

## MINUTES OF CHRISTLETON PARISH COUNCIL ORDINARY MEETING

### INCORPORATING KING GEORGE'S TRUST

Held on Tuesday date: 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2023

At Christleton Methodist Church Hall

#### UNSIGNED

**Present** Cllr Luke Henley (Chairman) Janet Brown, Kate Sinclair, John Beckitt, Elizabeth Inall, Peter Tonge, & Graham Ranger

In Attendance: CWAC Cllr Stuart Parker, 21 members of the public and Sue Thwaite (Clerk)

**Apologies:** Cllrs Susan Robson (prior commitment) & Lauren Buckley (no childcare) & PCSO Linda Bailey (on duty)

#### Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

1. Cllr Henley declared an interest in planning item 22/01309/FUL applicant are neighbours.

#### Minutes of the last Meeting

2. The Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday date 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 & Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 were approved and signed as a true and correct record.

#### Public Forum

3. Twenty members of the public were attending in relation to Manor Bridge Ltd development proposals and it was agreed that this item be **bt/fwd;**

#### Report on Manor Bridge Ltd

4. A number of residents attended the meeting and the following progress was reported since the last meeting

CWAC had reported:

5. The current CWAC local plan requires 22000 houses to be built between 2010 and 2030.
6. There are sufficient building developments in the CWAC area to meet this target.
7. CWAC has no plans to release further land from green belt.
8. However, Chester is surrounded by Green Belt and therefore any further housing targets will require revision of the Local Plan and the release of green belt but starting with brown field sites and not Manor Farm.
9. The proposed new High school on the west side of the A41 also faces the following hurdles.

A very recent Housing needs survey indicated that Christleton residents are overwhelmingly:

#### **In favour of**

- Protecting the green belt as far as possible.
- Rewilding as much of the green belt as possible.

#### **Not in favour of**

- New housing being built in the Christleton green belt

10. This same Housing Needs Survey identified that there is only a current need for a handful of houses in Christleton and not hundreds.
11. The Village already has a High School which delivers outstanding educational results – hundreds of houses will create a requirement for over 100 new places and not a large new High school.

12. Manor Bridge is proposing that access to the new housing development is via two railway bridges, reportedly owned by Manor Farm, which will have to be widened to cope with school arrival and departure traffic – Network Rail may or may not approve these changes in a timely fashion
13. The A41 is a dangerous road that has consistently delivered one fatality a year and has resulted in life changing injuries to schoolchildren cycling and walking within a few feet of fast-moving HGVs – the building of hundreds of houses and a new school on the west side of the A41 increases these risks as 1,000 rather than the current 150 children will be forced to cross the A41.
14. The A41 is heavily polluted with NO2 and particularly PM2.5 which is responsible for numerous chronic health conditions which include asthma, bronchial conditions and heart disorders. The fact that third of children are frightened of their routes to school and the major culprit is the A41 should tell us that the we should be doing our utmost to remove cyclists and pedestrians from the A41 SUP (shared user pathway) not including the road in the main thoroughfare to a new High School!
15. The proposed new school would need to be accessed by around 1,400 schoolchildren and their teachers over a period of 25 minutes (4,000/hour rate) in buses and cars, on cycles and on foot which compares with an average A41 vehicular rate of around 1,000 vehicles/hour – this is not a minor additional flow to a road already experiencing slow or stationary traffic at school arrival and departure times. The A41 will be gridlocked for more than an hour a day. Teaching staff and parents will be late for school and this key trunk road will effectively be taken out of use for more than an hour every weekday!
16. The Parish Council believes that safety improvements can be made to improve cycling and walking access to the Manor Farm site but Manor Bridge has not yet committed to designing, building and funding any of these critical improvements and we remain unconvinced that there is anything that Manor Bridge can and will do to prevent the A41 acute congestion that will result from superimposing school arrival and departure traffic on top of a trunk road with slow moving or stationary traffic
17. The proposal to site a new school on the West side of the A41 does not look viable to the Parish Council irrespective of any debate about local plans, green belt and housing needs
18. The Parish Council wish to thank the Learning Trust for their early announcement that  
“they have ‘no wish to re-locate the school or increase our student admission numbers.”
19. The Parish Council has now received the following legal advice:
  - i) The gift of an entire new school in order to justify the ‘special circumstance’ required for  
Planning permission of the Manor Farm housing development in Green Belt is entirely unacceptable in planning policy terms and raised significant legal concerns.
  - ii) Without the school the Manor Farm housing development proposal has no prospect of delivering the ‘very special circumstances’ required to justify harm to the openness of green belt.
  - iii) Manor Farm have submitted their site for a possible review of Green Belt boundaries. CWAC can review green belt boundaries as part of a review of the local plan. To do so it has first to identify a new housing need as the existing need of 22,000 houses between 2010 and 2030 is already satisfied. This requires clear political direction (not available yet) alongside revised birth rate projections and economic and employment forecasts for the area. The steps made by CWAC include making as much uses of suitable brown field sites, optimising development housing densities, consulting with neighbouring authorities and finally consulting widely. If a new housing need can only be satisfied by altering the green belt boundaries for Farm Land like Manor Farm, then CWAC has to evidence the ‘exceptional circumstances’ required to justify the change.

