

MINUTES OF CHRISTLETON PARISH COUNCIL ORDINARY MEETING

INCORPORATING KING GEORGE'S TRUST

Held on Tuesday 14th July 2020 - Via ZOOM Virtual Meeting

APPROVED

Present Cllr Luke Henley (Chairman) Susan Robson, John Beckitt, John Eccles, Elizabeth Inall, Kate Sinclair, Damian Murphy & Janet Brown.

In Attendance: CWAC Cllr Stuart Parker, Malcolm Pratt, Representative of Little Mere Management Company, Jane Harrad-Roberts (member of the public) and Sue Thwaite (Clerk)

Apologies: There were no apologies for this meeting

Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

Minutes of the last Meeting

1. The Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 16th June 2020 were approved as a true and correct record and will be formally signed by the Chairman following lockdown restrictions being lifted.

Consultation & Engagement (bt fwd)

2. Cllr Sinclair gave a Power-point presentation on how the Parish Council should consult and engage with the local community in the future Cllr Sinclair presented best practice for consultation and engagement and set out the steps that the Parish Council should take to ensure the work that it does represents the views and interests of residents in the village. Engagement means frequent communications with residents and local groups, involvement in projects and working groups, volunteering their time and effort to aid the village, contacting the Council to assist with problems and queries and advocates for the work of Christleton Parish Council. Successful engagement builds trust. Consultation creates the opportunity for residents to input into major decisions for the village. The Parish Council must set out objectives, determine who needs to be consulted, their needs and barriers to engagement with consultations. Residents must also be provided with financial and contextual information so that they can make an informed decision, including the ongoing impact of those decisions.
3. Following the recent newsletter, the Council are now looking at further consultation vehicles for the community and Cllr Sinclair will put together ideas for consideration in the near future. It was agreed that Cllr Sinclair would produce outlines for consultations in line with the best practice presented, for the two major planning developments, traffic, and the use of King George's Field. Cllr Sinclair noted that while social distancing measures are in place, it will not be possible to undertake fully accessible consultations without face to face meetings.

Public Forum

4. Cllr Parker reported that CWAC were gradually resuming 'normal' business with meetings being largely held via virtual platforms. Businesses and shops in Chester are gradually re-opening at a steady pace.
5. When asked if the Northgate Scheme would be put on hold due to the current economic situation with funding being transferred to other more pressing services, he informed the members that the project has now started with groundworks already taking place, the scheme will include new Market hall, cinema and restaurants and should be completed within a 2-year timescale.

Planning

Planning Applications

6. A list of planning application previously circulated to all Councillors was considered. Comments noted by the Clerk for submission to CWAC Planning Authority. All comments can be viewed on CWAC website
7. Planning Application 20/01877/FUL – Mrs Harrad-Roberts was invited to speak regarding this planning application giving a brief outline of the proposal for the benefit of the Council.
Resolved: The Parish Council confirmed they have no objections to this application.

Report from University of Law Working Sub-Group

8. Cllr Eccles circulated a report from the Sub-Group in which it was suggested that the group had delivered all that it could be expected of it being the conduit facilitating discussion with the Developer sharing viewpoints. The outcome of those discussion includes the Developer committing to pursue a temporary construction access, Developer commitment to provide Section 106 payments for Village infrastructure changes and a good working relationship between the Developer and the Parish Council.
9. It was discussed that the group now be discontinued being now at the stage where full Council collective decisions making will be required with Cllr Eccles still being the main point of contact between the Developer and the Parish Council.
Resolved: To disband the sub-group and for all further decision making going to full council, with
Action: Cllr Eccles to continue as the main point of contact with the Developer.
10. Cllr Eccles also reported he was awaiting confirmation from the Developer on the exact temporary point of access and route for construction vehicles.
Action: Cllr Eccles will draft a letter to the Developer to request this confirmation.

Littleton Parish Council

11. A communication from Littleton Parish Council had been received expressing their significant concerns with the proposal for a temporary construction access point off Little Heath Road, and Littleton Parish Council vehemently oppose such a plan and are looking to contact the Developer with their views.
12. Littleton PC confirmed that they would have no objections to a route that involves access via the A41 and Pearl Lane, although previous concerns to this route had been raised on the grounds of safety.
13. Cllr Eccles & Beckitt had followed up informally by speaking to two members of Littleton Parish Council explaining the background behind the current situation. Littleton's intention is to discuss it further at their next Parish Council meeting.

