

Chapel-en-le-Frith Parish

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Town Hall, Chapel-en-le-Frith on Thursday 16 May 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Parish Cllrs T Dales (in the Chair), J Adshead, M Chantler, J Perkins, C Williams, S Young
County Cllr R George
Borough Cllrs A Benham, S DePee
5 members of the public
Locum Parish Clerk P Leppard

Apologies: Parish Cllrs A Beswick, M Drabble
Borough Cllr K Sizeland

The Chair welcomed all those present.

1. Minutes of the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19 April 2023 were approved.

2. Report of the Chair of the Parish Council

The Chair gave an oral report, including the following:

- Thanks to Cllr Mike Chantler, who chaired the Parish Council from 2021 to 2024 and whose leadership in some difficult times had been invaluable.
- Noting improvements in the past year in the Memorial Park (with more to come in the coming months), helped by 'Section 106' funding which came from Seddon Homes.
- A desire in the coming year to, in particular, (a) improve the Council's communications, (b) maximise grants income to the Council wherever available, (c) improve facilities for young people and to support the elderly, less able and vulnerable – while having regard to the Council's difficult budgetary position.
- Noting that, of the 2 court cases re the Memorial Park in which the Council has been involved, one has now been fully concluded but the other is still awaiting a court hearing, likely to be in April 2025.

The Chair then asked Cllr Chantler, in view of his having been the Parish Council's Chair until last week, for his observations. Cllr Chantler said that:

- Much of the Council's focus in the past year had had to be on the Memorial Park litigation in which it found itself involved.
- He would like to thank Cllrs Dales, Perkins and Young for their particular support and wisdom during the year, noting that Cllr Young has now been a parish councillor for over 25 years.
- Improvements over the past year had included creating a more effective Committee structure and the reintroduction of a regular Parish Council newsletter to residents.

3. Reports from County Councillors

County Cllr George spoke about the following issues:

- The Highways surface-dressing programme (and also pothole repairs)
- Development of proposals for a new public footpath locally
- Community Speedwatch
- Her regular surgeries for residents
- Supporting the Little Cherubs charity
- Proposed closures of DCC residential care-homes and day-centres
- Cuts to DCC's voluntary-sector grants
- Proposals expected in July for changes to branch-library services
- The need to soon start putting in place a process for the required review of Chapel's Neighbourhood Plan

4. Reports from Borough Councillors

Borough Cllr DePee spoke about the following issues:

- The "Save the MUGA" petition in early 2024
- Section 106 funding of amenity improvements

- A possible timescale for the issue of the ‘falling-down house’ on Chapel High St to be resolved, plus the need for a focus on site tidiness there in the meantime
- Recent discussion with local Police as to a desire for more visible presence
- Her regular surgeries for residents
- Possible cleaning of Chapel’s war memorial
- Forthcoming D-Day 80 commemorations

In response to Cllr DePee:

Cllr Young pointed out that, although Eccles Fold day-care centre may be closed by DCC, the building belongs to HPBC – hence there would then be a question as to what its future use might be.

Cllr Adshead expressed concern about the level of service HPBC is now able to provide, given current financial constraints.

Borough Cllr Benham introduced herself, and explained that she hoped to be more visible in Chapel Parish in the coming year.

5. Reports from local organisations

Sally DePee, in her capacity as founder of the Little Cherubs charity, gave an update on its current activities.

6. Any matters raised by local electors of the Parish

A questioner asked for an overview of the arguments the Council will be deploying in defending the court case which is still outstanding. However, it was explained that this currently has to be confidential between the Council and its lawyers.

Another questioner asked about plans for expenditure on Leys allotments. It was explained that all discretionary expenditure is being heavily constrained until there is greater clarity as to any financial consequences from the outstanding court case.

Another questioner asked whether the Council has considered retaining its current Precept level once the litigation is finished, as a means of funding more services for residents. It was explained that the intention currently is that the Precept should drop back towards the level it was at before 1 April 2024 once the consequences of that litigation are in the past.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.05pm.