

# Bunbury Parish Council

## MINUTES

of the meeting held at The Jubilee Pavilion, Bunbury, on

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7.20pm**

**Present:** Councillors: Pamela Brookfield (Chair), Peter Gorman, Nick Parker, Matthew Randall, Richard Slater, Phil Spencer.

**In attendance:** Maximilian Clay - Clerk to the Council and 14 members of the public.

### **Feb25-1. Apologies**

Councillors Mike Thomas and Andrew Thomson tendered apologies and the Council resolved to approve the reason.

### **Feb25-2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensation Considerations**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **Feb25-3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Council resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were a true record and that the Chair be authorised to sign them as such.

### **Feb25-4. Unitary Authority Councillor Report**

Borough Cllr Posnett reported that:

- ◆ Cheshire East Council (CEC) had joined with Cheshire West & Chester and Warrington Councils in seeking to join the priority list for developing a Mayoral Strategic Authority.
- ◆ CEC had sought permission to increase Council Tax above the ceiling of 5% but permission had been refused.
- ◆ CEC is developing its SEND provision - a shortage was embedded when Cheshire was split in two because most of the SEND provision that had existed happened to be sited in Cheshire West.
- ◆ The A49 has been patched in a number of places, these temporary repairs had been undertaken pending wholesale resurfacing later in the year.

B Cllr Posnett was asked whether there was any plan to address the housing land supply shortage, arising from the sudden increase in the figure set by Government, more quickly than the Local Plan itself; B Cllr Posnett replied that there was not and that the 5% figure would be increased to 6% from 2025/26. A further question was asked about the impact of the shortage on the weight given to the existing Local and Neighbourhood planning policies and B Cllr Posnett responded that many policies would still hold good but that there would be an impact.

### **Feb25-5. Public Forum**

Three members of the public spoke against the planning application to be considered under item 7.a.i, below. The grounds for objection included pressure on infrastructure, especially traffic and on narrow roads, an excess of housing over the 2030 target already in place and errors of fact in the planning application statement.

### **Feb25-6. Members' Reports & Items for Future Agendas**

- ◆ Cllr Parker reported that the Jubilee Playing Fields Committee had commissioned repairs to the gate posts at the Pavilion entrance to the field and this had now been completed. Replacement interior lighting is also under consideration.
- ◆ Cllr Spencer reported that hedges along Bunbury Lane were still overgrown and impeding use of the footway, causing danger to pedestrians, who were forced into the narrow road.
- ◆ Cllr Slater reported that he was still investigating the heater in the Pavilion defibrillator and that the A49 was being dug up again, following recent repairs. He had spoken to the contractors to underline the importance of ensuring that the infill was level to ensure that the problem with vibrations from lorries does not recur.

- ◆ Cllr Brookfield reported that she and Cllr Spencer had attended a recent Police Cluster meeting. Amongst the reports received were three instances of dangerous driving within the village and an attempted burglary. The PCSO welcomes photos of illegal or dangerous parking, including the registration number, and follows such instances up by visiting the driver. An additional officer had been appointed to the area and information will be posted.

## **Feb25-7. Planning**

### **a. Responses to Application Consultations:**

#### **i. 25/0366/PiP - Land off Grange Close, Bunbury.**

*Permission in principle for the erection of up to 9 dwellings.*

It was noted that the application was for a decision in principle which means that further detail of layout, number of houses and design would be considered separately at a later date.

In discussion it was felt that the proposal would breach PG6 of the Cheshire Local Plan on grounds of building in open countryside (which is how the proposed plot is designated). It was also agreed that the proposal would also breach H2 of the Neighbourhood Plan relating to Co-location (that stipulates that new housing clusters should not exceed 15 units and that clusters should be distinct from each other in order to avoid an accretion of blocks of new-build in any one part of the village, thereby maintaining the varied character of the village). It was noted that the village has delivered a total supply of 135 new dwellings in the current planning period, of which 45 are affordable homes - this represents 170% of the target for new houses set out in the Plan and 120% of the number that the applicant's own agent suggests would be a reasonable figure (112). Further, it was felt that infrastructure would be stretched and that additional traffic generated onto an unlit, narrow lane with no footpaths would add significantly to an already dangerous situation.

