

## **MERE PARISH COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON**

**MONDAY 7<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER, 2020, at 7:45PM**

#### **VIRTUAL MEETING**

1 **PRESENT**

*Cllr R Finch, Cllr A Newnes, Cllr D Norcott, Cllr L Reynolds, Cllr P Sands, Cllr D Walker and Cllr J Wright, Cllr K Parkinson (Cheshire East Council)*

2 **APOLOGIES**

*Cllr J Duncalf*

3 **MINUTES**

*The minutes of the Mere Parish Council meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> October were **proposed** by Cllr Newnes and **seconded** by Cllr Reynolds. **All agreed.***

4 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

*Cllr Norcott declared an interest with regards to **HS2**.  
Cllr Wright declared an interest with **regards HS2**.*

5 **MATTERS ARISING**

*It was agreed that all matters arising from the previous meetings minutes are covered under the agenda headings.*

6 **POLICE REPORT**

*PC Lawrence Price was not available to attend this meeting as he is not on shift. The Clerk requested a report but has not received one.*

*Regarding Mere Parish Council's offer to trial a 20mph speed limit area, nothing has been heard. Therefore the Clerk has e-mailed the Police Crime Commissioner again and we are waiting a response.*

*Cllr Walker reported that the high vis vests, speed camera and training she was to speak with PCSO Emma Darroch has now been postponed until January 2021.*

7 **B5569**

*Laura Nelson has successfully secured a Community Litter Pick along the B5569 and the A50. This will take place on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December.*

*An e-mail has been sent to Simon Skates (Cheshire East Council) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November followed by a reminder on the 27<sup>th</sup> November asking for a response to our questions. No reply.*

**Action: Kathryn J Whitlow (Clerk)**

*Cllr Newnes commented that some items which we have previously brought to Simon Skates attention have now been done. However, there are many still outstanding.*

*Cllr Parkinson stated that she will follow this issue of no response up with Simon Skates.*

8 **HOLLOW WOOD FARM FOOT BRIDGE –OVER THE M6**

*A reply has been received to our enquiry from Paul Hupton, Senior Structures Engineer, Highways England dated the 30<sup>th</sup> November. It states that until the final alignment of HS2 is confirmed it is not known if the bridge will be built or as to its exact location. Once the Options Report is available Paul Hupton will share this with us.*

*Cllr Norcott pointed out that when the bridge was damaged by the Sainsbury's lorry more than 10 years ago the issue of HS2 alignment did not exist and so feel it unfair to regard this as an excuse not to have repaired the bridge. Clerk to convey the councils' feelings to Paul Upton.*

**Action: Kathryn J Whitlow (Clerk).**

9 **MANCHESTER AIRPORT**

*Cllr Walker stated that there is nothing to report due to the meeting she was due to attend having been cancelled.*

10 **HS2**

*Cllr Newnes asked how long before we need to start warning residents about increased road activity as a result of the proposed compound site at the M56 J6 and J7? Cllr Norcott suggested we invite John Atkinson to attend our January meeting and ask him to give an update. All agreed.*

**Action: Kathryn J Whitlow (Clerk)**

11 **FENCING AT THE END OF THE MERE**

*Cllr Norcott to contact the councillors with a date to meet up and tidy the area in the New Year.*

**Action: Cllr David Norcott.**

12 **COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE REMEMBERING A COUNCILLOR**

*The plaque has now been mounted onto a stone and placed in front of the Cherry tree in remembrance of Cllr GW Wright. Everyone commented upon how good it looks.*

13 **MERE PARISH COUNCIL WEB SITE**

*The website accessibility statement is now displayed on our website.*

*The Clerk is still working through the old versions of the minutes converting them to accessible copies.*

14 **MERE GOLF RESORT AND SPAR – MATRIX SIGN**

*We have received an e-mail dated the 22<sup>nd</sup> October from Derek Ward, Cheshire East Council, stating he has visited the site of the matrix sign and he confirms, yes it is an unauthorised sign on highway land. He has now passed the matter onto Lee Glover, Cheshire East Council Highways to deal with it.*

*A second e-mail dated 30<sup>th</sup> November has been received from Derek Ward stating he has noticed the matrix sign is still there!*

*Mere Parish Council wrote to the General Manager at The Mere Golf Resort and Spa and a response received dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November stating that the sign will be taken down and the grass manicured to keep it looking good. The banner is also to be taken down however, he states that he plans to encourage key workers to stay at The Mere and will let people know via a different message.*

*Mr Johnson does clarify that this is all short term.*

*On the 5<sup>th</sup> December the Clerk received an e-mail from Kay Coleman Graves (Mere resident) voicing her concerns about the matrix sign and asking why Mere Parish Council has not done anything about it?*

*It was agreed that the Clerk will reply to Kay Coleman Graves stating that the issue has been raised with Cheshire East Council and the matter rests with them now.*

