**CROFT PARISH COUNCIL**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

HELD AT 7.30 PM ON TUESDAY 16th OCTOBER 2018

AT THE CROFT VILLAGE MEMORIAL HALL, MUSTARD LANE, CROFT

**Present:** Councillor Cummerson (Chair)

Councillors Allen MBE, Bland MBE, Thewsey.

**Apologies:** Cllrs Griffiths and Partington

**2019/156 Code of Conduct – Declarations of Interest.**

None.

**2019/157 Minutes of the meeting held on 18th September.
Resolved.**Approved.

**2019/158 Matters arising from the Minutes.**

Minute Ref 2019/124 Road Signs.

 Speed Activated road signs have now been installed in The Village.

 Minute Ref 2019/124 Bench on Cross Lane.

 The Clerk has contacted the Engineering Department at Warrington Borough Council’s Highways Team. The responding officer wondered to where the bench should be relocated. Members were asked to comment on their preference and it was decided that the best option would be to position the bench in a more central location behind the barrier so that it was more accessible to potential users.

 **Resolved**

 Clerk to contact Highways Team with preferred new location.

 Minute Ref 2019/132 CYAC request for financial assistance.

 A meeting between CYAC and Parish Councillors has been arranged for 25th October to discuss CYAC’s request for financial assistance.

 Minute Ref 2019/130 Sirocco entrance on Heath Lane.

 Cllr Allen reported an incident with a tractor and an HGV that blocked the road for 15 minutes. The HGV driver had apparently been advised by the owner of Sirocco to use the Heath Lane entrance. Cllr Cummerson has reported this incident to the Borough Council.

 Minute Ref 2019/134 Public Right of Way.

 A map of public rights of way in Croft has now been uploaded to the website along with a link to the original map that is updated by Warrington Borough Council.

 Minute Ref 2019/136 Christmas Lights switch on.

 Croft Primary School have responded to the invite and will be happy to attend to perform some carols.

 Minute Ref 2019/150 Cross Lane advertising.

 The advertising has been reported to Warrington Borough Council and added to their enquiry list. A resolution has yet to be attained.

 Minute Ref 2019/155 Wooden Planter.

 The Clerk has contacted David Platt Landscapes Limited to request that the planter be returned to a wooden finish.

 Minute Ref 2019/127 Toilet Block.

 Cllr Bland asked when the meeting would be taking place to discuss the plans for the potential conversion of the playing field toilet block. Members agreed that this meeting should take place at a date after the meeting with CYAC on 25th October.

**2019/159 Clerk’s Report.**

In response to Members’ queries the Clerk referred to Croft Parish Council’s standing orders with regards to public participation during meetings. Members were advised that The Parish Council are only obligated to provide 10 minutes of meeting time for public engagement, any additional time would be at the discretion of The Chair.

Some Members have expressed concern to The Clerk about the large amount of paper used to produce agenda packs for all Councillors. The Clerk proposed that in order to reduce the bulk of paper usage that the planning application documents should now be circulated to Councillors via email, with the Clerk bringing one copy of the document to meetings in case any queries arise during discussions.

Some Members also volunteered to entirely forgo a printed agenda pack and instead receive an electronic copy which they would review during the meeting on their personal devices.

It is at the discretion of Members how they choose to receive their agenda packs.

**2019/160 Correspondence.**

Correspondence was noted.

**2019/161 Local Plan**

 At a recent Borough Council Liaison meeting a representative from Warrington Borough Council informed attendees that the Planning Department would be briefing Parish Councils at the start of 2019 on the borough council’s plan. The intention of Warrington Borough Council is to brief a number of Parish Councils at the same time.

The Clerk to liaise with other Parish Councils in the area to arrange a date for this to take place.

**2019/162 Audit 2017/18.**

The Parish Council finances and processes have been audited by both an internal and external auditor.
The internal audit noted that the reserves held by the Parish Council are high and suggested that the Parish Council should earmark funds for specific purposes.
The external audit highlighted that funds relating to council tax support have been incorrectly classified due to an error by Warrington Borough Council. The audit advised that the council tax support grant be shown separately from the Parish Council’s precept income.

Members were asked to consider the reports and approve the audit conclusions and recommendations.

**Resolved**

Approved.

**2019/163 Appointment of internal auditor for 2018/19.**

The Clerk asked Members to consider the re- appointment of the current auditors, JDH Business Services for this year’s audit.

**Resolved**

Approved.

**2019/164 CYAC.**

Historically the Parish Council have provided CYAC with an annual grant of £750.
This year Warrington Borough Council have taken responsibility for the CYAC premises and have levied a higher charge to users.
Using a CYAC prescribed application, CYAC has invited applications for financial support from affected groups and has made awards to the needy groups. To continue that support and to enabke the CYAC Committee to undertake enhancements and maintenance of the building – which Warrington BC will not do - CYAC have requested a grant from the Parish Council of £3,000.

