



MOLLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

18th January 2024

Commenced: 7.32 pm

Terminated: 9.25 pm

Present: Councillor D Wells (Chair)
Councillors K Brassington, C Crowe, J Jones, M Jones and R Jones

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Riley and Cheshire West and Chester Ward Councillor Simon Eardley.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M Jones declared an interest in planning application Ref No: 23/03824/FUL Warren Farm Townfield Lane Mollington Chester CH1 6LB, detailed in Minute 8(i). He remained in the meeting to answer questions on the application, but then withdrew from the meeting whilst further discussions took place.

3. CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER BUS SERVICES

Ms Kristy Littler, Cheshire West and Chester Transport Manager (Transport and Infrastructure), attended the meeting and provided information on the provision of public transport in the parish, specifically relating to bus services and also the Cheshire West and Chester Local Transport Plan.

Members referred to the difficulties that residents were experiencing due to irregular public transport, lack of street lighting and no footpaths. This caused significant safety concerns, especially for children. For example, the bad lighting affected access to two of the three bus stops; the irregularity, infrequency and odd timing of the buses passing through the village meant that the current bus service was not used sufficiently, however, data to analyse current uptake, was unreliable.

Ms Littler answered a number of questions relating to different proposals, but she advised that ultimately, the provision of a better bus service was dependent on the uptake of the service, and the availability of financial resources, as the impact of changing the timing and frequency of one bus, would affect the whole network. Members agreed that whilst there was evidence that the buses were underutilised, there was a significant possibility that the reason for this was the inconvenient timings of the buses arriving in Mollington, which especially didn't suit the needs of pupils attending schools outside the Parish. Ms Littler referred to funding available from Department for Transport to maintain the core network and increase passenger levels to the existing network, and she suggested that the best way forward was to survey the residents of Mollington on their requirements of the provision of a bus service.

Members therefore concluded that the following matters needed further consideration:-

- (i) To propose the most appropriate time/s (and frequency) of the bus service;
- (ii) Rationalise the number of bus stops (decide which bus stop to maintain)
- (iii) To gauge residents' views to understand when/ if they might use the bus service and for what purpose.

Finally, Ms Littler urged Members and residents to complete the Local Transport Plan survey, as this document would be used to shape the future development of public transport in the area.

RESOLVED

- (i) That thanks be extended to Ms Littler for attending the meeting;
- (ii) That further consideration be given to communicating with residents;
- (iii) That the Parish Council confirms its desire to work with Cheshire West and Chester Council on this matter.

4. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public in attendance at the Meeting.

5. MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 23rd November 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. Councillor Brassington wished to add that it had been agreed at the Meeting that bi-annual marathons were not feasible, and Members confirmed that this was correct.

6. FINANCE

(i) Approval of Payments

Approval was sought for the payments detailed in the table below:-

Date	Payee/Payer	Purpose	Sum Paid £	Account Balance £
20/11/2023	Clerk P Wells	Clerk Salary - November	£217.21	£16510.04
28/11/2023	David E Wells	Reimbursement for Poppy Wreath	£31.48	£16365.20
28/11/2023	Amenity Cleaner	Salary - November	£113.36	£16396.68
18/12/2023	Outgoing Clerk P Wells	Final Salary - December	£217.21	£15030.64
18/12/2023	Public Works Loan	Repayment	£1117.35	£15247.85
21/12/2023	Clerk M Clough	Reimbursement New Laptop	£298.99	£14671.66
21/12/2023	Clerk M Clough	Reimbursement Microsoft 365	£59.99	£14970.65
28/12/2023	Amenity Cleaner	Salary - December	£113.36	£14558.30
31/12/2023	Unity Bank	Service Charge	£18	£14540.30
02/01/2024	Clerk M Clough	First Salary - December	£210.91	£14329.39
Not paid	St Oswald's School	Room Hire Nov and Jan	£40.00	
Not paid	David E Wells	Reimbursement printer ink	£45.99	

RESOLVED

That the payments detailed in the table above be approved.

(ii) Bank Reconciliation

Members received the following Bank Reconciliation as at 2nd January 2024:-

Bank Reconciliation 11 September 2023	
MOLLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL	
Financial year ending 31 March 2024	
Prepared by: Muna Clough, Parish Clerk & RFO	

Balance per bank statements as at 2 nd January 2024	£
Current Account (20267771)	£14,329.39
Less: any unpresented cheques	None
Add: any unbanked cash	None
Net bank balances as at 2nd January 2024	£14,329.39
The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows	
<u>CASH BOOK</u>	
Opening Balance	£11,783.63
Add: Receipts in the year	£14,650.00
Less: Payments in the year	£12,104.24
Closing balance per cash book [receipts and payments book] must equal net bank balances above	£14,329.39

RESOLVED

That the Bank Reconciliation as at 2nd January 2024 be received.

(iii) **Website Training**

RESOLVED

That approval be given for the Clerk to attend training on updating the Parish Council website.

7. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2024-2025

A detailed report was considered by Members on the Budget and Precept.

The Chair reported on discussions with the Parish Council Payroll provider, Barnes Cooper and also with HMRC. He had been advised that no tax returns had been filed since 2016 and there were possible penalties to pay totalling approximately £900. Barnes Cooper were working to regularise this matter, but the Parish Council would be required to pay in the region of £420 to Barnes Cooper for completing this work. Members agreed that the Parish Council would appeal the penalties if they were confirmed.

