

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
SHAVINGTON-CUM-GRESTY PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2020**
**THE MEETING WAS HELD REMOTELY IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATIONS
UNDER S.78 OF THE CORONAVIRUS ACT 2020**

PRESENT:	Councillor B Gibbs Councillor V Adams Councillor L Buchanan Councillor N Cooper Councillor M Ferguson Councillor K Gibbs	Chairman Councillor R Hancock Councillor J Hassall Councillor G McIntyre Councillor R Moore
IN ATTENDANCE:	Councillor D Marren Mr W Atteridge	Cheshire East Council Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

298 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were invited to declare any (a) disclosable pecuniary interest; (b) personal interest; or (c) prejudicial interest which they had in any item of business on the agenda, the nature of that interest, and in respect of disclosable interests and prejudicial interests, to leave the meeting prior to the discussion of that item.

No declarations were made.

(Note: Councillor Cooper joined the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

299 MINUTES (PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS)

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the following meetings be approved as correct records:

- 15 July 2020
- 23 July 2020
- 2 September 2020
- 17 September 2020 (Extra-ordinary meeting)

300 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Members of the public were able to ask questions under the Parish Council's Standing Orders.

There were no questions from members of the public.

301 POLICE MATTERS – BEAT MANAGER'S REPORT

The Beat Manager's report, together with traffic data was received, and had been issued to Members under separate cover.

302 BOROUGH COUNCILLOR DAVID MARREN

Borough Councillor David Marren's report had been issued to Members. Councillor Marren drew attention to the following items in his report.

- Travellers' site provision.
- Car parks were now accepting cash for car parking fees. Until recently, payment could only be made via mobile phones, and this disadvantaged many users who did not have a mobile device.
- CEC Corporate Plan.
The Borough Council was seeking feedback on its plan, by 27 November 2020, although the Parish Council was not being specifically consulted on the Plan.
- Gresty Lane: Councillor Marren was arranging to meet with the Police and CEC Officers from the Road Traffic Safety Unit.

Members were able to ask questions and these were responded to by Councillor Marren.

303 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

It was reported that the Independent Examiner had confirmed a number of procedural matters and issued a letter (now submitted) which required uploading onto the Parish Council's website.

Mr Atteridge had contacted the Independent Examiner's office following which a two-week delay had been agreed to allow responses to be submitted to the various questions posed by the Examiner. These required clarification by the Parish Council; however, as they were points of clarification only, this was a task which the Steering Group could carry out without reference back to the Parish Council. The responses should be submitted to the Council for information.

As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the referendum would not be held until 6 May 2021.

304 PLANNING

304.1 Proposed Order- One-Way Operation – Part of Main Road

The Parish Council was asked to comment on the proposal to introduce a one-way operation on part of Main Road. The following documents were submitted.

- Notice of Proposal
- Plan
- Draft Order
- Statement of Reasons (amended)

RESOLVED: That Cheshire East Highways (CEH) be informed that the Parish Council was not convinced that the proposal satisfactorily met safety requirements, and urged CEH to ensure that whatever was decided would provide the safest option for motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and other road users.

304.2 White Paper: Planning for the Future

The Parish Council was asked to comment on the White Paper: Planning for the Future, by the deadline date of 15 October 2020.

RESOLVED: That the Council decline to comment on the White Paper: Planning for the Future.

304.3 Planning Applications

The Parish Council was invited to submit observations on the following planning applications:

20/4113N Land at Gresty Road, Shavington
Full planning permission for development of a new care-home facility including access, associated landscaping, and infrastructure.

RESOLVED: That the following comment be submitted to Cheshire East Council in respect of planning application No. 20/4113N:

Although the application was generally supported, the car parking provision was inadequate and did not appear to be accessible.

20/4251N 12 Burlea Drive, Shavington, CW2 5BZ
Proposed kitchen extension and internal works

RESOLVED: That no comments be made in respect of planning application No. 20/4251N.

**304.4 Southern Planning Committee – 30 September 2020
Planning Application No. 20/0604N (The Elephant and Castle Inn)**

Councillor McIntyre had attended the Southern Planning Committee on 30 September 2020 to speak on behalf of the Parish Council in respect of planning application No. 20/0604N. This application had been considered by the Parish Council at its extra-ordinary meeting on 17 September 2020.

