

Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting of Alderley Edge Parish held at 7.30pm on Monday 9th May 2016 in the Festival Hall.

Present

Chairman: Cllr G Hall

Ward Cllr: C Browne

21 Alderley Edge residents (signing in list with the Clerk)

Clerk: A. Ross

1. Welcome

Cllr Hall welcomed all present and opened the meeting at 7.32pm

2. To receive an Annual Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council 2015/16.

Councillor G Hall delivered his Annual Report (copy attached).

3. To receive a report from the Cheshire East Council ward councillor.

Councillor C Browne delivered his report (copy attached).

4. To consider any questions relating to Parish Council matters.

A question was asked about what weight a Neighbourhood Plan has alongside a Local Plan in terms of the number of houses that should be built. Cllr Browne explained that if the Local Plan states that Alderley Edge must take 400 houses then Alderley Edge would have to take 400 houses but the Neighbourhood Plan could dictate where those houses should be built. There was a further discussion about the Local Plan and the sites to the north-west and south-west of Alderley Edge which developers have expressed an interest in. One of the sites is opposite the Merlin pub between the roundabout and the by-pass (Barratt homes have expressed an interest), the other is land south of Ryleys Farm (Storey homes have expressed an interest). At this point the developers have only asked that the plot of land be considered as a strategic site, no numbers have been attached.

A question was asked about how Cheshire East Council regard Alderley Edge. Cllr Browne replied that he has always found the officers and leadership supportive and as a result of his persistence has managed to persuade them to schedule the whole village for drain clearing at the end of October.

5. To invite any Alderley Edge groups present to report on their activities during the year.

Anne Bale of the Royal Voluntary Service Alderley Edge Luncheon Club (for older people) gave a report (copy attached).

Paul Marshall of the Mayfair Committee gave a report:

He explained that the May Fair was re-started in 2010 as a small event and the plan now is to make it a week of events and for it to become a bigger part of the village. They also want to encourage community engagement as volunteers play an integral role and they always struggle to get enough to help with the road closure, etc.

The event is self-funding and any profits made are carried over to the next year to pay for entertainment. They did overspend last year but hope in the future to be able to generate funds to donate to local charities. He hopes to publish a set of accounts and put them on their website.

Steve Taggart of the Alderley Edge Partnership gave a report:

He explained that the Alderley Edge Partnership is a collaboration of people, local groups and societies who get together to share ideas. Their focus is on events and community projects and their objectives

are not commercial. One successful recent event was the 'Clean for the Queen' initiative, the next event is the May Fair followed by an 'armed forces day', which will be run alongside the Union Club to provide an event that will recognise the contribution local service people have made. A future project is 'Britain in Bloom' and the focus for this will be the planters on London Road. They have also created a 'friends of the station' group and managed to secure some funding from CEC. Their goal is to support local residents, mentor youngsters, develop a sense of ownership and foster community spirit.

Sarah Shorland of the Edge Association gave a report

The Edge Association is a local resident's group that campaigns on matters relevant to Alderley Edge village and its conservation area, monitoring new planning applications as they are registered with CEC

The Annual Parish Meeting concluded at 8.24pm

MINUTES SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING

Alderley Edge Parish Meeting

9th May 2016

This year we are splitting the Parish Council report into two sections.

I will focus on the Medical Centre and Festival Hall, whilst Craig Browne – in his capacity as both Parish Councillor and Ward Councillor – will report on work done in the last year on Car Parking and other aspects of Parish and Ward Council work.

This has been a very busy year. The Parish Council has taken on substantial new challenges.

To give you a sense of the extent of this shift, in 2014 the Parish Council spent just over £100,000. In the last year the equivalent figure was £2.8m, or getting on for 30 times as much.

In March 2015 our borrowings stood at just £6,000. Over the last year our debt has increased to £2.5m, or 400 times as much. This change of course results from the building of the new Medical Centre and the refurbishment of the Festival Hall.

This project has placed massive demands both on Parish Councillors and on our Clerk and Festival Hall Manager, and all should take credit for their hard work.

