

TABLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Bi-Monthly Meeting

Held on Monday 6th July 2026 at 7.30PM

Venue: Mere & Tabley Community Club

Contact: clerk@tableyparishcouncil.co.uk

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- **Present:** Councillors (Chair), H. Gurney-Smith (HGS), N Wythenshawe, K Newport (KN) & B Hartley, S Wharfe (SW), S Carson (SC), D Bailey (DB)
 - **Also Present:** Ms. S Booth (Parish Clerk)
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Part A (Public)

Welcome and housekeeping procedures were completed. The resigning Chair and Vice Chair formally stepped down from their respective positions

1. Chair to commence the meeting.

1.1 Apologies of Absence and Confirmation of Quorum

- Cllr T Jackson – Leave
- Cllr A Greenway - Leave

1.1.1 **Resolved** that the meeting was quorate, and the following apologies were received and accepted.

1.2 Declaration of meeting open

- **Resolved** that the Chair opened the meeting at 19:30

1.3 Declarations of Acceptance to office

- **Resolved:** That all outstanding Declarations of Acceptance of Office for the 2026–2027 municipal year were duly signed, received, and noted by the Council.

2. Declaration of Interest

- **DB** declared an interest on item 5
- **BH** declared an interest in Agenda Item 5. He advised the Council that he a Knutsford Town Councillor and that Knutsford TC opposed the planning application. BH also stated that he is also part of the Solar Action Group and was the lead at the recent meeting.
- **SC** Advised that she had also attended the public meeting at the church in opposition to the proposed solar farm.
- **Point of Order:** **NW** stated that he believed all members had attended the solar farm presentation by the developer. **SW** confirmed that they had not attended the meeting.
- **Resolved:** No further declarations of interest were made

Points of Reference (POR): *It was agreed to reorder the agenda, with Agenda Item 4 & 5 will be brought forward before Agenda Item 3*

4. Open Forum

4.1 The Chair welcomed members of the public and advised that, whilst the Council's Standing Orders normally allow a maximum of five minutes per speaker, additional time would be permitted on this occasion to allow residents the opportunity to express their views on the proposed solar farm development. The Chair invited the nominated spokesperson for the residents to address the Council.

- **MOP1** thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak and reported on the residents' meeting held the previous week, which had been attended by more than 60 people. MOP1 advised that the meeting had demonstrated the strength of local concern regarding the proposed solar farm development.

MOP1 stated that residents considered the proposal to be one of the most significant planning matters affecting Tabley since the M6 Junction 19 development.

Concerns were raised regarding the public consultation process, which residents believed had been inadequate despite an extension to the consultation period. MOP1 advised that the issues identified by residents had resulted in several pages of concerns being documented and had led to the formation of the Tabley Solar Action Group to coordinate community concerns and raise public awareness of the proposal.

MOP1 further stated that, whilst the proposed development was located within Tabley, residents believed it would have wider implications for neighbouring communities, particularly Knutsford. It was suggested that the proposal conflicted with efforts to promote Knutsford as a tourist destination and could have an adverse impact on the area's rural character and local economy.

Reference was also made to what residents perceived to be a lack of engagement from Cheshire East Council and the local Ward Councillor. MOP1 advised that support would therefore be sought from Knutsford Town Council, which had already resolved to oppose the proposal, together with neighbouring parish councils, to assist in presenting objections when the application is considered by Cheshire East Council's Strategic Planning Committee.

- MOP1 asked the Parish Council to consider how it could support local residents in preserving the agricultural nature of Tabley and in opposing the development of what residents considered to be high-quality agricultural land. MOP1 commented that the one-week extension to the consultation period was not considered sufficient.
- **MOP2** asked whether the Parish Council intended to support or oppose the proposed development and whether the Council's decision would be communicated to residents before Cheshire East Council determined the application.
MOP2 asked what authority the developer's representative had held during the public consultation event.
Response: BH responded to the question.
- **MOP3** asked what action Cheshire East Council was taking in relation to the proposal.
Response: Members of the public were advised that no planning application had yet been submitted.
- **MOP4** expressed concerns that consultation information had not been received to their Address but to the rest of the residents and was considered this to be unacceptable. It was noted that only limited information was currently available on the developer's website.
Update SC: Advised that concerns raised by residents at the church meeting, including mapping issues, had been brought to the attention of the developers. However, the Parish Council had received no additional information beyond that already available to the public.
- **MOP1** asked whether any councillor with a declarable interest in the application would be excluded from participating in the discussion and vote. MOP1 also raised concerns regarding a potential conflict of interest involving the Cllr, stating that they believed a financial interest existed in relation to the proposal.
Response: The Chair clarified that the Cllr would not participate in the discussion or vote on the agenda item and would leave the meeting for its consideration. The Chair further confirmed that any member with a relevant declarable interest would not participate in the debate or vote and would be required to leave the meeting room for the duration of that agenda item.
As the meeting concluded a further member of the public expressed the view that the proposal represented an industrial development rather than a solar farm.
There being no further questions or comments, the Chair thanked those present for their attendance and the Open Forum concluded.

