

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
CHOLMONDELEY & CHORLEY PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 27 JULY 2021
IN CHOLMONDELEY BOWLING PAVILION**

PRESENT: Councillor C Hopley Chairman
Councillor I Cundy
Councillor A D Fennell
Councillor R Keys

APOLOGIES: Councillor S Langton

IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Aspinall – Candidate for Co-option

20 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest, personal interest or non-pecuniary interest which they had in any item of business on the agenda, the nature of that interest, and in respect of disclosable interests, to leave the meeting prior to the discussion of that item.

No declarations were made.

21 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 4 May 2021 be approved as a correct record.

22 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the Parish Council's Standing Orders, members of the public were able to ask a question or make a statement, both of which must relate to matters which fell within the remit of the Parish Council.

There were no questions from members of the public.

23 CO-OPTION TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

There were currently four vacancies on the Parish Council (two for Cholmondeley and two for Chorley).

The vacancies had been advertised and Cheshire East Council notified, but there had been no request for an election. As a consequence, the Parish Council was now able to co-opt to the vacancies.

There were two candidates who had put themselves forward (1) Martyn Furse, who was recently appointed to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group; and (2) Sarah Aspinall.

Sarah Aspinall was in attendance; Martyn Furse was unable to attend for personal reasons and would attend the next meeting.

Sarah Aspinall made a brief oral presentation indicating why she wished to become a parish councillor. Members were able to ask questions of her.

A vote was taken, and by show of hands, it was –

RESOLVED: That Sarah Aspinall be co-opted onto the Parish Council, representing Chorley parish.

Ms Parish signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and was then able to participate fully in the meeting.

24 REPORT OF BOROUGH COUNCILLOR W S DAVIES

Councillor Davies reported on Cheshire East Council matters of interest:

- There had been a significant increase in Officers resigning, a consequence of which was that the Planning Department, in particular, had a backlog of processing applications.
- The Borough Council had now ceased operating the Cabinet system of governance and had reverted to the Committee system which had been operational in the former Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council.

25 WEBSITE ADMINISTRATION

When the two former councillors who set up the new website had resigned, there were no succession arrangements in place. This proved to be a difficulty with the end-of-year accounts, as some of the requirements could not be met.

In view of the urgency, Coderra Ltd. (the company which previously hosted the website) was contacted and undertook some of the work required to ensure that the website was operational.

The Parish Council was asked to:

- (a) authorise payment to date for the urgent work carried out on the website; and
- (b) to consider appointing Coderra Ltd. as the company to host the website with immediate effect.

RESOLVED: (a) That, in the absence of an invoice, payment to Coderra Ltd. be approved up to a maximum of £250.00; and

- (b) That David Proctor (Coderra Ltd) be invited to attend the next meeting.

26 FINANCIAL MATTERS

26.1 Accounts – 2020-21

The report of the Internal Auditor was submitted. For the audit in 2021-22, the Auditor would expect to see the Parish Council's response to each of the issues raised. These could be considered in detail during the current financial year. In the meantime, the following were specifically referenced.

Recurring Recommendation

General reserves are in excess of 200% of the precept and no earmarked reserves disclosed.

Sector guidance is that general reserves should be maintained at a level between 25% and 100% of precept.

The Council should review the level of general reserves with reference to sector guidance.

The Council had not published various items in accordance with the Transparency Code.

This was addressed at an extra-ordinary meeting held on 17 December 2020 when Members re-considered arrangements for the 2021-22 budget and made a recalculation to enable the precept requirement to be reduced to £2,430.00 with an expected balance on 1 April 2021 of £2,337, representing 96% of the precept requirement.¹

This related to the unavailability of an operational website.

¹ This was not specifically discussed at the meeting. The information has been added for clarity based on the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2020.

26.2 Effectiveness of Internal Audit

The Parish Council was asked to review the effectiveness of the internal audit process, using the checklist on the front of the Internal Auditor's report.

RESOLVED: That the Internal Audit showed that a robust audit had been carried out, and the audit had been effective with all requirements being met.

26.3 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

At the Annual Meeting on 4 May 2021, the Parish Council only dealt with the Exemption Certificate.

The full AGAR was now submitted and the Council was asked to consider both the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements as follows:

26.4 Section 1 of the AGAR – Annual Governance Statement 2021

The Council considered each of the assertions in paragraphs 1-9 of the Annual Governance Statement.

RESOLVED: (a) That a 'yes' response be recorded against Assertions 1-3 and 5-8, with a 'not applicable' to Assertion 9; and

(b) That a 'no' response be recorded against Assertion 4 as the Parish Council had failed to provide an opportunity for registered electors to inspect the accounts in accordance with Regulation 15 of the Account and Audit Regulations 2015.

26.5 Section 2 of the AGAR – Accounting Statements 2020-21

The Council was asked to approve the Accounting Statements for the year 1 April 2020–31 March 2021.

RESOLVED: That the Accounting Statements for 2020-21 be approved.

26.6 Authorisation of Payments

RESOLVED: That the following payments be approved.

£161.28 JDH Business Services Ltd. – Audit of Accounts 2020-21
(£134.40 net and £26.88 VAT)

£320.00 C M Jones – salary 1 April – 30 June 2021

26.7 Financial Statement – 1 April – 30 June 2021

A financial statement showing the position at 31 May 2021 was received.

27 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE

27.1 Minutes of Meetings

The Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meetings held on 20 April 2021 and 18 May 2021 were submitted for information.

27.2 Quotation from Cheshire Wildlife Trust

At the last meeting, the Clerk was asked to seek a quotation for a full ecological survey of the parish, from Cheshire Wildlife Trust (CWT). It was now reported that this had already been submitted by CWT and would form part of the grant application to Locality.

28 PLANNING APPLICATION

The Parish Council was invited to comment on the following planning application. The deadline date for observations was 23 July 2021. The Clerk had requested an extension to allow comments to be submitted after this meeting.

21/2874N 5 Chorley Bank, Wrenbury Road, Chorley CW5 8JS
Proposed first floor extension.

RESOLVED: That no observations be made in respect of planning application No. 21/2874N.

29 NEWSLETTER

The Parish Council was asked to agree to issue a newsletter at the earliest opportunity. The last newsletter was issued in February 2019.

The following were the suggested articles:

- Chairman's Message
- Reference to Covid-19 and impact on the parish.
- Update on Neighbourhood Plan
- New Councillors' details
- Bowling Club item
- Tennis Club item

A draft would be submitted to the next meeting.

30 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

28 September 2021²

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm and concluded at 9.00 pm

² Subsequently re-arranged to 5 October 2021