

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 2nd MARCH 2025 AT 5.15PM AT HUXLEY VILLAGE HALL

In Attendance: Cllr R Bird

Cllr F Halton

Cllr R Jones

Cllr S Martin

Cllr C Nicholls

Cllr M Pilkington

Cllr M Roscoe

Cllr S Ratledge

Cllr L Sackett (Chairman)

Members of the Public: 2

APOLOGIES: No apologies were received.

DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS - None were received.

PUBLIC SESSION – A resident raised concern about the condition of the footpath and stiles along the Eddisbury public right of way through Huxley and also the stile that drops immediately onto the road off the road verge by the Glamping Site. His concern is that there are a lot of children undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh Award who could be in danger as they descend the stile directly onto the road if a vehicle was driving along. The Chairman thanked the resident for bringing this to the Council's attention and would report to PROW Officer.

It was reported that the Parish Council are working with and Cheshire West and Chester Public Rights of Way Officer to identify routes between Huxley and Hargrave that could become stile less, however it was Cheshire West and Chester Council's priority to only replace stiles that were in disrepair, and it was the landowners responsibility to install them.

ACTION: The Parish Council undertook to raise with PROW Officer the stile by the Glamping Site and any further stiles requiring attention along the Eddisbury Way.

One resident left the meeting.

MINUTES

RESOLVED 24/050 that the Chairman signs, as a true and correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 5th January 2025 proposed by Cllr Ratledge and seconded by Cllr Martin.

ACTIONS

Actions not otherwise on the agenda that had been completed:-

- Clerk contacted PCSO and arrange a meeting – reported later on the Agenda.
- Clerk circulated the residents voice survey
- Clerk sought update from PCSO in relation to the break-in at Huxley in 2024.
- Clerk had organised a meeting with the PROW Officer for 13th March at 10am in Huxley.
- Clerk raised hedge on Long Lane with Highways.
- Clerk reported burnt-out vehicle on bridge in Hatton to PCSO and it was confirmed that it would be removed.
- Cllr Bird sent over photographs of flooding on Martin's Lane/Guy Lane to Clerk
- Clerk raised with Highways who confirmed the flooding was not affecting houses, it was not a priority.
- Cllr Sackett spoke to Headteacher of Huxley Primary School about the speeding on Church Lane, Headteacher attended meeting with PCSO.
- Clerk spoke to Highways about unadopted lay-by opposite Primary School – Highways confirmed that they would meet with the Parish Council in June on site to review this area.

- Clerk emailed Empty Homes Department of CWaC for update and circulated it around the Parish Council.
- Huxley Parish Council's rota for managing SID had been agreed.
- Clerk set up a meeting with Cllr Sackett on 26th February to meet the Traffic Management Officer of the Police Force to look at additional sites for the SID.
- Cllr Nicholls circulated a summary of the response to the Cheshire West and Chester Design Code – Vision Engagement consultation.
- Clerk reported Rural Shop at The Inn at Huxley to Planning Enforcement as it has now closed.
- Clerk submitted the Precept Request
- Clerk submitted the Churchyard Grant Application
- Clerk sought clarification on the Guide to Procurement Act 2023 and how it would affect smaller Parish Council's.
- Cllr Nicholls had tried to contact the administrator for the Facebook Account to see if she would be allowed to become an administrator so that the Parish Council information could be linked to the Facebook site and had been unsuccessful at this time and it was therefore agreed to remove this from the action list.
- Advice on Defibrillators and how much a village should have and the life expectancy – Cllr Pilkington and Cllr Roscoe

Actions not otherwise on the agenda still outstanding:-

- Cllr Nicholls has the plaque available to fix when the Beacon has been relocated.
- Cllr Pilkington to identify stiles that could be replaced in the area.
- Cllr Pilkington to continue mapping the locations of stiles
- Cllr Pilkington undertakes to identify landowners and make contact.
- All Councillors to take pictures of any stiles in the area when they are out walking so they can log them all and their condition.

BUSINESS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Public Right of Ways – it was reported that a meeting had been arranged for 13th March with the Public Rights of Way Officer of CWaC in Huxley.

Cllr Pilkington reported that CWaC had replaced bridges on FP3 and FP11. There was still some outstanding work needed on FP3, which would be brought to the attention of the PROW Officer on 13th March, and a question was raised as to if the stiles near Gatesheath could be replaced.

Community Litter Picking – it was reported that the Community Litter Picking Event in conjunction with Happy Days for Hargrave and Huxley had been organised for Saturday 8th March, at 9am meeting at the village halls in both Huxley and Hargrave.

Highways – It was reported that the yellow lines needed re-painting by the Primary School, clerk to report (HW692281331).

Cllr Bird confirmed that he and a number of residents of Guy Lane have reported the poor road condition of Guy Lane.

Cllr Ratledge reported that the Parish Council had recently met with the PCSO outside Huxley Primary School to find out how she could help with speeding vehicles, the PCSO has confirmed that they are not able to enforce the 20mph as they follow guidance at Cheshire Constabulary. The PCSO confirmed that she would try to show more presence in a police marked car in the area.