POR: The Chair advised that no planning application had yet been submitted and, therefore, the Parish Council was not in a position to determine its response. Once a planning application is received, an Extraordinary Planning Meeting will be convened to consider the application. The Council's observations will be formally resolved, recorded in the minutes and submitted to Cheshire East Council. The Chair also confirmed that the draft minutes of the meeting would be published on the Parish Council's website and noticeboard.

5. Proposed Tabley Hill Solar Farm

5.1 In accordance with the declared interest, Cllr D. Bailey declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in this item and left the meeting prior to its consideration.

5.2 BH declared an interest and addressed the Council.

BH confirmed support for renewable energy in principle but expressed the view that the proposed location was unsuitable for a development of this nature.

Members discussed the proposed development and raised a number of concerns, including:

1. The loss of productive agricultural land and the long-term impact on food production; the suitability of the site compared with alternative locations, including previously developed or lower-grade land;
2. The scale of the proposed infrastructure, including solar panels, steel support piles, substations, access tracks, security fencing and CCTV;
3. The potential impact on existing public rights of way and routes regularly used by residents and school children;
4. The environmental implications of maintaining the solar panels and the potential effects on local wildlife and biodiversity;
5. The possible impact on surface water drainage and flooding within the locality, particularly in the Tabley Hill Lane area;
6. The likely disruption associated with construction traffic and the proposed grid connection works;
7. The absence of any significant long-term employment opportunities or direct economic benefit to the local community;
8. The potential impact on aviation, given the site's proximity to the flight path serving Manchester Airport, including concerns relating to glare, wildlife attraction and bird strike risks;
9. The potential implications for neighbouring agricultural land and livestock.

Members referred to the developer presentation previously attended by several members and advised that, when questioned why the site had been selected, representatives had indicated that the availability of a willing landowner had been a significant factor in identifying the location. Members expressed concern that this alone should not determine the suitability of a site for development.

Members also discussed the limited level of detail currently available, noting that a formal planning application had not yet been submitted. Concerns were expressed that important information, including the final layout of the development, battery storage infrastructure, access arrangements and associated works, remained unknown.

It was acknowledged that, should the development proceed, the loss of agricultural land would be irreversible. Members also noted concerns expressed by residents that the proposal would provide little direct benefit to the local community.

Members recognised that the final determination of any planning application would rest with Cheshire East Council and, where applicable. However, it was agreed that the Parish Council should continue to represent the views of the local community throughout the planning process.

Members encouraged residents to continue submitting comments during the consultation period and, once a planning application is submitted, to submit formal representations to Cheshire East Council.

Resolved:

- That the Parish Council continues to monitor the proposal pending submission of a formal planning application then the Parish Council can formally respond.

- That an Extraordinary Planning Meeting be convened upon receipt of a planning application to consider the proposal in detail.
- That the Parish Council's formal observations be determined at that meeting and submitted to Cheshire East Council.
- That residents be encouraged to engage with both the consultation process and the subsequent planning application process by submitting their own representations.

POR: Following the conclusion of Agenda Item 5, Cllr D. Bailey was invited to rejoin the meeting and resumed their place at the meeting.

3. Guest Speakers and Reports: Invited guests will provide their reports. A remote meeting invitation sent to WCKH.

3.1 Ward Cllr:

Resolved: That no report or representation was received from Ward Councillor Kate Hague.

3.2 Cheshire Police:

Resolved: A written report was received from PC Millman and circulated to members prior to the meeting.

6. Minutes of the Previous Meetings

6.1 Minutes of the Annual Parish council meeting held on 4th May 2026 [P131 to P135]

Resolved: That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

6.1.1 **Resolved:** That there were no matters arising from the above set of minutes.

6.2 Minutes of the extraordinary Finance meeting held on 28th May 2026 [P136]

Resolved: That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

6.2.1 **Resolved:** That there were no matters arising from the above set of minutes.

7. Correspondence, Reports

7.1 Cheshire Showground Meeting

The Clerk reported that a meeting had been arranged with Cheshire Showground. **Cllrs HGS and KN** attended and advised that the meeting had been positive. Members noted that traffic management had improved; however, some vehicles continued to turn right onto Flittogate. It was agreed that this should be incorporated into the traffic management plan for future events.

