

BROXTON AND DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

30th September 2024

Commenced: 7.30 pm

Terminated: 9.30 pm

**Present: Councillor Williams (Chair)
Councillors Bell, Borman, Henshall, Shadbolt and Wild**

Mrs M Clough – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rogers and Haughton. Councillor Mike Jones, Cheshire West and Chester Councillor, also submitted his apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members of the Parish Council.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 22nd July 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no Members of the Public in attendance however, the Chair reported on an email received from a resident regarding flooding on Sherrington Lane. The resident had reported the matter to Cheshire West and Chester Council on more than one occasion, but had not received an acknowledgement and the problem had not been resolved.

Members discussed concerns over the lack of acknowledgements to concerns reported, however, it was highlighted that all updates are added to the Cheshire West and Chester Council website, rather than directly notifying individual complainants.

Councillor Borman reported on ongoing drainage problems along the A534, caused by blocked gullies on the main road, which were having an impact on surrounding highways. She continued to report her concerns to Cheshire West and Chester Council.

As some of the land which was contributing to the flooding was possibly owned by the Bolesworth Estate, the Chair agreed to raise this matter at the next Bolesworth Meeting.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

5. NATIONAL TRUST

Councillor Wild reported that he had been unable to secure the attendance of the National Trust to this meeting, but he would try to make arrangements for a representative to attend the next meeting.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Wild invites the National Trust to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

6. GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS 2024-2025

RESOLVED

That the following Policy documents, circulated with the Agenda, be approved (subject to the amendment of any typographical errors):-

- (i) **Standing Orders 2024**
- (ii) **Financial Regulations 2024**
- (iii) **GDPR Policy 2024**
- (iv) **Councillor Code of Conduct 2024**
- (v) **Retention of Documents Policy 2024**

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

RESOLVED

That the Risk Assessment for 2024-2025, appended to these Minutes as Appendix 1, be approved.

8. ASSET REGISTER

RESOLVED

That the signed and dated Asset Register for 2024-2025, appended to these Minutes as Appendix 2, be approved.

9. BUDGET AND FINANCE 2024-2025

Members considered a report of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

(i) Applications for Financial Assistance

The Clerk reported that there were no applications for financial assistance.

(ii) Transactions

RESOLVED

That the following transactions since the 1st July 2024, be approved:-

Payee/Payer	Description	Receipts	Payments
Hugo Fox	Monthly website fee (paid by Direct Debit on 12/07/2024)		£11.99
Shires	Invoice 1905		£18.00
Shires	Invoice 2051		£91.80
Information Commissioner	Annual Fee		£35.00
M Clough	July 2024 Salary		£346.62
HMRC	PAYE July 2024		£86.80
Hugo Fox	Website Build - Invoice 7199		£226.80
Cloud Next	Domain and Hosting Annual Renewal		£59.98
Hugo Fox	Monthly Website Fee - Invoice 6930		£11.99
Hugo Fox	DUPLICATED PAYMENT TAKEN BY DD		£11.99
Cloud Next	Email Upgrade		£63.77
M Clough	August 2024 Salary		£346.82
HMRC	PAYE August 2024		£86.60
Hugo Fox	Refund of Invoice 6930 (25 Aug)	£11.99	
Hugo Fox	Refund of Duplicated payment taken by DD (26 (Aug)	£11.99	

(The Clerk clarified that the duplicated payments and refunds were caused by a problem with the Direct Debit relating to HugoFox, which had now been resolved)

(iii) Payment of Invoices and Reimbursements

RESOLVED

That the following payments be approved:-

Payee/Payer	Details	Expenditure
M Clough	Salary September	@ £347.00
HMRC	PAYE Salary September	@ £87.00
M Clough	Salary October	@ £347.00
HMRC	PAYE Salary October	@ £87.00

(iv) Budget Allocation 2024-2025

RESOLVED

(i) That the following Budget Head expenditure to 20th September 2024 be approved:-

Budget Head	Total	Budget Allocation	£ Difference
Clerk Salary	£2,199.70	£5,274.00	£3,074.30
Office Allowance	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
General Admin	£551.02	£500.00	-£51.02
Room Hire	£200.00	£215.00	£15.00
Website Costs	£374.53	£500.00	£125.47
Microsoft Office	£0.00	£60.00	£60.00
Insurance	£499.72	£500.00	£0.28
Training	£0.00	£200.00	£200.00
S137 - Poppy Wreaths	£0.00	£100.00	£100.00
Elections	£273.35	£274.00	£0.65
A534 Interactive Signs	£0.00	£3,000.00	£3,000.00
Running Cost/Contingency	£0.00	£950.00	£950.00
Fire Engine House	£0.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Grants	£0.00	£500.00	£500.00
Projects (CIL)	£0.00	£1,923.81	£1,923.81
	£4,098.32	£14,996.81	£10,898.49

(v) Explanation of Variances

Members were asked to approve a reallocation of funds of £150.00 from the Contingency Budget to the General Admin Budget, as recent invoices from Shires payroll had resulted in an overspend on the General Admin Budget.

