



## **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON**

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 19:30, Lawton Memorial Hall**

**Present:**

Cllrs: Cllr G Mitchell (chair), Cllr M Blease-Bourne, Cllr L Mackinnon, Cllr P Redstone and Cllr I Johnston

Cheshire East Council – represented by Cllr P Redstone

Clerk – Sue Davies

Three members of the public in attendance.

**23-24/135 To receive apologies for absence.**

Apologies of absence were received from Cllr E Mitchell.

**23-24/136 To note the resignations of Councillors and progress with the co-option of new Councillors.**

The Chair informed that he had received the resignations of Cllr L Grimshaw and Cllr K Newton.

The Clerk informed that both the ordinary vacancies residual from the election, and the two casual vacancies have been advertised in accordance with legislation and that an election was not called, meaning the Parish Council is now free to co-opt into the vacancies.

It was noted that it was planned to advertise the vacancies with a deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 and to consider co-options at the meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

**23-24/137 To receive any declaration of interests regarding agenda items.**

Cllr P Redstone noted that he is also a Cheshire East Ward Councillor.

**23-24/138 Public Speaking – to allow any members of the press or public the opportunity to speak in accordance with Standing Orders**

The Reverend Sister Heather Kembell introduced herself to Councillors and expressed that she hoped for a good working relationship between Church and Council.

Two members of the public introduced themselves and both expressed a wish to be considered for co-option onto the Council.

**23-24/139 Approval of Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023.**

The minutes of the meeting of the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were approved by those present.

**23-24/140 To receive and note the minutes of Trustee and Committee Minutes:**

- a. **Minutes of the Trustee Meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2023, 18<sup>th</sup> October, 3<sup>rd</sup> September and 20<sup>th</sup> November.**

Deferred.

- b. **Minutes of the Staffing Committee Meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2023 and 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023.**

Deferred

- c. **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2023.**

Deferred

- d. **Minutes of the Planning and Projects Committee held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023.**

Deferred

**23-24/141 Matters Arising from previous minutes not covered elsewhere – to receive an update from the Clerk.**

- The Clerk reported that the savings account bank mandate is prepared and ready for signing.

**23-24/142 Finance:**

- a. **To approve payments to be made.**

The payments outlined in Appendix 1 were approved for payment.

- b. **To receive and approve bank reconciliations and statements dated 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.**

The Council received and noted the bank reconciliations dated 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

- c. **To receive receipts and payments to date in the financial year.**

The Council received and noted the receipts and payments to date.

- d. **To receive the Q2 and Q3 budget report and reserves from the Clerk and to agree any recommendations.**

The Clerk/RFO reported the following:

- The staffing budget has been significantly exceeded. This is due to donated support for the administration of Lawton Memorial Hall whilst the Trustees analysed role requirements and recruitment, due to an increase in hours allocated to staffing and a regrading of the Clerk's role.

- It was noted that the NALC negotiated pay increase was implemented to staff in December. Due to a cancelled meeting, the Clerk consulted with the Chair of the Council and Chair of the Staffing committee.
- The Council asked questions to the Clerk around the budget lines.

**23-24/143 Grant Policies and Applications**

- a. To review and approve, with agreed amendments, the current grant application form and policy.**

The Council approved the proposed changes to the grant application policy and application form.

- b. To consider and approve or otherwise a grant request from All Saints’ Church.**

The Council resolved to pay All Saints’ Church £250.00 for the provision and replacement of trees for the Christmas Tree Festival with some agreed conditions. It was noted that this event is a secular community event.

- c. To consider and approve or otherwise a grant request from Smallwood Toad Patrols 2024.**

The Council considered the request from Smallwood Toad Patrols. It was noted that the group doesn’t have a dedicated bank account but is affiliated to Frog Watch and that insurance is provided by Frog Watch. The Council resolved to approve the clerk purchase vets up to £200 in value and donate them to the group.

**23-24/144 Defibrillator provision in the Parish**

- a. To receive a status update on current defibrillator provision and the maintenance work required. To consider Parish coverage and future provision.**

The Clerk reported that the defibrillators at the Lawton Arms and Horseshoe Inn Red Bull pub are having a software upgrade and have had new batteries inserted.

