



**Minutes of the Meeting of Handforth Town Council held on
Tuesday 12th April 2022 at 7:30pm, held at Handforth Youth Centre,
Old Road, Handforth.**

Present: Cllr Sam Milward, Cllr Susan Moore, Cllr Cynthia Samson, Cllr John Smith (Chair of Handforth Town Council), Cllr Julie Smith & Cllr Kerry Sullivan

Also, present Mr Comiskey Dawson, Town Clerk
Five members of the public

The video can be watched on YouTube by following this link:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmNIRoV6ujZq24I634xDmhQ/>

PART A

22/10/1 To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies received from Cllr Nisa.

22/10/2 To note Declarations of interest and requests for dispensation to discuss or discuss and vote on a matter in which a member or co-opted Member has a Disclosable Pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest (DPI).

Cllrs Samson, Milward, John Smith & Julie Smith all declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 22/10/18 and requested the granting of dispensation to vote on the item.

Cllr Sullivan proposed, seconded by Cllr Moore to grant the dispensation to vote on the item.

Motion Carried: Two in favour with Four abstentions.

22/10/3 Open Forum- Comment and questions concerning items on this agenda may be put to the Council by the public during this period. Matters which, in the Chairman's view require debate and/or a discussion will be referred to the next Committee/Council meeting, as appropriate. Items not pertaining to the agenda may also be taken at this time at the Chairman's discretion. The Public

Forum is restricted to 15 minutes and strictly 3 minutes per person, unless the Chairman allows otherwise.

A resident enquired as to whether the council would be making any changes or updates to its website. The resident also enquired to the clerk as to how many visits it receives. Following a check on "Stat-counter" the clerk informed all present that for the period March 1st to March 31st, 2022, the website had received 5,360 hits.

A resident asked if they could comment on items 22/10/12 & 22/10/15 at the time of discussion.

22/10/4 To approve and sign the minutes of the Handforth Town Council meeting of 08th March 2022.

Cllr Julie Smith proposed, seconded by Cllr Sullivan to approve, and sign the minutes of the Handforth Town Council meeting of 08th March 2022.

Resolved: Unanimously.

22/10/5 To receive a report from the PCSO.

The PCSO was unavailable on the evening, however sent through the following report:

In the last month:

- ASB > We have had only one report of Anti-Social Behaviour, this was in Meriton park relating to kids (teenagers) shouting.
- Burglaries > We have a no burglaries since the beginning of Feb.
- Vehicle Crime > We have had two theft of vehicles since the last meeting last week on the same evening. A Scooter & Motorbike where taken.
- We have had 16 Domestic type incidents reported to us, most of these have been of a verbal argument nature, some involving partners/ ex partners/ even children hitting parents.
- Racial incidents > We have had no reports of a racial/ hate nature this year in the village.

If anyone would like any further details on any of these matters or anything else my details are on social media/ the board outside/ all of the councillors have my contact details.

22/10/6 To approve and sign the order of payments for April 2022.

Cllr Samson proposed, seconded by Cllr Julie Smith to approve, and sign the order of payments for April 2022 totalling £22,938.88.

Resolved: Unanimously.

22/10/7 To receive a report from Ward Councillor Julie Smith.

Cllr Julie Smith provided the following report to all present:

A busy month starting with a community litter pick on 12th March where we had over 60 members of the community who collected over 50 bags of rubbish. Truly a fantastic effort. The next one will be in May.

On 19th May we had another well attended community event when we planted almost 900 whips and saplings in Stanley Hall Park. We were joined by 1st Handforth cubs who helped as part of their community impact badge. The saplings will grow to provide a hedge between Tatton Rd and the park hopefully preventing vehicles from driving over the park.

We held the 3rd community skip day on Spath Lane Estate on 21st March. This was one of 2 which will be sponsored by Onward, and it was very well used as usual. The next one will be 25th April on Knowle Park.

On Saturday 26th March I held a surgery at the library. Thank you to Gareth for coming along in case anyone had any police related queries. 2 members of public attended to follow up previous queries and 2 came along just to say hello and to thank us for the work we do around the village. Most people know they can contact me anytime by phone, email or on social media so I wasn't really expecting hordes of people to attend. In the evening I was privileged to attend the 20th birthday party of the Time Out Group at Wilmslow Rugby Club. A wonderful achievement for a wonderful group.