The Parish Council sought clarification on why there was no 20mph enforcement and emails were sent out to PCC, Ward Councillor and MP who then raised the issue with The Chief Constable. The Chairman met with The

Traffic Management Officer from Cheshire Constabulary on 26th February and he later confirmed by email the exact guidance regarding 20mph enforcement. It states that such limits should be self-enforcing by appropriate landscaping, engineering and signage marking. Given that the Cheshire West and Chester Council had recently added dragons' teeth and roundels to the road to highlight the change of speed limit the Parish Council wondered what else needed to be done to highlight that it was a 20mph area

The Parish Council raised a question as to what could be done by Cheshire West and Chester Council to make the road look like a 20mph to allow the Police to enforce within the area. It was therefore suggested that the meeting with the Cheshire West and Chester Highways Engineer that was going to be scheduled for the summer should include the local MP, Ward Council, Headmistress of the Primary School and the Estate Manager for the CDAT and PCSO to try to get a multi-organisational buy-in to improve and monitor the speed drivers travel by the Primary School.

ACTION: Clerk to arrange meeting with Highways Engineer, MP, Ward Councillor, Headmistress, Estates Manager of CDAT & PCSO.

Speeding in Huxley – Cllr Ratledge reported that the SID data had revealed in January that 97% drivers were traveling over 20mph along Church Road, however there was a definite reduction in speed by approximately 10m/h from when drivers enter the SID initial caption area to the actual SID monitor.

The SID is currently monitoring a total of 50 metres away, however it is possible to monitor up to 200 metres. Therefore, Cllr Ratledge is working with the manufacturer to improve this, and they have recommended installing a longer pole, which Cllr Ratledge has requested be demonstrated to the Parish Council prior to the Parish Council committing to funding the replacement pole.

Cllr Sackett reported that a local resident reported that they were unhappy with the reflection of the SID and the Parish Council suggested that they explore the cost of installing a cowl to reduce the reflection.

ACTION: Clerk to explore the installation of a cowl on the SID to reduce the flashing light being reflected into the houses.

Allotments in Hargrave and Huxley – The Clerk reported following a conversation with CWaC that the Allotment Act states that it is the 'most local' council's responsibility to provide allotments within an area. Therefore, within Hargrave and Huxley that would be our Parish Council not Cheshire West. If 6 residents, ask for an allotment then it is the Parish council's duty to consider providing one and they can compulsorily purchase land to enable this.

Also, Chester West and Chester Council would not be interested in managing an allotment in Hargrave/Huxley as it is too far out for them, the Park Development Officer had looked and currently there is no-one on the waiting list for a Chester West allotment that comes from our parish. He suggests that to gauge demand in our area we may wish to ask our neighbouring parish councils if they have allotments and if they have anyone from our parish that utilise their allotments. He also stated that CWaC are working to reduce the waiting time for an allotment, currently it is 12 months, and they are looking to expand the allotments they have in Handbridge to reduce this further - so there may not be the demand for an allotment for Cheshire West residents outside of our parish boundaries.

It was agreed to close this subject at this time and the Parish Council had not received any enquiries for the provision of allotments.

Cllr Bird left the meeting.



Empty Homes Update – following the previous correspondence, this issue had been chased with the Empty Homes Office of Cheshire West and Chester Council, but no update had been received.

ACTION: Clerk to continue to chase with Empty Homes Department, CWaC.

Cllr Nicholls left the meeting.

Other Correspondence

Devolution of powers to Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington. Cllr Sackett highlighted to Parish Councillors that it had been confirmed that the Devolution would be taking place which could mean more decisions made locally, local leaders making key decisions about the local area and what matter most to residents, communities and businesses. There will be future consultations.

She highlighted that the Parish Council needed to carefully monitor this and understand the implications for Parish Councils in the future.

PLANNING

The Planning Register dated 19/02/2025 was accepted and changes to the planning register from last meeting were noted.

It was noted that the following application had been decided by the principle authority since the last meeting:-

- 24/03379/LDC - Long Acre, Mill Lane, Huxley, Chester CH3 7RQ – Lawful development certificate to establish a proposed erection of single storey side extension and front porch – *approved*.

It was noted that the following consultation had been undertaken since the last meeting:-

- 24/03261/FUL – Land at Guy Lane, Foulk Stapleford, Chester – Change of use of land for dog walking/training, hardstanding for parking with turning area and new access - the Parish Council had *no objections* to this application.
- 24/03726/FUL - Hargrave Hall - Erection of a storage building and construction of manege – *no objections* but observe that a condition be in place for personal use only and no external lighting and that the height of the shed seems to be excessive for a storage shed.

It was reported that the Parish Council had reported the following Planning Enforcement issues:-

- EN676019987 - the Rural Shop building at The Inn at Huxley following it being closed for over 3 months – within the planning application the building should be demolished within three months and the land restored within one month of the demolition.
- EN687229270 – The Beeches, Huxley Lane, CH3 9BG – change of footprint to Brick Built Stable Block.

