

LITTLE BOLLINGTON PARISH MEETING

Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 11 January 2022 at Little Bollington School

ATTENDANCE, MINUTES & FINANCE

1. PRESENT & APOLOGIES

Present:

<u>LBPM Officers</u>	Mike Reed (Clerk)
<u>Speakers</u>	Paul Hannam, David & Christian Taylor (Ash Farm)
<u>Officials</u>	Rev Patricia Robinson (Parish Church) Caroline Johnstone (Head Teacher, LB School)
<u>Lymm Road</u>	Ged Mann
<u>Park Lane</u>	Paul Barker; Hayley & Dave Hadfield; Joy Cooper; Ann & Paul Amphlett Brian & Geraldine Hurd
<u>Spode Green Lane</u>	Ve Whitworth; Rosemary & Joe Bowden; Giselle & Mike Rusted; Paul & Louise Duncalf Grey
<u>Reddy Lane</u>	None
<u>Stamford Road</u>	Tracie & Graham Hughes
<u>Park View</u>	Luke Tennant; Gail & Andy Blackburn; Anna & Thomas Britton
<u>High Field</u>	Chris Wood
<u>Other Areas</u>	Richard & Margaret Robson; Mary Gifford; Nigel Hennerley
Apologies:	None

Chair

The meeting agreed that Giselle Rusted would chair the meeting in view of the vacancy following the resignation of the Chair.

2. TRIBUTE TO REVS PATRICIA & PHILLIP ROBINSON

The Clerk paid a warm tribute to Patricia and Philip Robinson. He thanked them profusely for the huge support they had provided to him personally in his attempts to create a community in Little Bollington over the last eight years as Clerk. He reminded the meeting of the great work they had done for the village and its residents: such as digging and planting roadside verges, helping in the successful planning of the annual Little Bollington Festival, and publishing and distributing news from the community via the Parish Church magazine every month. Philip and Patricia will be missed, not only by the local churches, but by the Little Bollington community. The meeting applauded Patricia and Philip and seconded this vote of thanks with good wishes for their retirement.

3. PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous Parish Meeting on 2 November 2021 were approved.

4. FINANCE REPORT

The Clerk reported that the balance of the account is £2,700 including a grant of £842 from the Co-op which is designated for expenditure on a bench and planting (see item 12 below). The high figure is due to the lack of activity over the period of coronavirus.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE PARISH MEETING

5. ELECTION OF CHAIR OF THE PARISH MEETING

The Clerk reported that only one nomination had been received, namely Giselle Rusted nominated by Mike Rusted. There were no objections to this nomination and the meeting approved the appointment of Giselle Rusted as Chair. The meeting expressed thanks to Giselle for taking on the role.

6. APPOINTMENT OF A NEW PARISH CLERK

The Clerk proposed that agenda items 4,5 &6 be deferred. These were:

- Proposal to set a salary of £1,200pa for a professional Parish Clerk
- Proposal to increase the Parish Precept to £2,200 pa
- Proposal to recruit and appoint a new Parish Clerk

The Clerk explained that the above proposals had been considered and discussed at the previous Parish Meeting and at earlier meetings. These proposals were seen as the only way of recruiting a new Clerk given that attempts to recruit a resident to take on the role on the current voluntary basis had failed repeatedly. Nevertheless, three residents had raised last minute objections to the increase in the precept. Rather than proceed in the face of these objections, the Clerk reluctantly agreed to continue for one more year, having already served for over 8 years. It is likely that by the end of 2022 Little Bollington Parish Meeting will be abolished under proposals by Cheshire East to replace it with a new larger body merging two or more parishes. The meeting agreed to defer this matter to autumn 2022.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Ged Mann presented the proposal to establish the Little Bollington Neighbourhood Forum. He explained that its sole purpose will be to complete the Little Bollington Neighbourhood Plan and have it formally adopted. This will go forward as the Little Bollington Neighbourhood Plan regardless of whether Little Bollington Parish Meeting is abolished by the planned merger with other parishes. The meeting approved the establishment of the Neighbourhood Forum. Nominations and the elections of officers were conducted with the following elected unanimously and unopposed:

Chair: Ged Mann
Vice Chair: Brian Hurd
Secretary: Paul Barker

The constitution of the Neighbourhood Forum was approved and adopted.