Last Tuesday I briefly attended the Friends of Handforth Station annual meeting and spoke with a representative of Network Rail about the ideas I outlined in my last report.

Unfortunately, because the line is a main line we are unable to jet wash the shelters because of the risk of arcing and living rooves would be too heavy for the existing shelters but would be something they'd consider for the replacement shelters. The footbridge can only be repainted and cleaned up manually as Network Rail prohibit any electrical tools being used so close to the trainlines. She is getting back to me regarding Network Rail volunteers who will work alongside our own volunteers to smarten the bridge up. I believe the streetlight on the main road at the top of the Northern platform has now had the illumination increased providing a safer exit for people using the station.

We are in the process of setting a date for the 1st CPR training event, which will hopefully take place in the middle of May. Details will be posted in the notice boards and on social media.

On Friday last week I and a number of Town Councillors attended a community Easter event held here at the Youth Centre organised by Onward Housing. It was very well attended, and

everyone had lots of fun. Onward will be using the youth centre for most of the groups who used to meet in Wilmslow View which has now been deemed unviable.

In the evening of 8th March, we held a celebration for the volunteers of the 'neighbours helping neighbours' scheme which ran throughout the lockdowns and provided a lifeline to many elderly and vulnerable residents. It was a lovely evening although the rubbish weather limited the numbers somewhat. Thanks to Chris and Debbie Shenton for providing the beautiful plants which adorned the Railway pub, Peter Herds for the excellent buffet, Martin Crossdale for his expert DJ skills and Al and Jo for allowing us to hold the party in the Railway.

I have been asked to help promote Cheshire Easts fostering service and we will be holding an event in the Paddock on 11th May from 10-3 for anyone who may be interested in getting involved in fostering.

Following the completion of the electrical installations across the bridge at the station and down Station Rd onto Dean Rd and Handforth Rd I asked that the 'SLOW' road markings be repainted as soon as possible. I have offered to use my ward councillor budget to enable this to be completed sooner rather than later.

This coming weekend sees the 2nd Handforth Scarecrow Festival which I believe is being judged this year by PCSO Harding. Scarecrows need to be displayed by Friday morning so not too late to get involved. Congratulations to everyone involved for making this happen.

On 27th April there will be a special meeting of full council at Cheshire East where the recommendations of the audit and governance committee will be voted on by Cheshire East members. Councillor John Smith will speak about this more in a later agenda item.

I am conscious that many of the community events are geared to the children in our community and so I was happy to be asked to help promote the Bingo Club which will restart on Tuesday 26th April from 2 until 4 at the Youth Centre & also to promote the over 60's bowling club behind the Waggon and Horses pub. All abilities are welcome.

22/10/8 MOTION: To sign section 1 - the annual governance statement 2021/22 of the year end 31st March 2022 Annual return.

Cllr Sullivan proposed, seconded by Cllr Milward to sign section 1 - the annual governance statement 2021/22 of the year end 31st March 2022 Annual return.

Resolved: Unanimously.

22/10/9 MOTION: To sign section 2 – the accounting statements 2021/22 of the year end 31st March 2022 Annual return.

Cllr Julie Smith proposed, seconded by Cllr Moore to sign section 2 – the accounting statements 2021/22 of the year end 31st March 2022 Annual return.

Resolved: unanimously.

22/10/10 To receive a report from the Chairman regarding the recent CE Community Governance Review.
Cllr John Smith noted that he was taking comments directly from the Appendix of the CE Community Governance Review document submitted to the CE CGR sub-committee meeting held on 04th April 2022:

The following was noted:

There were 1,128 responses from Handforth: 510 via the consultation survey, 617 via a CGR survey leaflet produced by Handforth. Town Council and one by email. Of the 510 direct responses to the Borough Councils' consultation survey, 437 (86 per cent) disagreed overall with the Draft Recommendations, as did 591 (96 per cent) of those who completed the Town Council's leaflet; the email also expressed disagreement.

The Town Council is performing very well and is well regarded locally - in contrast to its image a year or so before - with local councillors working hard and being accessible; the right for Handforth to manage the impact of its major housing and retail developments on its community and the funding arising from this (e.g. Community Infrastructure Levy monies); and the lack of any financial benefit (cost savings) from the reduction in Handforth seats, as councillors are unpaid volunteers.