'Exceptional circumstances' is a less demanding test than the 'very special circumstances' test and may comprise one factor or a combination of factors. It is therefore important for residents and businesses affected by the proposed Manor Farm development to understand that nothing is likely to happen and if it does it will take years.

- iv) Another way in which housing can be approved is through rural exception sites which target people or households that live in the Parish, have permanent employment in the Parish, have close family members in the Parish or have lived in the parish for 10 years – these are necessarily small developments such as the one next to the Cheshire Cat which triggered the Housing Needs Survey.
  - v) It is critically important to find a way to launch the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan with contributions from a few skilled residents supported by professionals. Although Green Belt remains a substantial protection the Neighbourhood Planning process provides for other levers like housing density, layout, design etc. These can provide significant barriers to low-cost high density formulaic developments.
- 20 The residents were asked to volunteer for a Christleton neighbourhood planning team. Names and contact details should be emailed to the Parish Clerk. A session would be arranged to familiarise the volunteers with the Neighbourhood planning process which would receive professional support from CWAC, the Parish Council and consultants.

#### **Action Item 13c bt/fwd**

##### To discuss correspondence re village telephone box

- 21 A member of the public attended the meeting following correspondence bringing to the attention of the poor state of repair of the village telephone box.
- 22 The telephone box had originally been adopted to house a defibrillator machine prior to the COVID lockdown, and despite numerous times the Council has made enquiries on progress with the plans nothing has been forthcoming.
- 23 Following discussion, it was agreed with the resident that he would look into providing a specification of what was required to re-furbish the box to allow the Parish Council to look into obtaining quotations to bring the box back into good condition.

**Action:** The resident will look into this matter and come back to the Council at the next meeting.

#### **Monthly Inspection Report - Capesthorpe Road item 11b bt/fwd.**

##### Capesthorpe Road Community Orchard

- 24 There were no issues with the Orchard this month.

##### Report on condition of perimeter fence and action needed

- 25 A contractor has been to inspect the fencing around the perimeter of the Orchard and reported that a number of posts are rotten and need replacing. We are now awaiting a quotation for the required work.

#### **Planning**

##### Planning Applications

- 26 A list of planning applications 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.

##### Update on UOL Development

- 27 There was nothing to report at this meeting.

Update on Beechmoor community Liaison Group

- 28 A further Liaison Group meeting is being arranged and Cllr Tonge will attend on behalf of the Council.

**Traffic & Road Safety**

Update on Highway Issues

- 29 The design of the speed limit changes has now been agreed with CWAC Highways, the costs will be confirmed in the near future.
- 30 Vehicle Activated Signs for Plough Lane have now been ordered and the warning road markings will be installed after the planned resurfacing of Plough Lane.
- 31 Birch Heath Build-out – this is going out for the statutory public consultation which they are required to do prior in implementation.
- 32 Pepper Street is due to be closed on Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> June for water main repair.
- 33 Rowton Bridge Road is due to be closed for maintenance for a number of weeks (dates to be confirmed).

