

Chetwynd Parish Council

Minutes of Chetwynd Parish Council held via Zoom on Thursday 19 November 2020 commencing at 6.00 pm

Attendees: Derrick Clancy, Eileen Dowd, Paul Humphreys, Neil Robson, Mark Stefan, Tina Street.

Also in attendance: Jane Allman (Clerk), Ms Lucinda Lycett of Telford & Wrekin Borough Council, Mr R Gormley, Resident

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Kevin Grimston who had tried to join the meeting but was unsuccessful due to a technical issue, and Terry Griffiths due to a sudden emergency. David Williams also sent his apologies.

2. T & W response re flooding

This was a new addition to the Agenda and was taken at the start of the meeting due to the fact that Ms Lycett had another meeting to attend later in the evening.

Ms Lucinda Lycett, of T&W Borough Council joined the meeting to provide an update on the flooding issues within the Parish.

DC welcomed LL to the meeting and invited her to talk about the Borough Council's response to concerns about flooding in Sambrook. She gave a detailed summary of the issues and the plans to resolve the matter and took questions from the members of the Parish Council.

LL stated that there had been repeated incidents of flooding in the village over the past year but that the Borough Council had not realised the extent of the risk until the flooding had occurred.

The Council had identified that at the location of Holly Cottage a lot of water had run off the adjacent fields which had not been taken away by the drains.

There is a small pipe under the highway which blocks easily. A local landowner had re-laid land drains in February downstream of Holly Cottage after being contacted by the Borough Council, and, after the flooding incident in August he had laid additional drains.

In terms of what the Council is planning to do, there are plans to upgrade the gully at the very lowest part of the village by Holly Cottage which will make it less prone to blockage, but that it will not resolve the problem of where the water is coming from; nor will it do very much if there is a heavy deluge.

The council has established the capacity of the drains required to hold back any runoff. It plans to engage with Mr Briggs, the landowner and with PDM, the salad grower, to

identify the various elements of highway and private drainage, but these discussions are at a very early stage.

NR asked about the quantity of mud off the fields being deposited on the road. The ditches and drains appear to be inadequate in size. LL stated that she had not seen it herself but that a resident had advised her that it blocked up very frequently.

DC asked if a time frame to resolve these matters had been set. LL said that the issue of the highway drainage should be resolved very quickly as a budget had already been allocated for this. Wider landowner engagement is required and this is part of their planning. It is extremely likely that it will be necessary to apply for additional funding. She could not say whether improvements to the highway drainage would lead to a reduction in the flood risk.

NR advised that Mr Briggs had dug another gully in his field and wanted to make sure that he has done his utmost to alleviate the problem. The residents of Holly Cottage were relieved to learn of this.

TS raised an issue about flooding near Crossways. Fields there are planted with shallow rooting crops (lettuce) and the runoff blocks the ditches leading to more flooding. Hedges and ditches are not being adequately maintained leading to erosion of the soil. The landowner leases this land to PDM. LL said that the Borough Council will discuss with PDM the best practice to manage runoff, for example the use of bunds to contain it, and there are other methods available to farmers. After all, soil is an important resource and farmers are not likely to want to lose a valuable resource.

ED stated that when hedges are cut back, the debris is left at the side of the road and when it rains, this brash is swept into the drains. LL advised that she believed that the hedges are the responsibility of the landowner and that this matter should be raised with him. However, she would make a note of this for future discussions. LL said that Sambrook had been one of the worst affected areas during the heavy rainfall in August and that the council was aware of this.

There were no further questions. DC thanked LL again for her attendance and she assure the Parish Council that she was happy to be contacted again if further updates were required.

3. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising.

It was agreed that the minutes were a true record of the meeting. Proposed by NR, seconded by PH and carried unanimously. The minutes will be signed by the Chairman when COVID restrictions allow.

4. Chairman's report

There was nothing to report.

5. Flooding in Sambrook

This had already been dealt with at the beginning of the meeting. See Minute number 2.

6. Planning

The main concerns regarding applications for the development of Standford Villa (TWC/2020/0935) and Standford Lodge (TWC/2020/0936) are centred around the issues of access to and from the properties.

There are concerns that the access onto the A41 from Standford Villa represents a major road safety hazard. The exit is very close to the turns off the A41 to Sambrook and Howle, on what is already a particularly dangerous junction. As it stands, the junction is not clearly signposted and potentially, there could be three points of danger : traffic turning in or out of Standford Villa, traffic entering or exiting the lane to Sambrook and traffic turning in to the former petrol station.

