

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

Held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 7.00pm

**PRESENT:** Jo Butler (JB), Derek Heiron (DH), Victoria Coward (VC), Charlie Blood (CB), Alex Baker (AB), Ian Pulley (IP), Michelle Andrew (Clerk)

**APOLOGIES:** Rachel Blood (RB).

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **1. To agree as a true record the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024.**

The minutes were approved **6 FOR.**

### **2. To receive the Chairman's Annual Report on the Parish Council's work and accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.**

"Having looked back at my last report, there are still several outstanding issues that we just haven't been able to proceed with yet.

Last April we had the opportunity to apply for a grant to improve the playing fields. Unfortunately, there were several months of delays with Cheshire East Council meaning that we lost out and needed to look for other ways to fund this. We took a survey which was co-ordinated by Victoria Coward, identifying areas of village opinion and we now have a good view of what we would like. But we are at a halt with very little feedback from Cheshire East. It is disappointing, when we see on social media that other areas of Cheshire East seem to get more than the lion's share of investment for things like this. We continue to look at other avenues of funding to help with this.

Other grant applications have been more successful and thanks to the Rural England Prosperity Fund, we have been able to secure money to purchase a projector and screen for the hall. Hopefully this will help to encourage a variety of professional bookings at the hall and maybe even allow screenings for the village in the future.

For some of the other grants we are aware of, we need to have an EPC energy efficiency assessment for the hall, so we will aim to get that done this year, which will give us more opportunities for funding.

We seem to be at a standstill with the works to provide safer roads markings outside the school, that highlight the road and aim to calm the amount of traffic, or at least its speed. Jos Saunders has been our link and has been in regular correspondence on our behalf, but we are still awaiting an outcome for the school. On a positive note, for the school, we were able to fund and support the installation of an additional defibrillator for the village. This now stands bright and proud within the school car park and complements the existing Defibrillator outside the village hall. Fortunately, we have not had the need to use it for now, another good point but both are registered with the National network and ambulance service.

Work to undertake a plan of works at the village hall have met with delays also. As a parish council we must follow specific protocols to avoid any conflict of interest. We therefore must obtain 3 quotes for any significant works, and this has always been a problem as businesses seem to be reluctant to do this for us. We are still in the planning stage

of several upgrades to the hall, but this has been ongoing now for over twelve months and is very frustrating as we can see deterioration in certain areas. I am hopeful that we will get a start on some of these works in the near future. We have, however commenced replacing the fascia boards to the outside of the hall.

We spoke a lot this year about grit bins for the village. These were removed some time ago and we had been asked by several members of the village to reinstate them. After much too-ing and fro-ing we have been informed that after a Cheshire East Council risk assessment, that the village is not suitable for this. We have instead agreed to monitor the gritting service provided and will feed back to Cheshire East Council if needed.

We then have the issues with road gullies and the lack of maintenance of them. The good news is that some gullies on Macclesfield Road were emptied earlier this year, and our hope is that they will have a higher priority for the gullies team going forward. Other gullies and grids continue to be an issue, and we will endeavour to highlight issues as needed.

Then we have the road closure of the B5470, between Kettleshulme and Macclesfield which has required all traffic to be diverted along Bakestonedale Road. We have asked to be kept in touch with any works that Cheshire East Council are undertaking but so far, the communication has been sparse. Unfortunately, this has not only caused problems with getting in and out of the village safely but has had the knock-on effect that the smaller roads around the village are experiencing a high volume of commercial traffic. The school can no longer access swimming lessons, a mandatory part of the school curriculum and are looking for alternatives and hopefully will find alternative accommodation in Derbyshire.

The bus service has been slightly compromised but continues to run, thankfully and waste collection has not encountered any issues thus far. The latest update is that work is planned to start in the Summer of 2025.

We held a Fell Race and have recently had the second event starting and finishing at the village hall but involving the school and race clubs. It is great to see that this historic race has been reimagined, and I hope it will continue for many years to come. Thanks to the organisers and those that marshalled the event it was a great success.

The Memorial Hall continues to provide a venue for several entertainment events.

We have had continued CRTA support for arts and music sessions twice a year and these continue to be well supported. Over the last year we have had Hungrytown, a folk band, The Plot Thickens, which was a slight change to our usual music programme, but which went down well, and just this month, Gus Glynn with a history of guitar music from folk to modern day classics. All were great events, and I know that Gus would love to come back again with his band.

Over the Christmas period we had a slight change to our usual Christmas Fair as we are finding that people fancy a change sometimes. We held a coffee morning with a couple of stalls selling Christmas gifts. This reinvention went down well and was a lovely way of people getting together and having a chat with neighbours and friends. We continue to hold a seniors' party in December each year and we are grateful for the support we receive from the Kettleshulme Entertainment Trust, without whom we would struggle to keep this well supported institution going. The night is always full to capacity and people seem to appreciate all the work that goes on behind the scenes and on the stage too.

We held our usual Remembrance Day ceremony. We are no longer able to close the road for the half hour whilst we stand at our village memorial. We attempted to complete the paperwork but it was clear that we were not a fit for the application and so we had to try to mitigate any risk to those attending. Despite the slight change in focus the ceremony was the best attended for some time with over twenty people present, who were all invited for coffee and biscuits afterwards.

We have been informed of the planned devolution with Cheshire East amalgamating with Cheshire West and Cheshire and Warrington. There are plans for a mayoral election in 2026 and will look with interest at the communications from Cheshire East. With this in mind, we will be sending a letter to the CEO of Cheshire East Council regarding all the issues we have encountered over the last few years in the hope that we may make some inroads into getting some improvements in communications regarding the road closure, the gullies, the play facilities and the general lack on engagement with us as a village. We have also contacted our MP, Tim Roca, hoping that we can get some support following the recent Waste disposal centre closures.

Finance seems to be at the top of a lot of agendas and as a parish council we try hard to ensure the upkeep of the village and the hall and as such will be endeavouring to increase the number of money-generating events we hold. We have a good amount of money put aside for works to be completed in the hall but with increasing costs of fuel and supplies, we know this won't go far.

With this in mind, our finances are as follows: Current account £4,109.57 and our Reserve Account £21,375.04 as of our end of March bank statement.

I am hopeful that we will make some progress over the next year and look forward to working with my parish council and Macclesfield Councillor colleagues to do this."

### **3. Matters arising from the Chairman's report.**

Councillors thanked JB for her report. No matters arising.

### **4. Parish Matters – an opportunity for residents to raise issues.**

No residents were present at the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7:10pm.

Signed:

Dated: