

Acton Bridge Parish Council Meeting minutes

Date & time	4 th May 2021 at 19:00	Location	Video conference
Attendees	R Holt (Chairman), T Brocklebank, C Ballantyne-Roberts, R Forbes, D Charlton, G Hayward, D Hall, Cllr C Fifield CW&C, Cllr G Edwards CW&C, Cllr P Williams CW&C, Mrs C Robinson (Clerk to the Parish Council)		
Apologies	Michelle Gillet (PCSO)		
Absent			
Minutes written by	Mrs C Robinson (Clerk)		

The discussion commenced at 19:05

Note – This meeting has been held using Zoom conferencing facilities. The structure of this meeting has been agreed by all Parish Council Members. The Agenda for the meeting has been circulated to all Members and has been published on the Parish Council web site, members of the public were invited to join by contacting the Clerk for meeting invite details.

Agenda Item	Notes & Actions
1. Apologies	Apologies for Absence – as noted above
2. Declarations of interest	No pecuniary interests were expressed.
3. PCSO Update	The PCSO had sent her apologies.
4. Public Open Forum	There were no members of the public present.
5. Minutes of the meeting held on 6th April 2021	The minutes of the meeting held on 6 th April 2021 were accepted as a true and correct record.
6. Matters arising - a review of the March Parish Council meeting	
PCSO use of Parish Rooms	Cllr Holt confirmed that ABCA had agreed that the PCSO, Michelle Gillet could have a key to the Parish Rooms so that she could hold surgeries whilst also carrying out general duties in Acton Bridge, allowing for current restrictions. Wardens are to be deployed, although Acton Bridge does have speeding signs. The Parish Council agreed to leave the speeding signs as they are.
Flooding – Station Road	Cllr Edwards has some suggested meeting dates to forward to the Parish Council. After discussion the Parish Council agreed that the meeting with Highways needs to have the 2 issues of flooding on Station Road, and speeding, kept separate. The drains on Station Road just need to be unblocked. Speed calming measures to address the speeding issues are the main issue for the Parish Council. Action Cllr Edwards
Bank Account signatories	The clerk has received confirmation from NS&I of the balance of £919.64 being TF 1 st April 2021, it includes 2 pence interest.
Remembrance Plaques	Cllr Holt confirmed the vicar will be moving on in August and has agreed to try and fit the rededication in at the end June/beginning of July, Bob Heaton also has some contact with family members so the hope is some might be able to attend. Action Cllr Holt
Ward Member budget applications	ABCA is still struggling to get another quote for the cladding at the gable end to the Parish rooms.

Neighbourhood plan	The Neighbourhood plan is on hold until the Parish Council can get consultation with the Council Planning Officers. Two Parish Councillors have attended a training meeting on Neighbourhood planning by ChALC. Some Councillors managed to attend another ChALC Connections meeting on Planning, but the link to attend wasn't sent to all those that requested to attend.
Speed data	The meeting with Highways has yet to be re-arranged (<i>see Flooding – Station Road</i>). It is a meeting to discuss traffic calming options. There has been an issue downloading data but TWM have acknowledged they have issues with backroom server and they will confirm when the data can be downloaded. Action Cllr Edwards
Maypole Inn	Cllr G Edwards's meeting with Fiona Dunning (Localities) to look at the viability of creating a support hub in the village, is still to take place. The date is being discussed, but it will be a mobile hub as the Maypole is no longer an option. C/F Action Cllr Edwards
Website updating and historical minute filing	Cllr Hayward and the Clerk met on 15 th April - see separate agenda item 7: I.T. and website review. The historical minutes should be added to the website by the end of the week. Action Cllr Hayward
Weaver & Cuddington Beat community funding Station Car Park misuse	Cllr Holt has had an official letter confirming we are now in Purdah due to the Police & Crime Commissioner's election. Cllr Ballantyne-Roberts has spoken to the Railways contact this week, but she is going on maternity leave and a temporary replacement is yet to be identified. There is no further update on the Transport Police visits. CCTV would come out of a budget that has been suspended – but the temporary replacement will be given all the information.
Grass Verges Chapel Lane/Orchard Avenue	Cllr Fifield sent a chaser to Highways after the last meeting on 6 th April, but no response received. Cllr Charlton reported that some work had been done on the corner of Acton Lane on the grass verge to remove some of the big ruts caused by the tractors, more work still needs to be done although there is some improvement. Cllr Fifield did report further issues to Highways and he will continue to monitor. Action Cllr Fifield
Overgrown hedge letter	Cllr Holt did not think the hedge had been cut. Work request CW&C ref. no. SS310601440 the Clerk will add further comments and chase under the existing reference number and Cllr Fifield can be copied in if it is not resolved. Action Mrs Robinson
Station Hill Fence	Cllr Fifield had a response from Darren Dean that morning stating that after investigation the fence is believed to be owned by Network Rail who are sending a maintenance team to investigate – but nothing further received from Network Rail. Action Cllr Fifield
Northwich Isolation Support & the Ark	The Clerk was disappointed to report that she had no response to the message left for N.I.S. Group, she is trying to contact again. After discussion the Parish Council agreed a total donation to both groups should be £250 and should be split according to the ratio of meals they have each provided. Action Mrs Robinson
Contingency plan	Cllr Holt commended Cllr Charlton on the work done so far on pulling the contingency plan together that he had distributed to the Parish Council. Cllr Charlton thanked for the replies so far and asked for further thoughts on a group of volunteers that could be called on, who would they be. One option would be to put something on Facebook asking for (unpaid) volunteers, or the Parish Council could think of contacts they are aware of in the village (e.g. help with livestock) and talk to them. The Parish Council could use their knowledge of the village and residents to add to the list of volunteers. The Parish Council also agreed after discussion that it should be a generic contingency plan rather than one for flooding alone.

Cllr Charlton will draft a notice for Facebook for the Parish Councillors to review and asked for names etc from the Parish Council. **Action Cllr Charlton & All Parish Councillors**

Local Flooding

Cllr Williams has had 2 acknowledgements from MPs copied in, but nothing from DEFRA to either his letter or a reminder email asking them to reconsider renewing the flood resilience grants to assist the residents. He is considering other routes for ways to publicly raise the temperature as he will not be dropping the issue.

Cllr Ballantyne-Roberts confirmed that there had been no change to the damage to the bridge over the public footpath. Cllrs Williams and Ballantyne- Roberts will discuss and follow up. **Action Cllrs Williams & Ballantyne-Roberts**

Due to purdah, there is no response on the Police and Crime Commissioner's Grant yet. **Action Cllr Edwards**

Drains on Acton Lane

Cllr Williams has contacted Highways twice to look at all the drains. The top drains on Acton Lane don't appear to have been cleared. Cllr Charlton confirmed Highways have been working on the drains on Warrington Road. Cllr Hall will check the state of the drains at the top of Acton Lane and let Cllr Williams know if there has been any change. **Action Cllrs Hall & Williams**

Articulated Lorries delivering to Forresters Council Tax and Flooding

Cllr Forbes felt that in general the situation had improved, particularly during the day, when people are around, although night was a different matter.

The properties on Warrington Road are still mainly empty, but one family has moved back in this week. The residents themselves need to action the request for their homes to be classed as 'uninhabitable'. It will most likely be Christmas/February 2022 until everyone is back in their homes.

17 Hilltop Road

Cllr Fifield has sent the information on the Shepherds hut available for short-term let to the Planning Enforcement team. There are delays from enforcement across all areas of the Ward. Cllr Fifield spoke to Bob Charnley (Head of Planning), who confirmed that an extra enforcement officer is being employed. Bob Charnley also said he would speak about the issue of AirBnB and Planning Permission at the ChALC Planning meeting (in FAQs), it doesn't appear he did, so Cllr Fifield will follow up again. **Action Cllr Fifield**

Verge on Cliff Road

Cllr Brocklebank had an informal chat with the residents causing the issues on the verge on Cliff Road. They have made some efforts to improve, but the weather has meant it has deteriorated again. They have nearly completed all the work on the house, when the weather improves it is hoped they will address the damage on the verge again.