Concerns are that traffic travelling South and North on the main road may not anticipate the slowing of vehicles to enter the property or to take into account the possibility of stationery traffic while vehicles are exiting the property and turning on to the highway. Additionally, any persons entering Standford Lodge via a gated entrance will have to exit their vehicle to open the gate or to request admittance if an electrically operated gate is installed. This could potentially lead to a tail back of vehicles on the lane back towards the main road.

These issues have already been highlighted to the Borough Council and the Highways Department is looking into the matter.

It was suggested that councillors register their concerns online via the Planning Portal.

7. Finance

The Clerk presented the financial reports for the period 1 July to 31 October 2020. The only major expenditure during that period was the replacement of a further two sodium street lights with LED lamps. This brings the total of LED lights to eight, all of which are within the village of Sambrook. There are still two sodium lights in Puleston that may need to be replaced at a future date.

A list of cheques issued from 1 April to date had already been sent to Councillors in advance of the meeting.

The bank balance at the end of October stood at £3326.03. Anticipated balance at end of November is £2547.59 after payment of Clerk's salary and expenses.

The precept for 2021/2022 was discussed in depth. DC suggested that the precept be maintained at the same level as 2019/2020 i.e.£4000. NR agreed, provided that the opening balance for 2019 and 2020 were at a similar level as this would indicate that the level had been set quite accurately to allow for necessary expenditure over the year.

The proposal to maintain the precept at £4000 was seconded by NR and ED and carried unanimously. It was agreed that the necessary paperwork would be signed off at the January 2021 meeting in case there was any change in the Borough Council's financial strategy once the government's comprehensive spending review is announced on 25 November.

Note: at 1/4/2019, balance was 4753.86 and at 31/3/2020 it stood at 2187.96. Over the 12 month period April 2019 to March 2020, there had been exceptional expenditure on 3 replacement street lamps and a £1000 donation to the Newport League of Friends X-Ray appeal.

Since April 2020, a further 2 LED lights have been purchased. There is a quarterly electricity bill due for the period October to December. The bill for January to March will not arrive until after the beginning of the new financial year.

The long running saga with Npower and Western Power Distribution appears to have been resolved. It has been confirmed that Npower now have all the details about the Led lights and an earlier credit in the year accounted for the reduced energy consumption. Future bills should reflect this.

Payment of the Clerk's salary and expenses were approved.

8. Fly tipping

The refrigerator which had been dumped in the field adjacent to the layby at the entrance to Sambrook has been removed. On this occasion, T&W have acted promptly.

9. Rights of Way

The issue of blocked Rights of Way and poor signage within the Parish is ongoing with T&W. They have indicated that a list of jobs and necessary work to improve the situation will shortly be passed to their contractor.

The Clerk will endeavour to obtain more details of this list.

10. Parish Noticeboard at Village Hall

It has now been established that Mr Clive Blakeway has found a key for this board. He has offered to refurbish the noticeboard and memorial plaque. The Parish Council expressed their gratitude for this kind offer and expressed their willingness to allow him to use it to display information relevant to the community. NR stated that both Mr Blakeway and his wife are very philanthropic and supportive of the community and do a great deal to keep the village looking pleasant. Everyone agreed with this statement.

PH stated that the new noticeboard at the local pub was probably less effective now that the pub has closed and there would be fewer people passing it. A board located at the Village Hall would be seen by more members of the public once the hall reopens as the hall is very well used. He also suggested that, if the owners of the pub ask for the noticeboard to be removed, it would be easy to relocate it at the hall. NR agreed saying that the larger board is very useful and eye catching.

11. Recruitment of new Parish Clerk

The Parish Clerk is standing down on 30 November due to the fact that she is planning to move out of the area. A notice has been placed in the Parish Magazine advertising the vacancy but there has been no response to date. If anyone can suggest someone willing to take on the role, please advise Dc or PH.

PH agreed to monitor the parish Clerk email account from 1 December, pending the appointment of a new clerk.

Councillors expressed their thanks to the outgoing Clerk for the work carried out over the past two years.

11. Any other business

NR asked that someone check the level of grit in the bins prior to the onset of frosty weather. T&W can then be notified of any necessary top ups. Mr Randle of Randle Building Solutions has, in the past, very generously made up any shortfall on the part of T&W.

At this point, Mr R Gormley joined the meeting. His interest was related to the issue of flooding in the village. Of particular concern was the amount of water backing up in his road. He also asked if there will be a resolution of the problem of the 3' deep ditches silting up and then being drained into a 12" gully. A brief summary of the discussions with Lucinda Lycett was given and full details would appear in the minutes

12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place at 6.00 pm on Thursday 22 January 2021. The Clerk will make provisional booking of Sambrook Village Hall, but, in the event of government COVID restrictions being in place, the meeting will take place via Zoom.

The meeting closed at 6.40 pm.