

BROXTON AND DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

25th March 2024

Commenced: 7.30 pm

Terminated: 9.10 pm

**Present: Councillor Williams (Chair)
Councillors Bell, Borman, Rogers, Shadbolt and Wild
Councillor Jones (Cheshire West and Chester Councillor)**

Mrs M Clough – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Also in attendance was one Member of the Public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Henshall, Houghton, Poole and Vaughan.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 29th January 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Councillor Shadbolt objected to Minute 15, Football Pitch and wished to make comments thereon. The Clerk advised her that the subject of the Minutes was not an item for debate, but simply to agree their accuracy or otherwise. The Clerk added that the Minutes accurately recorded the discussion of this Item.

4. PUBLIC FORUM

A Member of the Public wished to raise the condition of Reading Room Lane. The Chair reported that this would be discussed during Highways Matters.

5. BUDGET AND FINANCE 2023-2024

(a) Payment of Invoices and Reimbursements

Members noted that the following transactions in Schedule A had been made since the last meeting:-

Schedule A

| Date | Payee/Payer | Details | Income | Expenditure |
|-------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 30/01/2024 | M Clough | Salary January | | £225.93 |
| 30/01/2024 | HMRC | PAYE Salary January | | £56.60 |
| 12/02/2024 | Bickerton Tennis Club | Donation towards lighting | | £250.00 |
| 29/02/2024 | Cheshire Wildlife Trust | Training – Parish Council | | £60.00 |
| 29/02/2024 | M Clough | Salary February | | £226.13 |
| 29/02/2024 | HMRC | PAYE Salary February | | £56.40 |
| 11/03/2024 | CHALC | Training – Cllr Henshall | | £45.00 |

Members were asked to approve the payments listed in Schedule B below:-

Schedule B

| Payee/Payer | Details | Expenditure |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Clerk | March Salary | £225.93 |
| HMRC | PAYE Salary March | £56.60 |
| Clerk | April Salary | Approx. £226.00 |
| HMRC | PAYE Salary April | Approx £57.00 |

RESOLVED

- (i) That the payments listed in Schedule A be retrospectively approved and noted;
- (ii) That the payments listed in Schedule B be approved.

(b) Budget Expenditure to 15th March 2024

Members considered the following Budget Head expenditure to 15th March 2024:-

| Budget Head | Total | BUDGET ALLOCATED | DIFFERENCE | DIFFERENCE £ |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|------------------|
| Clerk Salary | £3,224.84 | £3,052.00 | 105.66% | -£172.84 |
| Office Allowance | £579.09 | £208.00 | 278.41% | -£371.09 |
| General Admin | £444.88 | £1,100.00 | 40.44% | £655.12 |
| Room Hire | £150.00 | £165.00 | 90.91% | £15.00 |
| Website Costs | £0.00 | £100.00 | 0.00% | £100.00 |
| Microsoft Office | £0.00 | £50.00 | 0.00% | £50.00 |
| Clerk Mobile Costs | £0.00 | £100.00 | 0.00% | £100.00 |
| Insurance | £534.68 | £660.00 | 81.01% | £125.32 |
| Training | £280.00 | £200.00 | 140.00% | -£80.00 |
| S137 - Poppy Wreaths | £25.00 | £100.00 | 25.00% | £75.00 |
| Elections | £323.75 | £548.00 | 59.08% | £224.25 |
| A534 Interactive Signs | £0.00 | £3,000.00 | 0.00% | £3,000.00 |
| Running Cost/Contingency | £279.00 | £1,000.00 | 27.90% | £721.00 |
| Fire Engine House | £0.00 | £1,000.00 | 0.00% | £1,000.00 |
| Grants | £500.00 | £500.00 | 100.00% | £0.00 |
| Projects | £595.04 | £1,000.00 | 59.50% | £404.96 |
| | £6,936.28 | £12,783.00 | | £5,846.72 |

RESOLVED

That the Budget Expenditure to 15th March 2024 be received.