Update on Beechmoor Nurseries

14. A further virtual meeting will be held with developer when they have the visual assessment work back, their transport and air quality consultants would be in attendance to talk through the assessments and answer questions and concerns in detail.

Gate & fence on open field opposite UOL

15. It was brought to the attention of the Council that a new fence and gate had been erected on open field on the corner of Faulkners Lane and Pepper Street upon investigation it was found in normal circumstances 'any gate or fencing adjacent to the highway above 1m in height will need planning permission and is classed as development'. The tenant of the field is using the open space for his personal use – no action required.

Traffic & Road Safety

Update on Planit-IE brief

16. This is proceeding to plan; they are halfway through 8-week design programme, once all the designs have been tested with the Schools and CWAC, planning , landscaping conservation & highways they will be presented to the Parish Council with Planit-IE in attendance.
17. The traffic strategy and the effect of COVID-19 has seen a number of major changes since the last briefing, which will affect car parking options with the UOL developer
18. Air Quality monitoring continues in the centre of the village, Pepper Street, A41 cycle path and across the Hamburger roundabout, Little Heath Road to the A51.
19. The primary objective, since completing the Air Quality report was to reduce traffic flow and congestion in the centre of the village with a reduction in discretionary traffic on each main routes with various proposals being considered in each location. A new Park & Stride strategy for school students and staggered High School starts were a major part of that strategy.
20. There have been 3 additional capacity car parking options suggested:
 - (i) Right of the Plough Lane entrance to the High School – this option was put to the Head Teacher and Governors who after some consideration rejected this plan. It was noted that if this extra parking could not be used by visitors to the village, it could still be used by sixth-formers who currently park on Village Road and the toast rack, thereby freeing up more parking in the village.
 - (ii) Behind St James Church – this is still being considered, it was raised that it could pave the way for further development of Green Belt in the future which would be of concern to some residents.
 - (iii) Quarry Lane opposite the Primary School – there would be 27 spaces at a 90-degree angle – this will potentially be of concern to residents on Quarry Lane, but Planit-IE is working to make this sympathetic to the environment before it is presented as an option for consultation.
21. Cllr Beckitt suggested that the PC should consult early with a few residents most critically affected by any of the Planit proposals as part of an overall consultation planning process, which allows for the residents to feedback formally to the whole Parish Council.
22. Cllr Beckitt said that he intended to talk to some of the residents on Quarry Lane who are particularly affected by this scheme, but Cllr Sinclair voiced her serious concerns with this idea stating that this option should form part of an overall consultation proposal, allowing those residents to feedback formally to the whole Parish Council.
23. Priorities for additional car park spaces may also change due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, with The Bridge Club finding that online attendances are roughly double that of face-to-face and it is not clear how many players would return to the club building in the foreseeable future, this would have a significant reduction in cars parking in the village centre. That said Cllr Eccles reminded members of previous Council assurances that no cars would be displaced until additional car-parking provision is put in place.
24. The High School are also planning to stagger school starting/finishing times, which again would make a significant impact on traffic flows and congestion in the village.
25. Whilst it is not known whether the COVID-19 changes are temporary, the rationale for increased car-parking provision still remains given the one-off opportunity to receive Section 106 funding from the Developer. It was suggested that this funding could be re-distributed to other infrastructure projects for the community, namely improvements to Little Heath Play Area and improvements to the first field to be more widely used as a sports venue which could generate income for the KGF Trust.

CWAC Highways Backlog

26. There are a number of outstanding jobs to start following approval by the Parish Council, Cllr Beckitt had enquired with CWAC if there is a timescale for these works starting

CWAC Highways plans for Rowton Bridge Road

27. CWAC Highways had plans to close Rowton Bridge Road from the A41 for a trial period, both Christleton and Waverton Parish Council have communicated that they are opposed to this trial and are awaiting confirmation whether it will not go ahead.

King George's Trust

28. To approve retrospectively expenditure for July

Payments	£	Act	Cheque No:
Rob Pierce – groundworks for July 2020	905.00	Open Spaces Act 1906	
Income:			
Bank Balance @ date	5912.57		

Update on progress with Agronomist's Report

29. Cllr Murphy reported on his recent meeting with the Agronomist who took core samples of the soil which is of good quality he was impressed with the grass which was excellent for sport playing surface. The field needs a comprehensive draining scheme which could cost in the region of £20,000, but he informed Cllr Murphy that there were grants available from the ECB and Sports England and would look into the possibility of obtaining such funds. It was also agreed to discuss additional carparking on scrub land opposite the play area with the Agronomist.
30. Once his full report is received his recommendations will be considered along with other possible uses for the field.

