

COUNCIL – 15 OCTOBER 2025

NOTICES OF MOTION

Submitted to Council in Accordance with the Council Procedural Rules

1 Historical Rural Signage

Proposed by Councillor R Chadwick and Seconded by Councillor R Bailey

This Motion seeks to safeguard Cheshire East's historic rural signage—our fingerposts, milestones, and traditional wayfinding features. These signs are more than practical markers; they are part of our shared heritage, linking us to past generations and shaping the distinct character of our countryside.

Unfortunately, many are being lost through neglect, removal, or replacement with modern alternatives. Their disappearance erodes local identity, diminishes our landscape, and removes valuable historical records.

By auditing, preserving, and where necessary restoring these signs, we can protect an irreplaceable part of our cultural fabric. Working with parish councils, volunteers, and heritage groups, Cheshire East can show real leadership in valuing our history while maintaining safe and effective highways.

Council notes:

- That Cheshire East has a rich legacy of historic rural signage, including fingerposts, milestones, and traditional wayfinding features, which form an irreplaceable part of our cultural and historic environment.
- That these signs provide not only practical navigational aid but also represent tangible records of our past, linking present communities with their history and contributing to the distinctiveness and character of the rural landscape.
- That across the country such signage is disappearing due to neglect, decay, removal for perceived safety reasons, or replacement with modern, standardised signs. This trend is further exacerbated by reliance on satellite navigation technology, which cannot replace the cultural value or visual identity offered by traditional signage.

Council recognises:

- That the loss of rural signage results in:
 - The erosion of local character and sense of place.
 - The disappearance of valuable historical records reflecting travel, trade, and settlement patterns.
 - A weakening of community identity and a diminished physical link to our shared heritage.
- That many heritage groups, volunteers, and local communities are working to restore and maintain such features, often without formal support or resources.
- That organisations such as Historic England have issued guidance on balancing highway safety requirements with the preservation of heritage street furniture.

Council resolves:

1. To acknowledge the historic importance of Cheshire East's rural signage and commit to safeguarding this aspect of our cultural heritage.
2. To request that the Highways and Transport Committee, in consultation with heritage and conservation officers, conduct an audit of surviving rural signage assets within the Borough.
3. To explore opportunities to adopt a preservation and maintenance programme for historic signs, working alongside volunteer groups, heritage organisations, and parish councils.
4. To ensure that, wherever possible, historic signage is restored, maintained in situ, or—if removal is unavoidable—recorded and, where appropriate, relocated to local museums or heritage centres.
5. To promote greater public awareness of rural signage heritage, encouraging residents to report damaged or at-risk signs.