Minutes of Great Budworth Parish Council meeting held on 1st July 2024

The meeting opened at 19:02

**Present**:

Parish Cllrs; Vice-Chair Dave Wilkinson (DW), Cllr Malcolm Torrance (MT), Cllr Justin Culver (JC), Cllr Chris Wise (CW), Cllr Steve Coppell (SC) and Cllr Karen Williams (KW)

Clerk: Caroline Constable (CC)

Vice Chair David Wilkinson welcomed everyone and officially announced the resignation of Karen Hammond (KH). He wished her well for the future and offered thanks for her work and dedication since being elected in May 2023.

The Notice of Vacancy issued upon her resignation on 11th June ends on 2nd July at which point if less than/no electors ask for an election the PC can advertise for a new councillor who will then be co-opted.

A vote was taken to elect a new chair/vice-chair and all were in agreement.

Cllr SC Nominated Cllr DW and Cllr MT seconded, Cllr DW graciously accepted the nomination.

A nomination for vice-chair was asked for, Cllr JC nominated himself and Cllrs KW & SC seconded.

DW acknowledged the passing of Don Hammond, a long-standing retired councillor for both the ward and parish council. He stated that he was a loyal servant to the councils for many years and will be greatly missed.

**Apologies**:

Apologies received from Cllr Steven Jennings (SJ), Ward Cllrs Lynn Gibbon (LG), Norman Wright (NW) and Phil Marshall (PM).

**Declarations of interest:**

Declaration of interest received from DW; the quote for work to The Avenue is from DW’s brother-in-law’s company.

**Dispensations:**

There were no dispensations.

**Public Forum:**

Three members of the public present, one of whom asked about pot holes and why it seemed that Comberbach were getting their roads fully re-surfaced when the High Street was covered with pot holes and only being patched. Clerk advised that CW&C lack of money meant that generally only patching was being done as and when. The High Street is scheduled to be patched w/c 8th July at which point if they then need re-doing the PC can ask for a full re-surfacing.

**Minutes:**

The minutes from the parish council meeting of 07/05/24 were agreed and approved

**Actions from last meeting:**

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| Action Point | Action | Assigned to | Comments |
| 1 | Chase CW&C re filming database | KH | KH & KW were involved in looking at filming advertising and as KH has now left the council, KW agreed to take this task on. She will liaise with KH to ascertain details |
| 2 | Create Planning Register | CC | √ |
| 3 | Destroy finance documents prior to 2016 | CC | Not yet done |
| 4 | Finalise draft Mission Statement | JC | See agenda item 3b |
| 5 | Look into investment accounts | CC | √ see agenda item 6c |
| 6 | Set up a SO for salary payments | CC | √ first payment made 3/6/24 |
| 7 | Contact owner of Box Hedge Farm re meeting | CC | √ meeting held 6/6/24, see agenda item 3d |
| 8 | Report damaged kerb & flagstones on High Street | CC | √ reported 13/5/24, CW&C report states work completed, no one sure whether it was done satisfactorily & resident who reported it not present |
| 9 | Contact Highways asking why whole of High Street not being repaired in one go | LG |  |
| 10 | Chase enforcement re Crownest Lane | LG |  |
| 11 | Obtain quotes for cleaning fingerposts, The Avenue maintenance | DW | Quote obtained for The Avenue but not the fingerposts. DW to arrange |
| 12 | Grids & Gulleys checking to be added to next agenda | CC | √ see agenda item 4 |
| 13 | Notice on website that pumphouse water not fit to drink | CC | √ |
| 14 | Contact CW&C re water testing a legal requirements for signage | CC | √ see agenda item 3a |
| 15 | Correct website errors LG details | CC | √ |
| 16 | Contact conveyancing solicitor re sale land behind upper pump house | CC | √ see agenda item 3c |
| 17 | Chase Aston-by-Budworth re Westage Lane | CC | √ see agenda item 3f |
| 18 | Call Natwest re online registration failure – then do 6 | CC | √ the pc cannot have online banking due to the 2 signatories rule, there is a subscribed service available at £20 per month but it was agreed that this was not an effective use of pc funds |
| 19 | Get quote for migrating to .gov.uk domain | CC | √ see agenda item 3e |
| 20 | Talk to Parish Field trustees committee re improving parking | MT | Not yet done |
| 21 | Remove contact form on website – create list is needed | CC | √ |
| 22 | Add defib update to July agenda | CC | √ see agenda item 5 |