Village bins

Cllr Holt pointed out some of the bins in the village are overflowing again. Other Cllrs confirmed some bins have been emptied. Cllr Edwards will follow up again. **Action Cllr Edwards**

CW&C money set aside for flooding

Cllr Edwards confirmed the Flood Resilience Group will be responsible for distributing the funds for Infrastructure projects and has asked for funds for the bottom of Acton Lane to bypass waters into the river and for flood defences for Warrington Road. The Environment Agency now seem to be saying that the Flooding is a 'once in a lifetime/100 years event' rather than due to climate change, which makes it harder to justify funding. However, it has happened twice in 18 months in Acton Bridge. **Action Cllr Edwards**

Wildflowers

Hopefully Acton Bridge and other trial areas will now be included in the Wildflower plans next year. **Action Cllr Edwards**

The Great British Spring Clean

Cllr Edwards will send information suitable for social media to be posted on the Parish Council Website under 'News'. **Action Cllr Edwards**

Dog Fouling issues

Cllr Edwards confirmed there would not be any progress until after 17th May.

CW&C Waste Consultation

The press release indicated the results from the 14500 responses will be coming to full Council in July.

ChALC info on Self-Isolation

The Clerk posted the information on the Acton Bridge Parish Council website 7th April

7. IT and Website review

Cllr Hayward had sent a comprehensive report to the Parish Council following her review of the Website and Parish Council I.T. requirements. Whilst there was a proposal to have a separate meeting to discuss more fully, it was agreed that some of the points could be addressed quite quickly and some actions could be assigned. Any outstanding points could then be addressed at another meeting.

A summary of the discussion and actions:

- Home page content – What the Parish is/does/the precept/a bit about Acton Bridge Village **Action Cllr Holt**
- New photographs required of the Parish Council apart from Cllrs Charlton and Hayward. **Action All Councillors & Clerk**
- Council meetings information for residents who may want to attend **Action Cllr Fifield**
- Links: PCSO update/CW&C report it/CW&C StreetScene, Highways/WI/ABCA /Pre-School/Borough Councillors/Local MP (CW&C Website info) should all be added as links **Action Cllr Hayward & Mrs Robinson**
- Investigation of Accessibility, Transparency and GDPR requirements **Action Cllrs Hayward & Brocklehurst**
- Statutory Financial Documents will be reviewed and updated at the next Parish Council meeting (they are reviewed annually at the first meeting after the AGM)
- Addition of some good news stories, and some generic photos when standard circulars are added. Examples discussed included speed cameras, and lamp post poppies (May 15th). These need to be agreed by the Chairman/Parish Council before being added to the website. Residents could be asked for photos via the village Facebook page.
- Councillors' Register of Interests are available on the CW&C website, and do not need to be on the Parish Council Website, a link should be added to the Parish Council website. There needs to be a process to capture any changes to Councillors' register of interests within 28 days of any changes.
- The website needs to be registered to the Clerk rather than Cllr Hayward. **Action Cllr Hayward**
- The Clerk needs to have full access to the website, along with Cllr Hayward. Cllr Charlton also offered to be another Councillor with access rights, in case anything happens to Cllr Hayward. **Action Cllr Hayward**
- The current costs for the website is between £5 & £10 incl. VAT per month, Cllr Hayward has paid (& been re-imbursed) for the first 3 years.

Left for future discussion:

- Standard Parish Council Email Addresses for the Parish Councillors – are they necessary? Further investigation required.

- Gorstage Cemetery – the information on the Cemetery should be consistent across all 3 Parish Councils. It needs to be raised at the next JCC meeting on 22nd June. **Action Cllrs Ballantyne-Roberts & Brocklehurst**
- I.T. equipment requirements – when previously discussed by the Parish Council they had decided it was unnecessary, and there were issues with where it would be kept etc. Cllr Fifield said white boards had also been suggested previously. The Parish Council should be prepared to supply the Clerk with a laptop and software in the future, if required.
- The Clerk’s Parish Council email signature may need a GPDR disclaimer – this will be part of the further investigation on accessibility, transparency & GPDR requirements.

