

BROXTON AND DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

20th May 2024

Commenced: 7.30 pm

Terminated: 8.55 pm

Present: Councillors Bell, Borman, Henshall, Rogers, Vaughan and Williams,

Mrs M Clough – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Houghton and Shadbolt, together with Councillor Jones, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Councillor submitted their apologies for absence.

2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED

That Councillor Williams be appointed Chair of Broxton and District Parish Council Business for the 2024/2025 Municipal Year.

3. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR

RESOLVED

- (i) That if Councillor Houghton is in agreement, that he be appointed Deputy Chair of Broxton and District Parish Council Business for the 2024/2025 Municipal Year.**
- (ii) That this appointment be deferred to the next meeting, for confirmation.**

4. COUNCILLOR VACANCY

Members discussed their concerns over the main reasons for Councillor Poole's recent resignation from the Parish Council and agreed that the historic community spirit adopted by the Parish Council was being compromised by the conduct of an individual Councillor, at meetings and within the community. Members were keen to ensure that all Councillors acted within the scope of the Councillors Code of Conduct and agreed that when the vacancy was filled, then training be provided.

RESOLVED

That the resignation of Councillor Simon Poole be received, and the vacancy be advertised.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

6. MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 25th March 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair of the Parish Council.

Further to Minute 14(iii), Councillor Bell reported that he had been seeking to speak to the Council's Highways Engineer about the milestone but had been unsuccessful.

7. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no Members of the Public in attendance however, the Chair had received a request from a resident regarding improving the condition of the highways due to sediment, grass and dust.

Councillor Henshall reported that he had spoken to Mr Stuart Bateman, Principal Engineer about the condition of Reading Room Lane, and had been advised that individual complaints added the most weight, when reporting highways problems.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk to insert a link onto the new website, which assists residents in reporting issues to Cheshire West and Chester Council.

8. 2023-2024 ACCOUNTS

(i) Certificate of Exemption

RESOLVED

That approval be given to the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to submit a Statement of Exemption to the External Auditor for the 2023-2024 Financial Year.

(ii) Annual Governance Statement

RESOLVED That Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2023-2024, as circulated, be approved.

(iii) Accounting Statements

RESOLVED

That Section 2 of the AGAR, Accounting Statements 2023-2024, as circulated, be approved.

(iv) Internal Audit Report

RESOLVED

That the Annual Internal Audit Report 2023-2024, be received.

(v) Detailed Internal Auditor Report

RESOLVED

That the detailed Internal Audit Report 2023-2024, be received.

9. BUDGET AND FINANCE 2024-2025

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

9.1 Applications for Financial Assistance

The Clerk reported that there had been no applications for financial assistance.

9.2 Transactions

RESOLVED

That the following transactions since 25th March 2024 be noted.

Payee/Payer	Description	Income	Expenditure
M Clough	Salary March		£225.93
HMRC	PAYE Salary March		£56.60
CHESHIRE WEST	Precept	£7,000.00	
CHALC	Annual Subscription		£113.24
Cheshire Footpaths Assoc	Annual Subscription		£8.00
Cheshire Community Council	Annual Subscription		£20.00
Davenport Accountants	Internal Audit		£130.00
HMRC	PAYE April 2024		£56.40
M Clough	April 2024 Salary		£226.13
Brown Knowl Methodist Church	2023-2024 Room Hire		£200.00

9.3 Payment of Invoices and Reimbursements

Members noted that the Clerk's hours were to be discussed later in the meeting.

RESOLVED

That the following payments be approved.

Payee/Payer	Details	Expenditure
M Clough	Salary May	Please refer to Minute
HMRC	PAYE Salary May	Please refer to Minute
M Clough	Salary June	Please refer to Minute
HMRC	PAYE Salary June	Please refer to Minute

9.4 Budget Expenditure to 2nd May 2024

The Clerk reported that there would have to be a review of funds allocated to the Clerk's Salary and Room Hire (The costs of Room Hire had increased by 20% for 2024-2025).

RESOLVED

(i) That the following Budget Head expenditure to 2nd May 2024 be approved:-

Budget Head	Total	BUDGET ALLOCATED	£ DIFFERENCE
Clerk Salary	£282.53	£3,600.00	£3,317.47
Office Allowance	£0.00	£400.00	£400.00
General Admin	£271.24	£500.00	£228.76
Room Hire	£200.00	£165.00	-£35.00
Website Costs	£0.00	£750.00	£750.00
Microsoft Office	£0.00	£60.00	£60.00
Insurance	£0.00	£750.00	£750.00
Training	£0.00	£200.00	£200.00
S137 - Poppy Wreaths	£0.00	£100.00	£100.00
Elections	£0.00	£548.00	£548.00
A534 Interactive Signs	£0.00	£3,000.00	£3,000.00
Running Cost/Contingency	£0.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Fire Engine House	£0.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Grants	£0.00	£500.00	£500.00
Projects	£0.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
	£753.77	£13,573.00	£12,819.23

(ii) That the Clerk looks into the cost of purchasing interactive road signs.