Speedwatch Update

- 34 There was nothing to report at this meeting.

Update on ISTTF

- 35 The Council is still waiting to hear from Head of Highways what the conclusions have been reached from the TDM (Traffic Demand Management Study), which would include comments as to where they would support the changes on Rowton Bridge Road.

Update on Air Quality

- 36 The SE Chester Air Quality Working Group met with the CWAC Air Quality team Minutes of the meeting will be issued but the key actions agreed were:
- Write a summary draft brief describing
    - a. the Air Quality measurements carried out in Christleton, on the A41 and on the A51
    - b. the implications and
    - c. a recommended way forward which would include draft advice to parents, improvements to routes to school and continuous monitoring requirements.
- 37 This document would be circulated to the new CWAC Director of Public Health who would be a lead factor in influencing and developing a new approach for the CWAC Planning, Highways and Transport teams.
- 38 Recommend the devices (reviewed in a recent EPA note) that Parish Councils and CWAC could install for continuous monitoring of NO<sub>2</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> etc.

**KING GEORGE'S TRUST ITEMS**

To approve expenditure for date: June 2023

- 39 The expenditure set out in Appendix 1 was approved.

To approve quotation for Play Bark & Play Sand and organise distribution team

- 40 Following discussion, the quotation from Dandy's Chester Ltd to supply the Play Bark & Play Sand for the play area at a cost of £1,985.08 incl VAT was approved.

**Action:** The Clerk to place the order and Cllr Sinclair to organise volunteers to install the new bark and sand at a date to be confirmed.

Update on progress with LHPA re-furbishment project

- 41 Cllr Sinclair circulated the completed flyer to the meeting and a further meeting of the LHPA group is being scheduled to finalise details for printing and distribution and to move the project forward.

To consider request from Christleton Sports Club for financial support to purchase grass cutting machinery

- 42 Following discussion in connection with a request for financial assistance with the purchase of a new tractor and cutting equipment for the Sports Club of £2,000.
- 43 Cllr Ranger proposed and Cllr Beckitt seconded approval of this request on the understanding that the Sports Club will carry out the mowing of the KGF First Field from the start of the cutting season in 2024, thereby saving the Trust the cost of employing a contractor to carry out the works.

**Resolved:** The proposal was agreed unanimously

**Action** The Clerk to convey the decision to the Sports Club

Play area inspection report for date: May 2023

- 44 There were a number of issues brought to the Council's attention and it was agreed to request the play area inspector supply an estimate to carry out the necessary works.

**Action:** The Clerk to action this item.

**Allotments**

To receive report from Allotment Group

- 45 The Clerk reported that a number of tenants have been written to regarding late payment of their rent, this matter will be monitored.

**Finance**

To approve expenditure for date: June 2023

- 46 The expenditure set out in Appendix 2 was approved.

To approve retrospectively donation for Parish Coronation Lunch celebrations

- 47 Following discussion, it was:

**Resolved:** That the Council in accordance with its power under section 137 and 139 of the Local Government Act 1972, should incur the following expenditure, £100 which in the opinion of the Council is in the interests of the area or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure, to donate £100 towards the cost of a celebration lunch the Coronation of King Charles the third.

**Action:** The clerk to action this item.

To approve Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023

- 48 All questions on the Annual Governance Statement answered and agreed

**Resolved:** To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023 by all members present, this was then signed by the Chairman and the Clerk

To approve Accounting Statement 2022/2023

- 49 The Accounting Statement was circulated to all members by the Clerk for consideration it was:

**Resolved:** To approve the Accounting Statement 2022/2023 by all members present, this was then signed by the Chairman and the Clerk

To discuss annual Audit report 2022/2023

- 50 The Annual Return had been inspected by the Internal Auditor and approved. There were a couple of issues highlighted on the Internal Audit Report and these matters will be addressed by the Clerk and implemented.
- 51 The Annual Return and all required documents will now be forwarded to the External Auditor by the deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 by the Clerk.

