**Minutes, Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council 25 September 2023 at the Civic Hall.**

**Present:** Cllrs K Dawson (Chairman), B Beeley (Vice Chairman)

E Adamson K Barton

M Bingley M Birchall

H Bishop R Blackmore

L Dawson J Garner

A Marland K Phillips

M Powell D Wall

Welcome by the Chairman Cllr K Dawson and prayers led by the Rev Pat Gillan

**3467. To receive apologies for Absence:** S Al-Hamdani ,A Wrigley, G Sheldon, P Gaul, P Walsh

**3468. To receive Public Questions**

None received

**3469. Chairman’s Urgent Business**

None to discuss

**3470. Representatives from United Utilities to address concerns regarding treatment of Sewerage in Saddleworth**

3 representatives from United Utilities had been invited to the meeting to respond to the Motion sent by the Clerk 24th July regarding the discharge of raw sewerage into Saddleworth’s rivers and streams. They gave a brief presentation to Councillors on how the system works and the challenges they are facing.

Public Question:

A member of the public was invited to raise her concerns that sewage from building developers was draining into surface water drains, and request what United Utilities were doing to prevent this.

*A representative advised that although they are able to identify the source of the problem, they have no powers of enforcement to stop the pollution, but they will be speaking to the Environment Agency and Council about this issue.*

The representatives were then asked a series of questions (previously submitted by the Clerk) by the Environment Committee members:-

*Cllr Garner - Why were the figures so high for sewerage overflow into rivers in 2022 given that it was a relatively dry summer in Saddleworth with a much lower than average rainfall rate?*

There are 10 CSOs within the Saddleworth catchment and these have all had new monitors installed and commissioned between 2019 and 2021.

These monitors effectively tell us the level in the sewer and how that sewer reacts to rainfall. Each CSO has its own permit with a clause that specifies a permitted pass forward flow rate that must be met prior to discharge during storm conditions. These are most often physically engineered and immutable and different catchments have different challenges from factors such as urban creep, land drainage or groundwater infiltration that affect the levels of water going through the sewer.

Within the Saddleworth area we have recently established that the monitor at Delph New Road has had an error with its location since installation and was reporting spills that didn’t occur – this issue has now been rectified and this significantly affects the number of spills as this CSO accounted for roughly 80% of spills within the Saddleworth catchment.

With Delph New Road there are 2319 hours of spill data however taking Delph New Road away there is 450 hours of spill data throughout 2022 across 9 CSOs.

*Cllr Bishop - How do United Utilities know where all the outflows are?*

Assets are registered and mapped on an internal system, they have regulatory permits attached to them as well which prescribe our intervention plans / operation parameters. We are also installing monitors on every CSO which will be completed by the end of this year.

*Cllr Birchall - Why can’t we have meaningful live statistics monthly (like other companies provide) rather than annually?*

We are very aware of our environmental responsibilities and we have made a number of commitments aimed at reducing the frequency of storm overflow operation and improving river health more generally.

As part of our [Better Rivers Better North West](https://www.unitedutilities.com/globalassets/documents/corporate-documents/united-utilities-better-rivers-report-2023.pdf) commitments we are creating a dashboard that will provide real time data on all our CSO’s, this is due to be completed by the end of this year.

*Cllr Wall - When the BBC recently asked for data relating to dry spillage, why did United Utilities fail to provide the data, citing an investigation by the Environment Agency, when 3 other water companies did supply this information?*

There is currently a national investigation across the water sector by relevant regulatory authorities regarding discharges to the environment.

This is still a live investigation and therefore disclosing any information about the date, location and duration of storm overflow operations could adversely affect the course of the investigation.

*Cllr Bishop - What role are United Utilities playing in the new installation of drainage at Churchill Playing Fields?*

Environment Agency & Oldham Council are leading on the scheme. There has been UU presence in the area due to a separate network event which required our attention

*Cllr Garner - Is Saddleworth considered at a higher risk of discharge of pollution/sewerage/chemicals and where are we on your priority list?*

We are currently prioritising our huge programme of storm overflow interventions based on a number of factors including impact on highest spillers, bathing Water or areas in special environmental protection (SSSI). We have made a commitment to reduce the impact of our storm overflows by 60% by 2030.

*Cllr Bishop - What is the liaison between United Utilities and Local Councils in regard to new building works and sewerage provision?*

Everyone has a right to connect to our system and cannot refuse this under the Water Industry Act. Whilst we are not a statutory consultee, as part of the planning process we have a dedicated team that work closely with LAs and Developers to identify future development. Offering significant discounts to developers to encourage sustainable drainage to avoid rain fall being connected into our combined network.

