

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING OF STAPELEY & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON 23 MAY 2022 IN STAPELEY COMMUNITY HALL,
PEAR TREE FIELD, STAPELEY**

PRESENT: Councillor M Theobald Chairman
Councillor J Gibbs
Councillor P Groves
Councillor A Jacobs
Councillor J Hillman
Councillor K Nord
Councillor Y Orungbemi

APOLOGIES: Councillors M Docker, S Ford and G Gwinn

PART I – ANNUAL COUNCIL BUSINESS

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Parish Council was invited to elect a Chairman to serve until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

RESOLVED: That Councillor M Theobald be elected Chairman of the Parish Council to serve until the next Annual meeting of the Council.

2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

The Parish Council was invited to elect a Vice-Chairman to serve until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

RESOLVED: That Councillor J Hillman be elected Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council to serve until the next Annual meeting of the Council.

3 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.

4 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2022 be approved as a correct record.

5 REVIEW OF DELEGATION ARRANGEMENTS (COMMITTEES)

In accordance with S.101 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Parish Council was able to delegate any of its functions (subject to one exception, namely the power to set a precept) to a Committee or Sub-Committee. Notwithstanding that a delegation was authorised, the Council would still be able to undertake any functions which it had delegated to a Committee.

The Parish Council only had one standing Committee, namely the Complaints Committee, and Members were asked to appoint to it.

RESOLVED: (a) That Councillors J Gibbs, P Groves, A Jacobs, J Gibbs, Y Orungbemi and M Theobald be appointed to the Complaints Committee.

6 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS AS REPRESENTATIVES TO ATTEND MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

The Parish Council was invited to appoint members to represent the Council either as members of the outside body or to attend their meetings.

- **Stapeley Parish Action Group**

RESOLVED: That Councillors S Ford and J Gibbs be appointed to Stapeley Parish Action Group.

- **Cheshire Association of Local Councils** (various meetings)

There were several meetings/events throughout the year, but since the pandemic, these had been held remotely and had not yet reverted to physical meetings.

RESOLVED: That Members be appointed to attend events as and when they were available and according to their interest in the subject matter of the event.

- **Police Cluster Meetings**

RESOLVED: That subject to his agreement, Councillor M Docker be appointed as the principal Member to attend the Police Cluster meetings, with Councillor J Hillman as the substitute.

7 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS – 2021-2022

7.1 The Parish Council was asked to consider the accounts for submission to the Internal Auditor. The following documents were submitted.

- The audit checklist provided by the Internal Auditor. This set out a list of all the documentation required for the audit.
- The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (known as the AGAR). The Internal Auditor would be auditing the accounts during the first week in June 2022. The AGAR must be published on the were presented to the Council for approval.
- Accounts documentation comprising the following was submitted:
 - Summary report by cost centre.
 - Detailed cost centre report.as
 - Committed spend
 - Bank reconciliation at 31 March 2022.
- The authority must approve Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement) and Section 2 (Accounting Statement) and both sections must be approved and published on the website **before** 1 July 2022.

Section 1 must be approved first. This related to the governance arrangements of the Council. As the Internal Auditor had not yet reviewed the accounts, the Council was not in a position to approve it. This, in turn, meant that until the Parish Council was satisfied that its governance arrangements were appropriate, it could not approve the accounts.

Some minor amendments to the calculations were suggested.

RESOLVED: That an extra-ordinary meeting be held on 21 June 2022 to approve the accounts.¹

¹ Subsequently changed to 27 June 2022

The publication requirements were noted:

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the Council's website.

Before 1 July 2022

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounts are as yet unaudited.
- Section 1: Annual Governance Statement – approved and signed.
- Section 2: Accounting Statements 2021-2022 – approved and signed.

Not later than 30 September 2022

- Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate
 - Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR including any amendments as a result of the audit.
 - The Internal Auditor's full report should also be published.
- The Clerk/RFO was required to commence the exercise of public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval. This must be 30 consecutive working days and **must include the first 10 working days of July.**

The Clerk had set the dates as 1 July – 11 August 2022.

RESOLVED: That the documentation be approved for submission to the Internal Auditor, JDH Henry Business Services Ltd.