The Parish Council are due to meet with CYAC on 25th October to discuss this request, prior to this meeting The Clerk raised the following points for the consideration of Members:
**1.** Is the Parish Council prepared to let CYAC act as its agent in receiving and appraising funding applications and then allocating funds and monitoring their application?
If the Parish Council does accept that position, it may want to set some conditions to the application of the funds.
For instance, groups benefitting from the funds
should be comprised mainly of Croft Parish residents;
should be made aware that the funding is from Croft Parish Council and acknowledge that support in any publicity they generate; and
any unused funds should be returned to the Parish Council.
Equally, the Parish Council would require annually from CYAC a list of the groups supported by Parish Council funding and this list should detail the value awarded and the main reason(s) for the award being made.
Members should be mindful that the legal basis for making an award is that a benefit should be derived from it by its whole Parish area or by part of it, or by all or some of its inhabitants.

Under present budget arrangements the Parish Council allocates £750 annually to CYAC. That award was agreed before the borough council took responsibility for operating CYAC.
**2.** CYAC has requested a grant of £3,000 per annum.
If the Parish Council is prepared to let CYAC act it as its agent (as described above) Members would have to determine if that sum should become a recurring item in formulating the annual budget. Alternatively, Members may decide that a detailed application would be required each year.
**3.** If the Council decides to consider all applications itself, it may wish to specify a date by which recurring applications should be received. Councillors could then arrange a separate meeting to vet the applications before coming back to a public meeting with recommendations for formal approval.

Members noted that other charitable venues (the Memorial Hall and Christ Church Hall) were in need of financial support and that the Parish Council would have to be equitable in its allocation.

At this point Cllr Thewsey declared an interest in this matter as she is a member of The Board for Croft Village Memorial Hall. Cllr Thewsey did not participate in further discussions around grants to CYAC.

**2019/165 Financial Report**.

Due to the (now regular) late arrival of the bank statements Members were presented with the financial papers at the meeting.
The bank accounts had been fully reconciled and there were no unexplained items. The September creditor payments schedule totalling £11,757.36 was presented.
The reports show that the Parish Council is currently spending above budget by some £11,033.83. That amount reflects the high expenditure incurred for a number of items such as the speed activated warning signs, laptop computers, resurfacing parts of the Play Area and buying bollards for the Playing field.

Cllr Allen asked about the impact of council tax support grant on the Parish Council’s finances in 2019/20. The Clerk advised under the 2019/20 arrangements, the Parish Council’s number of Band D equivalent dwelling would decrease. For the Parish Council to achieve the same level of precept income as in 2018/19 would therefore necessitate an increase in the precept because effectively less dwelling would be subject to the charge.
The number of dwellings relevant to the 20019/20 calculations has yet to be announced

**Resolved.**

that the financial reports and the creditor schedule in the sum of £11,757.36 be approved

**2019/166 Planning Application 2018/33654 1 Dam Lane WA3 7HE.**
Householder – Proposed side and rear extension.

 **Resolved.**

No Objections.

**2019/167 Planning Application 2018/33563 16 Oak Street WA3 7HH.**

This application was a discharge of condition on a previously approved application. There was no opportunity for comment.

**2019/168 Planning Application 2018/33643** **12 Dam Lane WA3 7HE.**

This application was for a variation of condition on a previously approved application. There was no opportunity for comment.

**Recess**

**2019/169 Parking on Roundthorn.**

A resident reported that 2 men with clipboards had been to her house asking where she parked and if she would be willing to contribute £2,000 towards the cost of the creation of parking spaces. There has recently been an issue on Roundthorn where by an Ambulance was delayed in leaving due to difficulties manoeuvring.
It was noted by Members that Poplars Ave in Culcheth had a similar issue with parking which was resolved by Warrington Borough Council funding the creation of parking spaces.

**Resolved.**

Clerk to contact Warrington Borough Council in support of residents and to request a solution for the problem.

**2019/170 Boundary Fence.**

A resident requested help from Members with a long-standing issue whereby a boundary fence was moved. The resident has yet to get a resolution from Warrington Borough Council, despite having reported the issue in 2015.

**Resolved.**

Clerk to contact Warrington Borough Council and ask them for their comments on the matter.

**2019/171 Abandoned black bin.**

A resident complained that a black bin has been abandoned at the entrance to Cornmill Court. The resident has reported the bin but has been advised that it could take up to 12 weeks for the removal.

**Resolved.**

Clerk to report the issue to Warrington Borough Council refuse service.

 **2019/172 Rotten Tree Stump.**

 A resident reported a rotten tree stump near Sandy Lane/Heath Lane that could pose a hazard were it to collapse.

**Resolved.**

Clerk to report this to Warrington Borough Council.

**2019/173 Kenyon Lane fly tipping.**

A resident reported that a mattress has been fly tipped just after the junction with Main Lane.

**Resolved.**

Clerk to report to Warrington Borough Council.

**2019/174 Kenyon no longer identified as an area on its own.**

A resident proposed that the identity of the area of Kenyon was being diluted as road signs posted at the entry to Kenyon refer to Croft without naming the area of Kenyon. Members agreed that it would be a good idea to amend signage to indicate the area of “Kenyon in the Parish of Croft”

**Resolved.**

Clerk to contact Warrington Borough Council.

**2019/175 Parish Plan.**

Cllr Bland informed Members that the Parish Plan was reaching completion and that the aim of the committee was to bring the completed plan to the next Parish Council meeting for review by Members.