1. That includes better ways of capturing and managing rainwater – such as Permeable paving, which can be used on driveways and roads to help water be absorbed more easily;
2. Soakaways and other infiltration devices, meaning that no surface water runoff leaves the site;
3. Swales, shallow grassed or vegetated channels used to collect and/or move water, and basins, areas of land where all flowing surface water converges to a single point such as a wetland;
4. Rainwater re-use, through the use of smart water butts; and,
5. Infiltration trenches and filter drains, which allow water to soak and filter through to a subsoil layer.

We have a brand new dedicated team to manage rainwater differently and will be working closely with stakeholders to reduce the amount of rain that enters into our system.

Together with the EA and GMCA we have developed the first Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP) to drive forward the environmental, development and infrastructure priorities across Greater Manchester.

*Cllr Phillips- Will your company be paying for the clean-up of discharge of sewerage and chemicals out of your profits rather than passing this cost onto customers?*

We are proposing a £3bn investment to reduce the number of times our CSOs operate to help improve the natural environment. To help us achieve this, and keep customer bills down we are asking shareholders to fund the programme so we can get on with the task in hand.

Like all previous investments, the cost will be repaid by customers in small amounts over the lifetime of the new infrastructure. This could be 50 years or more.

Questions were then invited from Councillors at the meeting:

Cllr Blackmore- Will United Utilities agree to help persuade the Government to introduce fines for mis-connections which result in sewage going into surface water drains?

*The representatives advised that the Environment Agency had the power to do this.*

Cllr Wall – pointed out, that although the forward planning sounded good, why had there been insufficient investment over the last 20 years and asked what actions we can take on Planning and building control? There was some discussion around this.

*A representative advised they would definitely support the River Ranger and will send these details to the Clerk to share with Councillors*.

**3471. Correspondence**

* **2 items regarding previous Motion on Rail Strategy for Saddleworth**

It was agreed to defer this item until Councillors had received the Government pending update on their plans for HS2.

**3472. To receive Declarations of Interest**

None declared

**3473. To approve and confirm as a correct record the Draft Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 24th July 2023**

The minutes were proposed, seconded and approved.

**3474. To approve and confirm as a correct record the Draft Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 7th August 2023**

The minutes were proposed, seconded and approved.

**3475. To note the Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee Meeting 27th July 2023**

The minutes were proposed, seconded and approved.

**3476. To note the Minutes of the Extraordinary Finance Committee Meeting 7th August 2023**

The minutes were proposed, seconded and approved.

**3477. To note the Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting 7th August 2023**

The minutes were proposed, seconded and approved.

**3478. To note the Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting 4th September 2023**

The minutes were proposed, seconded and approved.

**3479. To note the Minutes of the Traffic & Transport Committee Meeting 7th September 2023**

The minutes were proposed, seconded and approved.

**3480. To note the Minutes of the Environment Committee Meeting 11th September 2023**

The minutes were proposed, seconded and approved.

**3481. To note the Minutes of the Assets Management Committee Meeting 18th September 2023**

The minutes were proposed, seconded and approved with one abstention.

**3482. To note the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting 21st September 2023**

The Clerk advised as these had not yet been shared with the Finance Chairman for approval they would be presented at the next meeting.

**3483. Councillor Vacancy and By-Election**

The Clerk advised the estimated charges received from OMBC Elections Team for this By-Election were £5,500 and asked Councillors whether they wished for polling cards to be distributed and the £420 additional costs. After some discussion this agreed, proposed by Cllr Beeley, seconded Cllr Birchall, all in favour. Clerk to action.

**3484. Additional Armed Forces Partnership representative nomination**

Following the resignation of Cllr Knotts, an additional Parish Council representative is required along with Cllr Al-Hamdani. After some discussion it was agreed Cllr Birchall would be our second representative. Clerk to action.

**3485. 100th Anniversary Pots & Pans**

The100th Anniversary is 11th November 2023. Councillors were asked for ideas on how we could mark the event. Cllr Blackmore suggested a stone carving to commemorate. Cllr Marland suggested rededication by a dignitary; she will speak to OMBC for further information. It was agreed that Cllr Beeley and Cllr Marland would meet and discuss. If councillors have any further ideas they were asked to email the clerk who will forward to Cllr Beeley and Cllr Marland.

**3486. Accounts for Payment July 2023 Income £9,288.20 Expenditure £25,991.13**

Accounts were proposed, seconded and approved.

**3487. Accounts for Payment August 2023 Income £5,109.95 Expenditure £29,238.74**

Accounts were proposed, seconded and approved.

**Dates of the next meeting:- Monday 23rd October 2023 at 19.30hrs**