



# Darnhall Parish Council



## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DARNHALL PARISH COUNCIL HELD REMOTELY ON TUESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER AT 7:30PM

**PRESENT:** Cllr L Jinks (Chairman)  
Cllrs M Davenport, R Langley, M Sherry, R Strachan, C  
Williams, and R Lee  
Dr M Bailey (Interim Clerk)  
Cllr M Gaskill (Cheshire West and Chester Council)

### 1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were noted

### 3. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

### 4. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING – 22<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020

The Chairman signed the minutes as a true and accurate record

### 5. MATTERS ARISING

The following items were raised by Members: -

- *Contract for Outdoor Spaces (Vale Royal Gardening - contract expires March/April 2020)*  
Contact has been made with Vale Royal Gardening and work has recommenced
- *Closure of bank accounts* – this still needs to be actioned.
- *Website* – design of the new site is going

### 6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman raised the following points: -

- Thanked all those who provided help with IT to make sure the meeting took place during the latest lockdown

### 7. FINANCIAL MATTERS

Members considered the following financial items.

## 7.1 Authorisation of Payments

£307.40	Clerk Pay (Interim – Dr M Bailey – Sept-Nov 2020)
£22.80	Shires Pay Services (M5 – 2020/21)
£308.40	Scribe Accounts (Annual Licence 1.12.20-1.12.21)
£16.80	Shires Pay Services (M6 – 2020/21)
£16.80	Shires Pay Services (M7 – 2020/21)
£215.00	Safe Security Ltd (Alarm System – Village Hall)
£574.80	JDH Business Services (Internal Audit – 2019/20)
£48.00	Neil Hopley Electrical Contractors Ltd (PAT Testing)

In addition, the following items had been paid by bank transfer between meetings: -

£500.00	Shires Pay Services (Caretaker Salary) – paid on 2.11.20
£59.88	BT Group (VH Telephone/Broadband) – paid on 27.10.20

**RESOLVED:** The above payments were **APPROVED** by the Council

## 7.2 Ledger/Bank Reconciliation (1.4.20-31.9.20)

The ledger/bank reconciliation report for the period 1.4.20-30.9.20 was presented to Members who **APPROVED** the document.

## 7.3 Budget Monitoring Report/Receipts and Payments Summary (Quarter 2 2020/21 – April-September 2020)

The budget monitoring report/receipts and payments summary for the first two quarters of the 2020/21 financial year were presented to Members who **APPROVED** the documents.

## 7.4 Budget Report and DRAFT Budget 2021-22

A report on the budget setting process for 2021-22 was presented to Members who noted the overall document, in conjunction with the quarter 2 information presented under minute 7.3 (above). The following issues were noted in particular: -

- That the 2020/21 budget is forecast to be overspent by £6,481.31
- The above overspend is mainly due to issues with the Clerk's salary (due to a change of clerks); shortfalls in income relating to the pandemic; and costs of the neighbourhood planning process
- It is forecast that the Parish Council will have an estimated £20,951.71 in the bank on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021
- The taxbase for 2021-22 is not yet known
- The auditor has advised the Council to address the issue of reserves and how much money to put into reserves and for what purpose(s)

It is not clear when the precept request needs to go to Cheshire West and Chester Council, but – as a guide – the Cheshire East

deadline is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The Parish Council next meets on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and it is proposed that the final budget and precept for 2021-22 is agreed at that meeting. Finance Committee is due to meet on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020, where there will be further discussions.

Members noted these points and **AGREED** to return to the budget at the January 2021 meeting for a final decision.

## **8. FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Minutes from the Finance Committee meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020 were presented to the Council and Members **APPROVED** the minutes. The items below were previously discussed at the above Finance Committee meeting.

In approving the minutes, the following points were made: -

- To establish a system for petty cash, so that items do not have to be purchased and the money then claimed back (refer to next Finance Committee meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020)
- To put a purchase order process in place, including use of an order book

## **9. QUARTER ONE 2020/21 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

This was presented to Members, who **APPROVED** the document.

## **10. RISK ASSESSMENT 2020/21**

The Parish Council's Risk Assessment was presented to Members, who **APPROVED** the document.