A small number of those supporting a merger listed complaints relating to the conduct of Council business and resources, but, as implied above, the vast majority of comments on the Council's performance were positive. Handforth Town Council opposed the Draft Recommendations merger proposal, referring to Handforth's distinct identity and its independence from Wilmslow following a 2009 local petition. This submission also presented a range of evidence to highlight Handforth Town Council's viability and effectiveness: statistics on major recent and forthcoming housing developments, which demonstrate both its population growth and the difference between its challenges and those of Wilmslow and Chorley; activities, service and achievements, ranging from the organisation of events like Christmas markets to CCTV provision to CPR training to part-funding various local community groups; and the long-term track record in securing a high number of nominations at election times and getting casual vacancies filled without difficulty. In addition, it highlighted some other problems that a merger would present: a greatly increased workload for the (remaining) clerk; a more distant, less accessible parish council office for Handforth residents (if meetings moved to Wilmslow); a sharp reduction in representation (four seats instead of the current seven) and loss of influence over the use of income from the Community Infrastructure Levy (another achievement) on the Garden Village/ Handforth Dean developments.

From borough ward Members making submissions on Wilmslow and Handforth, views on the merger proposal were more mixed. Two local borough ward Members supported it: one of them felt it was welcome and timely but did not comment further. A former resident and borough ward Member took the view that the merger would strengthen the local area's

voice and would result in more efficient use of public funds. However, there were three serving borough ward Members who opposed the merger: two stressed Handforth's distinct community identity and independence; the other (making a submission on Wilmslow) emphasised the separate identities of Wilmslow and Chorley - a view expressed by residents who had been in contact with this Member - and felt that Chorley's interests would be overridden by its larger neighbours.

Extensive evidence provided by Handforth residents of their distinct identity and need for separate representation, with the Garden Village and other large developments also presenting Handforth with very different challenges and priorities to those of Wilmslow and Chorley. Wilmslow Town Council itself cites a separate identity and the result of the 2011 referendum (supporting separate councils for Wilmslow and Handforth). The submissions from Chorley Parish Council and Wilmslow Town Council and a large majority of their residents (in Chorley's case, 100 per cent of the residents who responded) demonstrate that they too feel they have a separate identity to Handforth (and to each other).

The submissions from Handforth Town and its residents highlight the town's size and substantial ongoing population growth. The responses also indicate the vast majority of Handforth residents are satisfied with the work undertaken by their councillors and the services provided, with many positive comments (although a small number hold a different view). On this basis, it is clear that viability is not an issue for Handforth.

The consultation submissions from Handforth Town Council and its residents are not only large in volume (1,128), but overwhelmingly oppose the Draft Recommendations proposal of a merger with Chorley and Wilmslow. Furthermore, the submissions from Handforth offer extensive and persuasive evidence of their parish's distinct identity and challenges, its viability, the effectiveness and high activity level of the current Town Council and the adverse impact on representation that the merger would bring.

The submissions from Wilmslow Town Council and Chorley Parish Council also object to the merger, as do a large majority of the responses from their residents; again, the evidence submitted from these parishes is extensive and persuasive.

Therefore, the Borough Council recommends that Chorley, Handforth and Wilmslow remain as three separate councils.

As for the Draft Recommendations proposed change to the Handforth/ Styal boundary, this is supported by all the Handforth submissions that commented on this matter at the pre-consultation stage (five) and consultation stage (15), including the Town Council and Handforth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The arguments put forward for this change - relating to road access and service use - are persuasive.

Cllr Smith summarised that between the online survey and the Town Council survey there was a 91% rate of disagreement with the initial CE recommendations. Out of all the responses received across the borough, 24% came from Handforth and this high degree of both response rate and in favour of remaining independent from Wilmslow and Chorley went to show just how out of touch the authors of the Honford Star clearly were. Cllr Smith went on to thank all residents who responded and noted that it was a "team Handforth" effort. Cllr Julie Smith also thanked the CE committee members for listening to the residents' views in coming to these final recommendations.

22/10/11 To receive a report from the Chairman regarding the publication of the recent Barristers report and code of conduct investigations into historical councillor conduct breaches at HPC.

Cllr John Smith reported the following:

If I refer to “The 3 Cllrs”, that is Burkhill Tolver and Brewerton.

Around July 2020 the 3 Cllrs, suspended the Parish Clerk, Ashley for doing his job legally, but not to their liking and with the eventual aim of dismissal. This can be clearly seen within the report. They attempted this first by suspending him from his job with no reference to the Councillor Code of Conduct, but also with no consideration of Employment Law.