(c) Bank Reconciliation as at 15th March 2024

Members were presented with the following Bank Reconciliation as at 15th March 2024:-

| | |
|---|------------|
| Bank Reconciliation 15th March 2024 | |
| BROXTON AND DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL | |
| Financial year ending 31 March 2024 | |
| | |
| Prepared by: Muna Clough, Parish Clerk & RFO | |
| | |
| Balance per bank statements as at 15th March 2024 | £ |
| Current Account (00674201) | £15,231.50 |
| | |

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Less: any unpresented cheques (payments) | £0.00 |
| | |
| Add: any unbanked cash | £0.00 |
| | |
| Net bank balances as at 15th March 2024 | £15,231.50 |
| The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows | |
| CASH BOOK | |
| | |
| Opening Balance at 01/04/2023 | £13,496.33 |
| Add: Receipts in the year | £8,671.45 |
| Less: Payments in the year | £6,936.28 |
| Closing balance per cash book [receipts and payments book] must equal net bank balances above | £15,231.50 |

RESOLVED

That the Bank Reconciliation at 15th March 2024, be received.

(d) Appointment of Shires Accountants 2024-2025

RESOLVED

That the appointment of Shires Accountants as the Parish Council's independent payroll provider for 2024-2025 be approved.

6. CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

The Clerk reported that under the Financial Regulations, she had sought approval to enrol the Parish Council as a member of Cheshire Association of Local Councils (CHALC). There was a huge benefit to being a Member. The cost of membership for the year April 2024-March 2025 was £113.24.

RESOLVED

That the Membership to CHALC be retrospectively approved.

7. INTERNAL AUDITOR

The Clerk asked Members to approve the appointment of Davenport Accountants as the 2023-2024 Internal Auditor in the sum of £130.00.

RESOLVED

That the appointment of Davenport Accountants as the 2023-2024 Internal Auditor be approved.

8. ALLOCATION OF COUNCILLOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Clerk sought the allocation of particular portfolios to individual Members of the Parish Council, as it was the Members who had the area knowledge required to investigate and report back to the Parish Council.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the following Members and their portfolios be approved, together with responsibility for the investigation and submission of reports to the Parish Council on matters relating to their associated briefs:-**
- **Planning – Councillor Shadbolt**
 - **Highways – Councillor Henshall**
 - **Footpaths (Rights of Way) – Councillor Bell**

- (ii) **That the Clerk to draft a guidance document on the Members' individual roles and responsibilities.**

9. NEW WEBSITE

The Clerk reported that she had been struggling with the existing website, and asked Members to consider a report recommending the approval of HugoFox to build and host a new website. Members were concerned that the name HugoFox might be included in the address box, and the Clerk was asked to enquire of them, whether or not the Parish Council could keep its existing domain name.

RESOLVED

That the decision on appointing the website provider be delegated to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair.

10. PARISH COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

The Clerk asked Members to consider the provision of an appropriate storage facility for Parish Council documents, not accepted by the Cheshire Records Office.

Councillor Jones reported that some Parish Councils were amending their Standing Orders to categorise the document retention into shorter timescales, and to accommodate electronic storage.

RESOLVED

- (i) **That the Clerk to look at the Standing Orders with a view to categorising different documents for shorter retention schedules;**
- (ii) **That the Clerk contacts Iron Mountain to ask for a quote for digitising the historic paper copies, in her possession prior to her appointment.**

11. COMMUNITY ORCHARD

In Councillor Poole's absence, the Chair reported that Councillor Poole had been looking into possible funding available for introducing community orchards on unused land within the Parish.

RESOLVED

That Councillors Borman and Williams to raise this matter at the next Bolesworth meeting.

12. ROADSIDE VERGE BY THE GREEN OPEN REACH BOX SITED ON THE A534

Councillor Jones reported that he had spoken to the associated Planning Officer at Cheshire West and Chester Council, who had agreed to discuss this matter with the Highways Department with a view to making proposals to improve the junction, by moving hedges and restricting the layby. He added that the two Departments would be drafting a proposed plan which would be submitted to the Parish Council for consideration.

Councillor Shadbolt made a number of comments and Members agreed to give this matter further consideration at the next meeting.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Shadbolt presents a written report to the next meeting of the Parish Council for consideration.

13. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW WORKING GROUP

The Chair reported that there were no updates to consider at this meeting.

14. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

(i) A41 BROXTON/A534

Councillor Borman reported further deterioration of the highway outside Our Cottage, Philips Park, and the Woodlands to the Sandstone Inn. She added that the condition was so poor that it required a resurface.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk, submits an online report to Cheshire West and Chester Council Highways Department, on behalf of the Parish Council, to request a resurface of the highway from Our Cottage, Philips Park, and the Woodlands to the Sandstone Inn.

