

Elton Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 14 March 2016 at Elton Community Centre

Present: Councillors Tony Mills (in the Chair), Ruth Ackroyd, Margaret Lockhart, Claire Thornton and Maureen Wilson

In Attendance: Pauline English (Parish Clerk), Ward Councillor Stephen Smith, Rachel Foster - Libraries Manager, Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC), Claire Jones - Cheshire Community Action (CCA) and PCSO Jake Connolly

Part 1 – business transacted in the presence of the press and public

16.26 APOLOGIES AND RESIGNATION

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillors Ryan Cash, Martin Dickinson, Neil Hughes and Nicola Stubbs. The Parish Council had received a letter of resignation from Councillor Barbara Sweeney which was noted and accepted. The vacancy would be advertised in the usual way.

16.27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ackroyd declared an interest in Minute 16.33 as the planning application 16/00626/OUT related to land adjacent to the Church Hall. However, as the interest was not prejudicial she remained in the meeting.

16.28 ELTON LIBRARY CONSULTATION

Cheshire West and Chester Library Services were undertaking a review of library provision in Elton. The consultation started on 8 February and would close on Monday 4 April. Rachel Foster, Libraries Manager, CWaC attended the meeting and reported that the consultation had been distributed widely and that 60 responses had been received to date. It was clear from the responses that people used other libraries in the area, especially Ellesmere Port, Helsby and Frodsham because they were able to offer more facilities. A mobile library would be acceptable and suggestions were made as to whether it should stop. Rachel agreed to attend a Parish Council meeting after the consultation had closed and the results were available, probably in May. The Chairman thanked her for her attendance at the meeting.

16.29 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

In accordance with the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 it was RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Part 2 – business transacted in the absence of the press and public

16.30 ELTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Parish Council welcomed Claire Jones, Cheshire Community Action (CCA) to the meeting. A discussion followed. It was noted that the Annual General Meeting was to take place on Monday 18 April and a further discussion would be welcomed following that meeting.

Claire Jones left the meeting and it was RESOLVED to move back into Part 1

Part 1 – business transacted in the presence of the press and public

16.31 OPEN FORUM

Councillor Smith was invited to present a report to the meeting on the work he had been doing on behalf of the parish. He reminded the Parish Council that he was not a parish councillor and that he should be treated as a member of the public.

Councillor Smith reported that Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC) had increased Council Tax by 1.99% plus the additional 2% levy for Adult Social Care. This was to help meet the £50m of cuts that would be required over the next four years. The Members' budgets had been reduced from £10K to £5K and the New Homes Bonus

would no longer be passed down to Parish Councils. A Social Inequality Fund was being established and it was noted that the Elton ward was one of the most deprived in the Borough. On a personal note, Councillor Smith reported that he had been made Deputy Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Charter Trustees for Chester would, in future, precept just the Chester wards to pay for the Lord Mayor, the Deputy Lord Mayor, the Sheriff and associated costs. At present these costs were met by the whole of the Borough, which was considered to be unfair as Ellesmere Port Charter Trustees levied a small sum from their residents to cover civic affairs.

Sarah Dobbins had been promoted to the post of Senior Manager for Rural Localities and her former post had been taken on by Sharon Marshall. Sharon was formerly a Community Warden. A Ward Walk had been arranged for the four Elton parishes (Elton, Ince, Thornton-le-Moors and Little Stanney & District) on 4 April. It would not be possible to get to every part of the ward, but as much as possible would be covered, especially where issues had been identified. All Councillors were welcome and encouraged to attend. The start time and venue would be announced nearer the time. Justin Madders MP would attend a roaming street surgery in Orchard Park in the evening.