Inspection report on Little Heath Play Area

31. There were no issues with the play area equipment to report, but over 50 CO2 gas canisters were collected in one session and full and overflowing litter bins were reported to CWAC StreetCare for them to empty – this was done the same day as reporting the issue.
32. There have many instances of people using the play area despite notices informing them it is still closed until the council can meet the COVID-19 secure guidelines with the Ground worker reporting he has been subject to a great deal of abuse when requesting people to leave.
33. Their issues with car parking at the play area which has caused problems for visitors to the Sports Club – the entrance gate to the club's drive being blocked by an ice-cream van and cars preventing access.
34. It was agreed to investigate the area of scrubland opposite the existing car park to see if additional spaces can be created.

To discuss ordering play sand and bark for Play Area

35. Following discussion it was:
Resolved: To make enquiries as to the availability of Play Bark & Sand with suppliers with approval to spend up to £900 (ex VAT) and to enlist the assistance of volunteers to spread the materials when delivered
Action: Clerk to make enquiries regarding the bark and sand and Cllr Sinclair to organise volunteer group.

Covid-19 Guidelines for Little Heath Play Area

36. To enable the re-opening of the Play Area the guidelines were discussed and accepted along with the risk assessment. Wording for the signage making visitors aware of the rules for usage of the play area and equipment was approved, signs will now be made and displayed to enable the play area to be officially re-opened.

Future Projects & Groups

Update from Air Quality Group

37. Monitoring continues of air quality on the Village Centre and A51, Main development reported on was further evidence that PM2.5 particles are found in the bodies of young children, the commissioning of a new Great Boughton plume to monitor the A41 and Hamburger roundabout and the start of a project to develop a low cost continuous monitoring network for Great Boughton, Littleton & Christleton. CWAC Highways are due to begin work on the A51 Tarvin Road Improvement scheme with the main works being scheduled to start in August 2020 to May 2021.
38. Plans for potential improvements to the A51/A55 junction are still awaited together with costs.

Update from Asset Working Group

39. A Ward Walk is being organised to look at ways of improving and upgrading footpaths and cycle ways

Allotments

Update from Allotment Group

40. The allotments are now at full capacity – there has been a marked interest in people wanting allotment plots since lockdown has been in force. Repairs to the central pathway have now been completed and all rents have been received.

To update Allotment Risk Schedule/Risk Assessment

41. The Risk Schedule and Risk Assessment was considered and accepted.

Finance

42. The following retrospective expenditure for July was approved:

ORGANISATION			Cheque No:
Sue Thwaite – Clerk Expenses June 2020	115.23	LGA 1972 – Sec 112	2455
JDH Business Services Ltd – Internal Audit y/e 31/3/20	286.80	LGA 1972 – Sec 142	2456
Waterplus – Water charges for Allotments	8.17	Small Holding & Allotments Act 1908	2457
Krystal Hosting Ltd Domain Renewal – christleton-pc.gov.uk 2020/2022	60.00	LGA 1972 – Sec 112	2455
Majestic Wine – Gift for outstanding contribution for Volunteer Webmaster to building and maintaining PC Website	77.94	LGA 1972	2455
Cllr John Beckitt -ZOOM subscription	7.20	LGA 1972 – Sec 112	2458
CWAC – Pest Control Contract Renewal	266.86	Open Spaces Act 1906	2459
Rob Pierce – Groundworks for June 2020	380.40	Open Spaces Act 1906	2460
Boughton Heath Allotment Association – Skip Hire, Hire of JCB &40mm of Crush & Run for central pathway	834.06	Open Spaces Act 1906	2461
No Prior Approval Payments			
Sue Thwaite Clerk – Salary for JUNE 2020 & Additional hrs for MAY 2020	891.87	LGA 1972 – Sec 111	2455

Derek Garner – Village Asst Pay & expenses JUNE 2020	132.91	LGA 1972 – Sec 112	2462
HMRC – PAYE JUNE 2020	277.62	LGA 1972 – Sec 2	2463
INCOME:			
Bank Balances – @ 20/06/2020			
H/I Account	120,245.04		
Current A/C	100.45		
Dredging A/C	12052.87		

Quarterly Financial Review

43. The quarterly financial review was circulated to all Councillors and approved.

To approve quotation for restoring Village Sign

Resolved: The quotation of £210 to restore the faded village sign was accepted and approved

Action: Clerk to confirm acceptance with the contractor.