Councillor McIntyre now reported that the application had been approved, subject to conditions.

(Note: Borough Councillor Marren and Mr Atteridge, withdrew from the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

305 FINANCIAL MATTERS

305.1 Receipts & Payments Statement – 1 April – 11 September 2020

The Parish Council received a Receipts and Payments Statement for both the main Parish Council account and the Village Hall account for the period 1 April – 11 September 2020.

RESOLVED: That the receipts and payments statements for the main Parish Council account and the Village Hall account, for the period 1 April – 11 September 2020, be received.

305.2 Budget Monitoring Report – 1 April – 11 September 2020

A budget monitoring statement for the period to 1 April - 11 September 2020 was submitted. There were no bank statements available beyond this date.

305.3 Software Accounting Package

As requested at the previous meeting, the Clerk sought a quotation from Scribe for an accounting package which would be appropriate for the Parish Council. This was now submitted.

The accounting package had been designed specifically for local councils and was able to produce the reports which were required by the Internal and External Auditors at the end of each financial year.

The Clerk had been able to take part in a demonstration and was confident that this would be an appropriate package for the Council.

The subscription fee was £54 per month net (£648.00 pa). The price structure was tier-based and was dependent on the size of the Parish Council.

As this was part-way through a financial year, if the Parish Council wished to commence immediately, Scribe had provided an additional quote for a total set-up and data entry service for the current financial year (£399 net). The Clerk would provide all the financial data from 1 April 2020 to date and Scribe would then set-up all cost centres, codes with budget assignment and addition of bank accounts/balances. If this was accepted by the Parish Council, full training would be given to the Clerk and she would then continue the process to the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED: (a) That the quotation from Scribe be accepted, in the sum of £54.00 per month (net) for the annual software licence for the accounting package, with effect from 1 November 2020;

(b) That the quotation from Scribe be accepted in the sum of £399.00 net, for professional services to set up cost centres/codes, assign budgets, add bank accounts/balances, key transactions from 1 April to 31 October 2020 and fully reconcile accounts;

(c) That Scribe be asked to produce all necessary documents for the Finance Committee meeting; and

(d) That to enable sufficient time for Scribe to produce the necessary information for the Finance Committee meeting, the date be moved from 28 October 2020 to 18 November 2020.

305.4 Internal Audit – Engagement Letter

The Parish Council received an engagement letter from JDH Business Services Ltd. setting out its own responsibilities and those of the Parish Council, during the internal audit process.

RESOLVED: That the letter of engagement from JDH Business Services Ltd. be received.

305.5 Laptop and associated equipment for Community Manager

It was reported that a Microsoft Surface Laptop 3, and headphones, had been ordered for the Community Manager.

The cost was £1,570.98 plus £314.20 VAT (Total £1,885.17). This was to be funded from the allocation of £2,000 (Line 9 on the Budget Monitoring Statement – Minute No. 305.2 above).

305.6 Clerk's Delegated Actions

At its meeting held on 15 July 2020, the Parish Council agreed to extend the Social Media retainer with Brave Little Tank, to terminate 30 days after a Community Manager had been appointed.

Subsequent to that, the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, had authorised the extension of the Social Media retainer to the end of December 2020. This was to allow the first three months of the Community Manager's role to be treated as an introductory period until he had been able to familiarise himself with the job requirements.

305.7 Update on Audit Issues

The following were the specific audit issues raised by the Internal Auditor. These had been addressed at the meeting held on 2 September 2020 and the majority required no further action at this stage.

(a) *The budgeting process which underpins the setting of the precept must be improved to take account of all known expenditure.*

The Council does not accept that the process is flawed but does acknowledge that an error was made during the process for 2019-2020.

No further action required.

(b) *The Council must ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights for each financial year.*

The notice for the exercise of public rights for 2020-21 has been published correctly.

No further action required.

