

Sproston Parish Council
Meeting Tuesday 13th January 2026
Venue – The Barn, Parkside Farm, Brereton Lane, Sproston

Meeting opened at 19:35

Present: Councillor Peter Cunane (PC), Councillor Peter Gleave (PG), Councillor Stephen Percival (SP), Councillor John Lightfoot (JL), Councillor James Townley (JT)
Cheshire West & Chester Council Mark Stocks (MS)

15 members of the public were present.

1. Apologies

No apologies. Mark Stocks is running a little late but is on his way from Lach Dennis.

2. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were stated.

3. Minutes

Minutes from the previous meeting in November 2025 were signed by MA and seconded by PC.

4. Planning Applications

We are still awaiting the decision of the Planning Inspectorate for Dairy House Farm. Lots of communications are being sent back and forth from his representatives and CWACC planning enforcement. The appellant (Mr C Sherwin) and the CWACC have to agree on any proposals and that will take time. We did hope for a decision prior to Christmas but unfortunately not. We are aware that a haulage company is operating from DHF and there are Goods Operator Licences approved for that site. We believe that a timescale will be implemented but we have no further information on what these are going to be. Jill Stephens and Brian Leonard from CWACC are very aware of what is going on at DHF. There are also other issues within the site. The Environment Agency have finally come out and said that all material that is coming onto the site is all waste spoil and is not suitable for building a slurry lagoon. The Middlewich Bypass is still awaiting a final decision. Costs have risen to £107m. An additional holding yard is now required which is probably pushing up costs even further. A link will be put on the WhatsApp group to show maps etc for the proposed route.

5. Roads & Highways

Flooding around Broad Lane/Brereton Lane/Poolford Lane. There are multiple issues. CWACC highways team have been out jetting along Broad Lane. They have acknowledged that there are blockages at the junction of Broad Lane and Brereton Lane. There is a collapsed drain approximately half way down. Unfortunately we don't have a date when this will be resolved but we are pushing the council to carry out works. Water is breaching Gary Norbury's milking parlour and has on occasion run into their house. There is an 'X' sprayed on Broad Lane where they are planning to excavate. Water is coming all through the farm. According to Gary Norbury CWACC have put a drain in the ditch which then flows into the stream. However they have also used a 12" pipe into a 6" which is causing back up. Water should flow down to the brook. These issues have been ongoing since 2012. Gary Norbury's

slurry lagoon is full as the water table is high. Gareth Owens at CWACC is ignoring any requests to resolve the issues fully. Mark Stocks hasn't been able to resolve the issue with them either. Gareth Owens has said he is willing to come out and meet but he is going to implement works that will cut off field drains that flow into the highway drain. This will only make the flooding issue worse. Jettors have come out to Gary Norbury's farm and to Holly Farm along Broad Lane. Steve Gleave proposes that the parish council spend £10k from the Community Fund to resolve the issue. The Parish Council were willed a sum of money to be spent on the good of the community. The contractor, Willis's, may have a permit to resolve the road flooding issues. The general feeling among members of the public is that this situation has gone on for too long. JL prompted a show of hands to ask SPC to commit to spending £10k to resolve the flooding issue. This was unanimous amongst the general public present at the meeting. This was agreed by the Parish councillors. JT pointed out that the corner issue needs to be fixed first. It was agreed that SPC would contribute up to a maximum of £10k should CWACC be unwilling to fix the problems. JT will ask Gareth Owens to come out again to discuss. We believe Willis's will have to apply for a road permit. Sara Clough to obtain a new quote from Willis's to do the 5/6 metres from manhole to manhole on Brereton Lane.

Footpaths on the A54 have been marked out for siding out. These works were originally scheduled for late in 2025 but this has now been pushed into 2026. We are awaiting confirmation from CWACC when these will be done.

A water spring is running by Jane Norbury's. We asked that JN report this to CWACC as it is their responsibility to repair it. If it continues the road surface will be ruined if the weather freezes.

6. Policing Update

Unfortunately our local PCSO, Phil Hambleton, is not able to make the meeting tonight but we have his monthly updates. As ever, not much going on from a policing perspective. There was a speed watch from the layby in December and one speeding enforcement was done.

7. Finance

Following the recent precept request from CWACC we have decided to keep the precept as the same, which is £3900 per annum. This will leave the special expense of £32 per household the same. However we are in the process of taking over the land on Wren Avenue. When this is finalized, we will lose the special expense but will have to pay for maintaining the area including grass cutting.

We currently have £4,444 in the current account following expenses of Zurich Insurance £279.00 and grit for the grit bin on Wren Avenue £28.00. We have £53,994 in the Community account including £157.00 received in interest.

8. Public Speaking

We have received a report of fly tipping on Cledford Lane. There are a load of black bags down by British Salt. This falls under Cheshire East Council but can still be reported via their app. If you witness fly tipping then this needs to be reported to Cheshire Police with registration number of the vehicle/s if possible. There has also been a report of fly tipping by the shooting ground on Broad Lane.

JT met with Julie Dyer to discuss the Green behind the layby. JD clears the road of leaves and maintains the green space. She is happy to keep the arrangement as is but the Parish Council is concerned that there was no insurance cover as a member of the public. JD was

annoyed that the Green had been marked on Google maps as a 'park & gardens' and a public open space. JT said it was important that our green spaces in the parish were protected. JD has padlocked the Green but no-one on SPC has a key. This needs to be resolved and the green space needs to be registered for the parish. Some years ago SPC paid to have a fence installed to prevent overnight drivers using it as a toilet. JD has been maintaining this space as a casual arrangement. It is proposed that SPC will register the land but JD is not happy with this. JT said protecting our green spaces is important to all and we want a good resolution for the community. We will investigate taking ownership of this piece of land together with the land by the sewage works to the north of Wren Avenue.

9. Any Other Business

JT commented that the past year has been dominated by planning issues, both at Dairy House Farm and the marquee at The Fox & Hounds. Hopefully this year will be a little more settled.

Mark Stocks arrived – apologies for his late arrival – with some updates. He feels disappointed with the outcome of the Planning Inspectorate hearing regarding Dairy House Farm. In his opinion, planning seems to favour developers and those who flout the law. He is also disappointed with the response by CWACC to the flooding on Broad Lane. Properties on Broad Lane are being affected and he will continue to fight for us with the council. Centurion Way has been approved now with 25 houses out of a total of 100 houses falling into Sproston parish. No date has been given yet to commence building.

There is a change of use at the gas storage plant at Byley. There will be an expansion of the site with the change to hydrogen storage. There will be a final decision regarding this possibly in July.

Cheshire West & Chester Council are looking to increase the council tax by 4.99%. They are proposing to build more houses to meet government targets. There is a proposed reduction in PCSO numbers from 67 to 26. Hopefully Phil Hambleton will be safe! The mayoral elections will take place in 2027 for the unitary council.

10. Next Meeting Date:

Tuesday 10th March at The Barn, Parkside Farm, Brereton Lane, Sproston at 7.30pm.

Meeting Closed 21:17

Minutes Agreed by.....

Seconded By.....

Date