

Cranage Parish Council Business Plan

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1. Mission Statement

To promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Parish and to contribute to a sustainable and inclusive community.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 To assist in the creation of a socially inclusive and economically viable community embracing all residents irrespective of age, culture, income, race or religion and which seeks to develop their wellbeing and mutual co-operation.
- 2.2 To provide high quality, efficient, cost effective and sustainable services.
- 2.3 To promote and encourage the provision of a range of leisure, social, recreational facilities appropriate to the normal activities of a rural parish along with the support and maintenance of environmental and heritage assets.
- 2.4 To provide a channel for the views and expressions of the local community and to be responsive to its needs and aspirations.
- 2.5 To develop partnership and agency working with the public and private sectors in terms of resources and finance for the benefit of the community.
- 2.6 To liaise with and support local community associations.

3. Principles

In all its actions the council will take into account and, where appropriate, act in accordance with the principles enshrined in relevant legislation and best practice for:

- Health and Safety
- Equal Opportunities
- Best Value
- Disability Discrimination Act
- Age Discrimination Act
- Local Council Awards Scheme
- Environmental and Planning legislation

4. Four Year Plan

The key objectives for 2017 to 2020 are:

4.1. Planning and Development

4.1.1 Planning Applications – Cranage Parish Council receives notification from Cheshire East Unitary Authority (CEUA) of any planning applications submitted in respect of properties located in the parish and those in adjoining parishes which may directly impact the Parish. These notifications are circulated to parish councillors by email and the applications themselves are available to all to view online at Cheshire East's website. The Parish Council will respond to each one of these applications as appropriate. Where ever time permits the applications will be discussed at the next available Parish Council meeting prior to such response.

In responding to the applications the Parish Council will have regard to any representations made to it by parishioners.

4.1.2 Housing Needs Survey – Cheshire East completed a Housing Needs Survey in 2016 which indicated that there was an urgent need for affordable houses in the Parish. The Parish Council will support Cheshire East in trying to identify suitable plots to accommodate such housing but they will have to be in areas where there are suitable transport links so that schools, medical and social needs of residents are accessible.

4.1.3 Neighbourhood Plan – The Parish Council has considered and sought local views on the completion of a Neighbourhood Plan for Cranage. This cannot be taken forward until there are sufficient local volunteers to undertake the work.

4.2. Open Spaces and Community Buildings

4.2.1 The Paddock (land at the junction of Middlewich Road and the A50) – A Parish questionnaire in 2013 confirmed that the residents of Cranage wished to see this field remain as open space. The Parish Council acknowledges this wish and is currently putting into place plans to prevent any change in its use.

4.2.2 Village Hall – This was built in 1907 and is a self-financing Charitable Trust managed by a committee of local people for the use of Cranage residents. The Parish Council appoints a member to the Village Hall Management Committee.

4.2.3 Bowling Club – The bowling club land located on the open land within the Needham Drive estate is leased by Cranage Parish Council from Cheshire East and sub-leased to the Good Companions Bowling Club. A condition of the lease secures the right of the residents of Cranage the use of the bowling green, when no match is scheduled, for no charge.

4.2.4 S106 Land within ownership of Cheshire East – Cranage Parish Council installed a young person's play area, close to the Bowling Green in 2016. This is maintained by the Parish Council.

There has been a request from a resident that the Parish Council consider creating an outdoors Adult Exercise area in the same locality. Local views are being sought prior to taking the matter further as external funding and permission from Cheshire East will be required.

Within this area are Cranage Playing Fields, this comprises of two football pitches, maintained and hired out by Cheshire East, alongside an area of open space overlooking the Dane Valley, an area of outstanding natural beauty. There are no foreseeable plans to improve this area.

Adjacent to the Village Hall there is a further area that has a number of mown paths but which has become rather overgrown with invasive brambles and thistles and a number of shrubby trees. The Parish Council has been granted permission, by Cheshire East, to undertake some renovation work in this area which will widen the mown areas and reduce the amount of shrubby growth. This work will be undertaken in 2017.

4.3. **Highways and Footpaths**

4.3.1 Public Rights of Way – The Parish has over 10.3 km of footpaths and bridleways, including river walks along the Dane Valley. The Parish Council actively seeks to ensure that these remain open and accessible to as many people as possible. The opportunity to create new linking routes is often considered when planning applications are discussed.

Funding has been approved for the surface of footpath No.4 (which runs beside the weir) to be improved. This work will take place in 2017.

