UTKINTON AND COTEBROOK PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Rose Farm Coffee House on Monday 14th April 2025

MINUTES

14.04.01	**Public Open Forum** **There were three members of the public present and each spoke:** • There was a query regarding the Parish Council's plans to renovate and maintain the area around the Northgate Steps and why there was a lack of contact with the landowner, who has now cleared the path. The resident expressed his frustration at the proposal that the parish Council had planned to spend a large amount of money on unnecessary works. *The Chairman responded that the Parish Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council had received a large number of complaints from residents over the last 4 or 5 years and were keen to find a resolution to the issues presented.* • The second resident endorsed the views of the first resident and asked what plans were in place for the ongoing maintenance of the area? *The Chairman responded that there was a maintenance contract agreed and that dates for the work to take place would be shared as soon as the contractor confirmed them. Cllr Stewart stated that there had been lengthy negotiations with CWaC as to the future ownership and maintenance of the area so that this type of situation did not arise in future.* • There was then a query that the 20mph speed limit in place on John Street was implemented because there was a primary school there. Will this speed limit remain with the closure of the school? *It can be assumed that until the long term future of the school building is confirmed, the speed limit will remain.*
14.04.02	**Present:** Cllr Marian Atkinson, Cllr Matthew Grant (Vice Chair) Cllr Andrew Needham, Cllr Sami Kasteniemi, Cllr Stephen Moore, Cllr Graham Stewart, Cllr Caroline Stubbs **Apologies accepted:** Cllr Graham Spencer (Chair), Cllr Ed Stubbs **In attendance:** Kath Lloyd, Clerk and CWaC Ward Cllr Charles Hardy *In the Chairman's absence, Cllr Matthew Grant took the Chair.
14.04.03	**Declarations of Interest:** There were no declarations of new interest.
14.04.04	**Minutes of Parish Council meeting of 10th March 2025:** Cllr Stewart asked that more details be added to 10.03.15 to ensure that the hedge cutting agreed on John Street is completed satisfactorily: *The Telegraph pole and its support wires at the north end of the village hall.* *The gate to the field by the hall.* *The road junction warning sign.* *The area behind The Shrine War Memorial .* *The Road Sign Post Indicator sign.* *The area around The Bus Shelter.* *The area around the litter bin.* *The Traffic Flashing Speed Indicator Sign.* The minutes were approved as accurate and signed by Cllr Grant.
14.04.05	**Cheshire West & Chester Council** Matters: Cllr Hardy reported that the Members Budget is now available for the coming year and that the Parish Council should be considering suitable projects. Cllr Stubbs asked if another Highways meeting was planned? Cllr Hardy is trying to confirm a date and will be in touch as soon as he is successful. The MP will be invited to the meeting when the date is confirmed.

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Cllr Stwart asked for attention to be given to Wood Lane – Fishers Green which he feels is in an atrocious condition and Cllr Atkinson reminded Cllr Hardy that she had reported the dangerous condition of Oulton Mill Lane many times with no response from CWaC.
Cllr Hardy will continue to work with CWaC Highways to achieve responses.

14.04.06 **Planning Applications:**
14.04.06.1 Councillors noted the following applications received and agreed that no comment was necessary.

Ref No	Site Address	Proposal	Response
25/00666/S73	Ashwood Ridge Hill Utkinton Tarporley CW6 0JG	Agricultural worker's dwelling - Application to remove condition 2 and 5 (agricultural occupancy) of planning permissions 4/20363 (O) and 4/26015/D respectively.	No comment

14.04.06.2 There were no decisions received

14.04.07 **Finance Matters**
14.04.07.1 Councillors approved the accounts for payment and note accounts paid since 10th March 2025
14.04.07.2 Councillors noted the bank balance and cash book at the end of March 2025
14.04.07.3 Councillors approved the Annual Governance Statements unanimously, proposed by Cllr Atkinson and seconded by Cllr Stewart and signed by Cllr Grant

14.04.08 **Parish times:** Cllr Grant reported that the latest edition of the Parish Times would be ready this week and were Councillors all happy to deliver to their usual routes? All confirmed that they were prepared to hand deliver copies.

14.04.09 **Jubilee Funding Group:** Cllr Atkinson gave a brief overview of two grants which had been considered by the Funding Group via emails, both of which the Group recommend for approval by the Parish Council:

1. An application from the Community Events Group for £250 for red hi viz vests which would give a clear identity to volunteering team members at events. Proposed by Cllr Stewart, seconded by Cllr Atkinson, approved.
2. An application from the Utkinton Wi for £207 towards promotional activities in a bid to increase their membership. Proposed by Cllr Stewart, seconded by Cllr Kasteniemi, approved.

Cllr Stewart observed that he still felt that grant applications were scrutinised too harshly and that it should be easier for local groups to access funding.

14.04.10 **Big Community Festival:** Cllr Grant gave a brief overview of the progress that has been made on the organisation of the Big Community Festival due to take place on Saturday 14th June at Tirley Garth. All the bands and music are booked, there are 30+ stalls and 15 raffle prizes. Volunteers for a range of tasks on the day are needed and everyone was asked to put the date in their diary.
Each Community Group has been offered the opportunity of a stall for fundraising and for raising their own profile and Parish Councillors are needed to help with that too.

A resident asked if the Community Events Group should include the Parish Council or if the Parish Council should be an "umbrella" organisation and sit outside the group. The Parish Council felt that this should be the decision of the Community Events Team and was not appropriate to discuss at this meeting.

14.04.11 **United Utilities:** Councillors noted the response from United Utilities to the Clerk's recent email regarding the large green water tank. The response gives a promised for an update by the end of April.

14.04.12 **Wildlife Project:** Cllr Grant reported that there would be a piece in the Parish Times on the bird boxes, photograph competition and wild flower planting.

14.04.13 **Work Programme:** Councillors received the following updates on the schedules work programme and agreed on actions where appropriate –

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	14.04.13.1 Unsafe stiles on Sandstone Trail - CWaC have scheduled the replacement of the stiles with two kissing gates and the resident who raised the original issues has been informed. **14.04.13.2** Salt/ grit bins – no progress, Clerk will chase. **14.04.13.3** Flag stones Cotebrook Notice Board – the flag stones have been ordered and will be installed as soon as possible. **14.04.13.4** Northgate Steps update – following earlier debate, it was agreed that the situation will be reviewed when the contractor returns from his holiday. It was also noted that the Building Inspector and contractors at the new development in Northgate are aware that the footpath needs to be maintained as wide enough to pass that the sandstone wall needs to be reinstated.
14.04.14	**Councillors' updates and items for future agenda**: Cllr Needham observed that the land adjacent to Utkinton Village Hall has been used as a temporary car park for United Utilities and asked if the Parish Council could approach the landowner with a view to buying or renting the land from them? Councillors noted that this suggestion had already been followed up by the Utkinton Village Hall Committee and had been refused by the landowners.
14.04.15	**Future meetings:**

At Cotebrook Village Hall, Stable Lane, Cotebrook CW6 0JJ	**At Rose Farm Coffee House, John Street, Utkinton CW6 0LP**
Monday 12th May at 7pm Monday 14th July at 7pm Monday 13th October at 7pm Monday 8th December at 7pm	Monday 9th June at 7pm Monday 8th September at 7pm Monday 10th November at 7pm

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