The accusations in the report made by the 3 Cllr’s regarding Sue Moore, Cynthia Samson and me breaching the Code of Conduct, were found by the investigation to be completely without merit.

The allegations we 3 made regarding the 3 Cllr’s, were found to be proven in 19 instances.

Although an earlier resolution to the investigation into our 3 ex Cllr’s would have been preferable, I congratulate CEC Legal Officers for sticking with the investigation despite the many blocks thrown up by the 3 Cllr’s being investigated. These delaying tactics have been identified by the CEC Monitoring Officer as a significant contributory reason for the external legal costs to CEC being £85000. Obviously, a bill for CE Council Taxpayers.

I am also grateful to the Barrister who listened to our statements, conducted the investigation, and produced the report despite also having to contend with the tactics mentioned above. These are also clearly identifiable within the report.

Cllrs Sue Moore, Cynthia Samson, and myself reinstated Ashley.

Ashley’s complaint against A. Brewerton was found to be proven relating to Leadership, Respect for others and Bullying. Ashley’s actions and the fact that CEC held an election underlines the fact that a vacancy did exist as Ashley reported. It’s worth noting that the Cllr who self-disqualified did not make any representations to CE regarding their position. Despite the email from B Tolver referring to – and this is not verbatim -Drafting a letter of complaint about the Clerk and getting Aled to ask the Cllr to sign it.

I will now refer to some interesting points in the report, particularly in the investigation of A. Brewerton.

9.1 A draft version of this report was provided to both the Complainant and Subject Member for comment prior to being finalised.

9.2 No comment was received from the Complainant, save for one editorial amendment to a name incorrectly referenced.

9.3 Shortly after service of the reports upon the parties, the Investigator received a voicemail message on his mobile telephone from at 19:15 on 12 May 2021. The message stated:

‘Mr. Robinson, this is speaking. We’ve had conversations before, right? We made agreements if you remember, but perhaps you have a short memory. You will phone me in the next

half hour on this number. I repeat, you will phone me in the next half hour. If you do not, I shall see the police and all other people involved. Thank you.'

9.4 Two minutes later, at 19:17, the Investigator received a voicemail message on his mobile telephone

from Aled Brewerton. The message stated:

'Good evening Mr. Robinson, it's Mr. Brewerton. I've read your reports and I don't agree with them. I'll

be altering your reports to correct your errors. Also, I've forwarded them to my solicitor I'm now

commencing legal proceedings against all parties involved in this due to the erroneous, prejudiced and

discriminatory fashion in which this investigation has been undertaken. This has ignored clear, clear

evidence that backs myself and my two colleagues. This is not going to stand. Nothing will be published. I ain't going to discuss it anymore. My solicitor will be in touch. Goodbye.'

9.5 At 19:49, the Investigator received a further voicemail message from, using the number that Aled Brewerton had used. The message stated:

'This is, is it a day off? I did ask you to give me a phone call in the next half hour, [inaudible] hope you

do. Remember we had a long conversation, somehow says that this [inaudible] is not being understood

by you. I expect you to phone me, quick.'

9.6 The Investigator did not return any of the calls. It is worthy of note that the Investigator has never held a conversation of any sort with, despite his suggestions in the voicemail messages to the contrary. The only contact between the Investigator and was, as referenced in the report, a request by email from the Investigator to, asking him to cease intercepting confidential emails to and further to cease his attempts to involve himself in a confidential standards investigation. It is our view that the tone and content of these voicemails to the Investigator was entirely inappropriate, recordings of which can be made available upon request.

22/10/12 MOTION: During my short campaign, I spoke to as many residents as possible in order to listen to their concerns. There were many issues that were brought to my attention, however, one of major concerns raised by many of the women was how afraid they feel walking home from Handforth Train Station late at night due to lack of streetlights. I, myself as a women have previously walked home from Handforth Train Station, and I agree that it is a scary walk late at night. Therefore, I would like to ask the council to invest in street lighting on Church Road opposite the train station and the railway bridge and part of the Station Road and Dean Road. (Cllr Nisa).

Under HTC SO 1(c) A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.

22/10/13 MOTION: To review and agree any received Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Award applications.

- Handforth Scouts - £500.00
Cllr Samson proposed, seconded by Cllr Milward.

Resolved: Unanimously.