**Action: Kathryn J Whitlow (Clerk)**

15 **MEADOW LODGE**

*The Clerk e-mailed Peter Hooley at Cheshire East Council on the 28<sup>th</sup> November asking if Cheshire East Council have had time to review the expediency and content of any subsequent enforcement action yet? He replied on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December stating the process has not yet taken place. Also an appeal has since been logged against the council's decision on the planning application. He implies this may all take time.*

*This item to be carried over to the January Mere Parish Council meeting.*

16 **M56, J6-8 SMART MOTORWAY**

*Mere Parish Council received an e-mail from Laura Nelson stating that Jon, Jamie and herself are now joining with the M56 Junction 6-8 Motorway Upgrade Team to offer a joint parish council forum with Knutsford, High Legh, Rostherne, Lymm, Mobberley and ourselves. A meeting took place today and Cllr Finch represented Mere Parish Council. Cllr Finch reported that nothing was said at the meeting that had not already been said before. The work is due to be finished March 2022.*

*Cllr Norcott commented that we need to keep an eye on local traffic activity as it is feared local roads may be used as alternative routes to avoid the holds up at Junction 6-8 when work is being carried out.*

*Cllr Parkinson pointed out that the main contact person, to note for future correspondence, is Khaleda Chowdhury.*

17 **M6 JUNCTION 19 AND 20 CARRIAGEWAY REPAIRS UPGRADE**

*Cllr Parkinson has forwarded an e-mail from Khaleda Chowdhury, Communications Manager, Regional Communications Team, Highways England stating that due to recent weather conditions and also a much higher flow than expected of traffic the carriageway repairs have not progressed as well as planned. They are programming the remainder of the work around other projects taking place in the area to ensure minimal disruption to motorists. No work will be undertaken during the first week in December, to accommodate the additional traffic expected for the Black Friday sales. Also the work will be put on hold during the Christmas period (20<sup>th</sup> December to 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021) before restarting in the New Year.*

*As a result the overall programme has been extended and they now aim to have repairs finished by the end of January 2021.*

18 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS DETAILS**

*There has been one new planning application and two decision notices received since the last Mere Parish Council meeting. The details are in the Planning Book.*

19 **RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICERS REPORT**

- i. **The total in the cheque account** at the beginning of the meeting is **£4424.12** of which £170.43 belongs to the Archive Fund.
- ii. **Cheque Signatures** – The mandate form has now been completed by Cllr Wright, Cllr Walker and the Clerk. It will be forwarded to Matt Lewis at Barclays who will oversee that it reaches the correct department within Barclays.
- iii. The Clerk attended a **Budget training session** on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November arranged by Cheshire Association Of Local Councils. We are waiting the invoice.

20 **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT**

- i. **Remembrance Day Wreath** – A donation has been given to The Royal British Legion for the sum of £020.00  
This has already been paid by the Clerk who is to be paid back this evening.  
Cheque made payable to “Kathryn J Whitlow”  
Cheque No: 100824
- ii. A new **Union Jack flag** has been bought from Hampshire Flag Company. £125.33  
The Clerk has already paid therefore a cheque made payable to “Kathryn J Whitlow”  
Cheque No: 100825
- iii. **Zoom** – The Clerk purchased the Standard Pro-Annual package for service period 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021. £143.88  
Cheque made payable to “Kathryn J Whitlow”  
Cheque No: 100826
- iv. **Shires Pay Service Limited** – Payroll service costs for the third quarter, GDPR software and cheque fee. £041.40  
Cheque made payable to “Shires Pay Services Limited”  
Cheque No: 100827
- v. Invoice from **Cheshire Association Of Local Councils** for the **Planning Course** attended by Cllr Reynolds. The fee should have been £30 but as we have a £10 credit note this reduces the cost to £020.00  
Cheque made payable to “Cheshire Association Of Local Councils”  
Cheque No: 100828

Cllr Walker **proposed** that the above invoices be paid. **Seconded** by Cllr Newnes. **All agreed.**

21 **BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR 2021-2022**

Everyone had been sent a copy of the budget prior to this meeting. See below:

## **MERE PARISH COUNCIL - BUDGET FOR 2021/22** **PRECEPT**

Precept is paid in two parts, half in April and half in September

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>COST IN PREVIOUS</u>	<u>BUDGET FOR FINANCE YEAR</u>
	<u>FINANCE YEAR</u>	<u>April 2021 - APRIL 2022</u>
Clerk	£3,410.00	£3,500.00
HMRC	£124.00	£130.00
Clerk Expenses	£502.00	£510.00
Insurance cover	£361.00	£370.00
External/Internal Audits	£221.00	£225.00
Parish Maintenance	£1,400.00	£1,500.00
Tabley Church	£116.00	£120.00
Wreaths	£20.00	£20.00
Seminars training	£30.00	£70.00
CHALC Subs	£192.00	£195.00
Website	£770.00	£380.00
Zoom	£150.00	£150.00
Pay Roll	£189.00	£210.00
<b>TOTAL REQUIRED</b>	<b>£7,485.00</b>	<b>£7,380.00</b>
		<b>2021-2022</b>
<b>PRECEPT as it is</b>		<b>8000.00</b>
<b>ESTIMATED IN BANK 31st March 2021</b>		<b>£1607.51</b>
<b>VAT TO CLAIM BACK in 2021</b>		<b>£335.00</b>
<b>TOTAL FOR YEAR</b>		<b>£9942.51</b>
<b>PROPOSE PRECEPT</b>		<b>£9,000.00</b>