7.2 Review of Internal Audit Matters 2020-2021

The Internal Auditor would expect to see that the issues he raised during the audit of 2020-2021 had been addressed. Some of these had been reviewed during the year. A copy of the Internal Audit report was submitted and action noted.

7.3 Fixed Assets – at 31 March 2022

The Parish Council reviewed its fixed asset register which comprised the following information.

- Description and location of the asset
- Date when acquired, where known.
- Cost or value of the asset, where known.
- Disposal of asset, and reason for disposal.

Members were asked to consider approving the removal of any asset which was valued under £500; however, Members agreed that, subject to the following items, the assets register remain, without amendment, and be used as an inventory.

RESOLVED: (a) That the following items be removed from the Fixed Asset Register:

- 1) Wooden bench formerly located outside Stapeley Broad Lane School.
- 2) Hewlett Packard laptop computer purchased in 2009 (remove on basis of obsolescence).
- 3) Ladder for use with mobile vehicle speed display units.
- 4) Three convector heaters in the Community Hall (none of which were operational).

8 CALENDAR OF COUNCIL MEETINGS – 2022-2023

A calendar of meetings was submitted based on the current practice of meetings being held on the third Monday in the month. There were errors in the dates, and the Clerk was asked to revise the calendar before publishing it.

**9 REVIEW OF RISK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS
(Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011.)**

The Council reviewed its risk management arrangements, a requirement which was undertaken annually.

Banking arrangements: A Member commented that under item 14 in the Notes column, the wording was misleading. It stated: '*.....does not provide an appropriate level of security to prevent fraud*'.

The Clerk explained that this related to the fact that the current bankers did not require a two-signature process for digital banking, and this meant that there was a potential for fraud if only one person was able to move funds around, without any checks and balances.

Community Hall

22 Covid-19 related – risk to be amended to low

25 Legionella testing.

Request information from Crystal Clean South Cheshire, which carried out the Legionella checks and provide information on how it was tested and recorded.

25.2 Tables to be faced correctly. The Clerk reported that she frequently reminded clients (both regular and casual) of the need to face the tables side-on to avoid the potential for them falling onto children and injuring them. A laminated notice would be prepared and affixed to the wall.

25.4 Fire: The Clerk was reminded of actions still required in respect of fire safety.

RESOLVED: That subject to the comments made, the Risk Management schedule be approved.

10 COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT

It was reported that Cheshire East Council had delayed the adoption of a Councillor Code of Conduct which was being reviewed, but it may be available for the June 2022 meeting

11 STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Parish Council was asked to confirm adoption of the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations (combined into one document).

RESOLVED: That the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, having been reviewed, be approved without amendment, subject to the Clerk verifying that Standing Order 29(e) was still valid, given that the UK had withdrawn from the European Union.

12 EXTERNAL SUPPORT SERVICES

RESOLVED: That the Parish Council approve the following organisations for external support services.

- Shires Accountants for the payroll service.
- Rhino Safety as a health and safety consultant, particularly in respect of Covid implications.

PART 2 – ORDINARY COUNCIL BUSINESS

13 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (10 MINUTES)

In accordance with the Parish Council's Standing Order No.1, members of the public are able to submit a question or to make a statement, preferably in writing prior to the meeting, by submitting to the Clerk, or orally at the meeting.

There were no questions from members of the public.