Ged Mann explained that the work of completing the Neighbourhood Plan will now proceed. Cheshire East Council will fund a consultant to advise and assist the Neighbourhood Forum. There will be a further public consultation and, after any amendments to the Plan, it will be submitted to Cheshire East Council for approval. The approval process will include an independent inspection of the plan and a referendum of residents.

8. PLANNING APPLICATION ON LAND OFF SPODE GREEN LANE

The clerk reported on the consideration of the above application at the Cheshire East Council Strategic Planning Board on 22 December. The application was for a change of use from agricultural to mixed use including equestrian.

The Clerk had made a presentation at this meeting expressing concern about the number of sheds, containers and miscellaneous buildings, machinery and other articles scattered over the site. The site had the appearance of a derelict industrial area spoiling the appearance of this rural area. Many of the buildings had been installed without planning permission and the Clerk had reported this to the CEC Planning Enforcement team. Despite a correspondence running for over four years no effective action had been taken and the buildings now had deemed planning consent. The Planning Board gave these concerns serious attention and discussed them at length. However, it was felt that nothing would be gained from refusing this particular planning consent. It was approved and the Board instructed the Director of Planning to make checks on the site to ensure that it complies with planning regulations in future and to prevent inappropriate use of the land. It was felt that these comments by the Planning Board may lead to the planning application for the dog exercise area on a part of this land to be considered seriously. The applicant has been undertaking the dog exercise operations without planning permission for several years, despite complaints by local residents.

Ve Whitworth has contacted the man who operates as manager of this land and is seeking a meeting with local residents with a view to seeking a more amenable relationship. He is well aware that the local community have strong objections to many of his operations.

9. PROPOSED MOTORWAY SERVICE AREA ON THE M56/A556

The Clerk reported that he had circulated a consultation on these proposals to local residents as requested at the previous meeting, but he had received no replies. This was corrected by one person who had responded.

The meeting was reminded of the opposition to previous development proposals on this land (Cheshire Gateway). At that time information was circulated to residents and groups in Bowdon and other areas, and this led to widespread concern and opposition.

The following actions were agreed.

- The Clerk to circulate the consultation to residents again
- The Clerk to consult the National Trust regarding their views
- The Parish Meeting to formulate a draft response to the expected planning application
- The Clerk and others to prepare a list of key contacts

The Chair asked for a show of hands to indicate whether those present were in favour of the development proposals or not. The results were: 3 for, 12 against, 5 abstained.

10. STAMFORD ARMS

The update report on Stamford Arms development was not available. The item was deferred to the next meeting. The Clerk agreed to contact the developer, Novo, to ask what became of their offer to provide some benefits for the village and community.

11. PROPOSALS AT ASH FARM

David and Christian Taylor of Ash Farm, together with their business partner Paul Hannam, joined the meeting. Paul presented the proposals to expand the bed and breakfast business at Ash Farm on Park Lane. They plan to convert the barn and outbuildings to create indoor and outdoor spaces for meals and drinks. They will clear the field at the back of the premises to create a space for weddings and other events. They will also create a car park for 30 vehicles. They have agreed the plans in

principle with the National Trust who own the property. They have submitted a licence application for alcohol and music from 8am to midnight. Paul Hannam explained that this is one hour later than a standard licence and it may not be used up to the later time. He explained that a planning application is not required as the proposals are permitted under Class R of Schedule 2, Part 3 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015. The Clerk stated that the National Trust had informed him that this seemed incorrect as the buildings had not been used as a farm for over 30 years.

Many residents expressed strong concerns about the proposals, particularly with regard to noise and parking. It was stated that the village "closes down" about 9.30pm and noise after this time would be a problem. Paul Hannam explained that they had undertaken a sound survey and found that a source of 80dB fell to 32dB at the boundary of Ash Farm. He agreed to test noise levels when neighbours hear it and at night.

One resident living nearby explained that he is very strongly opposed to the proposals. He is very concerned at the prospect of wedding events being held on the field at the rear of Ash Farm which is immediately adjacent to his property.

