



MOLLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

6th January 2025

Commenced: 7.30 pm

Terminated: 9.30 pm

Present: **Councillor Wells (Chair)**
 Councillor Brassington (part), Crowe and J Jones.
 Councillor Simon Eardley - Cheshire West and Chester Councillor

There were 7 members of the public in attendance

Due to the nature of business considered at the meeting, the Chair did not follow the numerical order of the Agenda.

1. PUBLIC FORUM

Members of the Public raised the following matters:-

- (i) Broadband
 - A resident reported on broadband delivery.
 - The Cheshire West and Chester Council Digital Specialist would be attending the next meeting of the Parish Council to provide an update.
- (ii) Grove Road flooding
 - Residents reported ongoing, unresolved problems with flooding, particularly on Grove Road. It was suggested that the installation of a further ditch may be required to prevent the flooding.
 - Very little progress had taken place since these concerns were reported to the September meeting of the Parish Council.
 - Councillor Eardley agreed that this work should be considered as a priority.
 - There were unresolved discussions with the Borough Council regarding the ownership of the land adjacent to the road, as well as discussions about the financial responsibility for repairs/remedial works.
 - There were complications relating to drains and pipework, which would require to be resolved before any digging took place.
 - Councillor Eardley was leading on this project and liaising with the Borough Council and other parties, as similar concerns were experienced at various sites within the Borough.
- (iii) Parking around the school
 - Parent/carer parking was problematic.
 - Councillor Wells had been liaising with the Principal Engineer on this matter.
 - Members referred to the need for kerb markers, and Councillor Wells agreed to continue to liaise with the Principal Engineer on this request.
- (iv) Warren Farm Development (Application No: 23/03824/FUL)
 - The development bore no resemblance to the drawings and plans that were submitted to the Local Planning Authority in 2020 and 2023.
 - Building had continued and a barn was erected for which planning permission had not been applied.

- Councillor Eardley confirmed that he had called in the application and he was prepared to take this as far as he could within the Borough Council.
 - The Parish Council should consider mitigations.
- (v) Warren Farm Development (Application No: 24/03668/PDQ)
The owners of the site attended the meeting and asked the Parish Council for its thoughts on this application. The Members reported that their considerations, when the matter was discussed later on the Agenda, would take into account the following:-

- A similar application (22/01597/FUL) had been submitted in June 2023, which was refused by the Local Planning Authority.
- There was an over development on the site;
- The application represented inappropriate development on greenbelt;
- The buildings to be converted were unsubstantial;
- There was a clear unrest amongst the village about the ongoing development at the site generally;
- The proposed buildings were not in keeping with the existing buildings in the village.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Coulter.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Jack Jones submitted a Declaration of Interest in any discussions involving the Hynet proposal as he was an affected landowner.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 21st November 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. DIGITAL CHESHIRE

Mr Mike Duggine, the Digital Cheshire Specialist at Cheshire West and Chester Council submitted his apologies for absence and had agreed to attend the next meeting of the Parish Council.

6. FINANCE AND BUDGET 2024-2025

The Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer presented a report on the following:-

(i) Transactions

RESOLVED

That the following transactions be approved:-

Payer/Payee	Details	Receipts	Payments
St Oswalds	Invoice STOS17		£40.00
J Davies	November Salary		£113.36
Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Service Charge (Nov)		£6.00
M Clough	November Salary		£237.96
Grasshopper Services	August and September 2024		£25.00
M Clough	6 months @ £10 per month		£60.00
M Clough	Petrol reimbursement		£50.22
M Clough	Reimbursement for Microsoft 365		£59.99
Grasshopper Services	October and November 2024		£40.00
Grasshopper Services	Balance payable		£25.00
M Clough	Backpay Due to National Payrise		£69.84
HMRC	PAYE due		£98.12

Public Works Loan Board	Village Hall Loan Repayment		£1,117.35
J Davies	December Salary (Actual £163.82)		£113.54
M Clough	December Salary (Actual £246.76)		£237.96
J Davies	December Salary to Balance (Actual £163.82)		£50.28
M Clough	December Salary to Balance (Actual £246.76)		£8.80
HMRC	PAYE December 2024		£102.66
Unity Trust Bank	Monthly Service Charge (Dec)		£6.00
J Davies	December Salary to Balance (SO incorrect)		£0.18

(ii) Approval of Payments

RESOLVED

That the following payments be approved:-

Payer	Details	£
J Davies	January Salary	Approx. £118.82
M Clough	January Salary	Approx. £246.76
HMRC	January PAYE	Approx. £102.66
J Davies	February Salary	Approx. £118.82
M Clough	February Salary	Approx. £246.76
HMRC	February PAYE	Approx. £102.66

(iii) Budget Expenditure to 6th January 2025

RESOLVED

(a) That the following Budget Expenditure to 6th January 2025, be approved;

(b) That an additional Budget Head be created for the Speed Limit expenditure in the sum of £975.00. (Councillor Eardley to look into this further).