(ii) READING ROOM LANE

The Member of Public reported that Reading Room Lane was flooded again, and that she would report this to Cheshire West and Cheshire East Councils.

In the absence of Councillor Henshall, the Chair read a report that Councillor Henshall had written, following a site meeting he had held with Cheshire West and Chester Council Highways representative.

Councillor Henshall had also suggested that the Parish Council should compile a list of landmarks and notable features in the Parish, which the Members should endeavour to protect. These would include:

- Fire Engine House
- Beating of Bounds monument
- Historic Milestone on lower Old Coach Road.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted, and a List of Landmarks and Notable Features in the Parish be compiled, to include fire Engine House; Beating of Bounds monument and the Historic Milestone on lower, Old Coach Road.

(iii) MILESTONE

Councillor Bell reported that he had been consulting with Mr Stuart Bateman Principal Engineer, from Cheshire West and Chester Council on the Milestone, Old Coach Road.

He had also spoken to the Chair of Mid-Cheshire Footpaths Society with a view to drafting a Footpaths Plan, and he had met with Deborah Lack the Cheshire West and Chester Council Public Rights of Way Officer. Ms Lack had reported that she was already following up some issues that had been raised previously, and that the Department was working on a project to replace styles with gates, wherever possible, to improve access. She was also willing to help in conversations with landowners in maintaining paths etc.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

15. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Members discussed the following planning matters for January, February, and March (to date). Up to date references could be made by following the link: [Monthly List \(cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk\)](https://cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

February 2024

24/00537/NMA – Phillips Park Salters Lane Broxton Chester Cheshire West and Chester CH3 9JH
Non material amendment to 21/00187/FUL (The addition of one window to the rear elevation in the master bedroom and the addition of a single window in the garage to the rear elevation)
Decision: Awaiting Decision

24/00211/FUL – Land at Bankhead Old Coach Road Broxton Chester
Installation of a domestic scale Solar PV array to a paddock
Decision: Awaiting Decision

24/00174/LDC – Withy Bank Old Coach Road Broxton Chester CH3 9JL

Lawful commencement of development for conversion of a steel portal framed barn into a three bedroomed residential dwelling with associated curtilage as approved under planning permission 23/00295/FUL by completing site preparation works for drainage.

Decision: Awaiting Decision

RESOLVED

That the planning applications detailed above be noted.

16. BOLESWORTH ESTATE

Councillor Borman reported on a meeting that she attended on 12th March 2024. A planning consultant was also in attendance who discussed the Neighbourhood Plan. The consultant updated on the short, medium and long term plans for the area, which predominantly focussed on Tattenhall.

Proposals for development areas involved the canal side, glamping pods outside the Ice Cream Farm, the Candle Factory, and other areas that had been earmarked.

Bolesworth was keen to build affordable housing for local people, and discussions ensued around the transport network.

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 was Monday, 20th May 2024.

18. URGENT ITEMS

There were no matters of business which the Chair was of the opinion should be considered 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

- (i) That the permanent appointment of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer be ratified, following the completion of a successful probationary period;
- (ii) That the annual salary review of the Clerk be approved and the position be paid on Spinal Column Point 23, from 1st April 2024.
- (iii) That the Clerk and Chair conduct and approve a review of the hours required for the role, and report back to the next meeting. Payment for the hours agreed to be backdated to 25th March 2024.

20. THE FIRE STATION HOUSE

RESOLVED

- (i) That this building is retained by the Parish Council as a landmark and historic piece of the local community;
- (ii) That the Clerk to seek to obtain a price for a steel roof;
- (iii) That the Clerk to seek legal advice from Community Action;
- (iv) That the Clerk to contact CHALC if necessary, regarding the boundary dispute;
- (v) That a Fire Engine House Committee be established comprising the Chair, Deputy Chair, Councillor Henshall and the Clerk, and be given delegated authority to make arrangements to preserve this historic building for its electorate and local community;

- (vi) That the Committee be given delegated authority to spend a maximum of £2,000 in appointing any contractors or legal works, before the next meeting of the Parish Council;
- (vii) That if necessary, the Committee calls an Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council.