9.5 Bank Reconciliation as at 2nd May 2024

RESOLVED

That the following Bank Reconciliation as at 15th March 2024, be received:-

Bank Reconciliation 2nd May 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 2nd May 2024	
Current Account (07572433)	£ 20,810.20
Less: any unpresented cheques	£0

Add: any unbanked cash	£0
Net bank balances as at 2nd May 2024	
The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows	£ 20,810.20
<u>CASH BOOK</u>	
Opening Balance	£14,563.97
Add: Receipts in the year	£7,000.00
Less: Payments in the year	£753.77
Closing balance per cash book [receipts and payments book] must equal net bank balances above	£ 20,810.20

9.6 Clerk's Reimbursements

RESOLVED

That the Clerk's Reimbursements as detailed below, be approved:-

DETAILS	MILEAGE	£ (0.45p PER MILE)
25/10/2023 – Information meeting Sandstone Inn	19.6	8.82
19/11/2023 – Putting up Notices from CW6 9LG	24.9	11.20
12/12/2024 – Collecting lights from Brown Knowl	20.8	9.36
21/01/2024 - Putting up Notices from CW6 9LG	24.9	11.20
18/03/2024 - Putting up Notices from CW6 9LG	24.9	11.20
12/05/2024 - Putting up Notices from CW6 9LG	24.9	11.20
		£62.98

9.7 Parish Council Insurance

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council insurance was due for renewal on 1st June 2024. She had been sourcing alternative insurance, and Zurich provided a better deal. Members discussed the insuring of assets, and the Clerk agreed to contact Zurich and ensure the Phone Box and Defibrillator were also included. If the quote remained competitive, then the Clerk would have authority to buy the new insurance from Zurich.

RESOLVED

That if the Parish Council insurance quote remains competitive, when the Phone Box and Defibrillator are added, then the Clerk be given approval to arrange.

10. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW WORKING GROUP

Councillor Henshall reported that the Local Plan was currently under Review. This would provide information required for the Neighbourhood Plan. The first steps would be to survey the residents to ascertain their priorities, as the Neighbourhood Plan would identify the needs of the community. Following approval of the Parish Council, the Working Group would then look to draft a suitable survey.

RESOLVED

That this matter be deferred to the next meeting when Members will be asked for approval to draft a survey for the community.

11. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

Councillor Henshall reported on the following:-

- (i) A41 Broxton/A534 – Members noted that the former Police and Crime Commissioner who had been trialling cameras was no longer in post.

RESOLVED

That the possibility of erecting two interactive warning signs be investigated which would be located on each side of the junction, together with information on their upkeep and instalment.

- (i) Reading Room Lane – The continual flooding that was occurring on Reading Room Lane was due to mud and silt blocking the drains. Councillors Vaughan and Henshall had been in discussions with Mr John Barnes from Cheshire West and Chester Highways, regarding how to resolve this matter. Unless the root cause was addressed by the landowner, the matter would be ongoing. An indicative cost each time the drains needed to be unblocked (which included a temporary road closure) was approximately £2,000. Highways had confirmed the work would be undertaken as part of their scheduled work, at the same time as similar works in the area.

Councillor Henshall explained the strong feelings of the community and the detrimental impact on their daily lives, to the landowner, who was present at the meeting.

RESOLVED

That residents be encouraged to report their individual concerns via the link on the Cheshire West and Chester website.

- (ii) Old Coach Road – There had been water running towards Duckington for approximately two months. The Highways Department would be testing the water for chlorine. If chlorine was present, the matter would be referred to the Water Authority. If chlorine was not present, then the source of the water would be a spring.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

- (iii) Welcome to Broxton – Councillor Henshall suggested installing additional welcome to Broxton signs.

RESOLVED

That in the first instance, the Cheshire West and Chester Highways Department be contacted regarding the feasibility of this proposal.

- (iv) Roadside Verge by the Green Openreach Box Sited on the A534 – BT Openreach had agreed to look at this and the Parish Council was awaiting a report from them.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

12. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

In Councillor Shadbolt's absence, the Clerk reported that she had not been notified of any planning matters.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

13. FOOTPATHS / RIGHTS OF WAY

Councillor Bell reported that he had no updates to report.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

14. BOLESWORTH ESTATE

Councillors Williams and Borman reported that meetings had not taken place and there were no updates available.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted that the date of the next meeting of the Broxton and District Parish Council was Monday, 22nd July 2024.

16. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that there were no matters which required consideration as a matter of urgency.

18. EXEMPT BUSINESS

The following items of business were exempt from the press and public as they contained personal and commercially sensitive information.

19. CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

RESOLVED

That the Clerk's hours be increased from four per week to six per week, backdated to 25th March 2024, with a Review in September 2024.

20. THE FIRE STATION HOUSE

Councillor Henshall updated Members with the progress on this matter.

RESOLVED

That in accordance with the delegated authority given to the Fire Engine House Committee, agreed at the last meeting of the Parish Council (Minute 20 refers), the progress to date be noted and that an update report be presented to the next meeting of the Parish Council.