8. Clerk’s hours and salary

The Clerk had distributed an assessment of the Clerk’s role in line with NALC guidelines. The analysis provided showed that the average hourly rate based on the spot salary of £150 monthly and 3 hours per week would be £11.53 which coincidentally equates to the current rate for SP12, which falls in the LC1 (Local Council 1) range of salaries. The Clerk’s assessment of the role is that it does fall into the LC1 banding. The Clerk felt that in her first 6 months in role the average number of hours per week was about 3; but with the pandemic and flooding particularly, it had been more than that in the subsequent 12 months.

Whilst the Clerk left the meeting temporarily, the Parish Council discussed whether to make an increase in salary or give a bonus in recognition of the extra work. It was decided that a bonus of £200 was the appropriate action and when the Clerk re-joined the meeting she agreed to monitor and record excess hours to assist future reviews.

9. Planning Applications

- **21/01504/FUL** - 6 Cliff Road – Erection of a garden outbuilding - Consultation closing date: 13th May. The Parish Council agreed it should be brought to Planning attention that this is a large brick structure (with a veranda), and therefore a more permanent building in a washed over green belt area.
- **21/00297/FUL** - 71 Cliff Road – Single storey rear extension - Consultation closing date 13th May. The Parish Council agreed they had no comments on this application.

10. Planning Decisions

No official decision notifications received since the last Parish Council meeting. On the CW&C planning portal, 20/04505/LDC Treefield Cottage on Milton Rough is showing as approved, after being modified. 2 Chapel Lane, the rear extension is also approved.

11. Financial Matters

a. Authority for signing cheques

The Parish Council approved two cheques for signature:

- The Royal British Legion suggested minimum donation of £18 for 6 lamp post Poppies, the Parish Council agreed to make a donation of £30 (£5 each, as per original email).
- Zurich Insurance renewal due 1st June £257.60 (same as 2020)

The Clerk will distribute the cheques to signatories.

b. Bank Balances & Accounts for 2020/21

Total Balances as at 31st March 2021

	<u>DR -ve</u>	<u>CR +ve</u>
Current A/c		4,917.63
National Savings A/c		919.62
Unpresented chqs as at 31/03	634.78	
	<hr/>	<hr/>
		5,202.47

Summary

Total Balance B/Fwd @ 13/03/2021	5,681.25
Plus total receipts	
Less total payments	478.78
Total Balance C/fwd to 01/04/21	<u>5,202.47</u>

The Clerk had distributed detailed information for the year end audit for 2020/21 to the Parish Council to review prior to the Parish Council meeting. There were no observations or questions, and Cllr Holt noted the balance of £5.2k prior to the new financial year's precept of £5,045 meant there was a healthy balance of £10,200 in the Parish Council funds. With a carried forward sum of £1k for decoration of the parish rooms and a contribution for the repairs of the gable end, there is approx. £4k of working capital for the year. The Parish Council unanimously agreed to approve the figures, the accounts can now be passed to the internal auditor. The Chairman and Clerk will sign the accounts.

12. CW&C Ward Councillors

Cllr Fifield reported that it was quiet at CW&C because of purdah due to the election on Thursday.

Cllr Williams had updates to two of the items he is dealing with (from matters arising):

- A response has been received from Darren Dean (CW&C), that Cllr Williams will forward to the Clerk to circulate to the Parish Council. The work on Acton Lane drains has started and they have started to construct kerb aprons around the gullies. Cllr Charlton noted these repairs were on the drains at the bottom and the top ones still needed attention. Cllr Williams will follow up on the top drains. (Covered by Action in Matters arising)
- Cllr Williams has emailed Adele Mayer (the Footpath Officer), to forward to the appropriate contact in the Engineering dept. re the repairs to the footbridge, he couldn't trace any response.