Budget Head	Total	Budget Allocated	£ Difference
Staff Costs	£3,696.02	£5,500.00	£1,803.98
Monthly Payments to Clerk for Home Office	£120.00	£120.00	£0.00
Travel	£131.58	£110.00	-£21.58
Payroll	£540.00	£644.00	£104.00
Administrative Costs	£59.99	£150.00	£90.01
Room Hire	£40.00	£140.00	£100.00
Insurance	£300.00	£350.00	£50.00
Subscriptions	£204.44	£320.00	£115.56
Information Commissioner	£35.00	£40.00	£5.00
Audit Fees	£130.00	£180.00	£50.00
St Oswald's School Field Licence	£300.00	£300.00	£0.00
Website	£249.50	£250.00	£0.50
Training	£38.93	£105.00	£66.07
Community Projects	£339.95	£2,500.00	£2,160.05
Gardener	£532.00	£725.00	£193.00
Remembrance Wreath	£24.49	£40.00	£15.51
Unity Trust Service Charges	£47.40	£72.00	£24.60
Repayment of PWLB Loan	£2,234.70	£2,235.00	£0.30
Contingency/Planters (160524)	£0.00	£600.00	£600.00
Speed Limit Changes	£0.00	£975.00	£975.00
	£9,024.00	£15,356.00	£6,332.00

(iv) Explanation of Variances

Members were asked to approve a virement of £25.00 from the Audit Fees Budget to the Travel Expenses budget.

RESOLVED

That a virement of £25.00 from the Audit Fees Budget to the Travel Expenses budget, be approved.

(v) Bank Reconciliation

RESOLVED

That the Bank Reconciliation detailed below as at 6th January 2025, be approved:-

Bank Reconciliation 6th January 2025	
MOLLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL	
Financial year ending 31 March 2025	
Prepared by: Muna Clough, Parish Clerk & RFO	
Balance per bank statement as at 31st December 2024	£
Current Account (07572433)	£18,009.84
Less: any unpresented cheques	£161.92
Add: any unbanked cash	£0.00
Net bank balances as at 6th January 2025	£17,847.92
The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows	
CASH BOOK	
Opening Balance at 1st April 2024	£11,971.66
Add: Receipts in the year	£14,906.26
Less: Payments in the year	£9,030.00
Closing balance per cash book [receipts and payments book] must equal net bank balances above	£17,847.92

(vi) Bank Statements

RESOLVED

That the Bank Statements 30th November 2024 and 31st December 2024, as circulated, be received.

7. PLANNING MATTERS

• **Planning Applications**

The Chair and Councillor Eardley reported on the following planning applications:-

- (i) **Application No:** 24/03668/PDQ
Address: Warren Farm Townfield Lane Mollington Chester CH1 6LB
Proposal: Conversion of former agricultural barn to 3 no. residential dwellings (C3 use class) and associated building operations within the residential curtilage

Councillor Eardley reported that he had submitted an email expressing his concerns over this application.

The development was on land designated as Greenbelt, and there were strong resident concerns regarding all the development taking place on the site known as Warren Farm.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk submits to the Cheshire West and Chester Council, Mollington Parish Council's decision to strongly object to this planning application, for the following reasons:-

- **Inappropriate development in the greenbelt**
- **The proposal was effectively for new residential construction in the greenbelt, for which no very special circumstances existed – it having been found on a previous application in respect of this building that it was not suitable for conversion and the extent of the works required meant that it was tantamount to the building of new dwellings;**
- **Detrimental impact on residential amenity;**
- **Over-intensification of development on this site;**
- **Vehicle access to and from Townfield Lane. When the development was complete it was likely that there could be up to 20 additional vehicles using this access. When considering the development of the adjacent farm and the increase in traffic that this had resulted in, there was a significant increase in traffic on a single track lane without any street lighting or pavement;**
- **The building to be converted was not of a permanent and substantial construction.**
- **The proposed development was out of keeping with the existing buildings.**

(ii) **Application No: 23/03824/FUL**
Address: Warren Farm, Townfield Lane, Mollington, Chester. CH1 6LB
Proposal: Proposed agricultural building and associated works

The Members were extremely concerned over the impact of the current developments to the site, on the reputation of the Parish Council, as the landowner was a Councillor. Members considered the development to be a breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct, however, as there were some possible conflicts of interest with other Members of the Council (Councillor Brassington and J Jones), and the landowner/Councillor the Clerk agreed to seek advice on this matter.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk seeks advice on this matter and reports back to the next meeting.