We should take a moment to recognize what has been achieved. We now have a beautiful state-of-the-art Medical Centre, and a Festival Hall that is ready to continue its role in our community into the 21st century. The challenge now is for all of us - Councillors and other residents of the village - to take the new building to our hearts and make it the centre of village activities.

It is a tribute to all involved that the build project was completed on time. If it had not, then the Parish Council risked losing £500,000 in advance rent from the NHS. The doctors and the Council have now signed the Lease and we expect to receive that money this week.

As a community we owe much to a lot of people for this achievement, not least to the Emerson Group who bore the early costs of the project and who have gone the extra mile to bring it in on time.

In addition, the room we are now in – and it is the first time it has been used for a public meeting – is the result of a very generous donation by the Emerson Foundation. We are very grateful to Peter and Audrey Jones for making it possible. The new Emerson Suite provides an invaluable addition to the Hall, and I predict it will be used heavily by local organisations and groups.

The devil is always in the details on capital projects like this, and a lot of time has gone into project planning, drawing up financial projections and setting up the ongoing facilities management of the building.

The hard work has not stopped yet. We still have much to do. We need to:

- Get tenants installed in the second floor of the Medical Centre
- Get the Pharmacy fitted out and up and running
- Develop a vision and Business Plan for the Festival Hall to ensure its future viability
- Manage the tight finances of the Parish Council over the next 6 years, during which time our loan repayments will be at their highest and our rent income at its lowest
- Create additional car parking to allow the Festival Hall to operate to its full potential, respecting the rights and interests of all our neighbours; and finally:

- We have to raise funds and complete the internal building work on the back section of the Festival Hall to complete additional meeting rooms

I'd like to pick up on that last point in particular. We have already started work on fundraising to complete the Festival Hall, and we believe the way we are doing this provides a model for how the Parish Council can best work together with the community to deliver the best possible outcomes for everyone.

How does this work? To complete the Festival Hall a number of people from across the community have come together to form an Advisory Group. Each of those individuals brings their own skills to the party, and we are very grateful to them.

Let's take a simple very recent example: users of the new Festival Hall had complained about the poor acoustics. One member of our Advisory Group, Keith Lowe, as Chair of the AE Festival, arranged for an acoustics expert to assess what was required to reduce sound reverberation in the Hall. She recommended the fitting of acoustic panels.

Alan Davies then brought his expertise as an architect who specializes in re-purposing old buildings to bear on designing the layout for the acoustic panels. Simon Fenton brought his Quantity Surveying skills to bear to get the panels costed out and we found a donor who, as a music-lover was willing to fund the work. Simon Fenton then used his construction skills to oversee the installation of the panels – all achieved in record time two days before the Music Festival started.

In the group we also have Martin Hallam, who brings his, legal, property, fundraising and governance skills to the group, alongside Christine Munro and Craig Browne, who both have great experience of fundraising for community good causes and charities.

We shall shortly be forming a larger group – the Friends of the Festival Hall - to help us to develop the Hall's facilities and organise fundraising for it. If you feel you might be able to help in any way, no matter how small, please do get in touch with us.

I said that the way we are approaching the Festival Hall offers a model to us for meeting the challenges to come.

One of those challenges is the need for us to create a Neighbourhood Plan. We have decided that it is essential for Alderley Edge that we produce such a Plan because it will give us much more say in the future direction of the village, particularly in ensuring that we are not the victims of inappropriate development. We will need to draw on the skills of everyone in the village to complete this, not least because the final stage is a referendum in which everyone gets to vote. Craig will talk more about the Neighbourhood Plan in a moment.

Finally I would like to offer special thanks to our Clerk, Anne Ross, who has coped magnificently with the challenges of managing a complete change of Council members on top of embarking on a major build project that would daunt even the most long-established of Parish Councils. In that task she has been ably supported by the Hall Manager, Ashley Dawson, who has provided active input into the development project for the Festival Hall as well as commissioning the new building with the help of our Lengthsman, Nigel Thompson. We thank them all for their hard work and professionalism.

