

Walton Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at the St. Johns Community Church Hall, Old Chester Road, Walton, on Thursday the 7th April 2016

Present

Cllr. R. Hardie Chairman
Cllr. R. D. Bennett Vice Chairman
Cllr. Y. R. Shaikh
Cllr. H. A. S. Hardie
Cllr. B. M. Price
Cllr. C. M. Chadwick
Cllr. D. Karalius
Cllr. D. A. Meacock

In Attendance

Ray Hallam – Parish Clerk
Borough Cllr. P. Kennedy
Residents 1

Cllr. R. Hardie, the Chairman opened the meeting at 7.21pm and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- 1 **Apologies** - The Chairman stated that apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs. Ward, Eldridge and Hammersley.
- 2 **Minutes of the previous Annual Parish meeting** - The minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on the 2nd April 2015, distributed to all present, were reviewed. It was moved that the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chairman.
- 3 **Chairman's Report** - Councillor R. Hardie read from his prepared report, on his year in office as Chairman of the Parish Council

Chairman's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting 7th April 2016.

The Parish has run smoothly through the year and not much has changed. Although it should not affect the Parish Council, the Electoral Commission has changed the Borough Ward boundaries with "Higher Walton" joining Appleton Ward and "Lower Walton" joining Stockton Heath Ward. This is no advantage to us and there may be disadvantages due to being represented by more than one Borough Councillor and a division of the Parish ward boundary

A change to the license for Creamfields to extend it for a further day may reduce some of the congestion but also means the visitors will be in the area for another day. We are assured that it will only be "silent" music that is played on the extra day.

Policing of the area has changed in that there is now no local Inspector. Inspector Drum came to explain the change from 5 to one Inspectors for Warrington and the consequences of that. He also introduced PCSO Parr who has responsibilities that include Walton. We should benefit from "Operation Shield" whereby residents are given "dna water" to apply to their possessions. This should strongly deter thieves from having such marked items in their possession

There have been approximately 46 planning applications this year – many of which are inconsequential. However, there have been a few that would result in conversion of Green Belt land to residential or development within the Green Belt which reduces the openness of the area. We have tried to resist conversion of land or development within Green Belt. We have also tried to resist the conversion of garages to small, detached, dwellings due to the effect on the street scene. Our efforts have been largely unsuccessful, as the Borough Cllrs do not seem to want to prevent erosion of the Green Belt, nor maintain the uncluttered street scene. The Green Belt in the Parish may be vulnerable to wider development if there is no Parish Plan for the area.

We try to bring improvements to the Parish, but it is slow work. A few schemes are underway, but it's completion that matters. The old red GPO phone box will look good in the village when it has been transferred from its present siting. The money received from Creamfields funds such schemes. Fortunately, the trees we planted are maturing nicely to the benefit of the street scene. And the flowers bring a bit of colour. The green areas are so much more attractive with the bulbs flowering. There will be more trees planted this Spring on the A56 and we have been asked to plant more in the verges. We are presently in the process of trying to engage somebody to assist with the tidying of the Parish. We envisage a casual employee spending up to a day a month on general maintenance tasks.

Another donation was made this year in support of the Stockton Heath Festival. We believe a number of our Parishioners attend the events put on. Other donations were made to assist with the upkeep of the graveyard at St John's, in support of the Friends of Walton Hall Music and to Warrington Civic Society towards the rescue fund for the Crossfield bell

The two newsletters distributed this past year were produced to a much more attractive format and were well received. We thank Cllr Eldridge for that and also thank those who assisted with their delivery.

Two non Councillors have helped us again this year, namely Karen Dakin who has looked after our website and our Parish Warden, John Green who has helped with improving the appearance of the village. We thank them both.

We have updated our Parish procedures to stay in line with National developments and requirements. Our Clerk has, once again, been most helpful in ensuring we are working appropriately and has always been available to help Parishioners and Councillors. The audit was again faultless. Ray has been working with us since 2009 and I would suggest he is top of the league. We are indebted to him and we thank him for his work.

Cllr Hewitt resigned last Autumn after 10 years on the Council and now we have three Cllrs who are not standing for re-election. Cllr Chadwick who joined in 2002, Cllr Eldridge who joined in 2012 and Cllr Hammersly who joined last year. We thank them all for their work during their time as Parish Cllrs.

As this is the last time Borough Cllr Kennedy will attend our meeting as our Borough Councillor, it is opportune to thank him for the unstinting support he has given to our Parishioners and to this Parish Council. He has been most energetic, considerate and effective with him getting people heard by WBC and getting WBC to do some of those things they were neglecting and he has always tried to help those who have appealed to him.

Parish Cllr Bob Hardie
Chairman 2015-2016.

4 Parish Matters

As a resident Mr. Peter Priestner took the opportunity to thank Borough Councillor Paul Kennedy, he had served us so well and he had been particularly helpful with his prompt replies to emails. He wanted to add his thanks to those given by the Chairman in his Annual Report.

The Chairman thanked everybody for attending. The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

DRAFT