

Sproston Parish Council
Meeting Tuesday 14th January 2025
Venue – The Barn, Parkside Farm, Brereton Lane, Sproston

Meeting opened at 19:26

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) & Phil Hambleton (PH) PCSO

12 members of the public were present.

1. Apologies

No apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were stated.

3. Public Speaking

An update on Dairy House Farm was requested by a member of the public. MS responded saying that the issue was still with the legal time at CWACC. They had refused the application for planning, this was then appealed. However the planning team are still waiting for a response for additional information. There is now a new director of planning so MS is hoping that something will now move in regard to the site. There was recently a road traffic accident resulting in a fatality. Though the condition of the road was not directly to blame it has been noted that the street team need to come out to clean the road more often due to debris and mud being present on a daily basis due to wagons leaving the farm. The road or pavements are not being swept enough and the gullies are still blocked causing a build up of water on the carriageway.

Broad Lane is still flooding. A local resident who lives on Broad Lane has had water running off the road into their garden. There is a disagreement between the council (CWACC) and the residents. There is a damaged drain but the council do not agree with this. Mark Avril from CWACC has visited the site, the drain was jetted and there was a slight improvement in the flooding. However it has been noticed that there are tree roots blocking the drains. It would be favourable if the drains were jetted more frequently to relieve the flooding issue. MS to request that this be added to the works program. It was raised that the road surface is inadequate. The last time it flooded MS drove down it and the council (CWACC) appear to have tarmaced the middle of the road only. In doing so they have covered up a drain. As a parish council we are able to commission the works ourselves and claim the costs back from CWACC. This is due to a bylaw in council policy. The drains need sorting first before they resurface the road. MS to feed back to Cheshire West regarding works required.

The water leak by the Homestead on the A54 has been reported. They have filled it in with tarmac but the water is still coming from somewhere. JT to report it to United Utilities as a potential water pipe burst.

MS informed us that CWACC has the power to re-bill the farmer/landowner for cleaning the roads and gullies where it has been caused primarily by their actions. The A54 is filthy again outside DHF with lots of mud and debris. The gullies are also constantly blocked. DHF should be made by CWACC to put in a wheel wash. PH informed us that when the road is in this

condition they report it directly to highways. MS believes that CWACC should be doing more to rectify this.

It was asked by a member of the public as to what do the Environment Agency class the site as (DHF)? There have been issues before with the EA and they are not willing to visit the site due to previous altercations with the farmer. Unfortunately the EA does not appear to work well with other agencies/councils so issues go unresolved.

4. Previous Minutes

These were approved by SP and PG 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

There are no new planning applications in the parish.

However the Centurion Way planning is ongoing and Cheshire East have approved their part of the site. It is unlikely that Cheshire West & Chester will approve their part as it does not meet their development plans but the developer has reduced the number of houses in the Cheshire West bit from 25 to 20. There appears to be plans to open more of the land around Middlewich by Cheshire East. Cheshire West & Chester Council have had their housing supply budget raised from 500 to 1900 houses per annum over the next 5 years. It could be that we see more housing developments within our parish as the need to meet government quotas is met.

HS2 is not dead and the land is still safeguarded, potentially for HS2 Lite. But no further plans have been confirmed as yet.

6. Noticeboard

Our old notice board is now rotting at the posts so we require a new one. AT has looked at various options and we have opted for a aluminium noticeboard with a lockable front that we can display up to 8 A4 sheets in. It was agreed that this would be sited on the green at Wren Avenue, where the current one is sited. MS will give SPC 60% contribution to the noticeboard, which has a cost of £2377.20 including VAT.

7. Roads & Highways Update

There was a fatality on Holmes Chapel Road (A4) in December. The state of the road was not to blame but could have been a contributory factor due to the mud on the road as you cannot see the road markings or the cats eyes.

The black box, which was deployed last April, was located near The Fox & Hounds. If we wish to request a new survey with a new site we cannot have one before April in the new financial year. If we want it to be attached to a telegraph pole then we need the permission of BT. PH will speak to Ian regarding a speed review. SPC are happy to contribute to raising awareness to road users of the speed. JT to investigate purchasing a speed gun so that we can do our own speedwatch. PH informed us that if we would like to do the speedwatch from a different location then it has to be approved. This will now be in the new financial year if we wish to proceed with a new location.

It was noted that the Sproston sign coming from the junction of the M6 has fallen apart. A new one will be requested from Highways.

8. Finance

Balances – Current account £10,336 and Community account £43,344. Only expense being Zurich insurance £279.17. We also received interest into the Community account of £161.49.

9. Budget & Precept

It was decided not to raise the precept for the coming financial year 2025/26. Our expenses as a parish council have not increased but such an amount that we feel the need to increase the precept. The special expense will stay for the time being, this is for the green on Wren Avenue though plans are to take the responsibility and costs of this from CWACC. We believe that we can make significant savings of the costs involved in the upkeep of this patch of grass with the two swings. There would be a requirement to replace the swings within the next 2-3 years as they are coming to the end of their life.

10. Any Other Business

Grit bins were requested for Wren Avenue. There used to be two but they have disappeared. JT to get quotes for one and possibly two.

There is a proposal through devolution to have a mayoral authority of Cheshire West, Cheshire East and Warrington councils. They would still operate separately but one be under one mayoral authority. Most people who live within our parish are not aware of this. Finally, we have a Casual Vacancy for a parish councillor. Christy Illgmann is no longer a councillor. We thanked her for her input. Details of how to apply will be on the noticeboard and on the website.

11. Next Meeting Date:

Tuesday 11th March at The Barn, Parkside Farm, Brereton Lane, Sproston at 7.30pm.

Meeting Closed 20:38

Minutes Agreed by.....

Seconded By.....

Date