Geoff Hall
Chair
Alderley Edge Parish Council

Plans Report 2015-16

The Plans Committee continues to be extremely busy with more than 100 applications considered. A continuous stream of applications is received for consultation and response. In many months we have had to hold fortnightly planning meetings to meet the requested response dates.

I doubt that this will change and so I would like to thank my fellow councillors for making themselves available with the extra commitment of their time that this involves and hope that this can continue into the next year.

With the Cheshire East local plan being revised and resubmitted, coupled with it being known of a number of developers making representation in this process the Parish Council has suggested that it pursues and is initiating a Neighbourhood plan. This is to try and steer any development appropriately and potentially guard against some that could be considered not so.

I would stress though that this is not solely about planning and construction of large sites but, quite contrarily, about the evolution of the Village in a sustainable manner.

Equally I would like to say that this is not the Parish Councils Neighbourhood plan but the Communities Neighbourhood plan. We are looking for fellow villagers to drive this forward. Indeed at the end of the process it requires a community referendum for its adoption.

More to come on this in the very near future.

Alderley Edge Parish Meeting
9th May 2016

Good evening, thank you very much to Geoff for inviting me here this evening to say a few words about the Edge Association.

The Edge Association is a voluntary, non-profit making, non-political organisation formed about 45 years ago in response to a development threat. Originally we focused on the Conservation Area and over the years we have taken up village causes which will be familiar to you all such as the bypass, opposition to Dobbies/Tesco the Festival, Hall and the new surgery. More recently we have been concerned with parking issues and the impact on local residents and roads caused by continuous development and in particular contractors' parking.

I must stress that we are not always in opposition, appreciating that redevelopment will continue to happen whilst seeking to uphold the character and charm here, valued by all.

We welcome new members for an annual subscription of £10. We produce an annual newsletter distributed to all homes in the village and we have a website.

The Edge Association is an independent organisation with a diverse membership unified by enthusiasm and by interests in the Edge and surrounding village area.

As well as commenting on planning and village issues we have a buoyant social side which we enjoy. We hold an Autumn Leaves dinner annually which has been held at Alderley Edge Cricket Club in recent years and an annual litter pick with a sociable lunch afterwards.

As a committee we meet several times a year in addition to an AGM and we have been fortunate to have skilful and professional committee members involved. We were all greatly saddened recently by the untimely death of Phil Jobling who was our hugely respected plans secretary. We are grateful to Alan Jones (a former Alderley Edge Parish Councillor) for taking on the role.

To conclude, I am conscious that this does not seem like a marketing exercise for the Association but I have had a long, interesting and enjoyable involvement and therefore can talk with great enthusiasm about what we do!

Sarah Shorland
Edge Association

Alderley Edge Parish Meeting
9th May 2016

Good evening! I'd like to take a few moments to reflect on my first twelve months as your Ward Councillor, which have certainly been intensive. I'm aware that many people may not be fully aware of what's involved, in fact twelve months ago even I didn't realise!! Looking back, I realise I've already attended 26 formal committee meetings, had several informal meetings, hosted six site visits to Alderley Edge by officers, one visit by a Cabinet Member and held twelve community surgeries. I've also reported 83 separate highways issues - these have varied from potholes & defective streetlights, to blocked gullies and broken signposts. I realise that sometimes people might think "why hasn't this been done yet?" Some things just take time.

PARKING: The last twelve months have also been a learning curve for me; in particular, I've had to learn what is realistic in terms of long and short term goals. In the short term, it's been possible to get some surfacing works done on Congleton Road & Eaton Drive, whilst Talbot Road (outside our new Medical Centre) is due to be resurfaced very shortly. Over the next few months, we are going to have some new short stay parking spaces on Stevens St, South St, West St, London Road & George St (about 16 additional spaces in total) and following on from this, we will eventually have a further 12 additional spaces on Chorley Hall Lane as part of the scheme to widen the footpath over the railway bridge.