Another resident talked about the peaceful nature of the village, with birdsong being heard in the gardens. He worried that the quality of life will be damaged if music outdoors is permitted. Another resident raised concerns about the noise of taxis and other vehicles arriving late at night to take customers home from the venue. A concern was also raised about the impact of the noise from the venue on the many farm animals in the area including on the field adjacent to the rear field of Ash Farm.

One resident commented on the reported association with Brewdog, commenting that this company has a reputation for heavy drinking by a young clientele. Paul Hannam explained that they had considered Brewdog because of its green credentials. Their motto is "buy one get one tree", due to their policy of planting trees. They will help Ash Farm create a carbon neutral business. This will be their first rural location and will be very different from their town and city venues. The venue will implement procedures to prevent anti-social behaviour. They will have CCTV with recordings.

One resident reported that the article in the magazine, Altrincham Today, stated that the venue will hold weddings with up to 150 guests. Paul Hannam responded that they may stage weddings but these will not be frequent events.

He was asked why the licence application requests the removal of conditions 4, 5 and 6 in Annex 2. He responded that these were voluntary conditions relating to the licence for the Bed & breakfast business only.

Several people raised the issue of parking on Park Lane. This is the road into the heart of the village. It is a narrow lane which is very restricted in parts. It is not suitable to cope with additional traffic into the village. It already suffers from excessive parking due to the high number of visitors to the area. Problems of obstruction, including obstruction of emergency vehicles, have been caused frequently by excessive parking on Park Lane. There have also been some minor accidents. There were fears that this problem would be made even worse by the Ash Farm proposals.

The Chair asked whether residents were concerned about parking. All except one raised their hands to indicate their concern. When asked if they had concerns about the impact on the local environment all confirmed.

Residents were advised that they can make comments on the variation of licence application up to 19 January. The Clerk was asked to circulate advice to residents.

A final comment was made by one resident who stated that much of the proposals, such as the café and bar, were very welcome. They are a positive change for the village bringing investment to the area. But they need to be subject to limitations. The Chair asked for show of hands for or against this comment. This resulted in most of the 21 people present in favour with 2 against and 2 abstentions.

EXPENDITURE ITEMS

12. PROPOSED BENCH AND PLANTING

The meeting considered options for the installation of a new bench following the receipt of a grant of £840 from the Co-op Community Fund. The proposal to place a circular bench around the tree on the grass triangle on Park Lane was discussed. One resident reported that he maintains the grass on this plot. He was concerned that a bench in this location would lead to damage to the grass and plants, and to litter, spoiling this attractive village location. Another resident who had promoted the plan for a bench in this location generously gave way and accepted the argument against it. He proposed a picnic bench in the Community Orchard off Park Lane together with soft fruit canes planted in raised beds. The meeting agreed unanimously to this proposal. David Taylor had agreed to undertake landscaping on areas near Ash Farm on Park Lane including the installation of a bench next to the notice board.

13. REPLACEMENT OF FARM GATES REMOVED DURING SEVERE FLOODING

The Clerk reminded the meeting of this matter which had been discussed at a previous meeting. The farm gates had been removed in the extreme storm of January 2020 in an attempt to relieve the flooding in the area adjacent to Mill House. Due to the severe storm conditions the gates were swept away and never seen again. The farmer had replaced them at a cost of £220 and a resident had recommended that he be reimbursed by the Parish Meeting. The Clerk had been asked to take advice from ChALC on the legality of reimbursing to the farmer the cost of replacing the gates. He had been informed that if it was clear that the action had been taken in an attempt to protect the community, it would be legitimate to reimburse the cost. The meeting confirmed that this was the case and agreed to do so.

VILLAGE EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

14. QUEENS JUBILEE

The Clerk informed the meeting that the whole nation would be holding celebration events to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June this year. There will be a four day weekend with two Bank Holidays to mark this special occasion. Towns and villages throughout the land will take part in the Big Jubilee Lunch and hold street parties and other events. He urged residents to come together to organise events in Little Bollington and asked for volunteers. Eight people agreed to help: Gail and Andy Blackburn, Anna and Thomas Britton, Paul Barker, Gel Hurd, Ve Whitworth and Mike Reed. Paul Hannam offered help from Ash Farm with this event.

There was no other business and the meeting was closed at 8.45pm.