RESOLVED

That the reallocation of funds to clear the overspend in the General Admin Budget, be given further consideration at the next meeting of the Parish Council, when the 2025-2026 Budget is considered.

(vi) Bank Reconciliation as at 20th September 2024

RESOLVED

That the following Bank Reconciliation as at 20th September 2024 be approved:-

Bank Reconciliation 20th September 2024	
BROXTON AND DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL	
Financial year ending 31 March 2025	
Prepared by: Muna Clough, Parish Clerk & RFO	
Balance per bank statements as at 20th September 2024	
Current Account (07572433)	£ 18,025.59
Less: any unpresented cheques	£0
Add: any unbanked cash	£0
Net bank balances as at 20th September 2024	
The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows	£ 18,025.59
CASH BOOK	
Opening Balance	£ 14,563.97
Add: Receipts in the year	£ 7,559.94
Less: Payments in the year	£ 4,098.32
Closing balance per cash book [receipts and payments book] must equal net bank balances above	£ 18,025.59

(vii) Bank Statements

RESOLVED

- (a) That the bank statements dated 31st July 2024 and 31st August 2024, as circulated, be received.
- (b) That the Clerk opens a Savings Account for the Parish Council.

10. CIL MONIES

Members considered the following projects for the CIL monies:-

Welcome signs
Notice Boards

The Clerk reported that she had submitted the annual report to Cheshire West and Chester Council confirming that there was no expenditure from the CIL monies, and encouraged Members to seriously consider projects on which to spend the funding.

RESOLVED

- (i) That Councillor Henshall provides costings for Welcome Signs and reports back to the next meeting of the Parish Council;
- (ii) That the Clerk contacts Simon Poole and asks for a quote to renovate the three existing Notice Boards and to sand/refresh the Bus Shelter;
- (iii) That the Clerk obtains quotes for a bike rack to be attached to the Bus Shelter, particularly for use by school children;
- (iv) That the Clerk obtains quotes for purchasing three new powder coated green aluminium Notice Boards and that the quotes be itemised, ie. including posts.

11. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

At this juncture, the Chair requested that the following items be added to the next Agenda:-

- Overgrown Hedges
- Highways Clearance – Clearance of Gullies on a Maintenance Cycle
- Possibility of the Parish Council Renting the Chapel Car Park for visitors to the area

RESOLVED

That the above items be added to the Agenda for the next meeting of the Parish Council.

12. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW WORKING GROUP

Councillor Henshall advised Members that the next steps involved in a potential Review of the Neighbourhood Plan, were to survey the local community.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Henshall looks into providing a survey for the local community and reports back to the next meeting.

13. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Councillor Henshall advised Members of the following:-

- (i) The more people reporting a highways problem to Cheshire West and Chester Council, then the higher a priority the problem would become. Therefore, multiple individual reports, had more power than a single report by the Parish Council.
- (ii) Recent flooding on Old Coach Road was now resolved.
- (iii) Speeding on the A534 continued to be a problem, particularly because of the junction hazard. The Clerk had looked into the possibility of purchasing an interactive flashing sign via Cheshire West and Chester Council, but had been advised that the cost was in the region of £10,000.
- (iv) The Sand Stone had still not been re-installed in a vertical position.

RESOLVED

- (i) **That the Clerk further investigates the cost of purchasing a 'Slow Down - Hazard Ahead' flashing interactive sign from an alternative supplier;**
- (ii) **That Members email the Clerk of a list of items that they feel need to be maintained, even if they are not owned by the Parish Council, eg. Post Boxes; Bus Shelter;**
- (iii) **That Councillor Henshall to email Stuart Bateman, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Principal Engineer, about re-installing the Sand Stone.**

14. PLANNING MATTERS

Planning Applications

Members noted that there were no new planning applications for consideration at this meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that she had forwarded the comments of the Parish Council to Cheshire West and Chester Planning Department, in relation to Planning Reference Numbers: 24/01925/FUL and 24/01926/LBC, as agreed in Minute 14(i) of the last meeting.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

15. FOOTPATHS / RIGHTS OF WAY

Councillor Bell reported that he had been unable to make contact with the Rights of Way Officer. He asked Members to notify him of any paths of interest.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Bell continues to try to make contact with a relevant officer in the Public Rights of Way Department at Cheshire West and Chester Council.