In approving the document, the following points were raised by Members: -

- To include the telephone box (which hosts the defibrillator) at the Village Hall) and to let local people know there is a defibrillator at this location. Telephone box also needs to be cleaned and batteries replaced

## **11. BUDGET SETTING 2021/22**

This is covered in minute 7.4 (above).

## **12. REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-22**

Members considered the Parish Council Strategic Plan, which was developed as part of the work on the Neighbourhood Plan.

Members agreed to come back to this item at the next meeting in January 2021 with ideas for inclusion.

It was agreed to change the date of the plan to 2020-22.

The following points were agreed: -

- To remove the reference to bus services
- To remove the reference to improving local infrastructure including broadband improvement
- The work on the Village Hall floor has been completed

Cllr Strachan agreed to re-draft the document and circulate the new draft for comments and ideas.

### **13. VILLAGE HALL ISSUES – INCOME/EXPENDITURE**

Members considered an update on the systems for income and expenditure at the Village Hall. Members noted the actions and requested that the Finance Committee continue to monitor the situation in conjunction with the Village Hall Management Committee.

### **14. REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Members noted the changes made to the Financial Regulations – mainly around ensuring that thresholds for approval are consistent and **APPROVED** the re-drafted document.

### **15. RESERVES POLICY**

A new Reserves Policy was presented to Members for use by the Parish Council in setting its budgets and handling its accounts. Members **APPROVED** the policy.

### **16. EXTERNAL AUDIT 2019/20**

Members noted that all actions for the external audit of the 2019/20 accounts had been completed and that the Parish Council had declared itself as exempt.

### **17. GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE**

The General Power of Competence permits any Parish Council to do what an individual would reasonably be expected to be allowed to do. Given that the Parish Council qualifies for this by having sufficient elected Members and a Clerk with the appropriate qualifications, it was proposed that the Council adopt the Power. This was **APPROVED** by the Council.

### **18. PLANNING MATTERS**

The Parish Council considered planning matters affecting the parish – there were no issues to consider on this occasion.

An update was provided to the meeting on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan. The submission document is in place and is ready to submit to CWAC for the next stage of the process.

### **19. COVID-19 UPDATES/GUIDANCE**

The Parish Council considered the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the parish.

### **9.1 Darnhall Village Hall – Updates**

It was reported that the Village Hall had closed again but is due to re-open on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020. It was agreed that key policies and messages needed to be posted on the website.

### **9.2 Updates on COVID-19 in the Parish**

There will no other updates.

## **20. DARNHALL VILLAGE HALL**

Members considered two items in relation to the Village Hall (in addition to the above).

- Keys to the noticeboard will be shared
- Information on the Citizens Advice Bureau had been received and shared

## **21. CLERK'S REPORT**

The interim Clerk's report was noted.

## **22. SHARED INFORMATION**

The following items were shared by Members: -

- Cllr Gaskill – updated on the Raven public house – this will depend on the progress made with the Neighbourhood Plan
- Cllr Gaskill – will check that CWAC are sending planning application notifications out to parishes
- Cllr Gaskill – asked the Council to note progress made with broadband improvements in the area
- Cllr Gaskill – stated that he had money in his Member budget which could be used for the Darnhall Show
- Cllr Gaskill – offered to print off copies of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Cllr Sherry – raised the issue of the speed limit by the Village Hall and asked that this be reviewed (Cllr Gaskill will raise with CWAC)
- Cllr Sherry – reported that the surface of Smithy Bank needs to be addressed
- Cllr Williams – raised the issue of Darnhall Bridge – likely to be permanent traffic lights and the bridge will be closed at some point which could affect the Village Hall

## **23. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members agreed to the date of the next Parish Council meeting as Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7.30pm (subject to review).

## **24. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was agreed that, due to the confidential nature of the following items, to exclude the press and public from the meeting in accordance with section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

Reports relating to these items have been withheld from public circulation and deposit.

**25. DARNHALL VILLAGE HALL**

Members decided to accept the quote from Ackerley Plant Hire and Fencing to supply fencing at the Village Hall.

**Meeting closed at 21:15pm**