to community energy projects survey 13. Email from PCSO Wiggins – April/May report | CC |
| **8** | **Official Email Addresses**  Councillors discussed the recent advice that parish councils should migrate to ‘.gov.uk’ domain name for websites and email. Clerk advised that all cllrs should ideally have a pc email address but cllrs do not see the need as they get very little contact from residents to their private addresses, most correspondence goes directly to the clerk.  Clerk advised that it would be prudent to at least have a ‘gov.uk’ website and clerk’s email so that it is obvious that the contact is for a local authority and because of the added security as the current ‘gmail’ account is not very secure. All in agreement.  Clerk advised that it would cost approx.. £120 for Nicholas Baron-Morgan to migrate the website to a ‘.gov.uk’ domain. Purchase of the domain name will be approx.. £100 (plus VAT) for 2 years and she is to get a firm quote for migrating the email address. | CC |
| **9** | **Any other business**  Rev. Alec raised the D-Day commemorations in the village. Some thought that a beacon was being lit, he wanted to make it clear that this was not the case but there would be a candle procession.  He also wanted to raise the issue of the parish field as it is becoming more and more difficult to park on it due to waterlogging.  Discussions were had about the broken drainage pipework and the cost of adding more plastic honeycomb sheeting and hardcore. Rev. Alec wanted to know whether we could find out the cost of making improvements with a view to doing something in the future. MT asked whether the church would be contributing to the cost. Rev. Alec agreed to go to the Parochial Church Council to see if they could help fund.  KH asked MT whether he could talk to the Trustees Committee, he agreed.  LG suggested we look at crowd-funding | MT |

Confirmed date of next meeting, 01/07/2024

Meeting closed at 20:32

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)