The Council resolved to object to the proposal for the reasons set out above.

#### **ii. Licencing - The Sheds, The Old Post Office, Bunbury**

*Premises Licence to sell alcohol from 8am to 10pm every day.*

Following discussion, the Council resolved to offer no objection.

### **b. Updates on Application Consultations considered previously or other planning matters:**

There were no reports.

## **Feb25-8. Resilience Planning**

The purpose of the plan is to help the Council and residents be prepared for emergencies such as power cuts, blocked roads or floods. The plan would not be intended to address major incidents as these are managed by the emergency services and/or the unitary authority. The Clerk had circulated some initial ideas and in particular an A5 sized list of useful contacts and information which could be circulated to all households. After discussion it was agreed that a light-touch approach was desirable and that this could include the provision of a small amount of equipment such as freestanding stoves or heaters, generators, flasks and a plan for a central warm hub that could operate independently of the main grid. A number of issues, including safety, liability and practical arrangements were discussed and it was agreed to set up a working group to develop further ideas, liaise with other potential hubs, such as the village hall, church and scout hut, and present proposals to a future meeting. The members of the group would be Cllrs Brookfield, Spencer and Gorman and the Clerk.

## **Feb25-9. Removal of Bins from the Playing Field and Play Area Trial**

The trial, which had been a response to the problem of large quantities of litter around the play area and on the playing field, had been initiated twelve months ago and the Council had resolved to review it after a year. It was agreed that the experiment had been a great success with the amount of littering having reduced radically, resulting in a much cleaner play area and field. The Council resolved to make the experiment permanent and noted that since the appointment of the new lengthsman contractor other bins in the village had been serviced much more effectively.

## **Feb25-10. Bicycle Parking**

The Village Day Committee had sought permission for the installation of some bicycle parking

loops at the playing fields. The idea was supported in principle subject to agreement of the location. The southern end of the Pavilion was felt likely to be the most suitable position and it was noted that the loops should be re-locatable, given that the pavilion would probably be re-developed in the medium term.

### **Feb25-11. Neighbourhood Planning**

A report had been circulated in advance of the meeting, outlining events on planning policy which were being revised very quickly, with deadlines being changed very rapidly to meet the challenging Government housing targets. In relation to neighbourhood planning, the situation had become very muddled with Planning Authorities being asked to up-date their Local Plans within 12 weeks, when this normally takes at least 3 years. In addition, a major Local Government reorganisation was also in course. As a result, planning at a neighbourhood level had become extremely difficult with little encouragement or guidance to enable parish councils to proceed. In view of this it was proposed to further suspend review work on the Bunbury Neighbourhood Plan until such time as the policy landscape became clearer and the Council resolved to adopt this proposal.

### **Feb25-12. Draft Meeting Dates for the 2025/26 Session**

The following dates were agreed in principle, subject to change and to ratification at the Annual meeting:: 11th June 2025; 9<sup>th</sup> July 2025; 17th September 2025; 8th October 2025; 12th November 2025; 10th December 2025; 14th January 2026; 11th February 2026; 11th March 2026; 22nd April 2026; 20th May 2026 (Annual Meeting).

### **Feb25-13. Police Liaison**

The Council resolved to appoint Cllr Spencer as joint Police Liaison Officer (alongside Cllr Brookfield).

### **Feb25-14. Finance & Governance**

**a. Receipts and Payments** – The Council received the schedule of receipts and payments and resolved to approve the payments.

### **Feb25-15. Items for the Newsletter and/or WhatsApp Bulletin**

It was resolved to report information about items 7.a.i, 9, and 11 as well as an updates on allotments.

**The meeting closed at 9.20pm**

*Signed as a true record by authority of the Council*

*Chair*

*Date*      **12<sup>th</sup> March 2025**