But what about the plans we have outlined in terms of car parking at Heyes Lane, Ryleys Lane, Chorley Hall Lane & South Street? The first step was to consult with the village through the Parking Survey, which we did back in February. Since then, we've had these sites added to Cheshire East's Asset Register and we are currently preparing outline planning applications for these sites, but before we can submit anything, we also need to identify alternative sites to mitigate the resulting loss of public open space. The proposals would then come before Northern Planning Committee and then following a decision we will need to carry out ground surveys and develop business plans to demonstrate the viability of each site. This is all before any issues with covenants etc have been considered.

LOCAL PLAN: The latest draft version of the Local Plan was debated by Full Council on 26th February. In the Plan, Alderley Edge was identified as a Local Service Centre (and therefore expected to contribute not more than 100 homes over the plan period) and has no strategic site allocations (unlike Handforth & Wilmslow). This being the case, I voted in favour of the Local Plan in its current form; however I am aware that at least two developers have submitted representations during the recent consultation period, calling for the allocation of two strategic sites, one to the north west and one to the south west of Alderley Edge. In fact, 20,000 representations were received across Cheshire East during the consultation period, 5% of which were from developers. If any revisions are made to the Local Plan, they will be submitted in July, with further hearings planned in October.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: The ruling Conservative Group on Cheshire East Council voted against allowing any revised version of the Local Plan to come back to Full Council for further debate; this means that if any strategic sites are allocated to Alderley Edge in the revised version, the only control we will have over future development will be through a Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood Plans were introduced in 2011 through the Localism Act and replace Parish Plans. Unlike Parish Plans, Neighbourhood Plans are given weight in the planning process, with the NPPF stating that "where a planning application conflicts with a Neighbourhood Plan that has been brought into force, planning permission should not normally be granted".

Neighbourhood Plans are also a way of positively influencing the way in which we would like the village to develop; this could be about where we would like to build a new car park, or it could be about how we would like to improve the park, cycle routes we would like to create or pedestrian areas we would like to make safer. The important thing to remember about this however, is that it is a Neighbourhood Plan, not a Parish Council Plan. Although some of the Parish Councillors will be involved in the Steering Group, it will actually be led by residents and at the end of the process it will have to be approved at a Community Referendum, before it can be adopted. So we would like to invite everyone to come to a launch meeting which will be held here on 6th July.

Cllr Craig Browne (Independent)

Alderley Edge Ward

Cheshire East Council

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Report to Alderley Edge Parish Council AGM on May 9th 2016
By Anne Bale of the Royal Voluntary Service Alderley Edge Luncheon Club (for older people).

At present Luncheon Club has 37 members of whom 31 attend regularly. We have 45 volunteers. We usually get about 20-24 members each Tuesday and Thursday at a cost of £3 per person. Both member and volunteer availability has been hit particularly hard by accident and illness this year. We did try having a social coffee each Tuesday but there was little interest from the members and I ran out of volunteers. There is a possibility of a seated exercise class each Tuesday but I have yet to find out if members are interested.

Our major upset was our cooker breaking down in May 2015. It was mended after a month but the oven temperature is now somewhat erratic and so we will replace the cooker during the summer holidays, which will take a lot of joint working with Alderley Edge Methodist Church. Our funds are healthy as Waitrose are very generous through their green token scheme and Geoff Hall gave us one of his posters, which we raffled amongst members and volunteers. Cheshire East Council pays our rent, which is considerable.

Royal Voluntary Service are much more rigorous recently over food hygiene training and health and safety. This does have a lot of impact on my time but the benefits to resilience and quality are very important. We are rated '5' by the local environmental ~~inspector~~ *health officer*.

Around half of our volunteers are in their 70s and 80s and very few under 60 years of age. Consequently it is important to keep recruiting as inevitably there is a constant turnover. Most volunteers help with the cooking although we would love to get some people who would help Julie, our treasurer, and me with running the club.

We also need to constantly recruit new members to replace existing members who become too frail to attend or sadly pass away. Happily the last member to resign did so to move away to live with his new partner.