Action: KN to write to Cheshire Showground setting out the Council's observations.

7.2 Parish Noticeboard

The Clerk provided an update on the proposed improvements to the parish noticeboard. Members agreed that replacement of the damaged glass panel would be sufficient at this stage.

Action: Item to remain under review.

7.3 Broken Signage

Members noted that the damaged signage had been reported to Cheshire East Council via the Trace reporting system.

Action: Completed.

7.4 Public Information Litter Signs

The Clerk is to investigate litter signage.

Action: Ongoing

7.5 Holly Grove – Reported Anti-Social Behaviour

The Council considered correspondence received regarding reports of anti-social behaviour in Holly Grove. Members acknowledged the concerns raised and recognised the impact the reported incidents were having on the families. It was noted that the matter was considered to be a civil issue and, therefore, the Parish Council was unable to use public funds to provide direct intervention or take any legislative action

Resolved:

- That the Clerk write to **Peaks & Plains Housing Trust** outlining the concerns raised.

- That **PC Millman** be informed of the correspondence received and the concerns reported to the Parish Council.

8. Knutsford Town Council

8.1 Report from Cllr Hartley (Nether Ward) circulated to full Council Knutsford Town Council Update

- Cllr B. Hartley provided an update on matters relating to Knutsford Town Council.
- Members were update that it had been a particularly busy period within Knutsford town centre, with a number of community events taking place, resulting in temporary road closures.
- An update was provided regarding 60 King Street, where an offer had been accepted and the sale was progressing.
- Members were advised that the town centre streets had recently undergone a programme of steam cleaning, funded by the Knutsford Business Improvement District, as part of ongoing efforts to improve the appearance of the town, including preparations for the Knutsford in Bloom judging.
- Cllr Hartley also highlighted concerns regarding the presence of ragwort at the Tabley Estate roundabout. Members were updated that the plant is toxic to livestock and that responsibility for its management rests with the relevant highway authority.
- An update was also provided on Knutsford's Town of Culture programme, including the submission of a commemorative postcard to the national collection.
- Members noted that meetings had recently taken place at Tabley House, together with discussions involving the Crown Estate regarding maintenance of the historic tower situated on the island, where repairs to the roof are required.
- Finally, members were advised of the forthcoming opening of the Fairmont Hotel on 17 July. It was noted that proposals include the introduction of a 15-seat shuttle bus service between Altrincham, Knutsford and the hotel, which is also intended to form part of the associated planning proposals.

9. Planning

9.1 Resolved: Below are the active planning applications received for this period and new updates from objections made at the time the agenda was published.

- **Application No:** 25/4107/PIP
Location: Land of Moss Lane, Over Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire East, WA16 0PL
Proposal: Permission in principle for construction of one dwelling.
Date Received: 18/05/26 **Cllrs Notified:** 18/05/26
- **Application No:** 26/1636/ADV
Location: Roundabout, Chester Road, Over Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire East
Proposal: Advertisement consent for three advertising signs placed at entrance points on the roundabout. Signs will include company name, logo, contact details in short strap line. Template for the signs will be in line with Cheshire East Council guidelines.
Date Received: 21/05/26 **Cllrs Notified:** 22/05/26

10. Finance

Resolved that the Council received, considered and approve the financial transactions for the current period.

10.1 Bank Account Balances

Unity Trust Bank balances as of 31st May 2026:

- **Instant Access Account (20448367):** 30/04/26 £1,188.36 (Statements 56 to 57)
- **Current Account T1 (20448354):** 31/05/26 £3,172.35 (Statements 68 to 69)
- Payments received: 07/04/26: 1st Precept £1,992.00

10.2 Payments for Approval

To approve the following payments:

TPC/RA/157 – Unity Trust Bank Fees – £6.00 (DD) - Statement P68

TPC/RA/158 – Unity Trust Bank Fees – £6.00 (DD) - Statement P69

TPC/RA/159 – Clear Insurance £593.66 (Cheque No. 300092)

TPC/RA/160 – Internal Auditor£150.00 (Cheque No. 300093)

TPC/RA/161 – Clerk’s Salary (Months 3 & 4) – £[Amount Redacted] (Cheque No. 300094)

TPC/RA/162 – HMRC Payment (Months 3 & 4) – £66.67 (Cheque No. 300095)

11. Exclusion of the Public and Press

11.1 As all members of the public and press had left the meeting, a resolution under the **Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960** was not required. The confidential session commenced at **20:52..**

Signed: _____ (Chair of the Meeting)

Date: _____