

PRESENT: Councillor Jeff Warburton - Chairman
Councillor John Atherden - Vice Chairman
Councillor Chris Frankland

IN ATTENDANCE: Clerk Sue McDonald

1 APOLOGIES: Councillors A. Unwin, J. Erlam, J. Sherratt, L. Gianferrari, R. Jackson

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS: None

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes for 15th March, 19th May and 19th July were unanimously approved. Proposer Councillor Atherden, seconder Councillor C Frankland. **RESOLVED:** The minutes of the meetings were approved as correct records.

4 POLICE REPORT

Emma Darroch, from the Police, was unable to attend and no report was received. However, Emma will be attending the Rose Queen on Saturday 18th September.

5 TATTON ESTATE

5.1 General Report

Daniel Osborne, of Tatton Estate, was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following information:

- Battersea Muddy Dogs Run will take place on Saturday 25th September 2021 at Ashley Hall. This takes place at the Showgrounds and around the perimeter of the Bollin.
The event spill on to Ashley Mill Lane (as a crossing only) but Daniel has Anthony Clarkson, Adam Taylor and Herbie Hope are already in the loop.
Car parking will be contained within the Showgrounds.
- An outdoor Wedding Fayre will take place on 9th and 10th October 2021 in one field of the Showgrounds and it will be run by Wedding supply companies.
It is a ticket only event and car parking will be contained within the Showgrounds.

5.2 Tatton Services

5.2.1 General Report

No report from Tatton Estate was available

5.2.2 Feedback

Councillor Frankland attended a Teams meeting with the owner, the MD, the architect, the Planner and the Landscape Architect involved with the proposed service station. He was the sole representative of the community at the meeting but is sure that there have been other meetings. He gave the following report *'Much of the detail discussed at the meeting can be found in their leaflet which has been distributed.*

It was a refreshing meeting in that it was such a change to hear from a large organisation that could back up their plans with track record as can be seen at the Tebay, Gloucester Services and the lesser known - in these parts - Cairn Lodge Services in Scotland.

It was a pleasant and positive meeting with people who were obviously committed to a sustainable approach to good business. It appears that Ashley and the local area is fortunate to have the group invest in the area, especially for local rural businesses

The company is looking to source its supplies from local small businesses within a 30 mile radius of the services'

Councillor Warburton welcomed the initiative but urged caution over being too enthusiastic about the company using local businesses, such as those in Ashley, because it is unlikely that such small concerns could deliver the quantities required in which would, inevitably, be subject to rigid timescales and other conditions.

Councillor Frankland agreed this may be true for certain products but there would still be opportunities for craft items to be sold.

The meeting raised some questions which have been sent to all Councillors for comment and which will be discussed at the next meeting.

6 PLANNING MATTERS**6.1 Planning Applications for Consideration**

None

6.2 Planning Applications Already Considered**21/4256M 6 Hough Green**

To record that the Council had no objections or comments

6.3 Planning Enforcement

In the absence of a response from Enforcement, Councillors agreed that the Clerk should contact them again. The Clerk pointed out that there are only three enforcement officers covering the whole of Cheshire East. There was a discussion about contacting the leader of the Council about the issue but it was agreed that the Council could save that route for other pressing issues such as gulleys and HS2.

6.4 Other Planning Matters

None

7 M56 SMART MOTORWAY

No Councillors from the Smart Motorway subgroup were able to attend, but Councillor Jackson sent the following update.

'The subgroup has learnt recently that Mike Bull (the lead for the Smart Motorway projects in the North) has left Highways England and has gone to HS2. The subgroup (we) will contact his replacement.

The next phase of the project is key. There will be more vegetation removal on the embankment nearest to the village and everyone needs to be vigilant. It is important to complain if it is excessive or too much noise at night. We have been very clear that the village is very concerned about this activity.

We are also asking very searching questions about the Environmental Assessment Report for this scheme. There was a legal challenge to the M62 scheme and we are waiting for a reply to our latest questions.

Finally the finish date has been put back to Autumn 2022. Highways England has stated that this is due to installing better equipment to detect broken down cars.