(c) *Recurring recommendation: The Council to ensure that Members are not given authority to take action on behalf of the Council. This is contrary to S.101 of the Local Government Act 1972.*

The Clerk was reviewing the Minutes to try to establish if individual Councillors had taken action on behalf of the Parish Council.

In response to a Member's question, the Clerk advised that she would be able to complete this by the end of December 2020.

- (d) *Income systems for the Village Hall could not be tested. The Council needs to urgently re-establish effective internal controls over hall hire to ensure all hall hire documentation is retained and made available for internal audit.*

This was considered by the Village Hall Committee at its meeting on 6 August 2020 and agreement reached on the process.

No further action required.

- (e) *The fixed asset register should equate to last year's figure from the AGAR, plus the one addition in the year. The register therefore needs to be amended.*

The Practitioners' Guide requires that assets should be valued at purchase cost or an insurance proxy if the purchase cost is not known (that doesn't change over time;) therefore, the only movement in fixed assets each year should be for additions and disposals and all additions should be at purchase price. The Council needs to review the asset register and disclose the correct value in the AGAR which should equate to the value for fixed assets disclosed in the 2018/19 AGAR.

At the Parish Council meeting held on 23 July 2020, the Parish Council did not accept the fixed assets register as accurate but agreed to leave the value on the AGAR as it was pending a further investigation. The list had not varied, other than to include additions, since the Clerk was appointed in September 2015; however, Members were now of the view that not only was the provenance of all the assets required, but they were also minded to employ a professional valuer to value all, or some, of the assets.

The Parish Council was now invited to set up a Task Group (to be supported by the Clerk) to review the list of fixed assets with a view to adding assets not currently listed, and to consider seeking a professional valuation on all or some of the assets.

RESOLVED: (a) That a Task Group, to be supported by the Clerk, be set up to review the list of fixed assets;

(b) That Councillors Nicola Cooper, Kevin Gibbs and Rene Hancock be appointed to the Task Group; and

(c) That arrangements be made for the Task Group to meet in January 2021.

- (f) VAT Issue – Raised in 2018-2019

The VAT incurred during 2018/2019 has not been reclaimed and is a recurring issue. This is a material issue and relates to the extensive VAT (in excess of the threshold of £7,500) on the Village Hall refurbishment work.

At the meeting held on 2 September 2020, the Parish Council approved a quotation from Afford Bond to enable it to explore the possibility of re-claiming VAT incurred under the 'occasional breach' rule.

A formal letter had now been sent to Afford Bond. The work involved will require the Clerk to provide various documents over the last four years.

No further action required at this stage.

(g) VAT not reclaimed on payments made via direct debit had not been claimed.

The Clerk had already indicated to the Internal Auditor that this would be the subject of a separate claim to be made after the financial year end.

The Clerk had now submitted this claim to HMRC.

No further action required.

(h) Issues raised in 2018/2019 which needed resolution:

- *Budgetary control. The Council should review its budget analysis and ensure that it can balance the budget for 2019/2020. The Internal Auditor commented that the sum of £10,000 unallocated reserves and the £20,000 for the purchase of a parcel of land may be needed to ensure general cash reserves are in place at the end of the year.*

The Council addressed this in 2019-20 by increasing reserves to £25,000 which was 14% of its budget, an increase of 9% over the previous year. This will need to be increased to 25% for 2021-2022.

As this would be dealt with as part of the budget process for 2021-2022, **no further action required under audit issues.**

- *The Internal Auditor had stated that delegation to a Councillor under Minute No. 289 (March 2019) was still outstanding.*

This was addressed and the delegation was rescinded on 10 July 2019 with authority being returned to the Clerk; however, the Auditor had also commented (as noted above) that the minutes indicate that councillors continue to commit the Council to expenditure in respect of the Village Hall.

No further action required.

- *Village Hall Income: There is still a shortfall of £315.00 in Village Hall receipts.*

This was to be dealt with by the Finance Committee on 18 November 2020.

- *Re-valuation of the Village Hall.*

To be dealt with as part of the review of Fixed Assets.

- *S.137 Payments. Omitted from the ledger as a separate identification in 2018-2019; there were no S.137 payments in 2019-2020.*

There had been one S.137 payment in 2020-2021 and that had been recorded separately.