To approve the £1,000 transfer to Dredging Fund and £1,000 to Little Heath Road Maintenance Fund

- 52 The transfer was approved unanimously

**Christleton Schools**

Update from Christleton High School

- 53 There was nothing to report at this meeting.

Update from Christleton Primary School

- 54 There was nothing to report at this meeting.

**Planit Update**

- 55 There was nothing to report at this meeting.

**Action Items**

PROW Update

- 55 Cllr Tonge met with the Investigating Officer last week and walked round all the paths in question and interview of witnesses have been arranged for Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

To discuss vacancy on Parish Council

- 56 The vacancy on the Council was discussed and the wording of the vacancy notice was approved with the deadline for candidates to apply is noon on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023 with the application being considered at the July meeting.

Fishing at the Pit

- 57 The issues raised in the report from the Bank Warden were noted and will be monitored.

To consider sending delegate to PCC Borough & Town & Parish Council Meeting

- 58 There was no-one available to attend this meeting.

Notice Board

- 59 This on going

Broadband update

- 60 Openreach publish a map to show full fibre (FTTP) broadband rollout plans and progress across the UK. Recently, they made a change to their map key. Their map still shows Christleton being in plan, however with an unconfirmed date (previously it was "before December 2025"). It is understood, Openreach are aiming for the majority of their build to be complete by December 2025. However, this plan could be running late, explaining why the key may have changed.

**Information Correspondence**

- 62 All relevant information correspondence is emailed to all Councillors.

**Information Only Items**

- 63 Invitation to attend the Climate Change Conference on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

Meeting closed at: 10.04 pm

Dates of the next meeting: Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2023

CPC: 06/06/23

**APPENDIX 1 KING GEORGES FIELD TRUST EXPENDITURE**

<b>PAYMENTS</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Act</b>
Rob Pierce – Groundworks for April 2023	335.00	Open Spaces Act 1906
Groundforce Landscapes Ltd – Grass cutting of first field for April	120.00	Open Spaces Act 1906
Stewart Sim – Mowing of woodland area	90.00	
Gt Boughton Parish Council – Monthly Play Area Inspection	To follow	Open Spaces Act 1906
Dandy’s Landscape Supplies – Play Bark & Play Sand for Little Heath Play Area	1985.08	Open Spaces Act 1906
<b>BANK BALANCE @ DATE: 19/05/23</b>	<b>7332.51</b>	

**APPENDIX 2 - Parish Council Expenditure**

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Act</b>
Sue Thwaite – Clerk Expenses – May 2023	79.43	LGA 1972 – Sec 112
Microsoft Office 365 monthly subscription (Sue Thwaite)	83.16	LGA 1972 – Sec 112
Society of Local Council Clerks – Annual Subscription	177.00	LGA 1972 – Sec 112
Groundforce Landscapes Ltd – Cutting Legion Meadow and strimming bollards and seats on Birch Heath Common	552.72	Open Spaces Act 1906
ChALC – Affiliation Fees for 2023/2024	700.04	LGA 1972 – Sec 112
Christleton Parochial Church Council – donation towards King Charles Coronation Lunch celebration	100.00	LGA 1972- Sec 137-139
JDH Business Services Ltd – Internal Audit for year ending 31/03/23	354.00	LGA 1972 – Sec 142
Rob Pierce – Groundworks May 2023	355.00	Open Spaces Act 1906
<b>No Prior Approval Payments</b>		
Sue Thwaite Clerk – Salary and add hours for May2023	853.51	LGA 1972 11
Derek Garner – Village Asst Pay & expenses May2023	103.86	LGA 1972 – Sec 112
HMRC – PAYE & NICS for April 2023	281.23	LGA 1972 – Sec 2
Christleton Methodist Church – Room Hire June 2023	36.00	LGA 1972 – Sec 111
<b>Bank Balances – @ 19/05/23/</b>		
H/I Account	182,255.19	
Current A/C	100.48	
Dredging A/C	14,127.80	