

ALDERLEY EDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 18th July 2011

Present: Cllr M H Williamson (Chairman), Cllrs D G Herald, F Keegan, M J Connor
J D Bergin, M W Maczkowiak, M D Lloyd

In attendance: 2 representatives from the press (Wilmslow Express and alderleyedge.com)
1 member of the public (the PCSO)

Meeting

Commenced: 7:51pm

1. Apologies for Absence

Received from Cllr S Joseph.

2. To receive disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests from councillors on matters to be considered at the meeting.

None.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2011

Approval was proposed by Councillor M J Connor, seconded by Councillor F Keegan and carried.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Devolution of assets/services from Cheshire East Council

Councillor M H Williamson reported on the meeting held with Chris Allman from Cheshire East Council regarding devolution. The process and overall proposals have now changed. The “superloo” is not now to be transferred to the Parish Council owing to contractual obligations. The transfer of the park and playing fields has been deferred until at least 2013 when no funding will be forthcoming.

This leaves only the allotments to be transferred in 2012, again with no funding. Services such as grass cutting, etc are currently the subject of a pilot exercise in Congleton and nothing further will happen with these until the pilot runs its course and the results are known.

Chris is to provide more detailed information regarding the allotments – income, issues, expenses, etc. The council will then need to meet with representatives of the Allotments Society/organisations to understand their concerns, etc.

Councillor M W Maczkowiak was concerned as she was aware that the Beech Road allotments have serious drainage problems which she thought may be costly to resolve. This cost should not fall to the Parish Council; Cheshire East should pay for the remedial work required.

A similar problem will need to be considered in due course regarding the park. Ongoing upkeep of the tennis court and the correction of poor drainage in certain areas of the grounds could be expensive and these costs need to be understood before any transfer goes ahead.

Councillor M H Williamson indicated that a proposal regarding transfer is to go before the CEC Cabinet in August and the way forward will be clearer after that meeting.

Councillor J D Bergin mentioned the transfer of licensing, but Councillor F Keegan thought that planning and licensing were the 2 most legally intense operations undertaken within Cheshire East Council and that he therefore couldn't see licensing being devolved.

6. Shared space concept

Councillor M H Williamson reported on the meeting held in Poynton to examine the "shared space concept" being installed along the main street in that village.

Several councillors attended what was a very informative and fascinating meeting. Cllr Murray from Poynton gave a good presentation regarding the project and the councillors then saw first hand the work being undertaken which has progressed substantially, but is not yet complete.

Historically, town/village centres were car orientated or pedestrianised. The concept allows both traffic and walkers to share the space available which slows down the traffic and allows a much "softer" street scene – less signage, road/pavement merges, hard lines removed, etc. Users become "polite" and generally the pace of the street is "slowed".

However, there have been teething problems – the lighting has been changed – but overall the councillors who attended thought the scheme was worthwhile and are looking to investigate it further.

Councillor D G Herald asked if any users had been consulted – i.e. what do the actual residents/motorists think – but none had been contacted. However, many residents had supported the initial idea and once completed, time will be needed for everyone to get used to it. It would be then when views from the users would be most useful.

Councillor M H Williamson continued, advising that speed of traffic control was the most interesting along with the improved street scene. Local businesses were supportive of the changes, although the disruption whilst the work to make the changes is ongoing has found less favour.

A meeting with a consultant involved in the scheme is to be arranged to gather further thoughts and details.

7. Parking in the village

A meeting had been held with Cheshire East Council officers and Cllr Menlove regarding the parking survey and benchmarking data. In respect of the latter, David McGifford from CEC is to visit the councillors in September to discuss further.

Meanwhile, the gist of the survey covered issues regarding the length of street parking allowed – some needs to be 1 hour, whilst others should be 2 hours. The demands on off-street parking – e.g. the number of passes issued for the Festival Hall car park. Residential parking schemes – the legal position and philosophy of such schemes.

Proposals for Clifton Street, Lydiat Lane and Carlisle Street were explained. CEC is to compile a letter (the draft of which is to be agreed by the Parish Council) which is to go to the households in the 3 streets named and those in the surrounding area. This will explain the proposals and invite the residents to a Public Meeting likely to be in early October.

There remains concern regarding enforcement – road markings and street signage can be bolstered, but if there aren't the staff to actually enforce the schemes implemented, then little progress would have been made.

It was also pointed out that activity following the Public Meeting could be some time in coming to fruition as the Highways contractor is changing in October.

Councillor M H Williamson urged the public to attend the Public Meeting which will be publicised as soon as the date is known.

8. Reports from Councillors

Councillor D G Herald advised that he is still awaiting responses regarding allotments and the amount of funds left after the recent installation of new play equipment in the park. Councillor M H Williamson referred to Councillor D G Herald's tenacity in pushing Cheshire East Council to undertake the improvements seen and encouraged all councillors to similarly approach the council in this way to achieve results.

Councillor M W Maczkowiak mentioned a complaint by a resident regarding the noise coming from Highams whilst cars are being cleaned. The operation seems to be open 7 days a week and the hoovering noise is clearly disturbing. Environmental Health is to be advised and councillors felt that there would be restrictions within the planning approval as to when the service could be offered.

There was also concern that certain CEC officers do not return calls and so residents do not get a response to their query/complaint. Councillor M W Maczkowiak seems to be able to elicit responses – possibly as she is a councillor – but the average member of the public appears to be ignored. This is clearly unacceptable and it was suggested that she contact Cllr David Brown at CEC as he has responsibility for the council’s call centres and the response service provided.

Moving round the table, Councillor M J Connor advised that she hoped to provide further details regarding the Jubilee Celebrations next June at the September meeting. She also wanted to know why Alderley Edge can’t have a fountain similar to Poynton – she would investigate.

Councillor J D Bergin mentioned Davey Lane (and London Road) which floods regularly and was particularly noticeable following the very poor weekend weather. He also advised that it should be possible for the Parish Council to have a new website for around £1,000 – the problem is the ongoing management and update of the site once established.

Finally, the PCSO was given an opportunity to speak.

He discussed the parking issues still prevalent in the village especially around the schools and builders vans being parked on pavements – Macclesfield Road being a particular problem. Events at Ryleys School also causes problems along Ryleys Lane. He asked about parking being developed at Ryleys School using land to the rear of the school. Child safety remains his concern and whilst he appreciates the efforts being taken by the various Heads, the parents do not heed the advice given and continue to park inappropriately. He had attended a recent fete at one of the schools with a view to trying to educate the parents.

He discussed 2 vagrants in the village and explained that work is ongoing to try to resolve the matter. Councillor M W Maczkowiak, on behalf of a resident, asked if a Speed Indicator Device (SID) could be installed along Chorley Hall Lane in an attempt to slow down traffic. He advised that he would progress this and went on to report that some plant and machinery had been stolen from a site in Hough Lane. Provision for some youth activities is ongoing and he had utilised the Probation Service for tidying up at Beech Road. Whilst on the subject of Beech Road, he mentioned that whilst there are play items for the younger children, there is nothing for older children and wondered if any provision for this age group could be considered, either at this site or at the main park.

Meeting Closed: 9.04pm

ACTION SUMMARY

Undertaken By	Detail	When For
MHW/Councillors	Arrange meeting with consultant regarding Shared Space Concept	As soon as possible
All councillors	Ensure Public Meeting regarding parking is well publicised	As soon as date known
MWM	Contact Cllr D Brown regarding CEC lack of responses	As soon as practicable

Councillor M H Williamson
CHAIRMAN