16. BOLESWORTH ESTATE

Councillor Williams updated Members of the last meeting of the Bolesworth Estate.

The Estate was trying to work with Cheshire West and Chester Council's Highways Department in an attempt to mitigate flooding, but no response had been received. The Estate was therefore working on its own project to manage flooding.

The application for proposed holiday lets at Harthill, had been submitted.

The Estate was looking at potential development areas, and had identified Castlefields to erect affordable housing, which would hopefully be realistically affordable for local young people.

Locations for facilities were being investigated, and future events were being considered. Whilst there wouldn't be a Christmas event this year, the Estate would be reapplying for an Event Licence for next year.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted that the date of the next meeting of the Broxton and District Parish Council would be held on Monday, 25th November 2024.

18. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair was of the opinion that the following items of business should be considered as a matter of urgency due to time constraints.

19. VILLAGE NEWS

The Chair suggested that the Parish Council could promote its work and decisions in the Village News Newsletter.

RESOLVED

That the Chair to look into the cost of purchasing a page in the Village News, so that updates could be shared with the community following meetings of the Parish Council.

20. EXEMPT BUSINESS

Members resolved that the following items of business shall be exempt from the press and public as they contained information relating to an employee and commercially sensitive information.

21. PARISH CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

RESOLVED

- (i) **That a permanent increase to 6 hours per week, for the role of the Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, be approved.**
- (ii) **That the Annual Pay Review for the Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer in line with her Contract of Employment, in the sum of 37p per hour (SCP 22 to SCP 23), be approved.**

22. THE FIRE ENGINE HOUSE

Councillor Henshall presented an update on this matter.

RESOLVED

That this matter be reviewed at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

Broxton and District Parish Council Risk Assessment 2024-2025

Identified Risk	Potential consequence of risk	Assessment of impact (H/M/L)	Likelihood of risk occurring (H/M/L)	Controls in place to manage risk	Required Action
Loss or damage of physical assets owned by the Council.	Assets unable to be used. Expense of replacing assets.	H	M	An up to date register of assets. Adequate insurance of assets.	Regularly update register of assets and review insurance accordingly.
The risk of damage to third party property or individuals as a consequence of the Council providing services or amenities to the public.	Risk of litigation should an individual or third party property become injured or damaged.	H	M	Public liability insurance. Continue to report the failure of services and amenities to the public to the relevant authority.	Annual review of Public Liability Insurance cover
Loss of cash through theft or dishonesty.	The Council may be unable to provide its services. Damage to reputation of the Council.	H	L	Regular bank reconciliations are carried out. Internal audit carried out annually.	All payments detailed at Council Meetings.
Security and maintenance of documents and equipment.	Risk of loss of council records or property.	H	L	Documents backed up and Officer equipment safely stored when not in use.	Regular back up of laptop documents and website.
Compromised banking arrangements, including borrowing or lending as they are inadequate.	Loss of income through poor investment of funds. Bank charges incurred through unauthorised borrowing.	L	L	Regular bank reconciliations are carried out before each Council meeting. The budget is monitored each month and balances are transferred between the deposit account and current account.	

Identified Risk	Potential consequence of risk	Assessment of impact (H/M/L)	Likelihood of risk occurring (H/M/L)	Controls in place to manage risk	Required Action
Inaccuracies in Financial records	Public criticism by reviewer of accounts leading to reputational challenges	M	L	Cash book is maintained throughout the year. At the year end, financial statements are produced from the cash book and adopted by the Council. The bank reconciliation is presented to all meetings. All invoices and payments are now stored on the cloud.	Continue to formally receive financial statements at every meeting of the Parish Council
Failure to ensure all business activities are within legal powers applicable to local councils.	Ultra-vires expenditure could lead to local elector challenge. Possible external auditor investigation / public interest report. This would result in increased fees and bad publicity for the Council.	M	L	All payments are authorised by the Council at Council meetings. CHALC Membership	The Minutes record all decisions taken and payments made. Ensure Clerk's training is up to date.
Failure to ensure all requirements are met under employment law and HMRC regulations.	Fines for not meeting requirements. Liability for unpaid tax. Risk of legal action from employee.	M	L	Payroll records maintained each month. Parish Clerk has contract for employment which is reviewed annually. Annual payroll returns are submitted on time via Shires payroll. Employment contract for Parish Clerk is approved by Council.	
Failure to ensure all requirements are met	Entitlement to reclaim of VAT for a period being lost.	M	L	VAT is analysed separately in the cash book. VAT invoices are retained.	