- Mobility Access Group - £500.00
Cllr Sullivan proposed, seconded by Cllr Milward.

Resolved: Unanimously.

- Handforth Grange School - £500.00
Cllr Moore proposed, seconded by Cllr Sullivan.

Resolved: Unanimously.

- Residents of Hurlbote Close - £500.00
Cllr Samson proposed, seconded by Cllr Julie Smith.

Resolved: Unanimously.

- Residents of Richmond Avenue - £500.00
Cllr Julie Smith proposed, seconded by Cllr Milward.

Resolved: Unanimously.

22/10/14 MOTION: To agree an extension to the Christmas Lighting scheme through the current contractor (LITE) enabling the Town Council to fully decorate the centre of the village with hanging Icicle lights. The first-year costs for this would be an additional £4,559.00 for securing new power supplies. Subsequent years cost would be an additional £3,599.00 to the existing scheme.

Cllr Samson proposed, seconded by Cllr Sullivan to agree an extension to the Christmas Lighting scheme through the current contractor (LITE) enabling the Town Council to fully decorate the centre of the village with hanging Icicle lights. The first-year costs for this would be an additional £4,559.00 for securing new power supplies. Subsequent years cost would be an additional £3,599.00 to the existing scheme.

Resolved: Unanimously.

22/10/15(a) MOTION: To install a new “Slow Down” sign on Station Road near to the ramp. (Cllr Nisa).

Under HTC SO 1(c) A motion on the agenda that is not moved by its proposer may be treated by the chairman of the meeting as withdrawn.

22/10/15(b) MOTION: To receive recommendation from the HTC Finance Committee regarding a grant application received from the Friends of Handforth Station towards the costs of producing a 3D printed bas-relief of the Birmingham – Manchester railway company coat of arms and aluminium header boards celebrating the 180-year anniversary of the train line being open. Grant requested £1,000.00.

Noted that councillors had a large number of questions regarding the application to put to the applicant which will not be recorded verbatim, however, can be viewed on the HTC YouTube channel.

Cllr Moore proposed, seconded by Cllr Samson to agree £500.00 as partial funding to the application mainly to provide posters and associated artwork for the 180-year anniversary of the train line being open.

Motion carried: Five in favour with one against.

22/10/16 MOTION: To agree the purchase of up to £400.00 worth of Jubilee bunting to decorate Handforth village in advance of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee.

Cllr Julie Smith proposed, seconded by Cllr Milward.

Resolved: Unanimously.

22/10/17 MOTION: To agree the purchase of a large shipping container to increase available storage at the Handforth Youth Centre at a cost of up to £1,200.00.

Cllr Samson proposed, seconded by Cllr Sullivan to defer this item to a future meeting, as the costs associated with the purchase of a shipping container had dramatically increased.

Resolved: Unanimously.

22/10/18 MOTION: To agree to support the Breakfast Club at the Grange School for HTC to support for disadvantaged children, the staffing will be paid for by the school however they are looking at funding for the food which will be approx. £15 per week in term time only and the cost would be 39*£15 = £585 per year.

Cllr Sullivan proposed, seconded by Cllr Moore to agree this support up to a maximum of £585.00 for the full year.

Resolved: Unanimously.

22/10/19 To receive notices and correspondence.

Noted that the date of the Annual Parish meeting was set as 03rd May at 6:30pm to be held at the Youth Centre.

Cllr Moore noted that she had been chasing ANSA regarding clearing of fallen trees in the South Hall Woods and the continuation of the footpath improvement scheme. She also noted that the Chief Planning enforcement officer had been in touch regarding the damage caused to the trees in the South Wood by contractors working at the site West of Coppice Way.

22/10/20 To agree the date of the next HTC meeting to be held on 10th May 2022.

It was agreed without a vote that the next HTC meeting (and AGM) will be held on 10th May 2022 at 7:00pm.

PART B

Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960. Exclusion of press and public due to the business of the meeting being of a confidential and personal nature.

22/10/21 MOTION: To agree the additional remuneration of the clerk for the backdated 21/22 salary increase awarded by NALC following final agreement by NALC and the Union in March 2022 of 1.75%. And to agree the 1.75% increase for 22/23.

Cllr Julie Smith proposed, seconded by Cllr Milward to agree this, as it had already been agreed by NALC.

Resolved: Unanimously.

The meeting closed at 9:02pm.

Chair..... Date.....