

Sproston Parish Council  
Meeting Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023  
Venue – The Fox & Hounds, Sproston

Meeting opened at 19:32

Present: Councillor Peter Cunane (PC), Councillor Peter Gleave PG), Councillor John Lightfoot (JL),  
Councillor James Townley (JT)

Also present was Chester & Cheshire West councillor Mark Stocks (MS)

6 members of the public were present

1. Apologies

Councillors Christy Ilgmann & Stephen Percival were unable to attend and sent apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were stated.

3. Open Forum

Any questions were asked of the public. No additional questions were submitted at this time.

Some background information about Sproston Green was supplied by Jane Norbury. The ownership of the green was thoroughly looked into and there was no ownership historically. A decision by the previous SPC was made that the area needed to be fenced to show ownership by SPC.

Also the area of grass on Wren Avenue had been previously looked into to take ownership but the previous SPC declined it. This was due to the additional costs of insurance, safety checks and the installation of safety tarmac. Also the question was raised at the time of who was going to mow it as the cost of using contractors was thought to be too high at the time.

A member of the public asked the SPC if a letter could be sent to Esther McVey on her recent appointment in government following the reshuffle. However this was declined because as a parish council we are neutral politically. However JT said that the address is available should anyone want it. It was also noted that EMV and her office had been very helpful with local issues over recent months.

A member of the public asked if the Middlewich Bypass would be going ahead now that HS2 had been cancelled. It was generally agreed that the route of the bypass is based on a 40+ year plan and that it's effectiveness would be low as most of the traffic now goes through Middlewich enroute to Winsford and beyond rather than to Sandbach. The bypass will open up a tranche of land for infrastructure improvements especially to power supplies/electricity. The route will be from the Miller & Carter roundabout to Tetton on the Sandbach road. This route can only increase traffic through Sproston. MS will get an update on the bypass for the next meeting.

SPC will investigate the associated costs that could be incurred with the acquisition of the green space on Wren Avenue. Presently a contribution listed as a special expense on the council tax bills is covering the CW&C council costs.

Potholes and general road conditions were discussed. All defects can be reported on the CW&C app for highways. MS has reported that the drains outside Dairy House Farm were full and blocked. MS has circulated surveys to each household regarding highways and policing. It is noted that CW&C have half the spend that they did 8 years ago on repairs etc. A member of the public commented that 'what if you don't have the app or an online presence' to report such things. JT commented that you can still ring them though it does take ages to get through. MS agreed with this commenting that there needed to be a culture change within local government, especially since Covid with there being increasing people working from home with CW&C and that it is not a desirable direction when it comes to dealing with issues and/or complaints.

JL said that the water leak that had been running down from Wren Avenue into Brereton Lane has been fixed. It turned out to be a broken drain pipe.

#### 4. Previous Minutes

These were approved by JT and SP seconded. The minutes were available if anyone would like to see them. These will be loaded onto the website as soon as available.

#### 5. Planning Applications

No new applications had been received by the Parish Council.

MS commented on the planning application for Centurion Way which partly falls into SPC. A decision will be made in the new year as CW&C have more investigations to do and it is an unallocated site and the decision will probably be determined by committee. CEC have already approved their bit of the development.

#### 6. Roads & Highways

Gulleys are still blocked. There is a map link to CW&C website and MS will forward the link. However the site has not been updated since September so some of the grids may already have been done.

Dairy House Farm entrance has got a lot bigger. The question was asked if this was a contravention of planning? The comments made were that DHF seem to be above all legislation and what about the local residents, as they are not being treated fairly. Now that Mr Sherwin has no longer got a herd, then he does not need a slurry lagoon. Peter Gleave asked whether Natural England or Rural Protection can do anything. DHF does not have permission to run an operation of that size. Legal action is pending via CW&C.

Some members of the public raised the issue of speeding on A54. JT commented that we meet some of the criteria to get a reduction to 30mph on the A54. The other three roads within Sproston, Brereton Lane/Poolford Lane/Broad Lane are unclassified though it may be possible to get a reduction on Brereton Lane as far as Sproston Hall. This would be mainly due to the level of HGV traffic for the farms and that pedestrians use the roads for walking to the bus stop for schools. Unfortunately that part of the road does not meet the criteria but we can still apply to the council to get it reduced. The Police & Crime Commissioner has

purchased some laser boxes for speed control. These can be placed in situ for a week to monitor speeds and traffic volume. We can work together with Phil Hambleton to get one of these in place. The SPC recently ran a speedwatch and attached the SID by Mila House and this appeared to have worked well in slowing traffic.

Parking on the road between the Fox & Hounds and the entrance to Brereton Lane was raised as a car is blocking the view when trying to exit the junction onto the A54. SPC will raise this with the local PCSO.

#### 7. Wren Avenue

Currently SPC receive £2,244 average income per annum from Wren Avenue via council tax. MS to check what the total revenue is. If SPC want to go ahead and transfer the ownership of the green on the middle of Wren Avenue, then this would take a few months at least and would not be transferred before the next financial year. SPC are awaiting the value of the play equipment currently on site for insurance purposes to be able to look at all the costs involved in the area being transferred to the parish council. JT is waiting for Hardings to quote on the grass cutting. Once all costs have been received, a financial viability plan will be created and a decision will come from that.

#### 8. Oil Syndicate

PC has investigated and unfortunately it is a bit of a non-starter. As residents of the parish we could use [www.oil-club.co.uk](http://www.oil-club.co.uk). This website shows the last 12 months of oil prices if somebody would like to compare prices for various suppliers.

#### 9. Recycling Bins

MS has investigated. No household has received the new bins. CW&C claim it is down to access however it was agreed that this is not a real reason.

#### 10. Insurance Renewal

SPC have received the renewal. MS has confirmed that the 'Crash Site' signs are the responsibility of CW&C and do not need insuring by the parish. The defibrillator has been added and is now installed and working and has been added to the policy.

#### 11. PCSO Newsletter

The newsletter from Shakerley ward was passed around for everyone to look at. Local issues are still traffic and speeding on the A54. No serious crime had been reported for the area. SPC will extend an invitation to Phil Hambleton to attend one of the future meetings.

#### 12. Meeting Dates

SPC currently hold monthly meetings. This was agreed amongst the councillors as it is a new parish council. After the financial year it was agreed that SPC would move to bi-monthly meetings. The location of the Fox & Hounds was approved. The future dates have discussed and will be approved at the next meeting.

#### 13. Poppy Appeal

An email has been received by SPC from the Poppy Appeal detailing what is available for the area. Obviously too late for this year but it was discussed that SPC could possibly purchase

some lamppost poppies at £10.00 each (approximately 20 lampposts in the area) for next years appeal.

14. Finance

Finally we appear to have had our restrictions lifted by Barclays. The bank balances are as follows:

Community Account - £7,952

Savings Account - £42,553

The following payments will be made:

Zurich Insurance - £279.17

CW&C Election Costs - £181.00

Due to the parish council not existing for two years, the only funds received into the bank have been S106 monies.

The previous two years accounts need to be signed off and it is normal practice to use another local parish to do this.

MS will confirm when we need to submit our precept to CW&C.

15. Any Other Business

MS has a members budget of £5k which can be used towards a contribution for speed assessment costs on the A54. This has to be spent by the end of the financial year. Or possible towards additional waste bins in the parish. There is a two year rotation for gulley clearing but we are unsure where we are on this rota, date wise. MS will check.

16. Next Meeting Date:

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023 7.30pm

Meeting Closed 20:45

Minutes Agreed by.....

Seconded By.....

Date .....