It was noted that Elton would be in the first tranche to get a 20mph speed limit outside the school. The 20mph zone would only go as far as the junction with Parkland Drive but the good news was that there would be no cost to the local community. Work on the zebra crossing on School Lane, which should have been done during the half term holiday in February, would definitely start on 4 April. There were concerns about the condition of Ash Road and Parkland Drive. Some work had been done badly and, although repairs had been carried out on Parkland Drive, Ash Road remained untouched. The whole road had been included in the 2016/17 programme for resurfacing. Councillor Smith had spent a whole day looking at where existing road painting needed upgrading. United Utilities had been asked to reinstate the road properly on the A5117. The 40mph speed limit on Station Road between Elton and Ince was out to consultation with residents. A traffic regulation order was proposed to stop HGVs using Orchard Park Lane and Ince as a rat run. Councillor Mills would raise the issue at the next Encirc meeting. It was noted that there was an abandoned vehicle in Mulberry Close and that the Police had put a 7-day notice on it. The Street Soccer had been a very good event with around 20 children attending. It was noted that the Youth Club had been re-launched in the Church Hall and that they hoped to build some links with the primary school.

Fly tipping was a problem at the shops where people were leaving household waste to be collected when the public bins were emptied. People would be asked to report any such fly tipping, particularly any ordinary waste in black bags. Some new bins with lids were to be requested. These would take both ordinary and dog waste. Pogle's wood had been cleaned up as part of the 'Clean for the Queen' initiative and the Parish Council would now take responsibility for keeping it cleared.

And finally it was noted that Steve Robinson, CEO of CWaC, would be retiring in June.

16.32 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2016 were confirmed as a correct record.

16.33 PLANNING

- (1) **Applications:** Councillor Ackroyd declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in the following application as it was on land adjacent to the Church Hall.
16/00626/OUT - 8 or 9 dwellings including demolition of existing house and garage (Outline) on land at The Willows, Ince Lane, Elton, Chester, Cheshire CH2 4QB.
- (2) **Decisions:** None
- (3) **CWaC Planning Consultations:** Under the current system Local Councils were notified by email and a full set of paper documents, including plans, was sent for every application. This amounted to around 2,800 applications every year. CWaC currently did not make any decision until after 21 days following the

notification and if a Local Council requested more time this was granted on a case-by-case basis as long as it did not delay the application, which would be unfair on the applicant. The Local Planning Authority was required by law only to notify Local Councils of applications and to allow 21 days for them to respond. There was no legal responsibility to consult, this was a local arrangement between CWaC and Local Councils. Notification did not always require a paper copy of the application to be sent – often there was very little paperwork and what there was could be easily accessed on the internet.

CWaC were now proposing to do things a little differently. Their new proposed offer was:

- Continue to notify by email and allow 21 days for a response
- Continue to allow more time for a response on a case-by-case basis, subject to sound justification (e.g. an initial appraisal of the development has identified specific material planning considerations requiring further discussion). Additional time would not be granted for simple applications such as conservatories if the only reason for requesting more time was to fit in with the Parish Council's meetings programme. Local Councils would have to make alternative arrangements to ensure that they were able to respond to applications, if they so wished (not every application required a response).
- A conversation would be held with Local Councils about their requirements with regard to paper plans.

The proposed new arrangements were noted and the conversation was awaited.

16.34 HIGHWAYS AND PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

- (1) **Parking outside Elton Primary School:** The Chairman had spoken to Cheshire Fire and Rescue, the Police and the Scouts about a proposal to move the gate and put in some concrete bollards in Scout Hut Lane to prevent illegal parking. A quotation had been received from A J Eardley of £675 and it was resolved to accept this. CWaC would be asked for double yellow lines where appropriate.
- (2) **Zebra Crossing:** Following a number of delays this would now be done starting on 4 April (see Councillor Smith's report earlier).

16.35 COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SURVEY

Transport for many people across the Borough remained a major issue. For many people accessing essential services was a difficult task. Cheshire Community Action were carrying out a Cheshire wide survey related to community transport. The link to the survey was <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/communitytransport2016> and Councillors were encouraged to complete it.

16.36 LITTER IN COMMUNITY CENTRE CAR PARK

The Parish Council's attention had been drawn to a problem with litter from the community centre car park being blown into the preschool and reception children's (age 2-4) outdoor play area through gaps in the fence. This could be discarded food wrappers, cans, cigarette boxes, plastic bottles etc but, during a recent daily check, the School caretaker had found a needle in a MacDonald's food bag. This had safety implications for both the caretaker and other users of the car park. The police had been notified and had been asked to increase patrols in the area. Rubbish was removed primarily because it was a safety issue for the children but the Parish Council was unable to suggest any ways of monitoring the situation.

