

Spurstow Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

Clerk: C Jones, Rose Cottage, Spurstow CW6 9TG clerk@spurstow.org.uk

The Annual Parish Meeting was held at 19:00 on Thursday 25th May 2023 in the Ridley Chapel at St Boniface Church, Bunbury.

20th August 2023

The Annual Parish Meeting is an opportunity for parishioners on the Electoral Roll for Spurstow to raise any matters of concern to them that relates to their local community.

- 1. To receive any apologies for absence.** Jonathan Middlemiss
- 2. Present** Katherine Hutchinson (Chair on opening of the meeting), Nell Jones, Gordon Whitehead, Reynold Finney, Barry Bell
- 3. To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in May 2022.** Approved – Proposed by Cllr, Jones, Seconded by Cllr. Whitehead.
- 4. To elect a Chair of Spurstow Parish Council for the forthcoming Year.** After some discussion Cllr. Whitehead was elected as Chair for the Year, to his tenure to commence at the end of the Ordinary meeting to be held this evening– Proposed by Cllr. Hutchinson, seconded by Cllr. Bell. The Council unanimously thanked Cllr. Hutchinson for all her hard work and strong leadership whilst holding the Chair, especially through the difficult period of the Covid pandemic, and thanked her for her initiatives in setting up Spurstow’s help for those affected by the pandemic and for her initiatives about greening Spurstow nad maintaining the local footpaths.
- 5. To elect a Vice Chair for the forthcoming year.** After some discussion Cllr. Hutchinson was elected as Vice-Chair for the Year – Proposed by Cllr. Jones, seconded by Cllr. Bell.
- 6. Councillor James Pearson of Cheshire East Council** joined the meeting at 19:15 and introduced himself to the Meeting, have elected a Labour Leader and Independent Assistant leader, Cllr Pearson has been elected to the Corporate Committee Cllr. James Pearson was welcomed to the meeting and asked if he would like to address the meeting in the earlier part of the meeting, rather than later. The Chair asked Cllr. Pearson if he would be kind enough to take the Parish Meeting’s concerns to Cheshire East Council, and agreed to send on the correspondence to date. Mr Pearson received the parishioner’s concern and said that he had spoken to Peter Skates (Director of Growth and Enterprise) and Tom Moody (Director of Highways and Infrastructure) at Cheshire East Council, and had requested a meeting with the Director of Highways as soon as convenient - Cllr. Pearson did say that he had put improving both road safety and the condition of the local roads as the first priority in his Election Manifesto and that he understood the importance of this to the Parish, and that his next priority is connectivity.

7. Cllr Whitehead mentioned the ongoing issues with Badcocks Lane and the A49, saying that the CEC process has not worked well for him. Cllr. Whitehead asked the Clerk to send a copy of the Council's latest emails on this subject, street lights, and the dangerous building and Cappers lane, the owner of which is thought to be Caroline Grey
8. **To receive the Chair's report. (Please see below.)** This was received and noted by the Council.`
9. **To receive the Clerk's report, including the Parish Council accounts for Year ending 31 March 2023.**
These were received and noted by the Council.
- 10.**Authorise the Chair and Clerk to sign and submit the AGAR and it's accompanying documents as needed.**
Proposed Gordon – seconded Nell Unanimously Agreed
- 11.**To invite the public to raise any matters of interest.** None
- 12.**To set the date of meetings for the next year and to set the date of the next Annual Parish Meeting.** It was agreed that the schedule of meetings will be agreed at the quarterly meeting which immediately follows this meeting.

The Meeting closed at 20:01

Chair's report Spurstow Parish Council May 2023

The most important thing to happen this year was the appointment of three **new councillors** in September 2022. This is the future of Spurstow Parish Council, since I now feel I have been chair longer than I had planned and would like to step down shortly and none of the previous council members felt they could volunteer to take over the job-many having served in the past of course. So, to Nell, Gordon and Chris my grateful thanks, and don't worry if you can't do much often, none of us do very much very often!

The main issues we continue to deal with are the **flooding** of roads and gardens and the illegally parked **caravan**. Cheshire East believe they fixed the flooding of Cappers Lane last Spring and I have not heard differently so probably they did. A recent jetting of the parts of Long Lane which have been flooding and causing garden flooding did succeed in clearing some gullies so we will have to wait and see if this is successful in preventing the road and garden flooding next winter. We continue to try and ascertain the owner of the small area of land which the caravan is parked on, and are trying to find some contact details for the residuary owner of the land when Spurstow Hall was sold.

The **Speed Indicating Device** which we bought in January 2022 continues to be in good use. It has provided useful data on speeds on local roads which has been used in letters to Cheshire East about speeds past the entrance to Badcocks Lane for example. It has also been loaned out to other smaller parishes for a small amount of money, but mainly for the goodwill of cooperating locally which may well come in handy if we want to campaign more widely about an issue such as Beeston Railway station.

We have continued to respond to **planning applications**, and more recently to **safety issues** on the Schoolhouse bend.

We have added a **footpath** section to the website, to encourage more walking for pleasure, fitness and hopefully less environmental impact if some journeys can be made on foot, or if recreation does not start by driving for 30 minutes. This could do with more publicity.

In April of last year we heard we had been successful in influencing the **local governance review** so our allowed number of councillors did not fall to 7 as they had proposed, but remained at 8, allowing us a little more flexibility in appointments.

We have added work to make Spurstow more **environmentally friendly**, with information about light bulbs, letters to try to improve access to local tips thus reducing mileage, travelling together to meetings, policies about requesting porous drive surfaces as well as e-v charging points, bat and bird boxes etc. when we review planning applications amongst other things. We review progress on these at each meeting.

In December 2022 we had some meetings with United Utilities about the work on the **Vyrnwy Aqueduct**, which seems to be causing some slight noise problems to some Peckforton residents, but as we had hoped the traffic flows seem not to be a major problem in Spurstow.

We have purchased some "**Hedgehog highways**", which was supported by a news item in the Link this year. We do still have some available.

In January we decided to increase the **precept** by £310 to £3,960, an 8.5% increase due to the large increases in the cost of electricity and maintenance for the streetlights and other increasing costs and to allow us to continue to finance projects as we need to.

In May we had the 4-yearly **council elections** and succeeded in getting six councillors elected unopposed, since we did not want to incur the costs of an election but did want a more legitimate elected council rather than the large number of co-opted members we had previously.