



**CHURCH
LAWTON**
Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 23rd MAY 2023, 19:30pm, LAWTON MEMORIAL HALL

Present:

Cllrs: G Mitchell (chair), L Grimshaw, K Newton, P Redstone, Cllr M Blease-Bourne.

Cheshire East Councillor – represented by P Redstone

Clerk – Sue Davies

The meeting started at 7:30pm

Cllr Mitchell, as outgoing chair, opened the meeting.

23-24/1 To receive nominations and to elect a Chairman of Church Lawton Parish Council for the forthcoming Civic Year.

One nomination was received and seconded for Cllr G Mitchell. No further nominations were received.

Resolved: Cllr Mitchell was elected as the Chairman for the 2023-24 Civic year by a majority show of hands.

Cllr Mitchell signed his declaration of acceptance witnessed by the Clerk.

23-24/2 To receive nominations and to elect a Vice Chairman of Church Lawton Parish Council for the forthcoming year.

One nomination was received and seconded for Cllr K Newton. No further nominations were received.

Resolved: Cllr Newton was elected as the Vice-chairman for the 2023-24 Civic year by a majority show of hands.

Cllr K Newton signed his declaration of office witnessed by the Clerk.

23-24/3 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies of absence were received from Cllr I Johnston, Cllr L Mackinnon and Cllr E Mitchell.

- 23-24/4 Declarations of Office and Register of Interest Forms**
- a. **To note the requirements for the completion of these documents. To resolve to agree that any elected councillor not present who has not yet been able to sign their declaration of office, be allowed to do so prior to the June Council meeting.**
- Resolved:** That Cllrs Johnston, Mackinnon and E Mitchell can sign their declaration of office prior to the next Council meeting witnessed by the Clerk.
- The Clerk noted that councillors needed to return their declaration of interest forms without delay.
- b. **To resolve to adopt the Code of Conduct in place by Cheshire East Council.**
- The Council resolved to adopt the Cheshire East Code of Conduct.
- c. **To note the need to co-opt further councillors and to agree any actions required.**
- It was agreed that the Council should actively try and recruit further councillors with an opportunity offered at the Annual Parish Meeting.
- 23-24/5 To receive any declaration of interests regarding agenda items.**
- Cllr Redstone declared that he is also a Cheshire East Councillor for Odd Rode.
- 23-24/6 Public Speaking – to allow any members of the press or public the opportunity to speak in accordance with Standing Orders**
- No members of the public present.
- 23-24/7 Approval of Minutes of the 20th March 2023.**
- The minutes of the meeting of the 20th March 2023 were approved by those present.
- 23-24/8 To receive and note the minutes of Trustee and Committee Minutes (Note that any recommendations or actions relevant to Full Council are picked up on separate agenda points):**
- a. **Minutes of the Trustee Meeting held on the 24th April 2023.**
- The draft minutes of the meeting of the 24th April 2023 were received and noted.
- 23-24/9 To Review of delegation arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff and other local authorities**
- The Council considered and reviewed the Council’s committee structure.
- The Council **resolved:** Standing committees for the coming year would be a Planning and Projects Committee and Staffing Committee.
- 23-24/10 Planning and Projects Committee:**
- a. **To agree and approve the Terms of Reference subject to any agreed changes.**
- The Council agreed to extend the remit of the committee and to rename it as Planning and Projects.
- The proposed terms of reference for the Planning and Policies committee were approved.

The Council agreed to delegate the Christmas Lights Provision, Barrows Site, Neighbourhood Plan work to the committee. Other projects may be delegated under an agenda item.

b. To agree membership of the Planning and Projects Committee.

Resolved: The membership of the committee was agreed to be:

Cllr P Redstone
Cllr G Mitchell
Cllr I Johnston
Cllr K Newton

c. To receive nominations for and appoint a chair for the Planning and Projects Committee.

Cllr P Redstone was nominated, seconded and elected as the chairman of the committee.

d. To receive nominations for and appoint a vice-chair for the Planning and Projects Committee.

Cllr K Newton was nominated, seconded and elected as the vice-chairman of the committee.