Councillors agreed that Highways England had been less than forthcoming about the actual number of trees to be removed. In addition, there is no information available regarding mitigation planting for the future.

Councillor Frankland explained that it would be preferable to plant whips because they stand a much better chance of successfully growing. However, to afford proper protection without a fence, large trees would have to be planted. Sadly the larger the tree, the greater the trauma to the tree resulting in a higher failure rate than that of whips or self set trees.

It was agreed that some photographs of the removal of trees on the west bound side of the motorway would be advantageous. Ideally the photographs should be taken from the same place each time to illustrate a time line of tree removal.

8 HS2**8.1 General Report**

HS2 has gone suspiciously quiet at the moment.

There is nothing of note to report except that the Council has learned there is to be a rolling stock depot near Middlewich. Councillors are of the opinion that HS2 does what it wants, when it wants with no regard to the environment. To have so many depots so close to each other suggest either bad design or a lack of design.

Comments were made about the need for the slow speed spur to Manchester Airport which would be no longer required if an alternative route using existing rail lines to the north M56 via Manchester Piccadilly to the Airport was considered.

Manchester Piccadilly is already a delaying factor for HS2 in that it is a dead end station and, for the HS2 train to continue on its route, the driver has to walk from one end of the train to the other end.

8.2 HS2 Petition Debate

Esther McVey gave a very considered and logical speech in which she stated her belief that, instead of the expensive white elephant that HS2 had become, the Government ought to consider delivering high speed broadband to every home in the country, adding that it would be cheaper and be more beneficial than HS2.

Esther McVey paid tribute to a few groups and people from Tatton who have worked "tirelessly unearthing the failings of HS2". She thanked Ashley Parish Council, Mid Cheshire against HS2 and others.

The Clerk contacted MCAHS2 to see if it could be of mutual benefit for the two organisations to work together. The group is happy to explore this opportunity and a member of the group will attend a Council meeting if desired.

The HS2 petition debate is on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yt-9ZsO5vg> and Esther McVey's contribution starts at approximately 50.37 minutes.

9 VILLAGE MATTERS

9.1 Noxious Smoke

There have been reports of continuing bonfires but none recently was reported as being creating noxious smoke.

The Clerk has not received any information from residents regarding this matter and so this item will be removed from the Agenda

9.2 Station Approach - Manchester Bound Side

The Hermes post it locker has been installed but the approach and the lines denoting parking spaces have still not been repaired.

The approach has become hazardous with large potholes hampering progress to the station. It is understood that there is no lighting on the approach.

The Clerk will contact National Rail again.

9.3 Playground Matters

Some maintenance has been carried out on the playground:

- New bark has been placed under the swings
- The worn play frame lattice has been removed
- The worn rope ladder has been removed

A quote had been obtained from the original suppliers of the equipment for replacing the defective parts. The Clerk attempted to obtain other quotes but the companies contacted wanted to supply completely new equipment could or 'do it yourself' spares

It was agreed that the lattice would be purchased and then a small survey of parents would be taken to ask if the children used the equipment and what else they would like to see in the playground..

Once the survey was complete and, if the results supported keeping the rope ladder then an order would be placed.

Councillor Warburton added that new gates plus a new gate stump had been installed by Richard Winwood.

It was reiterated that the inspection would be carried out after all the maintenance was finished.

It was noted that the Council had not received an invoice for cutting the hedge along the playground. Unfortunately the gates were locked so the inside part of the hedge could not be fully cut.

9.4 Village Planters

It was hoped to place a planter by the bench near the crossroads. Councillor Warburton will contact Jamie Shepherd to get information about the cost of the planters and then the Clerk will obtain additional quotes

9.5 Light in the Hough Green Passage to the Station

The light in the passage had not been repaired. Councillor Warburton had not been able to contact the electrician to request he replaces the faulty bulb.

A resident of Hough Green has requested that the light be less bright because it shines on her garden and it can be seen from the bridge.

9.6 Other Village Matters

A resident has requested that the Council looks at the number of signs in the village and if they are appropriate. This will be discussed at the next meeting when more Councillors are present.

