



**MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 20th MARCH 2024, 19:00pm
LAWTON MEMORIAL HALL**

Present:

Cllr M Blease-Bourne; Cllr L Mackinnon, Cllr P Redstone (until 20:10pm), Cllr M Whittle and Cllr R Young
Cheshire East Councillor – represented by Cllr P Redstone

Clerk – Sue Davies

Two members of the public both co-opted during the meeting. (R Giltrap, M Grocott)

In the absence of the chair and vice-chair, it was agreed that Cllr Young chair the meeting.

23-24/195 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs G Mitchell, E Mitchell and I Johnston.

23-24/196 To receive any declaration of interests regarding agenda items.

None.

It was noted and agreed at this point that there be an alteration in the order of agenda items with some items deferred.

23-24/197 Public Speaking

None

23-24/198 Co-option Policy

Resolved: The co-option policy and associated documents were approved.

23-24/199 Co-option of councillors onto Church Lawton Parish Council:

The Council has received two applications for co-option onto the Parish Council. Each candidate was allowed five minutes to introduce themselves to the Council and answer some questions. It was confirmed that both are eligible to stand.

Subsequently, it was proposed, seconded and agreed by absolute majority that M Grocott and R Giltrap collectively be co-opted onto the Parish Council.

Cllr Giltrap and Grocott both signed their declaration of office witnessed by the Clerk.

23-24/200 Committee Membership

The committee membership was reviewed as a result of the two co-options.

Resolved: To add Cllr Giltrap to the Planning and Projects Committee.

23-24/201 Committee Minutes

Item deferred.

23-24/202 Updates on key items

Item deferred.

23-24/203 Finance:

a. Approval of payments, both retrospective and outstanding

Cllr Mackinnon declared an interest due to having a family link to Urban Vision and she didn't vote on the item. The payments shown in Appendix 1 were approved by all those voting.

b. To receive and approve bank reconciliations and statements dated 31st January 2024 and 28th February 2024.

Item deferred.

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

The list of receipts and payments to date was received.

d. To receive a budget summary from the Clerk and to agree any recommendations put forward.

Item deferred.

e. To receive an evaluation of reserves and to approve any recommendations.

The Clerk outlined the reserve levels based on 29th February 2024. It was noted that the election funds reserve may need a review in 2024-2025.

Resolved: To allow the street cleaning earmarked reserve to be moved back into general reserves.

f. To receive councillor checks on the accounts Q1 to Q3.

Cllr Blease-Bourne gave a report on the councillor check undertaken during 2023-2024 to date. The following points were raised:

- It was confirmed a good, clear and organised system is in place.
- It was noted that the VAT reclaim has now been submitted.
- Concern was raised that the payroll was still not always being handled in a timely manner and all need to be mindful of the need to ensure payment by the 25th of the month.
- It was felt some guidelines should be drafted around in-house checks to assist councillors, including understanding reconciliations, and also around the process of approving payments in Unity Bank.

Action: The Clerk to draft some guidelines for review.

Signature of the Chairman of the meeting where the minutes were approved:

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23-24/204 Grant Application

The applicant (Keystones Support Centre) has decided to postpone their application to the 2024-2025 financial year.

23-24/205 Corporate Risk Assessment

The Corporate Risk Assessment put forward was reviewed by the Council. The following amendments were agreed:

- To ensure the bank mandate is reviewed at least annually. The Clerk informed that this forms part of the Annual meeting in May.
- It was agreed that the defibrillator checks should be at least every four weeks. The Clerk informed that councillors would be invited to be guardians. Cllrs Redstone, Blease-Bourne, Young and Whittle volunteered.
- It was noted that data protection training is outstanding and should be sourced.

Resolved: Approved subject to the listed amendments.

23-24/206 Policies to update, review and approve.

Resolved: The following policies, all dated March 2024, were approved by the Council. There were no suggested amendments:

- a. **Health and Safety Policy.**
- b. **Grievance Policy.**
- c. **Disciplinary Policy.**

23-24/207 Clerk’s mobile phone: To consider options presented and agree the package to be used.

Item deferred.

23-24/208 To receive matters from the Cheshire East representative present.