No further action required.

305.8 External Audit – 2019-2020

The report of the external auditors, PKF Littlejohn, had been expected at the end of September 2020. No response had yet been received.

During the external audit of the accounts for 2018-2019, the report was not received until the Clerk followed up later in 2019. The report sent was dated September 2019, but the Clerk did not receive it until December 2019.

In view of this and to avoid a similar situation during audit of the 2019-2020 accounts, the Clerk had sent a follow-up email to PKF Littlejohn.

306 PUMPKIN HEROES TRAIL (ALTERNATIVE TO HALLOWEEN) – 31 OCTOBER 2020

The Parish Council was asked to consider joining with St Mark's Church in running a pumpkin trail event to be operated as a joint 'Shavington Online/Community' activity.

This had arisen following an approach from a church-worker who was involved with children and families. The event would be taking place irrespective of the Council's potential involvement, but the worker had asked for the Parish Council's support to give it a higher profile.

It was proposed that the event be supported under the banner of 'Shavington Online/Community' with St Mark's Church organising and delivering the event itself, and the Parish Council supporting it by producing the maps and advertising the event.

The church worker had discussed the proposal with Councillor Kevin Gibbs, Chairman of the Community Engagement Committee, and he summarised the details of the event.

The only role for the Council would be to promote it on social media, in accordance with the branding guidelines.

The issue of safety was raised, and it was suggested that the event should be held over several days (possibly 30 October – 1 November 2020) so that social-distancing could be maintained, rather than all participants attending on the same date.

RESOLVED: (a) That the Pumpkin Heroes Trail, organised by St Mark's Church, be supported by the Parish Council as a 'Shavington Online/Community' event; and

(b) That the Parish Council promote the event on social media, using community branding.

(Note: Councillor Nicola Cooper withdrew from the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

307 WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY

Members were reminded that 23 September 2020 was the deadline date by which Parish Councils were required to comply with the Public Sector Bodies (Website and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018, or have a plan of action in place to ensure compliance.

Brave Little Tank was currently creating a new website which had yet to be populated, but as this was a new website, it was expected that it would be fully compliant.

There had been some scheduling delays and Brave Little Tank had recently met with Tim Dobson (Community Manager) to discuss arrangements for preparing content for the website.

308 PARISH COUNCIL VACANCIES

There were two vacancies for parish councillors. These had arisen as a consequence of insufficient candidates putting themselves forward at the local elections in May 2019.

The process of co-option had been suspended during the pandemic, but it was now permitted for candidates to be co-opted by attending a virtual meeting of the Parish Council.

To ensure the widest pool of candidates, the Parish Council was asked to agree that these vacancies be re-advertised in the December 2020 newsletter. Candidates would be encouraged to observe the meeting to be held on 6 January 2021, so that they would be aware of how the Council operated. The co-option could then be held on 3 February 2021.

RESOLVED: (a) That the vacancies for parish councillors be advertised in the December 2020 newsletter; and

(b) That the Parish Council co-opt to the two vacancies for councillors at its meeting on 3 February 2021.

309 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

309.1 Membership

The Parish Council was asked to appoint a Member to the Community Engagement Committee.

The current membership comprised Councillors Kevin Gibbs, Gordon McIntyre and Ryan Moore with Judith McIntyre as a non-Parish Council Member. The quorum for a meeting was three but this excluded the non-Parish Council Member.

Meetings were arranged *ad hoc* to suit the availability of all the Members, but if at short notice one of the Councillors was unable to attend a scheduled meeting, this would mean that the meeting could not take place.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Jane Hassall be appointed to the Community Engagement Committee.

309.2 Remembrance Sunday and 'Carols at Christmas'

It was reported that the Community Engagement Committee was meeting on 22 October 2020 to finalise arrangements for Remembrance Sunday (8 November 2020) and 'Carols at Christmas'.

Arrangements for Remembrance Sunday were noted, but these were subject to change, dependent on prevailing Government guidance.