10 FINANCIAL MATTERS

10.1 Authorisation of Payments

Proposed by Councillor Atherden, seconded by Councillor Frankland

£101.00 HMRC PAYE Q2

10.2 Receipt of Part 2 of Precept

To record that the second payment of the precept for £2,400 was received at the beginning of September

10.3 Re-Issue of Lost Cheques

The Clerk explained that some cheques made payable to her had been lost in the banking system and she requested the Council to reissue a cheque to cover the missing ones. The total sum of the cheques was £282.14. Councillors agreed to cover the amount and the Clerk will immediately stop the missing cheques.

10.4 Other Financial Matters

Councillor Frankland asked if cheques were the only way to make Council payments? It was explained that the Council has very few transaction and cheques provided both a paper trail and were less convoluted than paying online because each transaction would still need authorisation from two signatories.

11 HIGHWAYS MATTERS**11.1 Overgrown Pavements, Gulleys, Drains and Potholes**

There is a new Highways officer for the local area whose name is Josh Holden. The Clerk contacted him to request that he makes a visit to Ashley to do a walk round to observe the villages ongoing highways issues. Josh declined the invitation stating that not only has he not had his second Covid jab but, also, he has had numerous requests to visit various parishes. He was, however, quite happy to meet via a Zoom meeting.

On this basis the Clerk thought it wise to revisit the outstanding issues via a re-listing of known problems.

Councillors were unhappy with this approach and asked the Clerk to demand that the Highways officer visit Ashley. Some of the problems besetting Ashley were first reported some years ago and it is time they were resolved. These included a drain at Tanyard where a manhole has roots hanging out which was inspected but nothing was done about it. Another long standing problem was the overgrown pavements which have had very little maintenance.

There are also some new problems as follows:

11.1.1 Hedge At Swallows Barn

This hedge is a traffic hazard because its width is such that vehicles are forced towards the centre of the road. Its height is now of the order of 30 feet which makes for a very intimidating sight.

The hedge obscures Cheshire Railings which were installed to provide a visibility splay. There is a strong belief that the hedge is on agricultural, rather than private, land and as such should be removed.

Cheshire East has a duty of care to ensure Highways safety and Councillors considered that the hedge has got to the stage where some action is urgently required

11.1.2 Road to the Car Park on Hough Green

A resident reported that the approach road to the car park is sinking on one side and there are overgrown bushes to the other side. The resident will supply the Clerk with a photograph but until that is received it is not clear if the problems is the responsibility of Highways or Peaks and Plains.

11.1.3 Hough Green Passage to the Station

A resident reported that weeds in the passageway are so overgrown that one side is impassable. Again the resident agreed to provide an image of the problem.

11.2 Other Highways Matters

It was noted the new 'top up' scheme would cost more to administer than it would benefit repairs to the Highways. Councillor Leach has approximately £4,900 for repairs which has to cover the whole of Mobberley, Ashley and other local areas.

12 NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH AND SPEEDWATCH

It was agreed to defer this to the next meeting

13 NEW CODE OF CONDUCT

There was no comment on this item

14 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Cheshire East's Governance Review, amongst other things, is aimed at equalising the number of Councillors across parishes. It has been suggested that Ashley's Councillor complement be reduced from 8 to 7.

Councillor agreed that the flaw in this approach is that there is no recognition of the size of a parish nor the available services - or lack of services.

In Ashley's case it was agreed that the number of Councillors remain at 8 to cover the widespread nature of the Parish in order that all areas could be covered by a Councillor.

15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (10 MINUTES)

Nothing

16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Warburton asked Councillors if there should be a Christmas 'do' this year. There was unanimous agreement that the event should go ahead. This will be discussed at the next meeting

The Council also suggested that the recipient of the Brereton Trust should be discussed at the next meeting.

17 CORRESPONDENCE

All email correspondence forwarded to Councillors

Post:

Highways England
Commercial

Newsletter - also sent to residents
Mail Shots

18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15th November 2021

19 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting

Signed: _____ Chairman 15/11/2021