4.3.2 Verge Maintenance – Cranage Parish Council has contracted to have the highway verges within the parish cut twice more than Cheshire East will undertake. This is to ensure the safety of road junctions and to improve the overall aesthetics of the wide verges within the parish.

- 4.3.3 Northwich Road – A revised speed limit has been approved and is scheduled to be implemented in 2017 along Northwich Road. This has been a long standing request by many local residents.

Northwich Road has wide verges but no footpath. Concern has been expressed for the safety of school children walking to or from school buses along this stretch. Investigations have been made into incorporating permeable webbing into the verge to enable them to be walked on safely.

- 4.3.4 Knutsford Road – This major road through the parish is also the diversion route for the M6. It is used on a daily basis by pedestrians and cyclist as well as motorised vehicles. Stretches of this road are flanked with tarmac footpaths but not along the whole length and there is no dedicated cycle path. With the increasing number of isolated developments along and adjacent to this road the Parish Council is looking for opportunities to increase the stretches of footpaths and to incorporate cycle ways where feasible.

The speed limit on this road, throughout the parish is 50mph, with advisory lower limits where there is a safety issue. There is a perception that this limit is not being adhered to by motorists. When an opportunity arises the Parish Council will seek S106 funding to install one or more Speed Warning signs as an alert to motorists

4.4. **Health and Wellbeing**

- 4.4.1 Defibrillator and Resident Training – Cranage Parish Council funded a defibrillator in the Parish. It is located at Cranage Hall Hotel. When initially installed a number of parishioners and employees undertook training on its use. The Parish Council will seek to ensure that such training is kept current and will seek to encourage other interested parishioners to receive the pertinent training.

- 4.4.2 Cranage Pre-School – This is the only school facility within the Parish, all older children have to travel to neighbouring parishes or further afield to attend Primary and Secondary Schools.

- 4.4.3 Environmental Awareness – Cranage Parish Council will encourage and organise “litter picks” throughout the parish.

Concern has been raised over the potential pollution caused by the proximity of the Parish to the M6. The Parish Council continues to seek information and assurances from the relevant authorities as to whether this is the case and if so proved what measures will be taken to mitigate the harmful effects on parishioners.

4.5 **Communications**

4.5.1 Cranage Parish Council Website – This is kept up to date with details of meetings and how to contact the Parish Council.

4.5.2 Notice Boards – There are five Parish Council Notice Boards located in the Parish:

- Northwich Road;
- Middlewich Road;
- Crescent Road;
- At the Village Hall; and
- Needham Drive.

Details of meetings and councillors are posted on these boards along with other statutory notices.

4.5.3 Newsletters – The Parish Council produce three Newsletters each year. These are distributed, by Councillors, to each household within the parish.

4.6 **Local Council Award Status**

4.6.1 Local Council Award Scheme – The new Local Council Award Scheme has been designed to celebrate the successes of the very best local councils, and to provide a framework to support all local councils to improve and develop to meet their full potential. The scheme offers councils the opportunity to show that they meet the standards set by the sector, assessed by their peers, and to put in place the conditions for continued improvement.

The Award Scheme has been designed to provide the tools and encouragement to those councils, enabling them to share best practice to drive up standards.

Cranage Parish Council will apply for Foundation Status.

4.7. Training of Councillors and Clerk

The Parish Council fully understands the benefits of an ongoing training programme. Councillors and employees will be encouraged and supported to undertake training and development which they need to fulfil their duties and responsibilities. The Parish Council maintains its membership of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils who organise a series of seminars and workshops throughout the year.

The Parish Council endeavours to send all new Councillors on an Introductory to Parish Councils Course within six months of their appointment.

The Parish Clerk is a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks and attends events laid on by them which enables her to keep up to date and to obtain CPD points.

4.8. The Parish Clerk

The role of the parish clerk is one that has increased considerably in the recent past. From humble beginnings as a “keeper of records” to the current role of effectively being a chief executive or business manager of the council. The role encompasses not only the original purpose to taking notes, keeping records and arranging meetings but also extends to being the legal and financial advisor, publicity officer, event’s organiser, liaison officer for residents and outside agencies etc.

The current clerk, Julie Mason, carries out the role on a part-time basis and is also clerk to other local parishes Somerford, Newbold Astbury cum Moreton, and Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booths. This joint employment benefits each of the parishes considerably since the experience gleaned by one council can be shared with the others and this can often lead to cost savings.