23-24/11 Staffing Committee:

a. The agree and approve the Terms of Reference. (Circulated separately)

It was noted that the terms of reference have been modified to include the Council's role as a Trustee and the management of the charity staff and the caretaking/ cleaning contracts. It was further noted that recommendations from the committee would need to be directed to the correct body – Trustee or Council.

It was agreed to modify the draft to delegate the committee to approve staffing related policies without recourse to Council as long as Council is kept aware of policies.

The proposed terms of reference were approved by those present.

b. To agree membership of the Staffing Committee.

Resolved: The membership of the committee was agreed to be:

Cllr M Blease-Bourne
Cllr P Redstone
Cllr K Newton
Cllr L Mackinnon

c. To receive nominations for and appoint a chair for the Staffing Committee.

Cllr Blease-Bourne was nominated, seconded and elected as the chairman of the committee.

d. To receive nominations for and appoint a vice-chair for the Staffing Committee.

It was agreed not to elect a vice-chairman with the committee allowed to elect a member to chair a meeting should the chairman not be able to attend.

23-24/12 To agree members to do in-house audits during 2023-2024.

It was agreed the following councillors would be responsible for 'in-house' audit of the accounts for the coming year:

Cllr K Newton – Q1
Cllr M Blease-Bourne – Q2
Cllr L Grimshaw – Q3
Cllr P Redstone – Q4

23-24/13 To consider the continuation or otherwise of any working groups and agree membership.

a. Neighbourhood Plan Group

It was agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group be delegated to the Planning and Projects for further consideration.

b. Community Group – meeting with other organisations (e.g., All Saints Church) regarding events

It was agreed that the Community Group would continue, with membership from the local community, and the Council represented by Cllrs Grimshaw, and P Redstone.

Cllr Newton was asked to enquire of the Lawton memorial Hall committee is they would like involvement.

c. Barrows working group.

It was agreed that the Barrows Project be delegated to the Planning and Projects for further consideration.

The Clerk informed that Alsager Town Council have been informed through their Clerk that if the group be reformed, they would be contacted with an invitation to have a representative as previously.

d. Footpaths working group.

It was agreed that the Footpath work be delegated to the Planning and Projects for further consideration.

23-24/14 Appointment of Members to the outside bodies, committee, and community groups:

a. Lawton Memorial Hall operating committee

It was agreed that Cllr B Newton will be the Lawton Memorial Hall lead representative to report appropriate issues to both Council and trustees as appropriate.

b. To confirm Police liaison representation and Speed Watch lead councillor(s).

It was agreed that Cllrs P Redstone and I Johnston be the police liaison and Council lead for Speed Watch.

23-24/15 General Power of Competence (GPoC).

The Clerk confirmed that the Council meets the eligibility of having two thirds of members elected and a qualified Clerk.

The Council **resolved** that it does meet the criteria and to adopt the GPoC for Church Lawton Parish Council.

23-24/16 To review and approve Standing Orders dated May 2023.

The Council **resolved** to approve the Standing Orders dated May 2023.

23-24/17 To review and approve Financial Regulations dated May 2023.

The Council **resolved** to approve the Financial Regulations dated May 2023 subject to an agreed increase to the credit card transaction and monthly limit to £750.00.

23-24/18 Other policies which require renewal at a relevant annual meeting:

a. To review and approve the complaints policy.

The Council **resolved** to approve the complaints policy dated May 2023 subject to the addition of a contact email for the chairman.

b. To review and approve the Freedom of Information policy.

The Council **resolved** to approve the Freedom of Information policy dated May 2023.

c. To review and approve the data retention policy.

The Council **resolved** to approve the data retention policy dated May 2023.

d. To review and approve the data protection policy.

The Council **resolved** to approve the complaints policy dated May 2023.

e. To review and approve the council's policy for dealing with the press/media.

This item was deferred.

f. To review and approve the Council's employment policies and procedures.

The Council delegated review of these policies to the staffing committee.

23-24/19 Asset Management:

a. To review and approve the Council's asset register dated 31st March 2023.

The asset register dated 31st March 2023 was approved by a majority show of hands.

b. To receive a report from the clerk and assistant clerk regarding asset management, safety checks and any actions required.

