

Little Bollington with Agden Community Council

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING, TUESDAY 10 OCTOBER 2023 At Little Bollington School

1010/1 Present and Apologies

Present: Robin Palmer (Chair), Anne Blackburn, Rick Taylor, Thomas Britton, Paul Cassidy, Raluca Khajeh, Mike Reed (Clerk)

Apologies: Will Blackburn, Kate Parkinson (Ward Councillor)

Several local residents were in attendance.

1010/2 Approval of agenda

HS2 was added as the next agenda item. The revised agenda was approved.

1010/3 Declaration of interests

All present confirmed there were no conflicts of interest with items on the agenda.

1010/4 HS2

Nigel Hennerley addressed the meeting on HS2. Nigel is liaison person on HS2 for High Legh Parish Council and had undertaken the same role for the former Little Bollington Parish Meeting. He explained that the HS2 section from Birch to Manchester and the Golborne link had been cancelled. Land safeguarded south of Rostherne will be released. All properties purchased for the project will be sold, with previous owners having first option to purchase. HS2 Ltd will be wound up in summer 2024. A budget of £36Bn will be made available for a new organisation known as "Network North", including £12Bn for Northern Powerhouse Rail (Liverpool to Leeds). This project may make use of the safeguarded route from Liverpool to Manchester via High Legh, which was assumed in the HS2 proposals, but this is unlikely as it involves an expensive tunnel into Manchester.

1010/5 Public Participation

The Chair invited those attending to raise any matters for the attention of the Council. No matters were raised.

1010/6 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 12 September were approved.

1010/7 Matters arising

Giant Hogweed.

The National Trust had replied on the matter of giant hogweed on the River Bollin. They are taking action to address the problem and pointed out that it is a national problem. Resident, Graham Hughes, informed the Council that he had reported the problem to the Fisheries Department of the Environment Agency.

The Clerk will remind the National Trust of the request for them to attend LBACC meetings.

ACTION

CLERK

Community Orchard

It is planned to hold a bonfire and social event in the orchard and a team of volunteers will be recruited to clear and tidy the site. It was recognised that a rota of volunteers is needed to undertake mowing, which is required about four times each year. It is intended to hold community events on the site including a summer barbeque and November bonfire. Paul Barker offered to help with the orchard and the community events, although he did not wish to continue as manager of the site. It was agreed that LBACC will take overall responsibility for the community orchard and will organise maintenance.

ACTION

LBACC

Site Compound

The Clerk had written to the head of Planning at Cheshire East Council asking for action on the planning condition to restore the area to farmland.

1010/8 Financial Report

Budget and precept for 2024-25

It was noted that the precept would have to be increased to provide the funds for a salary for the clerk. The Council must strike a balance between minimising this increase and ensuring it has sufficient funds for its operations and plans. It was noted that the current clerk undertakes 20-30 hours work per month, but the salary will provide for less than this. The Council agreed to hold a discussion group to consider the budget and precept in detail and to report back to the next Council meeting for further consideration and decisions.

Grants

The Clerk reported that CEC had confirmed that they can provide help in identifying possible sources of grant funding, but they do not provide any grants to local councils.

1010/9 Establishing LBACC - progress and next steps

Communications with Councillors and residents

It was agreed that it would cause confusion and inefficiency to publicise email addresses for every Councillor. It was agreed that email communications with the Council should be via the Clerk's email address. The Clerk will keep the Council informed to ensure that matters referred by email are considered and addressed.

The idea for leafleting residents of Agden to extend communications to them was deferred to a future meeting. It was agreed that a Meet Your Councillors event would be worthwhile and could be held at the Wheatsheaf Inn in the Agden area in the new year.

ACTION

LBACC

Website and email account

Resident, Chris Wood agreed to change the name of the website and will continue to provide technical support for this and the email account.

ACTION

CW

Storage of documents

There was a brief discussion of the storage of electronic files and documents. Resident, Chris Wood agreed to advise on GDPR requirements for storage and retention of documents.

ACTION

CLERK/CW

Recruitment of Clerk

The Chair had produced and circulated a draft advertisement for the post. It was suggested that this could be promoted via LinkedIn and Indeed, via ChALC, and via the local email communications and WhatsApp Group. Nigel Hennerley agreed to mention the post to the Clerk of High Legh PC. The meeting expressed a preference that the new clerk should be a local person with a commitment to the local community.

ACTION

LBACC

Insurance

Following a delay, the Clerk has requested quotations.

1010/10 Site of garages in Little Bollington

An information note had been provided by resident, Alex Gillyon, on the proposal by Cheshire East Council to transfer the land around the garages in Little Bollington to LBACC. There was a discussion, with the following points noted. LBACC will be required to pay its own legal fees and those of CEC. If LBACC declines the offer from CEC, the land will be put out to open tender, allowing any private or other organisation to take possession. There were concerns that a private owner may not act in the best interest of the garage owners and the local community. The following questions and concerns were raised.

- Clarification is required on whether CEC will lease the land or transfer ownership.
- Clarification is required that the transfer involves no costs other than legal costs.
- Advice should be obtained on expected future costs involved in ownership of the land.
- Insurance cover will be required for the land and any consequent liabilities.
- Provision must be made by LBACC for maintenance of the land and associated costs.
- LBACC must decide the charges for rental of the land by garage owners.
- LBACC must ensure that income from rentals exceeds the costs incurred.
- What liabilities will rest with LBACC?

It was agreed that Councillor Rick Taylor, who has no personal interest in the garages, will discuss the matter with Alex Gillyon and report back to the Council.

1010/11 Future meetings

The Council decided that future Council meetings will be held quarterly, with discussion groups and committee meetings as required to progress matters between Council meetings.

0711/13 Other Business

There was no other business and the meeting ended.