13. Reports from other Meetings

- Cllr Ballantyne-Roberts confirmed she and Cllr Brocklebank attended the Joint Cemetery Committee (JCC) Meeting on 20th April, the main points to highlight:
 - The Digital Mapping project has started, with the JCC paying 50% of the invoice received, 50% when the project is finished
 - Mid Cheshire Landscapes, who do the regular cemetery maintenance, has been taken over/bought out by UK Landscapes, which seems to be working out.
 - There is a backlog of interment of ashes due to the Govt. restrictions on gatherings. Families are waiting until larger gatherings are allowed.
- The CW&C Planning (Bob Charnley) meeting was attended by several Parish Councillors. Cllr Holt noted there was an interesting point raised from members from around Cheshire West (by another Bob Holt), about the conflict in Planning re permitted development and supplementary planning guidelines, but it wasn't really answered properly.

14. Correspondence

The Clerk had distributed to the Parish Council in the last month:

- Email 14th April – **Hourglass Charity** – Harm, abuse, exploitation of older people. The Parish Council agreed to stick with their standard practice which is to not single out charities or make donations, with the only exception of the Citizens Advice Bureau in the past.
- Email 16th April – **Lamppost Poppies**, Royal British Legion – subsequent email activity from Parish Council led to the request for 6 poppies (see Financial Matters)

- Emails 27th & 28th April – **Keep Britain Tidy, Great British Spring Clean** – the Parish Council agreed to post information (from Cllr Edwards) on the on the Parish Council website.
- Email 28th April – **DCMS Rural Broadband Consultation**, NALC Briefing PC3-21 – Cllr Brocklebank had previously done a round robin review of broadband speeds on Chapel Lane and Cliff Road. Cllr Hayward had done a review of the information circulated, there are 22 questions that NALC would like Parish Councils to respond to. Cllr Hayward felt that a survey could be put on the Acton Bridge Facebook page to help with answers to some of the questions and provide evidence for the response. Cllr Hayward offered to circulate a survey for the Parish Council to review. **Action Cllr**

Hayward

- Email 28th April – **Cliff Road, road closure 4th May** – The email was posted on website after email circulation due to date of road closure. The road was never fully closed, there was access throughout the day. Cllr Hayward had received a response to her question on the diversion.

In addition, the Clerk has available for distribution:

- The Spring 2021 edition of **Countryside Voices**
- Notification of Virtual Online AGM for **CPRE**, the countryside charity Cheshire – the details of Zoom meeting and proxy voting

There were also multiple emails concerning the **death of HRH Prince Philip**. The Parish Council’s condolences and the link to the online condolence book were published on the website on April 12th.

Cllr Holt had responded to a request about dog exercise areas in Acton Bridge from Fiona Dunning at CW&C (sent to all councils in the area), to say there were none.

15. Village Matters

Cllr Ballantyne Roberts informed the Parish Council that ‘Station Friends’ was resuming, and the train operators are paying for some planters on the platforms, that they are going to try and fill. As long as there are fewer than 6 Station Friend volunteers, they are able to volunteer at the station to hoe, weeding, tidying litter etc.

Cllr Forbes informed the Parish council that Hazel Pear Wood coppicing work and thinning out has been ongoing over the last few weeks and will be finished shortly.

16. AOB

Cllr Hayward raised 2 matters:

- Cllr Holt and the Parish Council confirmed Cllr Hayward could attend the ChALC training in June for new Councillors at £25 for ChALC members
- Gigabit Broadband project (ChALC bulletin), the whole of the village is eligible for the Government voucher scheme. With the drive towards home working, mixed broadband speeds in the village and a fund of around £84m available for 5 years (but 1st come 1st serve), it is a project for a group of residents to look into. Cllr Hayward will investigate further and distribute a summary via email. **Action Cllr Hayward**

17. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 7th June 2021 starting at 19:30. This meeting will include the election of Chairman and Vice Chairman. Cllr Holt confirmed he will not be offering himself for election to either position and thanked those present for their support over the years. At that meeting the Parish Council should ratify/re-date the standard statutory documents. This meeting will also be held face to face at the Parish Rooms as remote meetings are no longer allowed from 7th May 2021.

The discussion closed at 21:45

Signed (Chairman)

Date.....