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|  | Agenda Point | Assigned to.. |
| **1** | **Parish Cllr Reports**  SC – reports that the gate onto the school playing field is still being left locked after school has finished, checked this evening and it was again locked. Clerk advised that the pc had still not been given a key. CW asked whether a letter could be sent to the school, all were in agreement. Clerk to write, copying in Rev.Alec. | CC |
| **2** | **Ward Cllr Reports**  No ward cllrs present.  DW advised that he wished to ask Ward Cllr’s why the road verges were being left uncut as they were now causing issues with visibility at many junctions in and around the village/ward. Clerk to email | CC |
| **3** | **Progress Reports**   1. The Pump House –   further details regarding signage requirement received from CW&C & DWI which highlight that signage does not remove mitigation and only option may be to ‘restrict the flow’. JC reported that last Friday he had seen someone in a high-vis jacket at the pump and wondered whether further testing was being done. Clerk advised that she had not been informed but would check with CW&C and if testing was not being done would request a test so that a decision could be made on the future of the water supply.  Clerk also advised that a tile had slipped from the roof and there was now a hole. DW stated that the roofer had been finding it difficult to obtain replacements, Beeston Reclamation may have some so he was to check that out. Bill Anderson reported that the water could be treated but at a cost that might be prohibitive, he was looking into this. CW stated that the only option may be to weld the gates shut.  Clerk to contact CW&C for further info regarding testing   1. Mission Statement –   JC reported that due to his recent health issues he had been unable to finalise a draft. He will complete it before the next meeting   1. Sale of land behind Upper Pump House –   after an initial delay the paperwork has now been sent to the purchaser’s solicitor. There had also been a query about a piece of land that was outside of the boundary plan. Cllr’s advised that they believed this was just a sliver in-between the pump house and the wall and that it should not be included in the sale. Clerk to contact pc solicitor.   1. Crownest Lane –   clerk and KW, MT and KH met with Mr Latif on 6/6/24. Councillors relayed residents concerns regarding the cutting down of trees, work done on the lane and the gates. Mr Latif stated that he only cut down diseased trees or those threatening to fall on his property and the gates were temporary in order to secure his land and property. He stated that Highways had visited and talked about the lane and that they were happy that he reinstated a hard surface as the previous one had deteriorated underneath vegetation. Councillors also asked whether he had any plans for developing the land, he advised that at present he did not but if he did, he would be governed by planning laws.  Clerk reported that she had contacted Highways regarding the extension of the resurfaced lane into the hedgerow line but the response was that it was acceptable and necessary as the trucks delivering material had been slipping on the wet ground and running into the hedgerow. Highways advised that any work done to the lane required permission and whilst the initial work had not gained permission, they were happy that it be reinstated to a hardcore finish.   1. .gov.uk Domain change –   recent guidelines to move to using ‘.gov.uk’ domains discussed at last meeting and clerk was to determine full cost of the change. Clerk advised that cost of registering a ‘.gov.uk’ domain was £109 + VAT for 2 years with subsequent 2 years currently at £61 + VAT. Clerk advised that a £100 grant was available to put towards the initial cost, clerk to apply. Hosting of a ‘.gov.uk’ email is £14.14 per month and if the website is also to be changed there would be a cost of around £120 to have it migrated from greatbudworth.com.  