FINANCIAL ITEMS

Cashbook and Out-turn Forecast YTD

RESOLVED 24/051 Year to date cashbook and out-turn report dated 19/02/2025 was approved as a true and correct record.

Bank Reconciliation against Cashbook YTD – **RESOLVED 24/052** – that Cllr Jones signed the Bank Reconciliation and Bank Statements.

Insurance Renewal

The Clerk reported she had requested quotes from the following companies, following the Parish Council now finishing their three year tie in with Gallaghers Insurance:-

Zurich Insurance Quote - £304

Clear Councils Quote – awaiting quote.

Gallaghers - £462.86

It was RESOLVED 24/053 to approve the Parish Council proceed with renewing insurance through Zurich Insurance subject to the Clear Council quote not being significantly lower.

VAT Rebate Application - RESOLVED 24/054 to submit the VAT Rebate Application for 2024-25 of £783.50 in March to allow for payment to be reviewed within the same financial year.

Payroll Provider for 2025-26 - RESOLVED 24/055 that Shires Accountants continue to undertake to provide payroll services for the Parish Council for 2025-26.

Payments by Direct Debit – RESOLVED 24/056 to continue paying the ICO subscription by Direct Debit and this be the only Direct Debit paid by the Parish Council.

Payments for approval:-

Income received since the last meeting for approval

Date	Payable to	Gross Amount	Comment
09/01/2025	Bank Interest	£23.73	Bank Interest
09/02/2025	Bank Interest	£24.36	Bank Interest

Payments made since the last meeting for approval

Date	Payable to	Net Amount	VAT	Gross Amount	Comment
14-01-2025	Hargrave Parochial Church	£28.00	£0.00	£28.00	Hall Hire
23-01-2025	Linux Internet Ltd	£47.88	£9.58	£57.46	12 Month Cloud Hosting Package
23-01-2025	PQR Limited	£15.00	£3.00	£18.00	Payroll Services – Backpay Calculation
25-01-2025	Mrs T Ryall-Harvey	£347.01	£0.00	£347.01	Salary Tax month 11

Payments not yet made for approval

Payable to	Net Amount	VAT	Gross Amount	Comment
Mrs T Ryall-Harvey	£347.01	£0.00	£347.01	Salary Tax Month 12
Mrs T Ryall-Harvey	£99.69	£13.96	£113.65	Expenses
Broxton Barn Owl Group	£100.00	£0.00	£100.00	Donation

RESOLVED 24/057 to accept the income and payments list above since the last meeting for approval.

PARISH COUNCIL MATTERS

RESOLVED 24/058 that the Risk Management Policy and Risk Assessment that were circulated prior to the meeting and reviewed be approved in preparation for the Internal Audit, subject to the wording on the Risk Management Policy item 6.6 be amended from Financial and Administration Committee to Parish Council. Proposed - Cllr Ratledge, seconded by Cllr Halton.

Asset Register for 2025 RESOLVED 24/057 that the Asset Register be approved as circulated prior to the meeting. This was unanimously approved. Proposed - Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Halton.

Internal Auditor

RESOLVED 24/058 to instruct Mr Phil Sanders to undertake the Internal Auditor for 2024-25.

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

CIL Money - The notes of the Working Group meeting held on 9th February were circulated around the Parish Council.

It was also reported, in regard to the defibrillator that Cllr Pilkington had received confirmation that the lifetime of a defibrillator is normally around 10 years. Therefore, it was *recommended* that a rolling budget be put in place to replace batteries every four years, pads every two years and the defibrillator every 10 years.

Neighbourhood Plan Review – It was reported that Cllr Jones, Cllr Nicholls and Cllr Sackett had completed an online questionnaire that goes towards the new local plan.

Cllr Ratledge highlighted concern about the possible use of farmland for solar farms and suggested that this needed to be reviewed and a possible amendment in our neighbourhood plan in the future depending on what CWaC implements in their Local Plan.

Cllr Jones raised concern about potential barn conversions and the pressure on services this could create, he felt it could be worth considering a policy, in the future, on how CIL money should be spent on community services.

Cllr Ratledge also highlighted that given the Primary School was reported to be oversubscribed, they may look to increase the number of pupils that they are allowed in one intake which could create further possible traffic pressures in the future.

DOWN OUR WAY – items for inclusion in the next issues of Down Our Way was sought.

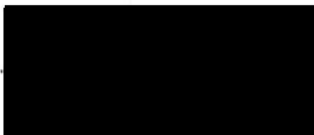
- Parish Meeting article.
- Date of next Parish Council Meeting.

It was noted that the deadline for include items in the next edition of Down our Way was 20th March 2025.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be the Parish Council Meeting and will take place on Sunday 4th May 2025 at 5.00pm in Hargrave Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 18:52

Signed:..........

Dated:.....04/05/25.....