14 FINANCIAL MATTERS

14.1 Authorisation of Payments

14.1.1 RESOLVED: That the following payments be approved:

£1,020.00	Cheshire Ecology Ltd. (Invoice 535 - £850.00 net and £170.00 VAT) Preparation of Habitat Management Plan for the Conservation Area at Talbot Way.								
£364.80	Crystal Clean South Cheshire Ltd. Cleaning of Community Hall (Invoice 2235 - £304.00 net and £60.80 VAT)								
£345.60	Starboard Systems Ltd. t/a Scribe (Invoice 2883 - £288.00 net and £57.60 VAT)								
£60.00	Shires Accountants (Invoice SHI-0290) Submission of pension re-declaration to the Pensions Regulator. (£50.00 net and £10.00 VAT).								
£1,138.64	C Jones – reimbursement for arrears of tax/NI to HMRC, as follows: <table><tr><td>£283.58</td><td>Period ended 5 November 2021</td></tr><tr><td>£286.44</td><td>Period ended 5 December 2021</td></tr><tr><td>£284.21</td><td>Period ended 5 March 2022</td></tr><tr><td>£284.41</td><td>Period ended 5 April 2022</td></tr></table>	£283.58	Period ended 5 November 2021	£286.44	Period ended 5 December 2021	£284.21	Period ended 5 March 2022	£284.41	Period ended 5 April 2022
£283.58	Period ended 5 November 2021								
£286.44	Period ended 5 December 2021								
£284.21	Period ended 5 March 2022								
£284.41	Period ended 5 April 2022								

The Clerk reported that these underpayments had occurred partly because whilst cheques were sent to HMRC in respect of the tax on the Clerk's salary, they did not include the Class 1 NIC which was supposed to be paid by the Council; the Clerk herself had no liability for National Insurance.

The Clerk had settled the account to avoid interest payments which were calculated on a daily basis.

14.1.2 RESOLVED: (a) That payment to Arthur J Gallagher (Insurance provider) in the sum of £497.60 for the insurance premium for the year 1 June 2022 to 31 May 2023 be approved, but the offer to enter into a long-term agreement be declined;

(b) That the Parish Council seek other quotations in January 2023 as there was concern about some of the items which had been excluded from the policy; and

(c) That the Cheshire Association of Local Councils be asked for the names of other insurance providers.

15 INSURANCE COVER – 1 JUNE 2022 – 31 MAY 2023

The Parish Council was invited to renew its insurance cover with Arthur J. Gallagher, Insurance Brokers, which had taken over from Came & Company.

As noted in Minute no. 14.1.2 above, the Parish Council agreed to pay the fee for one year, but to make other enquiries for insurance provision in 2023-24.

16 CONSERVATION AREA – TALBOT WAY

The Parish Council considered an updated report from Dr Martin Page of Cheshire Ecology Ltd. This had been provided on 5 May 2022 and was a different version from that submitted to the meeting on 25 April 2022.

Dr Page had been unable to attend the meeting to speak to the report, but had indicated that he would be available for the meeting on 21 June 2022.

Members commented that the report did not identify priorities for undertaking the work listed; it had been expected that this would be included.

Reference was made to paragraph 5.9 (immediate management arrangements for the area) and also the possibility of having an interpretation board installed at the site but it was suggested that this could be considered in March 2023.

17 COMMUNITY HALL

At the meeting held on 21 March 2022 that the Covid-19 restrictions in respect of use of the Community Hall, be removed, but the Parish Council agreed to continue to monitor the arrangements monthly having regard to the health and safety of all users of the hall.

It was agreed that no action be taken at the present time, but that the Council continue to review the situation.

18 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Parish Council received a letter from Brian Reed. Head of Democratic Services and Governance, in which he confirmed that Cheshire East Full Council had approved the Community Governance proposals at its meeting on 27 April 2022.

The new arrangements would be implemented in April 2023 in time for the elections in May 2023.

19 PLANNING MATTERS

There were no planning applications for consultation.

20 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 item owing to the confidential nature of the business to transacted, and the public interest would not be served in disclosing that information.

21 WEBSITE

Visuals of the work undertaken so far were tabled and the following were agreed:

- Home page version 1 be approved.
- Members supported the yellow colouring for useful contacts.
- Councillors to be listed in alphabetical order.
- The Parish Council's working groups to be listed together with their membership.
- All information to be submitted to the Clerk.

22 REPORT OF BOROUGH COUNCILLOR PETER GROVES

Councillor Groves reported on various Cheshire East Council matters which affected the parish.

- Councillor Groves had discussed the speed review with the Chief Executive.
- The 'Go to' bus service was to be expanded.
- Collapsed gully on Wybunbury Road.
- HGVs on Audlem Road.

- Stapeley House – dropped drain cover. CE Highways was dealing with this.
- The crossing at Peter de Stapleigh Way had not yet been installed but would be installed during this year; possibly July/August.

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.....Chairman

The meeting commenced at 7.15 pm and concluded at 9.25 pm