- b. To receive quotes for a cabinet and new defibrillator for the Red Bull Public House and to approve or otherwise.**

The council considered the quotes and resolved to delegate to the clerk the purchase of one of the packages proposed by Wel Medical, dependent on the differences between the models. (maximum £1210.74 net). Wel Medical was recommended by the Northwest Ambulance Service.

**23-24/145 Budget and Precept for 2025-2025**

- a. To consider and approve the draft budget with report for 2024-2025 subject to any amendments.**

The Council considered the draft proposed budget for 2024/2025. It was resolved to approve the budget presented. The following were noted:

- The built-up earmarked reserves from Covid years, which has kept the precept down over the last couple of years, has now become depleted.
- Cheshire East are passing more services down and, due to their current financial situation, service may pass down. The only way to prepare for these uncertainties is to ensure an adequate reserve without being excessive.
- The one-off need for the completion of the Neighbourhood Plan was noted.
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The Council **resolved** to approve the draft budget.

**b. To agree the precept request for 2024-2025.**

The Council **resolved** to request a precept of £40,000 to fulfill the budget. The Clerk was asked to submit the request to Cheshire East Council.

**23-24/146 Mobile Phone contracts for Staff: To receive some quotes for a SIM for the Clerk (who has a spare phone). To agree to delegate to the clerk the purchase of a reconditioned phone and SIM for the deputy clerk subject to an agreed limit.**

Item Deferred.

**23-24/147 To receive matters from the Cheshire East representative present.**

Cllr Redstone reported on the financial position at Cheshire East Council, and it was likely that there will be a large cut in services.

**23-24/148 Neighbourhood Planning: To approve an update on the progress.**

Cllr I Johnston provided an update.

**23-24/149 Other Planning Matters**

**a. To consider responses to the following applications:**

None

**b. To receive any updates on the enforcement action on the land adjacent to the Trent and Mersey Canal and agree any actions.**

No further update.

**c. To receive updates on outstanding and recently approved applications.**

None.

**23-24/150 Community Group update:**

Cllr Blease-Bourne provided an update including around the plans for a D-Day.

**23-24/151 Police update**

It was noted that there is no PCSO presence at the moment.

- 23-24/152 Community Speed Watch: To receive an update on Community Speed Watch**  
It was reported that this group is still not active due to the police assessments.
- 23-24/153 Environmental Improvement**  
The Clerk is arranging for a visit from the lengthsman service to the Parish and asked Councillors for input of tasks.
- 23-24/154 Highways Issues: To receive any highways issues from the Clerk or members.**  
None raised.
- 23-24/155 To receive any correspondence or other matters from the Clerk.**  
An email received from a community group was raised.
- 23-24/156 To receive any reports or items from members.**  
None reported.
- 23-24/157 Training/meetings and courses:**
- a. To consider any training requirements.**  
Training requirements were considered. The Clerk reminded Councillors that everyone had agreed to do at least one course.
  - b. To note training attended.**  
None reported.
- 23-24/158 Future Agenda Items**  
None raised.
- 23-24/159 To agree Date of next meeting:**  
The council agreed the next meeting will be Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024, 7:30pm, Lawton Memorial Hall.