- The service would be 20 minutes duration.
- Readings to be provided by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Borough Councillor David Marren and a representative from Shavington Primary School
- Both churches were participating.
- The service would be live-streamed.
- Singing would not be permitted, other than for a soloist from the Festival Committee; the Community Manager would make contact with the Committee.
- The Chairman of the Council had discussed arrangements with the Scout Leader, in respect of standard bearers.
- Hymns would comprise I Vow to Thee my Country; and Make me a Channel of Your Peace.
- A recording of *The Last Post* followed by two minutes' silence, and then *Reveille*, was to be provided by the bugler who usually performed this each year.
- Councillor Nicola Cooper would take photographs of the event.
- Residents would be discouraged from attending.
- Wreath-laying arrangements not yet finalised.
- Completed Service sheets were required by 12/13 October 2020.

310 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE – REVIEW OF CONTRACT

At its meeting held on 30 September 2020, the Environment and Recreation Committee had reviewed the grounds maintenance contract with Northwich Town Council.

Councillor Matt Ferguson, Chairman of the Committee, reported briefly on the review.

311 VILLAGE HALL RE-OPENING UP-DATE

Councillors who had been involved in the detailed arrangements for the re-opening of the Village Hall reported.

The hire agreement had been updated to reflect Covid-19 arrangements, and the Clerk had asked Lynne Thornton, Solicitor, to confirm that it was acceptable. A response was awaited.

(Note: Councillor Vivien Adams withdrew from the meeting at this point in the proceedings.)

312 STREET NAMING – THOMAS PALIN CLOSE

A road on the Taylor Wimpey development (Cherry Tree Park) had been named ‘Thomas Palin Close’ after George Thomas Palin.

A resident had complained about this, as the name of the deceased fallen soldier was George Thomas Palin. Borough Council David Marren had asked the Borough Council for an explanation as to why it could not be renamed.

In December 2018, the Parish Council had provided to Cheshire East Council’s Street Naming section, a list of WWI deceased soldiers with a request that their names be used for street naming purposes on all new developments in the parish.

George Thomas Palin had died at age 22 years and the Parish Council considered that by amending his name to disregard his first name, did not honour him in a befitting manner.

It was understood that the change in name had been because the use of ‘George’ could cause confusion with other streets which also featured the name ‘George’; the name ‘Thomas Palin Close’ was a compromise.

Members accepted that the Parish Council did not have the power to insist on a name change, but it was agreed that a complaint be made to Cheshire East Council, to express Members’ dismay that despite a list of war dead being provided in 2018, the Borough Council had not honoured this particular soldier by declining to use both his first and second names along with his surname.

RESOLVED: (a) That the Parish Council write to Cheshire East Council (CEC) to express its dismay that the name of the road ‘Thomas Palin Close’, did not honour the fallen soldier (George Thomas Palin);

(b) That CEC be asked to consider re-naming the road to George Thomas Palin Close; and

(c) That the resident complainant be informed of the action taken.

313 INFORMATION ITEM – NEWSLETTER

The Community Manager was in the process of drafting the December newsletter. A list of items was included on the agenda.

The following items were deleted:

- VE Day 2020
- Youth Club closure
- Brief reference only, to be made to the Parish Council’s consideration of the acquisition of 140 Main Road, as this was still a matter under discussion.

314 FUTURE MEETINGS

22 October 2020	Community Engagement Committee
28 October 2020	Finance Committee
4 November 2020	Parish Council

315 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.

316 POSSIBLE ACQUISITION OF 140 MAIN ROAD

(Reason for exclusion: Relates to potential contract matters between the Parish Council and the Borough Council)

The Parish Council was asked to consider the intended use of the building at 140 Main Road, Shavington in the event of Cheshire East Council (CEC) agreeing to transfer it.

CEC had asked for details of the proposed use of the asset as this was key to its own decision about whether it would be appropriate to transfer it to the Parish Council.

The Clerk reported that she had contacted four chartered surveyors and provided informal quotations from each surveyor, none of which had yet been able to visit the site.

RESOLVED: (a) That the Parish Council consider this matter further at its meeting on 4 November 2020 when it was expected that surveyor's quotations would be available; and

(b) That formal quotations for surveys be reported to the November 2020 meeting.

.....Chairman

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm and concluded at 10.10 pm