Identified Risk	Potential consequence of risk	Assessment of impact (H/M/L)	Likelihood of risk occurring (H/M/L)	Controls in place to manage risk	Required Action
under Customs and Excise regulations.				VAT returns are submitted annually.	
Failure to ensure the adequacy of the annual precept within sound budgeting arrangements.	The Council would not be able to meet its objectives due to lack of funds.	H	L	The Council set a budget annually in the annual budget meeting. Actual expenditure against budgeted expenditure is reported to Council at each meeting.	
Failure to adopt timely and accurate reporting of council business in the minutes.	The Council could be open to challenge if they do not have an accurate record of any decisions taken.	L	L	Minutes are taken at each Council meeting by the Clerk, these are properly numbered and are approved at the next Council meeting. A master copy is kept within the files stored at the Clerks home address.	To deliver the signed Minutes to the Cheshire Records Office on an annual basis. Ongoing training of the Clerk as recommended by CHALC
Failure to respond to electors wishing to exercise their rights of inspection.	An elector could complain if they are not able to exercise their right of inspection.	L	L	A notice is put up on Council website notifying electors of their right to inspection of the accounts during the relevant inspection period.	
Inadequate document control.	Increased fee from the internal auditor or external auditor if there is a poor audit trail.	L	L	All documents are filed. There is an audit trail from the cash book to supporting documentation.	Respond to any comments/recommendations from the Auditor

Identified Risk	Potential consequence of risk	Assessment of impact (H/M/L)	Likelihood of risk occurring (H/M/L)	Controls in place to manage risk	Required Action
Register of members' interests and gifts and hospitality isn't in place, complete, accurate or up to date.	Possible complaint by elector.	L	M	All members have adopted the code of conduct.	Ensure all new Members are clearly briefed about the requirements Annual reminders to all Members to check/update their interests
Disaster Recovery not in place	Loss of essential records	H	L	Secure online data storage.	
Any circumstance affecting the Council's ability to hold regular meetings	Inability to conduct council business due to not being able to hold face:face meetings	H	L	Hold meetings remotely where this is legal	Follow advice from CHALC
Supplier fraud including the adequacy of supplier onboarding controls	Loss of finances from goods paid for but not received	M	M	Most costs are only incurred after goods received Extra research if payment is to be made in advance	
Parish Council inquorate	Too few councillors	M	M	Immediate and extensive recruitment Positive and extensive publicity of vacancies CWAC support Monitor and manage as appropriate	Members of Parish Council
Loss of Property	Damage including third party or criminal damage	M	M	Review adequacy of Insurance Cover	Annual reviews
Data Protection	Information is shared inappropriately	M	M	Members regularly reminded of their obligations	Additional training where necessary
Staff not in place	Essential works not carried out	M L	M L	Hours, health/long term illness, training, resignation.	Continual membership of CHALC who will provide temporary support if required.

Identified Risk	Potential consequence of risk	Assessment of impact (H/M/L)	Likelihood of risk occurring (H/M/L)	Controls in place to manage risk	Required Action
	Fraud by Staff			Monitor and manage as appropriate. Fidelity guarantee value set at appropriate level	

BROXTON & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL**Register of Assets 2024/2025**

Asset	Purchase Date	Cost	Insured
(1) Fire Engine House Old Coach Road CH3 9HY			50,000.00
(1) Bus Shelter Sherrington Lane CH3 9JU			Insured under Street Furniture for £14,500
(3) Noticeboards Sherrington Lane CH3 9JU Duckington SY14 8LQ Harthill Green CH3 9LF	29/06/2016	1141.17	Insured under Street Furniture for £14,500
(2) Benches Sherrington Lane CH3 9JU Duckington SY14 8LQ	18/08/2016 01/01/2018	675.50 1.00	Insured under Street Furniture for £14,500
(1) Defibrillator Sherrington Lane CH3 9JU	16/12/2017	2285.00	2000.00
(1) Lenovo Laptop	25/09/2023	300.00	300.00
(1) Samsung A20 Mobile phone	01/12/2020	121.67	100.00
(1) Telephone Box			Insured under Street Furniture for £14,500
		TOTAL	£66,900.00

Inspected by:



Date of Inspection:

20/09/2024 .