Cllr Redstone reported that he has had a meeting regarding the flooding on Linley Lane. Cheshire East are in discussions with Sainsbury’s around future maintenance and also with the current landowner of the culvert area (Lagans). Cllr Blease-Bourne asked if the drains could result in a delay to the building and also enquired about the badger survey. Cllr Redstone agreed to find out.

Cllr Giltrap asked for an update on the bollards by the Lawton Arms which are still lying on the ground. Cllr Redstone agreed to pursue this.

Cllr Young asked if the footpath from Red Bull and the canal bridge (Liverpool Road West) could be cleared as the poor state made it very difficult for anyone on foot, especially given the lack of lighting. It was raised that this is against the Cheshire East policy of allowing people to walk. Cllr Redstone agreed to pursue this with Cheshire East Council.

23-24/209 Members Item: Odd Rode Bus and Community Support.

It was agreed to defer this item.

Signature of the Chairman of the meeting where the minutes were approved:

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23-24/210 Neighbourhood Planning:

The Clerk updated the Council on the progress to date, with a possibility of reaching regulation 14 before the summer.

It was noted that the aim is to launch the draft plan at the Annual Parish Meeting.

*** Cllr Redstone left the meeting at this point (20:10)*

23-24/211 Other Planning Matters (PR to lead)

a. To consider responses to the following applications:

No new applications had been received by the Council.

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 updates have been received.

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

Item deferred.

23-24/212 D-Day Arrangements.

Resolved: It was agreed that the Clerk could purchase a beacon up to £1000 net.

23-24/213 Update on bench provision.

Deferred.

23-24/214 Update on defibrillator provision.

The Clerk informed of a quote received for the installation of the defibrillator at the Red Bull pub by a suitably qualified electrician.

Resolved: It was agreed to progress with the installation.

23-24/215 Police update: To receive a police and PCSO report.

Deferred

23-24/216 Community Speed Watch: To receive an update on Community Speed Watch.

Deferred

23-24/217 Environmental Improvement:

Deferred

23-24/218 Highways Issues:

The issues of badly churned up verges was raised. The problem is particularly bad on Woodgate Avenue and Brown Avenue. Cllr Gilrap felt that historically, Cheshire County Council had agreed to fill in the grass verges on Brown Avenue to increase the width.

Currently, the verges are very churned up and, in one place, services are showing. It was felt that there are several reasons for this including the bus, refuge vans and workers' vans.

Signature of the Chairman of the meeting where the minutes were approved:

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It was agreed that Cllr Giltrap and the Clerk meet with a highways officer from Cheshire East to discuss options.

It was further agreed to draft a polite letter asking residents to try and not park on the road unnecessarily and also to report any damage that they observe.

23-24/219 To receive any correspondence or other matters from the Clerk.

Deferred

23-24/220 To receive any other reports from the chair or members.

Deferred.

23-24/221 Training/meetings and courses:

a. To consider any training requirements.

Deferred.

b. To note training attended.

Deferred.

23-24/222 Future Agenda Items

Deferred.

23-24/223 To agree Date of next meeting: It was agreed that the Clerk call a meeting during April prior to the meeting on Wednesday, 15th May 2024, 7:00pm, Lawton Memorial Hall.

23-24/224 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.

23-24/225 To review and approve the Council's regular suppliers for 2024-2025.

The regular suppliers were reviewed and it was agreed to continue with the services of the following:

Accounts package – Scribe

Payroll – Shire Payroll Services

Netwise – Website Provision

Note – 365 accounts already reviewed at the February meeting.

23-24/226 Staffing Issues To receive a report in relation to staffing matters and the assistant clerk appointment.

Cllr Blease-Bourne provided an update on the recruitment of the assistant clerk. It was highlighted that the Clerk has had an enormous workload over the last year which isn't sustainable.

Appendix 1 – Payments for approval 20th March 2024

Scribe	Financial software	INV-5072	£331.20	£66.24	£397.44
Shire Accountants	Payroll Services	SHI-1908	£15.00	£3.00	£18.00
Shire Accountants	Payroll Services	SHI-1908	£45.00	£9.00	£54.00
Urban Vision	Neighbourhood Plan	UVE 1012-24	£6875.00	£1375.00	£8250.00
Parish Online	Mapping Software	00EQ041-0005	£140.00	£28.00	£168.00
ChALC	Course/training	2023/343	£60.00	0	£60.00

Signature of the Chairman of the meeting where the minutes were approved:

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