# Appendix 1 – Payments Approved.

## Retrospective

Voucher Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
26 Salaries	01/11/2023		Unity Bank		Payroll October	Staff Salaries	X	1,268.50		1,268.50
26 HMRC - Staff Salaries	01/11/2023		Unity Bank		Payroll October	Staff Salaries	X	71.20		71.20
26 Staff - working from home al	01/11/2023		Unity Bank		Payroll October	Staff Salaries	X	26.00		26.00
27 Salaries	12/12/2023		Unity Bank		Payroll November	Staff Salaries	X	2,067.02		2,067.02
27 HMRC - Staff Salaries	12/12/2023		Unity Bank		Payroll November	Staff Salaries	X	491.83		491.83
27 Staff - working from home al	12/12/2023		Unity Bank		Payroll November	Staff Salaries	X	26.00		26.00
28 Training - Clerk and Council	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		SLCC branch conference	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	X	70.00		70.00
29 Street cleansing contractors	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Environmental/cleaning work	Congleton Town Council	S	233.98	46.80	280.78
30 Street cleansing contractors	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Environmental/cleaning work	Congleton Town Council	S	233.98	46.80	280.78
31 Print cartridges	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Ink Cartridges	Sandtony	S	65.12	13.02	78.14
32 Training - Clerk and Council	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		training.	Ovulc	Z	50.00		50.00
33 Training - Clerk and Council	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		training.	Ovulc	Z	30.00		30.00
34 Training - Clerk and Council	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		training.	Ovulc	Z	120.00		120.00
35 Training - Clerk and Council	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		training.	Ovulc	Z	50.00		50.00
36 Payroll Costs	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Payroll charges Q3 and Q4	Shire Accountants	S	144.00	28.80	172.80
37 Subscriptions	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		LCMS	National Association of Local	S	50.00	10.00	60.00
38 Bank Charges	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Quarterly bank charges	Unity Bank	X	18.00		18.00
39 Training - Clerk and Council	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		training.	National Association of Local	S	43.37	8.67	52.04
40 Donations	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Poppy Wreath	Clerk - Sue Davies	Z	28.98		28.98
41 Chairman's allowance	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		LMH donation to Anniversary	Clerk - Sue Davies	X	49.40		49.40
42 IT Software	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Zoom	Zoom	S	11.99	2.40	14.39
43 IT Software	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Zoom	Zoom	S	11.99	2.40	14.39
44 IT Software	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Zoom	Zoom	S	11.99	2.40	14.39
45 IT Software	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Zoom	Zoom	S	11.99	2.40	14.39
46 IT Software	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Zoom	Zoom	S	11.99	2.40	14.39
47 IT Software	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Zoom	Zoom	S	11.99	2.40	14.39
48 IT Software	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Zoom	Zoom	S	11.99	2.40	14.39
49 IT Software	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Zoom	Zoom	S	11.99	2.40	14.39
50 IT Software	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Zoom	Zoom	S	11.99	2.40	14.39
51 IT Software	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Zoom	Zoom	S	11.99	2.40	14.39
52 IT Software	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Zoom	Zoom	S	11.99	2.40	14.39
53 IT Software	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Zoom	Zoom	S	11.99	2.40	14.39
54 Hall Hire for Meetings	31/12/2023		Unity Bank		Hall Hire LMH	Lawton Memorial Hall	E	12.99	2.60	15.59
								29.20		29.20

Appendix 1 – Payments Approved.

Church Lawton Parish Council  
PAYMENTS LIST

Voucher Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
55	31/12/2023	Hall Hire for Meetings	Unity Bank		Hall Hire LMH	Lawton Memorial Hall	E	65.70		65.70
56	31/12/2023	Hall Hire for Meetings	Unity Bank		Hall Hire LMH	Lawton Memorial Hall	E	65.70		65.70
57	31/12/2023	Hall Hire for Meetings	Unity Bank		Hall Hire LMH	Lawton Memorial Hall	E	29.20		29.20
58	31/12/2023	Hall Hire for Meetings	Unity Bank		Hall Hire LMH	Lawton Memorial Hall	E	51.10		51.10
59	31/12/2023	Hall Hire for Meetings	Unity Bank		Hall Hire LMH	Lawton Memorial Hall	E	29.20		29.20
60	31/12/2023	Salaries	Unity Bank		Payroll December	Staff Salaries	X	1,007.25		1,007.25
60	31/12/2023	HMRC - Staff Salaries	Unity Bank		Payroll December	Staff Salaries	X	79.20		79.20
60	31/12/2023	Staff - working from home al	Unity Bank		Payroll December	Staff Salaries	X	26.00		26.00
61	15/01/2024	Training - Clerk and Councilk	Unity Bank		SLCC training GDPR	SLCC Enterprises Ltd	S	15.00	3.00	18.00
<b>Total</b>								<b>6,679.81</b>	<b>186.09</b>	<b>6,865.90</b>

**Appendix 1 – Payments Approved.**

**Payments to be made:**

Wel Medical - I273417	£170.00	£34.00	£204.00
Wel Medical – I273414	£170.00	£34.00	£204.00