To consider quotation to repair benches by the Pit

Resolved: The quotation to repair and refurbish the 3 benches on Little Heath by the side of The Pit for the cost of £460 was considered and approved

Action: Clerk to confirm acceptance with the contractor.

To approve invoice from Planit IE

44. The interim invoice for £1800 was approved following confirmation that this amount would be deducted from the outstanding balance.

Christleton Schools

Update for Christleton High School

45. The Headteacher is currently working on ways of welcoming back students safely within guidelines for the school to re-open in September.

Update from Christleton Primary School

46. There was nothing to report at this meeting

Monthly Inspection Report

Capesthorne Road Community Orchard

47. There were no issues to report this month with the Orchard.

Community Safety Matters

48. There were no issues to report this month

Action Items

To discuss vacancies on the Parish Council

49. Following confirmation from CWAC the Council can now advertise the two vacancies to co-opt two new members, the position will now be advertised on the village notice boards and the Parish Council website – the deadline for application is Friday 24th August 2020. Anyone wishing to apply should be made in writing to the Clerk at clerk@christleton-pc.gov.uk; with a short resume, a description of yourself, giving brief details of why you would be an ideal parish councillor and what you can bring to the role.

To consider online file sharing

50. Cllr Sinclair will investigate various platforms to enable the council to file share to make virtual meetings more efficient.

To consider LGA consultation on New Model Code of Conduct

51. The New Model Code of Conduct was circulated to all Councillors with the view that we should have a single code that we all understand and that there should be reasonable and proportionate sanctions of breaches.

Action: The Clerk will convey the Councils comments to NALC

To discuss Little Mere Management Maintenance Deed

52. When the Deed dated 23rd July 2004 was signed the burden of the maintenance of Little Heath, which is an unadopted road up to the speed bump to the right of the gates to Little Mere was placed on the owners of the Little Mere properties through their management company, who have no control over access to or use of Little Heath. There are no provisions in the Deed to address changes in use of Little Heath that might lead to the intensification in use by either number or size of vehicles using the road.
53. The Deed placed the onus on the residents of Little Mere the liability of paying all the costs incurred with resurfacing maintenance and repair work. Over subsequent years the volume of traffic using Little Heath has increased enormously with increasing use by Christleton Sports Club, the children's play area, bike track and use of first field. The Pit also attracts traffic as a popular recreational area for picnicking, fishing, feeding the ducks and bird watching.
54. The Management Company have requested that the Parish Council consider their proposal to set up a sinking fund to address future repair and maintenance costs, to be controlled by the Parish Council, the fund would be financed by an annual levy based on usage and obligations of the user group involved i.e. Management Company, Sports Club, First Field Users and Community Precept Levy.
55. Legal advice would be required to address alteration to the terms of the Deed, its possible replacement and future communications if changes in the use of Little Heath were to arise with any new user groups contributing to the levy.

Resolved: To seek legal advice to make necessary amendment to the Deed to incorporate a user group levy, and it was agreed to consider the setting up a sinking fund.

Action: Malcolm Pratt, representative of LM Management Company will investigate the legal aspects of amending the Deed and report back to the Parish Council in due course.

To discuss updating Village Director & Village Guide

56. It was agreed that the task of updating the Village Directory would be shared by all councillors and they were all allocated designated areas with end of August as a deadline for completion.

Update on communications with Welsh Water/SWAC Highways on flooding at junction of Plough Lane and Village Road.

57. Cllr Beckitt reported he was in the process of identifying a Senior Technician with Welsh Water to review the drainage system and produce a design, operation and maintenance of the drainage arrangements at this junction so as to reduce the frequency of flooding at this junction with rainwater and sewage.

Information Correspondence

58. Information correspondence received during the month has been emailed to all Councillors upon receipt by the Clerk

Information only items

59. Cllr Robson informed the meeting that David Cummings has devised some local walks which are on the Parish Council website and has now produce further Heritage Walks which will also be published on the website.
60. A vote of thanks was given to David for producing all the walks which were proving to be immensely popular. The Clerk will write to David expressing the Councils thanks for his continued hard work he carries out for the community.

61. A meeting to be held by David Keane, Police & Crime Commissioner with Town & Parish Councils to be held on Thursday, 23rd July 2020 will be attended by Cllr Sinclair.

Date of next meeting: 11/08/20 & 02/09/2020

Meeting closed at 9.35 pm.