CW asked whether it was right to move the website to a ‘.gov.uk’ address as the site was more than just a PC site and that he was against it. Clerk advised that as the PC paid for the site and updated it, it was a PC site but that it could be left as a ‘.com’. The moving of the website from a ‘.com’ was put to a vote with 4 voting against the move. It was therefore carried that the website would remain as ‘greatbudworth.com’ and just the clerk’s email address would be changed. Clerk also advised that all cllrs should have a dedicated PC email address, cllrs were against this and clerk advised that as long as they kept their PC emails secure this should not be a problem. Clerk to action the move of PC email to ‘.gov.uk’.   1. Westage Lane –   clerk had contacted Aston-by-Budworth PC in April about the pot holes and has recently been advised by Aston-by-Budworth clerk that Cheshire East has been out to the Lane and reported that the road is not in need of repair but that it will be put on their ‘future rolling programme for level 2 patching’.   1. Clerk’s Admin –   clerk advised that she has now been through all of the unread emails and that whilst a number dating from 2022 did require actions they were no longer relevant. She has now tidied up the emails and deleted most of them keeping the last 12 months (as per Retention Policy) and archived those that may be of interest/use in the future.  She reports that she still has a number of admin tasks to do including actioning the historical internal audit findings, checking and clearing down the old pc laptop, creating an Asset Management Policy and tidying up the website. She asked for authorisation for continuing to work up to 9 hours per week, this was granted. | CC  JC  CC  CC  CC |
| **4** | **Grids & Gulleys**  Following on from the release of a Grids & Gulleys map, taking on the task of checking the grids and gulleys was discussed. It was agreed that traversing the A559 to do this was not safe and the requirement should be carried out by CW&C. |  |
| **5** | **Defibrillator**  SC advised that the current pads will expire Feb 2026 and that at the moment the unit is working and the battery does not need replacing. He advised that in his opinion the cost of replacing the battery and the age of the unit would suggest that once the battery needs replacing a new unit be purchased, probably sometime in 2026. All were in agreement with this and that an item would be added to the 2025/2026 budget to cover it’s replacement. SC agreed to obtain a cost for the November meeting. | SC |
| **6** | **Finance**   1. Bank Reconciliations – reconciliations for April and May were checked and signed off by JC 2. Spend against budget – clerk presented a breakdown of current spend against the budget; apart from the additional salary costs (9 hrs per week rather than the budgeted 6 hrs per week) all spending was within budget 3. Investment Accounts – Natwest offer 3 investment accounts; instant access, a 35 day notice account & a 95 day notice account. All were in agreement that any project would take at least 3 months to agree and organise so the 95 day notice account, currently at 4.25% was the most appropriate. Clerk to arrange opening of an account and transfer £20000 from reserve account   ***Income & Expenditure*:**   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Payee | Details | Chq.No. | In | Out | | Clerk | Salary – 6/5/24 to 30/06/24  Standing Order set up equating to yearly salary based on 6 hours per week (£5616) divided by 12 (£468)  Payments made:  3/6 £468  1/7 £468  Agreed extra hours 21.83 @ £18ph £392.97  Employee NI due £34.24 taken from extra salary, payment made:  £358.73  Employer NI also due of £113.29 (not yet invoiced) | 1074 |  | 468.00  468.00  358.73 | | Clerk | Reimbursements (includes working from home allowance, envelope & postage for conveyancing documents, paye payment & mileage) | 1073 |  | 119.28 | | ITV.com | Filming |  | 1000 |  | | Cheshire Community Action | Membership renewal | 1071 |  | 20.00 | | ICO | Membership renewal via DD 5/8/24 |  |  | 40.00 | | Totals |  |  | 1000 | 1474.01 |   Receipt received from Chalc for 2024/2025 membership (£99.94)  Quote from Hankey Home & Gardens for work to The Avenue - £240, agreement (via email) had been made for the work to be carried out | CC |