16.37 ACTIVE CHESHIRE

It was noted that Active Cheshire had launched a 'Movers & Shakers' fund, to support town/parish councils, community groups, schools and businesses in encouraging people to be more active. Grants of up to £500 would be available to any group/organisation who organised a community gathering of more than 100 people within the boundary of Cheshire and Warrington. Existing events (festivals, fetes etc.)

are eligible. Funding would be allocated to more than 25 events across Cheshire and Warrington. The panel would meet on 20 March to decide on successful applicants.

16.38 UPDATE REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

- (1) **Police Update:** PCSO Jake Connolly reported several issues of ASB involving a group of some 6-8 youths and that a mini digger had been stolen within the village.
- (2) **Community Centre:** Councillor Lockhart would attend the Committee meeting on 21 March.
- (3) **Play Area / Parish Field / Jubilee Field:** Section 106 money was available for projects in the parish and the Chairman raised the possibility of using some of this and putting it together with an application for a WREN grant and contributions from other agencies to undertake a project to create an outdoor playing pitch on the Parish Field.
- (4) **Shops:** The owner of the shops said he was unaware of the mess at the rear of the parade and that he would get something done about it.
- (5) **Encirc / Essar / CF Fertilisers:** Councillors Lockhart and Mills had attended the Essar meeting. It was noted that the company had been fined £½m in relation to two incidents, one involving waste being tipped into the canal and the other an oil spill.
- (6) **Protos:** Requests had been received for funding from the Community Benefit Fund. Some more information had been requested, but it was hoped to make the first awards in the near future.
- (7) **Frodsham Wind Farm:** The scheme was progressing rapidly and it was noted that the first windmill would be erected in the near future.
- (8) **Thornton Science Park:** Nothing to report.
- (9) **Allotments:** Nothing to report.
- (10) **Website / Social Media:** All emails into the parish council's general email address were complaining about the quality of the roads, mainly the entrance to Ash Road. When the road was flooded, it was impossible to see the deep holes, which could be very dangerous. Councillor Lockhart would speak to Councillor Hughes about responding to complaints.
- (11) **Parish Council and Police Surgeries:** The majority of queries and complaints were about potholes. The majority of repairs were "quick fix" and the filler was coming out of them as fast as it was put in. Councillor Lockhart reported that Councillor Sam Dixon, Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council, had agreed to attend one of the Parish Council's surgeries.

16.39 CORRESPONDENCE

Publications: Clerks and Councils Direct – March 2016

16.40 FINANCE

- (1) **Payments:** The following payments were approved

Cheque		Total
S/O	Staffing Costs	985.48
BACS	Andrew Grigg - Mow Allotment footpaths	30.00
64	A J Law - Hedgecutting @ Allotments	144.00
65	SLCC - Practitioners Conference Fee	273.20
66	SLCC - Additional Accommodation	128.00
67	SLCC - Book-The Charity Officers Handbook	14.96
S/O	Igoe - Monthly website hosting fee	6.99
BACS	Parish Clerk - Expenses	29.53
BACS	Igoe - Web Updates	30.00
68	Morris & Co - Payroll Admin	93.60

69	1st Ince & Elton Scouts - Newsletter delivery	100.00
70	Cllr Wilson - Travel & subsistence-Conference	190.25

(2) **Receipts:** The following receipt was noted

Helsby and Elton Group Practice - Rent	40.00
Gardeners' Association – Plot rents	8.00#['

(3) **Balance:** The balance in the bank at 14 March 2016 was £39,705.59

16.41 ISSUES RAISED BY COUNCILLORS

Councillor Cash was currently finalising the Newsletter but had encountered some problems relating to the number of words per item, the approval process prior to the Newsletter going to print and the format to be used which had taken up a lot of his time. He would draw up a set of instructions for future editions.

16.42 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Annual Parish Assembly - Monday 11 April 2016 at 7.00pm at Elton Community Centre to be followed by Parish Council Meeting.