

# **BETCHTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**2<sup>nd</sup> January 2025**

**Commenced: 7.35 pm**

**Terminated: 8.50 pm**

**Present: Councillor Avis Curwen – Chair  
Councillors Robert Moss (part) and Joan Ramsey**

**There were 22 Members of the Public in attendance at the meeting**

## **1. PUBLIC FORUM**

Members of the public attended the meeting to discuss a planning matter relating to a screening opinion for an application for a residential development in Sandbach, the details of which were:-

Application Reference Number: 24/4693/EIA

Application Type: EIA screening / scoping

Proposal: Screening Opinion for an outline application in support of a residential development of up to 320 dwellings, open space, landscaping, associated infrastructure and works, including earthworks and drainage

Mr Sambrook, a member of a newly formed Sandbach vs Overdevelopment Group, outlined the concerns regarding this matter. Residents then spoke of their concerns which included:-

- (i) The environmental and wildlife impact;
- (ii) Drainage was already insufficient and the proposed soakaways would not resolve the existing and added burden;
- (iii) There was a strong risk of the brook and the weir being overwhelmed;
- (iv) Flood risks;
- (v) The significant increase in cars;
- (vi) Local schools were already oversubscribed;
- (vii) The GP and dentists were already full;
- (viii) Increased traffic congestion;
- (ix) These developments were not detailed in the Local Plan.

Residents insisted that an environmental impact assessment must be completed and the Chair urged all residents to submit their individual comments to the Planning Authority and to also sign up to the Action Group.

At this juncture, Councillor Moss arrived at the meeting (7.45pm)

Residents also discussed that the land had been gifted to a well known animal charity by a resident in her will, and it was the charity that was considering selling the land to a developer. The residents considered other actions that they might take, including negative social media posts regarding the charity which would have a detrimental impact on future donations, writing to the charity to explain that the land was agricultural land and was always intended to be maintained to support the natural environment and wildlife.

## **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the Parish Council supports the residents in requesting to the Planning Authority that an Environmental Impact Assessment is undertaken for this proposal.**

A resident expressed concerns regarding the footpath under the motorway (Alsager Road) which was overgrown with bushes. The Parish Council referred to a potential bridge strike, due to the bridge being obscured by overgrowth.

The resident also raised concerns about flooding on Alsager Road, particularly at Garth Cottage, and speeding through the village. He felt that there were insufficient 30 mph signs.

**RESOLVED**

- (ii) **That the Parish Clerk contacts the Highways Agency, regarding the motorway bridge;**
- (iii) **That the Parish Clerk contacts the Local Highways Department regarding the flooding and speeding traffic.**

A resident referred to the removal of play equipment at Charles Square.

**RESOLVED**

- (iv) **That the Chair contacts ANSA to establish the reason for this removal.**

A request was received for highway mirrors on Dubthorn Lane.

**RESOLVED**

- (v) **That the Parish Clerk makes enquiries of the Highways Department.**

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Batchelor, Bradley and Freer

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**4. COUNCILLOR VACANCIES**

Following the recent resignation of Councillor Malbon, the Parish Council considered applications from the following interested residents, to sit on Betchton Parish Council (there were 10 seats in total):-

Mr Nigel Beresford  
Mrs Emma Williams

**RESOLVED**

**That the co-option of Mr Nigel Beresford and Mrs Emma Williams onto Betchton Parish Council, be approved.**

**5. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**6. APPOINTMENT OF CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER**

**RESOLVED**

**That the permanent appointment of Muna Clough as the Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, to Betchton Parish Council, on a starting salary of SCP 22 £16.93 per hour (Local Government Payscale) for 13 hours a month (3 hours a week), be approved.**

**7. CHESHIRE EAST COUNCILLOR'S REPORT**

Councillor Wray was not in attendance at the meeting.

**8. GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS 2024-2025**

Members considered the following Governance Documents for 2024-2025.

- (i) **Councillor Code of Conduct 2024-2025**

**RESOLVED**

**That the Councillor Code of Conduct 2024-2025, as circulated, be approved.**

**(ii) GDPR Policy 2024-2025**

**RESOLVED**

That the GDPR Policy 2024-2025, as circulated, be approved.

**(iii) Retention of Documents Policy 2024-2025**

**RESOLVED**

That the Retention of Documents Policy 2024-2025, as circulated, be approved.

**(iv) Publication Scheme 2024-2025**

**RESOLVED**

That the Publication Scheme 2024-2025, as circulated, be approved.

**9. ASSET REGISTER 2024-2025**

Members considered the Asset Register, and made some amendments.

**RESOLVED**

That the Asset Register 2024-2025, be re-considered at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

**10. NATWEST BANK ACCOUNT**

**RESOLVED**

That the Chair of Betchton Parish Council, Councillor Avis Curwen be authorised to close Betchton Parish Council's NatWest Bank Accounts, and make arrangements for the remaining funds to be transferred to the Unity Trust Bank Account.

**11. PROJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

Members discussed the need for a formal plan for the play areas in the Parish.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) That the Clerk contacts Edward Yoxall of ANSA to enquire about the future plans for the play areas;**
- (ii) That further consideration of trees, be deferred to the next meeting;**
- (iii) That further consideration of bird boxes and bat boxes, be deferred to the next meeting.**

**12. BUDGET AND FINANCE 2024-2025**

Consideration was given to a report of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer on the Budget and Finance 2024-2025, as follows:-

**(i) Transactions**

**RESOLVED**

That the following transactions be approved:-

PAYEE/PAYER	DETAILS	RECEIPT	PAYMENT
A Malbon	Laptop Reimbursement		£175.00
British Legion	Two Unnamed Tommy Statues		£350.00
HMRC	PAYE		£54.00
M Clough	October Salary		£216.00
Avis Curwen	Reimbursement for Benches		£939.18
Joan Ramsey	Reimbursement		£347.71

**(ii) Approval of Payments**

**RESOLVED**

That the following payments be approved:-

PAYEE/PAYER	DETAILS	PAYMENT
M Clough	November Salary (15 hours @ £15 p/h)	£180.00
HMRC	PAYE November	£45.00
M Clough	December Salary (15 hours @ £15 p/h)	£180.00
HMRC	PAYE December	£45.00
M Clough	January Salary (13 hours @ £16.93 p/h)	Approx. £179.00
HMRC	PAYE January	Approx. £45.00
M Clough	February Salary (13 hours @ £16.93 p/h)	Approx. £179.00
HMRC	PAYE February	Approx. £45.00

(iii) 2024-2025 Budget Expenditure at 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024

**RESOLVED**

That the the following Budget Head expenditure at 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024 be approved:-

Budget Head	Total Expenditure	Budget Allocated	£ Difference
Salary	£270.00	£2,400.00	£2,130.00
Office Expenses	£175.00	£200.00	£25.00
Insurance	£257.60	£350.00	£92.40
Information Commissioner	£0.00	£40.00	£40.00
Room Hire	£0.00	£120.00	£120.00
Poppies/Wreaths	£0.00	£130.00	£130.00
Community Projects	£12.00	£1,000.00	£988.00
Village Maintenance	£16.00	£150.00	£134.00
Website and Email	£288.00	£300.00	£12.00
Subscriptions	£210.90	£300.00	£89.10
Internal Audit	£0.00	£150.00	£150.00
Contingency	£0.00	£500.00	£500.00
CIL Ringfenced	£1,636.89	£1,939.00	£302.11
	£2,866.39	£7,579.00	£4,712.61

(iv) Explanation of Variances

The Clerk reported that there were no variances to report at the meeting.

(v) Bank Reconciliation as at 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024

**RESOLVED**

That the Bank Reconciliation at 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024, as detailed below, be approved:-

<b>Bank Reconciliation 18th December 2024</b>		
<b>BETCHTON PARISH COUNCIL</b>		
<b>Financial year ending 31 March 2025</b>		
<b>Prepared by: Muna Clough, Parish Clerk &amp; RFO</b>		
<b>Balance per bank statements as at</b>		
<b>Current Account NatWest (07073917) 26th Nov 2024</b>		<b>£2,323.95</b>
<b>Reserve Account NatWest (96522526) 31st October 2024</b>		<b>£2,031.21</b>
<b>Current Account Unity Trust (20519047) 30th November 2024</b>		<b>£3,943.11</b>
<b>Less: any unrepresented cheques</b>		

Current Account NatWest (07073917)	£350.00
Reserve Account NatWest (96522526)	£0.00
Current Account Unity Trust (20519047)	£0.00
Add: any unbanked cash	
Net bank balances as at 18th December 2024	£7,948.27
The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows	
<b>CASH BOOK</b>	
Opening Balance	
Current Account NatWest (07073917) at 01/04/2024	£6,840.69
Reserve Account NatWest (96522526) at 01/04/2024	£2,023.83
Current Account Unity Trust (20519047) at 01/04/2024	£0.00
Add: Receipts in the year	
Current Account NatWest	£2,596.00
Reserve Account NatWest	£7.38
Current Account Unity Trust	£0.00
Less: Payments in the year	
Current Account NatWest	£1,962.74
Reserve Account NatWest	£0.00
Current Account Unity Trust	£1,556.89
Closing balance per cash book [receipts and payments book] must equal net bank balances above	£7,948.27

(vi) Bank Statements

**RESOLVED**

- (a) That the NatWest Current Account (07073917) Statements dated 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024 and 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024, as circulated with the report, be received;
- (b) That the NatWest Reserve Account (96522526) Statement dated 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024, as circulated with the report, be received;
- (c) That the Unity Trust Bank Account (20519047) Statement dated 30<sup>th</sup> November 2024, as circulated with the report, be received.

**13. APPOINTMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

**RESOLVED**

- (i) That the appointment of individual Councillors to Lead on the following tasks be approved:-
  - Planning Lead – Councillor Bradley
  - Environmental and Footpaths Lead – Councillor Williams
  - Highways Lead – Councillor Beresford
  - Police Liaison – Councillor Moss
  - Parish Council Representative on Sandbach Arms Houses – Councillor Curwen

- (ii) **That the Chair contacts the Administrator of the Betchton Parish Council Facebook page, and makes arrangements for it to be deleted.**

**14. 2025-2026 BUDGET AND PRECEPT**

Members considered a possible revision of the previously approved Budget and Precept, due to the recent notification that Cheshire East Council would recharge Parish Councils for the costs incurred for all out Elections, if any seats were contested. This change would take place from 2027.

The Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer reported that she had received notification from Cheshire East Council, that the maximum sum payable by Betchton Parish Council would be £395.50.

**RESOLVED**

**That the Parish Council does not increase this year's Precept Request, but instead the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, introduces a new Budget Head for Elections, and allocates a ringfenced sum of £200.00 for the 2025-2026 Financial Year.**

**15. DATES OF MEETINGS**

Members noted that the date of the remaining meeting for the 2024-2025 Municipal Year was Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025 (at Malkins Bank Golf Club).

**RESOLVED**

**That the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025 at 7.00 pm and 7.30 pm, respectively (at the Pink Church).**

**16. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chair reported that there were no items that required consideration as a matter of urgency.