Lea-by-Backford Parish Council

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish** **Council held on Monday 08th May 2017 at Mollington, Backford & District Village Hall**

**PRESENT**: Councillors Richard Jones (in the Chair), Fred Jones, Sue Pownall, Robin Leigh, John Littler, Rob Griffiths with Philip Pownall (Clerk)

**17.01 ELECTION OF CHAIR** Cllr Richard Jones was proposed by Cllr John Littler and seconded by Cllr Sue Pownall. There being no further nominations Cllr Richard Jones was duly elected Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2017-2018. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed and dated.

**17.02 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR** Cllr Robin Leigh was proposed by Cllr Fred Jones and seconded by Cllr Rob Griffiths. There being no further nominations, Cllr Robin Leigh was duly elected Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2017-2018. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed and dated.

**17.03 APOLOGIES** None

**17.04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** None

**17.05 OPEN FORUM** 1) District Councillor Brian Crowe attended the meeting to inform the Parish Council details of the forthcoming Boundaries Commission Review implemented by Cheshire West and Chester Council. It appears that the number of District Councillors is to be reduced from the current 75 to 69. The number of residents living in the various Wards dictates the number of Councillors in post. Parishes cannot be split up but can be moved to join other Wards to bring them into percentage tolerance levels. Three separate courses of action to be considered.

 1) Burton to join Mollington and Saughall

 2) Caughall, Backford, Chorlton and Lea by Backford to join Upton Ward

 3) No change to the make up of the current Ward – within tolerance levels

Cllr Crowe informed the meeting that a deadline of 5th June 2017 was the cut-off for representations to be sent to the Commission. A lively debate and discussion followed as to the response of the Parish Council to the above options. The Chairman expressed his opinion that he feared the Parish would become urbanised if joined to Upton Ward. Cllr Pownall suggested the effect of the Army Camp proposed closure, combined with the possibility of the land being used for housing development would increase the population of the Upton Ward considerably.

It was decided to postpone a decision until Backford Parish Council had met on the 9th May and discussed the proposals and a definitive conformation agreed as to the Ward boundary of Upton. The prevailing view of Lea by Backford Council was for the status quo to remain.

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**OPEN FORUM** 2) Mr Chris Jones attended the meeting to advise on the proposed implementation of Super Fast Broadband to the area. He confirmed that Virgin Media Contractors had completed the installation of the optic cable ducting through Lea by Backford and had now progressed into Mollingon Village. He suggested that cabinet junctions were to be sited in order to allow cable access to Demage Lane and Grove Road if sufficient interest was shown by residents. He was unable to furnish the meeting as to the situation regarding the contractor’s take- over of the Village Hall parking areas but confirmed that ongoing discussions were taking place to reinstate the surface.

**17.06 ANNUAL REPORT** The 47th Annual Report was received and approved

**17.07 MINUTES** Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Monday 13th March 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and duly signed.

**17.08 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS** The Clerk reminded members that the Parish Council was required to conduct a review of its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations regularly. The current copy of both documents was made available to all councillors and following discussion of the necessity to avoid a repeat of the difficulties encountered last year due to the inaccurate and misleading information provided by the previous Responsible Financial Officer it was decided to appoint a councillor whose role is to check that audits are in hand and within timescales. Cllr Rob Griffiths agreed to take on this important role on behalf of the Parish Council.

**17.09 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES** The following representatives were appointed:

1. Backford Charities Cllr Fred Jones
2. War Memorial Trust Cllr Sue Pownall
3. Rural Sounding Board Cllr Robin Leigh
4. Village Hall Post Vacant

**REPORTS BY REPRESENTATIVES**

1. Backford Charities – Cllr Fred Jones attended a recent meeting at Chorlton Hall and informed the meeting that a new recipient was now included taking the total beneficiaries to five.
2. War Memorial Trust – Cllr Sue Pownall confirmed that 1 application had been received and would be processed if the appropriate exams had been passed
3. Rural Sounding Board – Cllr Robin Leigh informed the meeting that the North West was the area least well-served by Bus Services. He also suggested that Rural Crime had increased dramatically – particularly

livestock and farm machinery theft. Also the meeting was informed that hand held speed cameras are available from Community Police on request

1. Village Hall - Cllr Rob Griffith informed the meeting that he did not wish to continue as the representative on the Village Hall Committee as he was unable to attend Thursday meetings. He informed the meeting that many hall users had cancelled their use of the hall following the difficulties of road access and parking due to the chaos caused by the Virgin Media contractors.

**17.10 FINANCE** **Cheques raised:**

 000653 P J Pownall Clerk Apr – May 156.80

 000654 J Reeves Ammenity Apr - May 150.00

 000655 Chalc Annual Sub 57.05

 000656 Moll & Back V. Hall Mar & May 32.00

 000657 Experior Systems Int. Audit 150.00

 000658 Zurich Ins Liability Ins 257.60

 000659 Moll & Back V. Hall July – Sep 36.00

 000660 Post Office 12 1st class 7.68

The annual financial statement, balances and year on year variances were presented to the meeting and approved. The internal audit and report were also presented and approved.

**17.11 CORRESPONDENCE** None

**17.12 MATTERS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS**

 Cllr Rob Griffiths advised the Council that 2 sections of the railway wire security fence were missing alongside the public footpath between Station Road and Demage Lane bridges. He had informed Railtrack workers who went to investigate.

 Cllr Sue Pownall reported that the set of steps leading to the public footpath at the Demage Lane bridge were damaged and unsafe. One side had collapsed.

**17.13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

 Monday July 10th 2017

**Signed Chairman: -----------------------------------------------------------------**

**Date: -------------------------------------------**