| **7** | **Correspondence**   1. HMRC Tax Code notice for CC – actioned 10/05/24 2. Email(s) from Aston-by-Budworth PC – Cheshire East repairs to Westage Lane 3. Temporary Road Closure notice – High Street – 14/05/24 4. Temporary Road Closure notice – Church Street – 14/05/24 5. Email from chalc – Public Bodies Accountability Consultation – completed 6. Email from The Pensions Regulator – acknowledgement of updated declaration 7. Temporary Road Closure notice – Westage lane – 22/05/24 8. Temporary Road Closure notice – Belmont Road – 22/05/24 9. Email from CW&C – Local Plan drop in events 10. Email from Ron Bailey (researcher for Lord Don Foster) – Safety of Lithium Batteries – request for support – discussed and pc decided not to send contact/support 11. Email from chalc – Recommended practise on local authority publicity during pre-election period 12. Planning Application – 24/01513/TPO – Fairfield Cottage Warrington Road – prune Holm Oak – comment deadline 25/06/24 - no objections via email 13. PCSO Report May/June – breaking and entering & thefts from Church during a service 14. Email from CW&C – requests for extra time to comment on planning applications 15. Email from chalc – Election staffing 16. Email from Andy Hamman Highways – Crownest Lane issues 17. Temporary Road Closure notice – Gibb Hill – 24/06/24 18. Email from chalc – AGM motion guidance & submission 19. Temporary Road Closure notice – High Street – 08/07/24 20. Temporary Road Closure notice – Dark Lane – 09/07/24 21. Email from chalc – Cheshire West Volunteering Strategy Consultation – completed 22. Email from Cheshire Community Action – Writing Successful Funding Bids – CW commented on usefulness of professional help when completing bids as they were complicated, no one wished to attend the seminar 23. Email from chalc – Financial Services Compensation Scheme |  |
| **8** | **Internal Control Checklist**  CW agreed to complete the checklist and will liaise with clerk | CW |
| **9** | **Risk Register**  2023 Risk Register reviewed by clerk and the following noted:   * Insurance of assets; pc should receive copies of insurance from lessees of the tennis and bowling club but are not. * Item ‘Cars using Parish Field are not controlled and become stuck in softer ground’; SJ pointed out via email that management of parish field responsibility of the Parish Hall Committee (PHC), clerk asked why this item is in the risk assessment if not the responsibility of the pc, all in agreement to remove. Clerk to remove it from document * Item ‘Safeguarding controls are not in place for people using PC assets’; PC to ensure lessees have suitable policies in place. No historical evidence to show that this has been done. PC needs to see copies of Safeguarding Policies. * Item ‘That PC assets are used to the best advantage of the local community’; PC to ensure leases are up to date and adhered to by checking accounts, site specific risk assessments, fire risk assessments, tests on gas, electricity & water conducted by lessees. No historical evidence that this has been done.   Clerk advised that she has emailed the secretary of the PHC asking for the relevant information but as yet had no reply. MT to investigate and take to next PHC meeting and then report back.   * Item ‘Falling Trees/branches on PC owned land’; control measure is regular maintenance and identification of risks. Tree Management Policy recently written and awaiting approval (see agenda item 10) to ensure this risk is mitigated   Risk Assessment document to be altered as per discussions and presented next meeting for approval | CC  MT |
| **10** | **Tree Management Policy & Schedule**  As part of discussions above SC stated that a schedule of future works was drawn up around the time that the Lally Tree Survey was created in 2020 but he was not sure whether it was actually within the survey. Clerk stated that she had not seen anything and will investigate. The agreement and approval of the policy will therefore be put off until further information gathered. | CC |
| **11** | **Any Other Business**  MT asked whether the PC had received a planning application for 17 Westage Lane as he has seen work taking place and been told that a planning application has been put in. Clerk advised that no email had been received, she will check CW&C planning | CC |

Confirmed date of next meeting, 09/09/2024

SC gave his early apologies as he will not be available on that date

Meeting closed at 20:22

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)