



Goostrey Parish

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING 2007

VILLAGE HALL, TUESDAY, 24th APRIL 2007 AT 7.30PM

Present: Parish Cllrs. Salmon (Chairman), Collins, Craggs, Leake, Mitchell, Padley, Richardson, Robertson and Sturman
County Cllr. Oliver,
Borough. Cllrs. Furlong & Kolker
55 members of the Public.

In attendance: Denise Draper, Parish Clerk
Inspector Mark Gammage, Congleton Neighbourhood Policing Unit
Lisa Green, Customer & Local Relations Manager, Cheshire CC
Mark Barker, Client/Stakeholder Manager, Northern Rail
Robert Morton, Community Rail Officer
Carl Baker & Penny Carter, Network Rail

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed all present and explained the difference between this the 'Annual Parish Meeting' and the 'Annual Parish Council Meeting'. The Annual Parish Council Meeting is, in effect, the AGM of the Parish Council at which the Chairman & Vice Chairman are elected and membership of committees determined. The Local Government Act of 1972 requires the Parish Council to host an Annual Parish Meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to inform electors of the work of the Council, present the Chairman's Report and Accounts and to discuss parish affairs, as a guide (but not a command) to Councillors.

Chairman: Cllr. Gordon Salmon

Parish Clerk: Denise Draper

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Cllr. Neville Price, Chairman of Cheshire County Council who was attending a service at Chester Cathedral to celebrate Cheshire Police Force's 150th anniversary and also from Diana Salmon and Rosalind Gunary.

3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING 2006

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting 2006 were agreed to be a true record and taken as read.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman began with congratulations to Margaret Kettle on being awarded a Lifelong Achievement Award, presented recently at Chester Town Hall, in conjunction with the Woman of the Year Scheme to support the NSPCC. He proposed that the meeting send a letter of congratulations. This was agreed and the meeting gave Mrs Kettle a warm and enthusiastic round of applause.

He then presented his report which is summarised as follows:

The Parish Council. At the election in May 2006, only 5 candidates were nominated and were elected unopposed, without the need for voting. A letter was sent to every household, asking for volunteers for co-option to fill the remaining five seats. 15 people showed an interest and after some withdrawals, 9 remained as candidates for co-option. All of these were strong candidates who would have brought their own expertise to the Council. The May meeting co-opted 5 members by simple majority vote.

The Chairman introduced each Member of the Council and the Parish Clerk, whose appointment had been confirmed as permanent at the May meeting.

The Council had met 11 times during the year, with an average attendance of 7 members. The Chairman of Cheshire County Council and his wife attended the February meeting.

Notable Events during the Year.

- June - The clearing of the railway compound and resumption of the train service. Another enjoyable and successful Rose Day and Scarecrow competition, for which the Chairman congratulated the committee and organisers.
- July - A successful Gardens Open Day which raised £140.60 for Barnardos and McMillan Cancer Relief. The event would be repeated in 2007 and anyone interested in opening their garden was asked to contact the Parish Clerk.
- October - A Civic Service at St.Luke's to which representatives of the many organisations in the village were invited.
- February – A service at Chester Cathedral in celebration of Cheshire's Town and Parish Councils, attended by 4 councillors and their partners.

Highways and the Environment. The Council has continued to monitor the environment of Goostrey and has dealt with a number of requests from residents, from pruning of trees to the painting of the Goostrey sign on the Bogbean, which is in hand. Road signs have been repaired and Cheshire County Council has been asked to carry out a survey of road surfaces with particular attention to the Booth Bed Lane crossroads and the Mill Lane/Main Road junction.

A seat has been installed at the Bank View/Main Road junction and the Council is looking into the provision of picnic tables and benches at the Booth Bed Lane play area.

It is intended to plant shrubs on the verge at Shearbrook Bank to improve the appearance and discourage parking.

Attempts to have the H50 bus service reinstated were not successful. CCC subsidise bus routes up to a limit of £2.50 per passenger but the H50 required a subsidy of £13.78 per passenger.

CCC replaced three oak fingerposts with metal posts indicating 'Restricted Byway'.

After letters to the Rights of Way Maintenance Manager, the Chief Executive and the Rural and Recreation Officer, and with the help of County Cllr. Oliver they were eventually persuaded to provide new oak posts, a small contribution being given by the Footpaths Group.

Speedwatch. Cllr. Martin Leake had taken over as leader of the Speedwatch team.

There had been 38 speed checking sessions since June 2006, logging 386 vehicles at 38mph and above. The three locations used and the number of speeding vehicles are:

New Platt Lane – 113 vehicles (highest speed recorded = 59mph)

Main Road (Shearbrook Steps) – 170 vehicles (55mph)

Main Road (Woods Farm) – 103 vehicles (55mph)

The future objective is to erect flashing speed warning signs (known as Smiley Sids).

Options being investigated are to have three permanent units, one at each end of the Village and one on New Platt Lane at an estimated cost of £9,000 or to have three movable units which could be deployed at 7 different locations at an estimated cost of £11,000. After further surveys and resolving of health and safety issues, it is hoped to finalise plans by the end of August and have the units in place by the Spring of 2008.

Planning. The Council continues to investigate planning applications, with site visits as necessary. During the year there had been 40 applications. The Parish Council had made objections to 3 of these and expressed concerns over certain aspects of a further 2.

Goostrey Young Peoples Project. The Council continues to give its support to this project. Borough Cllr. Dr Peter Kolker, now the Chairman of the G.Y.P.P. committee would be invited to speak later in the meeting.

Railway/Station. An application for listed status for the station building had been sent to English Heritage. This had been referred to the office of the Secretary of State, Department for Culture, Media & Sport and a decision was expected within a week.