RESOLVED

That the 2024-2025 Precept request in the sum of £14,392.00 be approved.

8. PLANNING

The Parish Council considered the following planning matters:-

- **New Planning Application**

- (i) Ref No: 23/03824/FUL Warren Farm Townfield Lane Mollington Chester CH1 6LB.
Proposed agricultural building and associated works. Councillor Jones answered questions on this application for a new project, which involved working with Genus and Edinburgh University on groundbreaking research on beef cattle, methane capture and feed efficiency.

At this juncture, Councillor Jones withdrew from the meeting.

Lengthy discussions took place and concerns were expressed regarding the size of the barn, the condition of the road and its impact on residents, the large amount of green space that was being utilised and traffic.

Discussions were also held regarding the use of Facebook for planning applications, and Members agreed that social media should not be utilised for sharing this information. Instead, residents visiting the Mollington Parish Council website, would be directed to the Cheshire West and Chester Council planning portal for further information on planning matters relating to the local area.

Councillor Jones returned to the meeting.

Members raised their concerns with Councillor Jones who particularly wished to reassure the Parish Council that works to resolve the condition of the road were commencing the following day.

RESOLVED

1. That the Parish Council raises no objections to the planning application but wishes to record its thorough consideration of the following concerns, which were raised with the applicant:-

- **the impact on local residents in particular the access and road conditions,**
- **overall development size at the site and the impact on the infrastructure. and the comments made to the applicant thereon.**

2. That the responses from the applicant, especially in relation to the works to improve the condition of the road which were to commence the following day, were welcomed and recorded.

- (ii) Ref No: 23/03953/FUL Warren Chase Townfield Lane Mollington Chester CH1 6LB. Two storey rear extension, part two storey, part single storey side extension, single storey front extension and render. The Parish Council raised no objections to this application.
- (iii) Battery Storage Pre-Planning Stage.

The Parish Council raised concerns over the lack of transparency regarding this proposal. Members felt that the Net Zero project was being introduced at the expense of the greenbelt, when there were other brownfield sites that could be utilised.

RESOLVED

That this matter be discussed further, following the submission of a planning application.

Members noted the following planning applications:-

- **Ongoing Planning Application/s**
- (iv) Ref No: 23/03107/FUL Land at Glebe Farm, Mollington, Chester. Conversion of former stable, hayloft and workshop into two dwellinghouses to be used as holiday lets. (Awaiting decision)
- (v) Ref No: 23/03105/DIS The Elms Farmhouse, Townfield Lane, Mollington, Chester. CH1 6NH Discharge of conditions 3 (Materials), 4 (Parking), 5 (Cycle Parking) and 6 (Hard and soft Landscaping) of 19/00308/FUL. (Awaiting decision)

- (vi) Ref No: 23/03442/DIS Warren Farm, Townfield Lane, Mollington, Chester. CH1 6LB Discharge of conditions 12 (hard and soft landscaping), 13 (drainage) and 15 (construction management plan) of planning permission 20/04324/FUL. (Awaiting decision)
- (vii) Ref No: 23/03569/PMA CSS House, Parkgate Road, Mollington, Chester. CH1 6NQ Conversion of office to single dwelling house. (Awaiting decision)

Decisions Made

- (viii) Ref No: 23/01702/LDC Warren Chase Townfield Lane Mollington Application for lawful development certificate for existing use as a residential dwelling (C3) without compliance with occupancy condition 4 of planning consent 6/6299 for a continuous period for more than 10 years. Approved on 28 November 2023

9. HIGHWAYS AND PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

The Chair updated Members on matters relating to the Parish Highways and Public Rights of Way. He reported on streetlights and the poor condition of Townfield Lane, and he intended to speak to the Cheshire West and Chester Council Principal Engineer about these matter. Ongoing concerns were expressed over the overgrown hedge belonging to a property within the Parish which was impacting on the highway, and the Chair agreed to seek advice on the most effective way to address this and residents would be asked via the Newsletter to contribute to the upkeep of the village.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

10. CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 4

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting (Minute 3 refers).

11. PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE AND EMAIL

The Chair reported on difficulties with the Parish Council website, which were hopefully now resolved. Members agreed that for various reasons, at this stage, they did not want to use Parish Council dedicated email addresses.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

12. NEWSLETTER

The Chair circulated a draft copy of the Newsletter.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

The Chair and Clerk report that they had not received any correspondence.

14. WARD COUNCILLOR'S BRIEFING

Members referred to a written update received from Councillor Eardley.

RESOLVED

That the update be noted.

15. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair wished to discuss the following items of business, due to the next meeting not being scheduled for two months.

16. TIPPING OF HORSE MANURE AND HAY

A significant amount of horse manure and hay was regularly being tipped on public land by Mollington school.

RESOLVED

That Members will keep the site under review and, if required, contact the perpetrators.

17. PARKING ON THE GRASS VERGE AT JUBILEE TREE

It had been noted that parents dropping off their children at school were parking on the grass verge at the Jubilee tree. This was damaging the land.

RESOLVED

That the Chair drafts a letter to be sent in the first instance to the Head Teacher, to disseminate to parents, requesting that they do not park on the grass verge.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted that the next meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday, 21st March 2024 at 7.30 pm at St. Oswald's Primary School.