### **NOTES**

The Clerk made the following comments:

- After the cheques have been paid this evening there will be £4073.51 in the account.
- Payments to be made between now and March 2021 are estimated as follows:
 

Clerk	£0700.00
HMRC	£0250.00
A Blackburn (Tabley Church)	£0116.00
D Fenton (Parish Maintenance)	£1400.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2466.00</b>
- Once the figure of £2466.00 has been paid it will leave £1607.51 in the account by the end of March 2021.
- One of the reasons the figure is so low is we had the unexpected cost of ensuring that the website was accessible (£410), purchased a new flag (£125.33) and Zoom (£143.88).
- The Responsible Financial Officer suggests that the council ask for at least a £9000 precept. This will give us an increase of £1000 to ensure we have money to cover any extra costs we may incur next year.
- However, if there is any project that the council wishes to finance next year then now is the time to discuss and agree before agreeing a precept figure.

Cllr Finch **proposed** that the precept be increased to £9000. **Seconded** by Cllr Reynolds. **All agreed.**  
**Action: Kathryn J Whitlow (Clerk)**

22 **RISK ASSESSMENT**

*The Clerk has added an item to the risk assessment which refers to holding council meetings during lockdown. Otherwise the risk assessment is the same.*

*Cllr Finch **proposed** that the risk assessment be agreed and signed. **Seconded** by Cllr Wright. **All agreed.***

23 **STANDING ORDERS**

*The Standing Orders for Mere Parish Council are very brief. Therefore the Clerk has produced a more detailed 9 page Standing Orders.*

*Cllr Newns **proposed** they be accepted by the council. Cllr Norcott **seconded**. All agreed.*

24 **NEW BUSINESS**

- i. ***Revocation of Air Quality Management Areas*** – E-mail received from Sarah Attwood, Senior Environmental Health Officer, Cheshire East Council stating Cheshire East Council is proposing to revoke seven Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) across the borough. The reason for this is levels of nitrogen dioxide have been consistently below the national objective. Of the seven one is within Mere and another in a neighbouring town.

- A556 Chester Road, Mere
- A50 Manchester Road, Mere

*The Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has recommended that the council revoke the AQMAs and so the council is seeking Mere Parish Council's views as to whether we agree.*

*Cllr Reynolds **proposed** yes, Mere Parish Council agrees to revoke the AQMA in Mere. **Seconded** by Cllr Walker. All agreed.*

**Action: Kathryn J Whitlow (Clerk)**

- ii. ***Cheshire East Council Launches Consultation On Transport and Parking*** – An e-mail from Cheshire East Council stating it has launched a public consultation on transport and parking. It began on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November and ends on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021. The results of the exercise will inform the future direction of how to improve transport, walking and cycling in our towns. It will also inform proposals, which would be subject to further consultation regarding charges to parking provision and potential charges to car parking charges in the borough.

*Cllr Walker suggested a few of Mere Parish Councillors read through the consultation papers and then report back at the next Mere Parish Council meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021.*

**It was agreed** that Cllr Finch, Cllr Newnes, Cllr Reynolds and Cllr Walker will review and report at the next meeting.

**Action: Cllr Finch, Cllr Newnes, Cllr Reynolds and Cllr Walker.**

- iii. ***Derelict Properties Within Mere*** – Cllr Newnes informed the meeting that Cheshire East Council are now looking into the possibility of taking the property, known as Malber, Chester Road, Mere over.

- iv. ***Footpaths Overgrown Within Mere*** – Cllr Norcott reported trees hanging over the footpath near to the Kilton. Cllr Sands reported branches are growing over the footpath on the A50. Mere Parish Council has already written to the residents asking to trim back vegetation. Cllr Parkinson agreed to look into this. **Action: Cllr Parkinson.**

*Cllr Norcott reported that the hedge on the B5569 alongside Home Farm just as you approach the Mere traffic lights, is very overgrown. The Clerk will write to the property owner asking for the hedge to be cut back. **Action: Kathryn J Whitlow (Clerk).***

- v. ***Cheshire Community Action Launches Community Housing Hub*** – This was noted by the council.

25 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

*The next Mere Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021 starting at 7:45pm. As to whether it will be held at The Mere or will be a virtual meeting is to be decided nearer the time.*

26 **ITEMS INTRODUCED BY COUNCILLORS**

*None.*

*The Chairman wished everyone a Happy Christmas.*

*The meeting closed at approximately 9pm.*

*Signed: ..... Date: .....*