The asset management and safety checks document was reviewed. There were no safety issues raised at the current time.

c. To note the requirement in the 2023 JPAG for evidence of permission to site assets on land not belonging to the Parish Council needing to be held by the Council and to further note that the Clerk and Assistant Clerk are working to establish such permissions.

This requirement was noted and the Clerk was asked to ensure this is in place before the year-end.

23-24/20 Insurance provision

The Council reviewed the insurance and resolved to appoint Zurich as the Council's Insurance Provider for 2023/24. It was noted that the Lawton Memorial Hall insurance is separate, although this may be reviewed in future years.

23-24/21 To review and approve the Council's subscriptions:

- a. ChALC due April 1st 2023.
- b. SLCC – contribution to the Clerk's subscription (shared with Prestbury PC).
- c. CVS Subscription – paid for 2023-2024.

The council **resolved** to approve the subscriptions listed.

23-24/22 To resolve to approve the services for 2023/24:

- a. Payroll- continued use of Shire Pay Service
- b. Internal Auditor – JDH Business Services
- c. Website hosting and provision – NetWise.
- d. Microsoft 365 provision – Decoded
- e. Accountancy Package – Scribe f. Mapping Software – Parish Online

The Council **resolved** to approve continued use of all the above services for 2023-2024.

23-24/23 Review of the Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

23-24/24 To agree a calendar of meetings for the 2023-2024 Council year.

The meeting schedule proposed was approved and will be published.

23-24/25 Matters Arising from previous minutes not covered elsewhere – to receive an update from the Clerk.

Updates from the Clerk on actions from previous meetings still ongoing, not covered elsewhere and which currently require no further actions agreeing or decision resolving.

It was agreed to defer all matters arising listed below to the subsequent meeting except it was *fed back that Cheshire East had been contacted about The Spinney.*

- a. **Unity Bank - mandate change progress and credit card application.**
- b. **NatWest – progress on account closure.**
- c. **Newsletter**
- d. **Hedgehog corridors.**
- e. **Signage on The Spinney**
- f. **Update on the purchase of bulbs and wildflower planting.**
- g. **Progress of further bin provision from ANSA.**

23-24/26 To receive matters from the Cheshire East representative present.

- a. **To invite Cheshire East Councillors present to provide an update on any Cheshire East Council matters relevant to Church Lawton Parish Council.**

Cllr Redstone deferred items to the next meeting.

- b. **To receive any further updates on the Cheshire East Expenditure of the Ward budget.**

Cllr Redstone updated that there was mention of reducing the speed limit along Sandbach Rd through Lawton heath End to the A50 from this budget. The Council concurred that with the lack of pavement, the road can present a hazard with speeding cars.

23-24/27 Finance:

- a. **To approve payments to be made (including some retrospective payments).**

The following payments were approved:

Payroll April	£1071.01
Payroll May	£889.65
Print cartridges (Sandtony)	£107.00
Memorial Hall Hire	£29.00
SLCC - textbook	£52.30
ICO subscription	£40.00
ChALC affiliation	£697.82
Insurance - Zurich	£396.00

- b. **To note receipts for the 2022/2023 financial year.**

The Council received the receipts from the 2022-2023 financial year.

- c. **To receive a summary of payments for the 2022/2023 financial year.**

Deferred

- d. **To receive bank reconciliations and statements dated 31st March 2023.**

The Council received the bank reconciliations dated 31st March 2023.

- e. **To receive the quarter 3 accounts 'in-house' check.**

It was reported this check is still outstanding.

- f. **To receive the draft 31st March 2023 end of year accounts and to note any significant budget variances.**

The Council received the budget report for 31st March 2023.

- g. **To receive a 31st March 2023 reserves report.**

The Council received the reserves balance dated 31st March 2023.

- h. **To receive the bank reconciliation dated 30th April 2023.**

This item was deferred.

- i. **To note payments and receipts up until the 30th April 2023.**

This item was deferred.

23-24/28 Audit 2022-2023

- a. **To receive updates from the Clerk and to agree the timetable on Internal Audit arrangements.**

The Clerk outlined the Internal Audit procedure which is required to initiate the internal audit.

- b. **To receive updates from the Clerk and to agree the timetable on External Audit arrangements.**

The Clerk reported that the Council can declare exempt for 2022-2023 as both payments and receipts are under £25,000.

