

ALDERLEY EDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 7th March 2011

Present: Cllr M H Williamson (Chairman), Cllrs M D Lloyd, F Keegan, M W Maczkowiak
N Schofield, A Jones, D G Herald

In attendance: 2 representatives from the press (alderleyedge.com and The Wilmslow Express)
No members of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

Received from Cllrs Y Wrinch and P P Tomlinson.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 7th February 2011

Councillor A Jones explained that he wished to amend the minutes (under point 4a) as follows:

Replace:

Councillor F Keegan suggested that councillors should “walk the village” before any meeting to understand what might be possible. However, Councillor A Jones explained that both he and Councillor M H Williamson had done that last autumn and he had summarised the parking situation across the village. He was awaiting input from the other councillors, but apart from Councillor P P Tomlinson’s response, he had received nothing. He re-iterated that if feedback/thoughts were forthcoming he would summarise them into one document.

With:

Councillor F Keegan suggested that councillors should “walk the village” before any meeting to understand what might be possible. However, Councillor A Jones explained that both he and Councillor M H Williamson had done that last autumn and he had summarised the parking situation across the village. He offered at last November’s meeting to collate councillor’s ideas, so far he had received a few from two councillors. Apart from Councillor P P Tomlinson’s response to his own thoughts on the topic which he had issued last month, he had received nothing else. He re-iterated that if feedback/thoughts were forthcoming he would summarise them into one document.

These changes had been e-mailed to all councillors who were happy with the adjusted wording.

On that basis approval was proposed by Councillor A Jones, seconded by Councillor M H Williamson and carried.

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Traffic Matters

a) Street Parking Review

A meeting had been held earlier in the evening with James Howard, Parking Manager at Cheshire East Council.

He advised that various groups were to be consulted on the Parking Review, but a meeting with the general public was not planned. The Review would:

- define the “Town Centre”
- collect usage data of both the car parks and the streets
- determine the income derived from parking

- review the time allowed to park – are the current limitations correct
- consider the current markings on the street – parking bays/areas and yellow lines
- not look beyond the “Town Centre”
- make recommendations

However, the councillors noted that the Review would:

- be superficial, with the data (which it is suggested would be collected) being of little value
- take a long time, if ever, to implement
- possibly not be implemented as there was no money
- not be taken forward as there were no/few staff to implement the recommendations.

A new Highways contractor is scheduled to take over from October and most of the current staff would not be retained. Only 2 officers are due to carry on. Hence it will take at least 12 months before any work would start.

It was hoped that the Review report would be available 3 months from the start of survey work being undertaken.

The councillors felt that the Review would be meaningless unless the proposed changes to the various junctions through the village are not completed. However, there was concern that there are no funds for this work.

Councillor M H Williamson advised that he had now written to Phil Sherratt at Cheshire East Council raising a number of matters, but only a short response had been received. He felt that a meeting with him was needed and he and Councillor N Schofield are to meet with him as soon as can be arranged.

The councillors asked for copies of the latest reviews completed to give a flavour of the output to be expected, although Councillor N Schofield remained concerned that it was a “desktop” study with no identification of causes for the problems. It was suggested that possibly Parish Plan Group members and residents could be used to obtain data.

Councillor D G Herald asked if there were any figures to show how reduced the traffic through the village now was following the opening of the by-pass, although concerns remained regarding the level of traffic seen along Ryleys Lane. Councillor A Jones remarked that at the Harden Park roundabout one previously had to queue to get into the village; now the queue is to get out..!

Moving on to other matters, Councillor N Schofield raised the issue of United Utilities works in the village and indicated that problems were caused by drivers ignoring signs at Chelford roundabout. He has raised this with Cheshire East, but no action has been seen to correct the signage nor has he had a response – he will chase.

There was a discussion on funding issues and the use of parking ticket income. Particular mention was made of the raising of obstruction tickets for illegally parked vehicles which is taking up a lot of the PCSO’s time, and is concerning his superiors. Councillor F Keegan felt that this is what he is being paid for and perhaps a meeting with Inspector Welsted is needed to iron out this problem. There was view that there should be more, clearer road markings to allow the traffic wardens and PCSO to “book” offenders.

5. Non-Traffic Matters

a) Festival Hall

In the absence of Councillor P P Tomlinson, Councillor M H Williamson talked about mast income and the request from one of the mast operators to replace the existing control equipment/box with a new installation. This would currently be at the same site pending any developments at the Hall when the mast companies may need to move their mast and control equipment elsewhere. He indicated that it would be pointless in not approving the request and the other councillors agreed with him.

He then mentioned the actual development proposals by advising that following the imminent demise of the PCT and the falling through of possible prudential funding there was now no clear plan to move forward.

He explained that a meeting with the local doctors is required, but not yet as there is, in effect, no project to discuss. Councillor F Keegan indicated that a new plan of action is needed as the current procurement process has probably expired. Councillor M H Williamson felt that the doctors are far more constrained in their funding and so far a viable way to progress has not been found.

A separate “investor” was being sought after the prudential funding “fell through”, but this has proved impossible to take forward. Accordingly, returning to the original proposal for funding is now being considered. Councillor P P Tomlinson was to be asked to summarise the situation to all the councillors so that the next steps could be considered.

Councillor A Jones offered to review the current situation regarding the 2 preferred tenderers to see if that process was now “dead” and whether the council should start afresh.

6. Policing

Councillor M W Maczkowiak advised that the PCSO is still involved in moving on a local vagrant who had taken up residence in the village, sleeping rough. However, this was proving difficult owing to certain locals who were enabling him to stay in the locality. She was to discuss the situation with the PCSO.

7. Licensing

Nothing to report.

8. Communications

Nothing to report.

9. Reports from Councillors

Councillor A Jones reported that it is 3 months since he walked the village with someone from the Highways Department, but many of the tasks discussed remain outstanding.

Councillor M D Lloyd enquired about traffic calming in the village – the only evidence is around Horseshoe Farm where the speed limit changes and this is more a warning of the change, rather than a calming measure.

Moving around the table, Councillor M W Maczkowiak expressed concern for the increasing number of potholes and general state of local roads. However, there seems to be little funding available for repairs.

Councillor D G Herald updated councillors on the park improvements. New play equipment is due to be installed. He went on to mention that the lane along the railway track, near the station had been cleared of weeds/over grown plants/trees again and he was considering arranging a possible art sale – details to follow.

Finally, Councillor F Keegan asked again about the replacement bench outside the Co-operative store. The clerk advised that Bluemantle had confirmed that one was on order.

ACTION SUMMARY

Undertaken By	Detail	When For
MHW	Arrange meeting with Phil Sherratt (and NS)	As soon as practicable
NS	Chase CEC regarding signage at Chelford roundabout	As soon as practicable
MHW	Contact Inspector Welsted regarding use of PCSO’s time	As soon as practicable
PPT	Circulate Hall redevelopment summary/update to councillors	As soon as practicable

Councillor M H Williamson
CHAIRMAN