8. BUDGET-PRECEPT 2025-2026

The Parish Council considered a report of the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

Members considered the Budget for 2025-2026, and agreed to set a Precept in the sum of £15,000. In 2024-2025, each Band D household was required to pay £38.46 of its Council Tax for the Precept. In 2025-2026, each Band D household would be required to pay £39.10, (which represented an increase of 1.66% or 64p for the year).

RESOLVED

- (i) **That the Budget for 2025-2026, as Appended to these Minutes, be approved;**
- (ii) **That Mollington Parish Council authorises the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to submit a Precept request for 2025-2026 in the sum of £15,000.00 to Cheshire West and Chester Council;**

- (iii) That the appointment of the existing Amenity Cleaner be continued for 2025-2026;
- (iv) That the appointment of the existing Gardener be continued for 2025-2026;
- (v) That the appointment of Barnes Cooper as the payroll provider for 2025-2026, be approved;
- (vi) That the appointment of Davenport Accountants, to undertake the internal audit, be approved;
- (vii) That Mollington Parish Council agrees to maintain a Reserve of £10,500.00

9. URGENT ITEM

The Chair was of the opinion that the next item of business should be considered as a matter of urgency, as Councillor Brassington was required to retire from the meeting early due to family commitments.

10. COUNCILLOR VACANCY

RESOLVED

That Juliet Plunkett be invited to attend the next meeting of the Parish Council to present to Members her application for co-option.

11. EXEMPT BUSINESS

The Parish Council resolved that Members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, as it contained exempt information under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, relating to individuals.

12. AMENITY CLEANER

RESOLVED

That the salary of the Amenity Cleaner be approved as the National Minimum Wage, which increases when necessary.

At this juncture, Councillor Brassington retired from the meeting (9.00 pm)

13. HYNET PROPOSALS

Two Mollington Parish Councillors were required to represent Mollington Parish Council at a meeting with Hynet and other Parish Councils.

RESOLVED

That Councillors Crowe and Jack Jones, be appointed as Mollington Parish Council's representatives. (Councillor Wells would be the Reserve)

14. FREEDOM FIBRE ACTIVE CABINET INSTALLATION

RESOLVED

That this matter be deferred to the next meeting, and in the meantime, the Clerk would request an update.

15. CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER COUNCIL'S HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

The Parish Council considered the response received and circulated from Rt Hon Samantha Dixon MP, in reply to its email, and the further email sent to the MP relating to the current lack of public home to school transport provision for the children of Mollington. Minute 16 (19th September 2024) refers.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

16. PARISH MAINTENANCE 2024-2025

- **Weed Spraying**

RESOLVED

That Councillor Crowe to provide an update to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

17. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The Chair reported on the replacement of Notice Boards and Planters.

RESOLVED

- (i) **That the CIL monies be spent on the purchase of Notice Boards;**
- (ii) **That the Chair to present the final quotes to the next meeting of the Parish Council.**

18. WARD COUNCILLOR'S BRIEFING

Councillor Eardley presented an update on matters relating to the Parish including:-

- Townfield Lane - Issues regarding potholes, edge deterioration and sweeping had been reported;
- Blocked gullies near Warren Chase, were contributing to the mud challenge;
- Green Waste Collection was open to registrations, the cost was £52.50 for the year;
- Progress with broadband was taking place;
- Flooding was being investigated and reported and remained a priority;
- The Council budget was about to be released and Council tax would increase to 5%.

19. DOCUMENTS

The Chair reported that he had a number of boxes containing archive documents.

RESOLVED

That the Chair deposits these boxes with the Cheshire Records Office.

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted that the next meeting of the Parish Council would be held on Thursday, 20th March 2025 at 7.30 pm, at St Oswald's Primary School.

**MOLLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
BUDGET 2025-2026**

Budget Head	Budget 2025-2026
Staff Costs	£5,750.00
Clerk for Home Office (£10 per month)	£120.00
Travel	£110.00
Payroll	£120.00
Administrative Costs	£100.00
Room Hire	£140.00
Insurance	£375.00
Subscriptions	£300.00
Information Commissioner	£40.00
Audit Fees	£180.00
St Oswald's School Field Licence	£350.00
Website	£250.00
Training	£105.00
Community Projects	£3,745.00
Gardener	£800.00
Remembrance Wreath	£200.00
Unity Trust Service Charges	£80.00
Repayment of PWLB Loan	£2,235.00
Contingency/Planters	£0.00
CIL RINGFENCED Not included in Precept Request	£3,605.10
	£15,000.00