- c. **To consider and resolve to approve the Exemption Certificate for 2022-2023.**

After receipt of the end of year accounts, the Council **resolved** to submit the Exemption Certificate given both payments and receipts are under £25,000.

23-24/29 Planning Matters

- a. **To consider and agree responses to the following applications:**

23/1875C – 18, Congleton Road North, Church Lawton, ST7 3AS Proposed extension to front gable, render & cladding treatments to elevations, detached garage and alterations to garden steps/access to house.

Resolved: The Council resolved to make no comment.

23/1696C – 183, Crewe Road, Church Lawton, ST7 2DG Proposed single storey rear extension.

Resolved: The Council resolved to make no comment.

- b. **To receive updates on outstanding and recently approved applications:**

21/0671C – Grove Manor, 79 Liverpool Road West, Church Lawton, ST7 3DL (Decision Target Date = 10th May 2021, still outstanding) Outline application with some matters reserved for 10 dwellings.

21/5665C 7 Rectory Croft, Church Lawton, ST7 3FE Proposed change of use of land to provide stable block to support on-going maintenance of land. Approved with conditions, 4 th May 2023.

23/0222C Trent and Mersey Canal, Liverpool Road West, Church Lawton Formation of Field Access. Approved.

23/0647C Land off Sandbach Road, Church Lawton. Use of land for recreational angling including creation of 7 timber fishing pegs around existing lake, parking for 8 vehicles, replacement gate and pedestrian access track. Approved with conditions.

23/0850C Sandon House, Cherry Lane, Church Lawton, ST7 3QZ Replacement detached garage. Comments deadline 5th April 2023 Approved with conditions.

23/0881C 8, Rectory Croft, Church Lawton, ST7 3FE

Single storey rear orangery extension.

Approved with conditions.

- 23-24/30 Police update: To receive a police and PCSO report from the Clerk.**
The chairman noted that the PCSO ought to be invited to a forthcoming meeting.
- 23-24/31 Community Speed Watch: To receive an update on Community Speed Watch.**
It was reported that there are volunteers who are waiting to be trained.
- 23-24/32 Environmental Improvement: To receive updates and agree further action on:**
- a. Canal and River Trust liaison
 - b. Lengthsman Service update and further work.
 - c. Locations for further bench installation.
 - d. Planting on the one-way street (Liverpool Rd West)
 - e. Bulb Planting and wildflower beds
 - f. Memorial or Coronation Tree locations.
 - g. Waste bin provision. Working with ANSA.
- These items were all deferred due to insufficient time available for consideration.
- 23-24/33 Christmas Tree Provision**
It was agreed that this project be delegated to the Planning and Projects Committee.
- 23-24/34 Highways Issues:**
None raised.
- 23-24/35 To receive any correspondence or other matters from the Clerk and Assistant Clerk.**
None raised.
- 23-24/36 To receive any other reports from the chair including details of the Annual Parish Meeting.**
The chairman noted that the Annual Parish Meeting is called for the 2nd June 2023 expressed hope that some councillors could attend.
- 23-24/37 To receive any reports or items from Members.**
None raised other than a question around website updates for councillor profiles. It was agreed that councillors should supply a photograph and some words to the Clerk.
- 23-24/38 Training/meetings and courses:**
- a. **To consider any training requirements.**
The councillors were encouraged to attend at least one training course from the schedule.
 - b. **To note training attended.**
None attended.

c. Future Agenda Items

- Plan of work for committees and councillors.
- Footpath and bridge off Cherry Lane (to Planning and Projects Committee)

23-24/39 To agree Date of next meeting: Monday, 19th June 2023, 7:00pm, Lawton memorial Hall.

23-24/40 Exclusion of press and public: To resolve under 1960 (Admission to meetings) Act to exclude the press and public due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

The Council resolved to exclude the press and public for the next item.

23-24/41 Staffing Issues To receive a report in relation to staffing matters and the assistant clerk vacancy.

A potential candidate has sent a cv which members have had access to. It was agreed that the candidate appears suitable, and that the candidate be interviewed as the recruitment was considered a matter of urgency. It we resolved to delegate the recruitment of the post to the Staffing Committee.