It was likely that the canopy over the platform would be reduced by half, but still retaining the decorative metal supports. An additional shelter could be provided if required.

Goostrey Rail Users Group (G.R.U.G) had been founded and had achieved a great deal in repairs and improvements to the station. The group had applied for permission to

extend and replant the garden areas next to the south-bound platform and steps. A representative of Cheshire's Best Kept Station would be giving advice.

Quality Parish Status. In view of impending changes in local government which could result in powers to provide local services being cascaded down to Parish level, the Council feels it necessary to pursue Quality Status. This involves demonstrating that the Council can give leadership at the heart of local governance, fully represent local people and improve both the quality and range of local services. The Council must operate in an

ethical way and represent local interests effectively. The Council must satisfy a number of criteria: The Clerk must hold a Certificate in Local Council Administration which Goostrey's Clerk is now working towards. At least 80% of the councillors must be elected. Goostrey has only 50% deemed to be elected. If this problem cannot be resolved, it will be 2010, after the next election, before the Council can apply for Quality Status.

Sponsorship. The Council is anxious to have closer associations with young people, the elderly and indeed with the electorate as a whole. To this end the Chairman has proposed some form of sponsorship for Rose Day and the Arts Festival and the hosting of a luncheon event for the elderly at Christmas time.

The Village Hall. Several events took place during the year:

Sue Higginson was appointed as Caretaker.

The lounge and servery were painted.

Re-roofing was completed.

The stage lighting was cleaned, refurbished and safety checked.

Cyclical electrical testing had taken place, revealing the need for some updating.

A donation from the Rural Touring Theatre Group had made it possible to purchase stage backdrop curtains.

A CD player had been donated by Cllr. Mary Robertson.

The current major project is the investigation of the cause of damp in the toilets. The investigation and any repairs will be carried out by CCC's contractors with the Parish Council being responsible for 15% of the cost. The PC then intends to modernise the toilet facilities at its own expense.

CCC is implementing Annual Maintenance meetings for joint use projects such as the Goostrey Village Hall.

The Chairman thanked Sue Higginson (Caretaker), Edna Brandreth (Bookings Clerk) and Terry Collins (Village Hall Manager) for all their hard work during the year.

The Chairman finished his address by thanking:

The Parish Councillors

County Cllr. Ken Oliver

Borough Cllrs. Dr Peter Kolker and Patrick Furlong

The Parish Clerk, Denise Draper

Mr Rathbone for keeping the Bog Bean in such a beautiful condition and

Mr John Dutton for repairing the mirror at the Manor Avenue junction.

5. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2006/2007

Copies of an unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2006/2007 were circulated for the information of members of the public.

A member of the public asked if the amount of money on deposit was allocated to specific reserves. The Chairman replied that reserves were in place for major Village Hall improvements, traffic calming measures and possible election fees.

6. PUBLIC FORUM

Mr Roger Dyke of the Footpaths Group thanked the PC for its help over the matter of the oak fingerposts. Three of these had been removed without warning just before Christmas and replaced with metal posts. After the PC's energetic intervention, CCC had agreed to install oak posts similar to the old ones.

A member of the public referred to the problem of dog fouling. This is particularly bad around Dromedary Lodge and the Graveyard and affects all residents. Another member of the public agreed and asked the Council to do more to alleviate the problem.

A resident of Primrose Chase asked the Council's reaction to the planning application submitted for Sandyacre, Main Road and expressed disappointment that he had not received any acknowledgment from the Council after sending it a copy of his letter to the Planning Department of Congleton BC. Cllr. David Craggs, chairman of the PC's planning committee replied that the PC had expressed concern about the increase in volume and height of the proposed building, that the property could eventually be 3-storey and that the portrayal in the plans of the bordering screen of trees and hedges was not accurate. The Chairman apologised for the lack of a reply and promised to contact the resident shortly.

Borough Cllr. Kolker advised that the Borough Council does not reply to individual comments but that whenever more than 5 objections are received, the application is referred to the planning committee rather than being decided by planning officers.

Another resident commented that immediate neighbours were not always advised of planning applications by Congleton BC and an ex-parish councillor commented that the Parish Council used to inform neighbouring householders whenever it received details of planning applications. The Chairman agreed to consider reinstating this practice.

The Rev David Ottley thanked the Speedwatch team for its efforts but commented that there were problems with children walking to school (as encouraged to do) along Blackden Lane and Church Bank. Drivers often ignored the 30 mph limit and part of the journey was in the de-restricted area. He suggested a 20 mph limit for some of the village roads. The Chairman advised that the PC had no jurisdiction regarding speed-limited areas but was trying to get some of the areas extended.

Borough Cllr. Dr Peter Kolker, Chairman of G.Y.P.P. was invited to give a report on progress towards the building of a new youth centre. He reported as follows:

It was now planned to build at the western end of the school field – the school and the PC approved of this location.

Confirmation of CCC's approval was required and boring to investigate the condition of the underlying land would be carried out before a planning application was submitted.

The opinions of the uniformed organisations would be sought.

Dr Kolker presented the outline plans for the new building and pointed out the following features:

Simple, low-cost framework.

Anti-vandal features – no windows on unseen elevations and mainly brickwork at lower levels.

Low running costs.

Provision for building a second floor within the building in the future.

A covered veranda along one side, useful for the school and Rose Day.

The project would be funded by the sale of the site of the existing youth centre.

An optimistic timeframe was – planning application by the middle of the year and a start on building later in the year.

After presentations by the guest speakers, the Chairman thanked the speakers and invited all present to join the Parish Council for light refreshments, the Meeting closing at 9.55 pm.