

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF STAPELEY & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL  
HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2023 IN STAPELEY COMMUNITY HALL,  
PEAR TREE FIELD, STAPELEY**

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**PRESENT:** Councillor M Theobald Chairman

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors S Ford, P Groves, J Gibbs, J Hillman, P Groves, A Jacobs,  
K Nord and Y Orungbemi

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**126 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence, together with reasons for absence, should be notified to the Clerk prior to the commencement of the meeting.

The Parish Council is asked to approve apologies for absence.

**127 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Members were invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary 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.

**128 MINUTES**

- (1) 19 DECEMBER 2022
- (2) 16 JANUARY 2023

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meetings held on 19 December 2022 and 16 January 2023 be approved as correct records, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Groves' name in the list of those present at the meeting held on 19 December 2022.

**129 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)**

In accordance with the Parish Council's Standing Order No.1, members of the public were able to submit a question or to make a statement..

There were no questions ore statements.

**130 CHESHIRE EAST BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

Councillor Peter Groves reported on a number of Cheshire East Council matters of interest and updated Members on previous matters raised.

- The Borough Council's medium-term budget was currently out for consultation.
- The Muller Homes application was to be considered at the Strategic Planning Board on 25 January 2023.
- Progress had been made on the proposed car park expansion at Stapeley Broad Lane School.
- The Massey Road bridge was now fully operational.
- The blocked gully at Wybunbury Lane had been repaired.

**131 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

**131.1 Authorisation of Payments**

**RESOLVED:** That the following payments be approved.

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£297.31	HMRC	Tax /NI liability in respect of Clerk's salary
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£548.40	Crystal Clean S Cheshire	Invoice 2520 (4 Jan 2023) £457.00 net and £91.40 VAT Legionella testing, floor buffing, buffer hire charge and three private bookings
£624.96	Dame Hygiene Services	£520.82 net and £104.14 VAT Provision of nappy disposal unit at Community Hall

### 131.2 Payments Made under the Scheme of Delegation

It was reported that the following payments had been made under the Scheme of Delegation. The Parish Council was asked to ratify the payments.

**RESOLVED:** That the following payments be ratified.

£220.00	ASB Electrical – repairs to lighting in Community Hall. Cheque date 4 Jan 2023
£297.31	HMRC – Tax and NI liability – Clerk’s salary

Arising out of discussion, the Clerk stated that ASB Electrical had suggested that all the lights in the Community Hall would benefit from replacement with LED lights. He would submit a quotation in due course.

### 131.3 Budget 2023-24

The Parish Council reviewed the draft budget for 2023-24 which had been discussed at the Finance Committee meeting held 14 November 2022, and further discussed at the full Council meetings on 21 November 2022 and 19 December 2022.

The following amendments were agreed.

Line 28	Gas supply in Community Hall - Increase to £5,000
Line 30	Water supply. Clerk to follow-up.
Line 35	Electricity supply in the Community Hall - Increase to £750.00

The whole budget could not be agreed at this time as further updates were required:

**RESOLVED:** That approval of the budget be deferred to the February 2023 meeting.

- **Speed Indicating Devices**

As part of the budget considerations, the Parish Council would need to make a decision in respect of whether new speed indicating devices (as previously supplied by TWM Traffic Systems) should be purchased, or replaced in their entirety to allow for the installation of new units which would take advantage of technological advances since the current SIDs were installed.

**RESOLVED:** That the Road Safety Working Group consider this matter and make recommendations to the Parish Council in February 2023 to inform the budget 2023-24.

### 131.4 Effect of Community Governance on Precepts

Cheshire East Council (CEC) had reported that there had been discussion which had taken place over the past few months about the precepts set by CEC, for those new parish councils which would come into existence on 1 April 2023 (Stapeley & District was one such council).

A small number of representations from parish councils had been made to CEC, to the effect that the fixed precepts might be insufficient to meet the needs of the new parish councils. CEC had, therefore, undertaken to consider potential options for increasing the precepts.

A major difficulty in seeking to increase precepts was that these had been agreed at a meeting of Full Council and were subsequently incorporated into the formally executed legal Order, which had been published, and which had now taken legal effect. Having taken legal advice, CEC's conclusion was that this could not easily be amended and, even if there was a legal route in which to do this, it would not be likely to be able to be undertaken until May 2023 at the earliest, this being after the new parish councils would come into being.

Another issue was that because the new parish councils were not yet in existence, there were no formal bodies in place with legal standing, nor any elected Councillors representing those bodies, which had the standing to make formal representations to Cheshire East Council upon the question of amendment to, or quantum of any changed precepts.

A range of options were pursued, with advice from the Borough Council's Chief Financial Officer, and Monitoring Officer, as well as from the Community Governance Review Project Board barrister. The conclusion was that it would be necessary for the new Councils to come into being and for them to meet at the earliest opportunity to agree upon how they would wish to take the matter forward.

CEC had already received representations from a number of the new parish councils, to the effect that there were no concerns about the level of precepts already set.

If the Parish Council wished to take additional advice, ChALC could be contacted, or Brian Reed, Head of Member Services at CEC.

#### **131.4 Cheshire East Council – 2023-27 Medium Term Financial Strategy**

Cheshire East Council was inviting opinions and views from residents, businesses, councillors, staff, town and parish councils, local community groups and other stakeholders on the Council's budget for the next financial year.

Inflation, including fuel, energy, was running at around 10% currently, compared with a national target of 2%. Pay inflation also significantly higher than forecasts, and interest rates have risen from 0.5% in February 2022 to 3%. In addition, as with other councils across the country, Cheshire East Council was seeing increasing complexity of demand in services to support people who needed additional help. More than 60% cent of the council's net budget was spent on these services for adults and children.

An email had been sent to Members on 5 January 2022 offering an opportunity provided by ChALC to participate in a virtual session on Thursday, 12 January or Tuesday, 24 January 2023.

The closing date for the consultation was 30 January 2023. The full document was available on the CEC website.

#### **132 PLANNING APPLICATION – 22/3107N – LAND AT PETER de STAPLEIGH WAY**

The Parish Council was invited to comment on the following planning application:

23/0198N – 140 London Road, Stapeley, CW5 7JN  
Single-storey flat roof rear extension to comprise a roof lantern, rear double doors and a window unit.

**RESOLVED:** That no observations be made in respect of planning application No. 23/0198N.

#### **133 PARISH COUNCIL LOGO**

The Parish Council considered several versions of a proposed revised logo for use on Parish Council stationery and the website.

A vote was taken, and it was -

**RESOLVED:** That version 3b of the logo design be approved.

## 134 COMMUNITY HALL

### 134.1 Covid Restrictions

The Parish Council was asked to consider if there should be any changes in respect of the Covid arrangements at the Community Hall.

Members were reminded that at the Council meeting on 21 March 2022, it was agreed that there should be a standing agenda item to review the Covid situation each month.

**RESOLVED:** That no changes be made to the current Covid arrangements at the Community Hall.

### 134.2 Wi-Fi

The Parish Council was reminded that the Wi-fi in the community hall had not been working since August 2022. A new SIM card had been supplied, but before access to the system could be effected, it was necessary for Vodafone to provide a new user name and password, prior to inserting the SIM card.

Neither the new user name, nor the password, allowed the Clerk to access the system. The Clerk had been in contact with Vodafone on several occasions, the last one being 19 January 2023 to advise that as this service had not been available for the Parish Council, it may be necessary to cancel the direct debit payments until service had been resumed. The Council had, therefore, lost £168+ net in direct debit payments to date.

The agent at Vodafone warned the Clerk that during our conversation the phone call may become disconnected but undertook to call her back if it was. The call did become disconnected, but the agent did not phone back.

**RESOLVED:** That the direct debit in favour of Vodafone be cancelled with immediate effect, and that an alternative provider be sourced.

## 135 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR WORKING GROUPS

**135.1** The draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for the following working groups were not currently available. The Clerk invited Members of each of the working groups to consider what would be appropriate for inclusion in the ToRs, based on the Model Terms of Reference approved at the September 2022 meeting:

- Conservation Area – Talbot Way
- Road Safety Working Group
- Victorian Orchard

The Groups were invited to submit draft Terms of Reference to the next meeting.

### 135.2 Conservation Area – Talbot Way (Working Group: Councillors Ford, Gibbs, Jacobs and Orungbemi)

Members considered progress on this project. The Clerk had asked Jof's Mowing to ensure that the hedging encroaching on the footway, was trimmed back. The following action was now agreed:

**RESOLVED:** That Jof's Mowing be asked to submit a quotation for clearing the conservation area on Talbot Way, by 31 March 2023;

(b) That Dr Martin Page observe the start of the work; and

(c) That Councillor Bickerton also observe the work as it was undertaken.

**136 WEBSITE**

It was reported that Simon Warbrook (Warbrook Creative) was awaiting receipt of content for the new website.

**RESOLVED:** That the Working Group aim to provide Simon Warbrook with website content at the earliest opportunity to enable the website to be fully operational by 31 March 2023.

**137 NEWSLETTER**

The draft newsletter was submitted for information. The only change made was to add Councillors Groves and Gibbs to the Road Safety Working Group.

**138 OUTSTANDING ITEMS**

The following outstanding items were noted.

- Quotation for insurance provision
- List of actions in respect of fire risk assessment at the Community Hall.

**139 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** That in accordance with Paragraph 1 (2) of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items owing to the confidential nature of the business to transacted and the public interest would not be served in disclosing that information.

**140 QUOTATIONS FOR PLANTERS – OUTSIDE COMMUNITY HALL**

Reason for exclusion: Commercial sensitivity)

Quotations had been requested but had not yet been received.

**141 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**20 February 2023**

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The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm and concluded at 9.20 pm