

CHELFORD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD

THURSDAY 20TH AUGUST, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

at CHELFORD VILLAGE HALL, KNUTSFORD ROAD, CHELFORD.

PRESENT - Councillors: D. Wilson (Chairman), J. Leach (Vice Chairman), B. Brindley, K. Chaudhuri, A. Boon, E. Michell.
Members of Public (0).
Cheshire East Borough Councillor G. Walton.
Mr. J. Owens & Miss R. Monaghan - Cheshire East Council Neighbourhood Planning Team.
Dr. E. M. Maddock - Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** - No apologies were received from Councillor S. Hampson who was absent from the meeting.
2. **JEREMY OWENS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING MANAGER CHESHIRE EAST** -
 - i) Mr. Owens presented an overview of Neighbourhood Planning including the status of such a document, the process of preparing the plan and the financial implications. A Neighbourhood Plan, which forms part of the statutory development plan for a given area, provides the community with an opportunity to influence the future growth of that area. Significant community engagement and commitment is required in order to create a plan which will meet the needs and aspirations of the residents along with complementing the Local Development Plan being produced by Cheshire East Council. The submitted plan is scrutinised by an independent examiner and, if successful, is subject to referendum by the Neighbourhood Area electors prior to adoption by Cheshire East Council. The average cost of producing a Neighbourhood Plan is in the region of £13,750, however, grants are available to assist with any costs incurred.
3. **QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION** -
 - i) Members asked Mr. Owens a number of questions as outlined below:
 - a) Are there any restrictions on the funds available from 'Locality' and Cheshire East Council? - Mr. Owens advised that these funds are to support the production of a Neighbourhood Plan, however, the total amount available can be obtained through several applications as the project progresses. It should be noted that some of the funds are subject to a time limit for use.
 - b) Are Parish Councils expected to contribute towards producing a Neighbourhood Plan using funds obtained by way of precept? - Mr. Owens advised that Parish Councils are not expected to use precept monies for the production of a Neighbourhood Plan. There is also no requirement for match funding for the two grants available from National Government and Cheshire East Council.
 - c) How does the Neighbourhood Plan fit in with current Green Belt policy? - Mr. Owens advised that development on Green Belt is not supported by the Government, however, a Neighbourhood Plan gives communities an opportunity to provide additional support to this position.
 - d) Is it usual for Neighbourhood Areas to engage the services of consultants to assist in the production of a Neighbourhood Plan? - Mr. Owens advised that several Parishes have engaged consultants to assist with the project. The support obtained from consultant services can vary in remit, however, it is a matter for the Neighbourhood Area to consider which aspects of expertise and support are required in addition to that available from volunteers within the Neighbourhood Area.
4. **IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN NEEDED IN CHELFORD?** -
 - i) What would be our motivation for wanting/not wanting a plan?
Members considered a range of issues including the outcome of the Annual Parish Meeting held in May, 2015. It was noted that to undertake this project would be a huge commitment and would require the involvement of volunteers within the community, however, the use of consultant services may reduce some of the demands on residents. The successful completion of a Neighbourhood Plan would provide an opportunity for the Parish to influence future development within the Neighbourhood Area, however, it would need to be reviewed as and when circumstances change and to ensure alignment with Cheshire East Council Local Development Plans.
5. **WHAT CAN IT DO/NOT DO?** -
 - i) Mr. Owens advised that, in addition to the issues already discussed, a Neighbourhood Plan cannot be used to stop development. The underlying theme of a Neighbourhood Plan must be the overall growth and development of the Neighbourhood Area.
6. **WHAT SPECIFIC BENEFITS WOULD SUCH A PLAN BRING TO CHELFORD** -
 - i) The benefits of proceeding with a Neighbourhood Plan had already been discussed.

