

Clerk to the Council: -  
Mr. R. J. Hallam  
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**Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of Walton Parish Council held at St. John's Community Church Hall, Old Chester Road, Walton, on Thursday the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017.**

**Present** Councillor B M Price - Chairman  
Councillor D A Meacock  
Councillor H A S Hardie  
Councillor A Jones  
Councillor R Hardie

**In Attendance** Parish Clerk R J Hallam  
Residents 0

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30pm.

**35. Apologies for Absence**

The Chairman reported that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ward (work commitment), Shaikh (work commitment), Greenshields, Karalius and Borough Councillor Harris.

**36. To Receive nominations and elect the Vice Chairman of the Council and to receive the Vice Chairman's declaration of office.**

Councillor A. Hardie nominated Councillor Meacock and this was seconded by Councillor R Hardie.  
***It was resolved that Councillor Meacock will be the new Vice Chairman.***  
Councillor Meacock completed the Declaration of Office.

**37. Adjournment**

There was no adjournment.

**38. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017 were reviewed.  
Page 9, para. 30, Civic Services attendees, first word, second line 'on' should read 'of'.

***Subject to the amendment it was resolved that the minutes be accepted as a true record.***

**39. Reports on Matters Arising from the previous minutes**

The report had been issued with the meeting documentation.

**Standing Orders** - Cllr. R. Hardie commented that his understanding was that it was only new councillors who needed to confirm to the Clerk that they had read and understood the Standing Orders.

**Village Triangle Christmas Tree** - Councillors thanked those involved in erecting, decorating and taking down the Christmas Tree at the Village Triangle. Cllr. A. Hardie added that she had in fact sent Christmas Cards to those involved.

**Walton Arms Hedge** – Following Cllr. Bennett's visit to see the licensee, it is understood that the licensee was rather unhappy about the fact that the PC had raised the issue of the hedge being cut down. More information to be sought from Cllr. Bennett at the next meeting.

#### **40. Report from Borough Councillor**

No report.

#### **41. To receive and accept the report from the Clerk on the Parish Accounts and to formally approve the accounts for payment**

The Clerk had issued with the Agenda the Financial Report (FR) and a copy of the Receipts and Payments Account for the current year to date, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

The Clerk presented: -

Cheque number 001025	payable to R J Hallam	Clerk's Salary	£258.51
Cheque number 001026	payable to HMRC	PAYE/Tax	£64.40
Cheque number 001027	payable to R J Hallam	Office Expenses	£24.99
Cheque number 001028	payable to Blackbird Garden Co.	Cleaning Rd Signs/Tidy War Mem/Pruning (12 hours)	£150.00

Since preparing the report the Clerk had received the account from the Internal Auditor and requested that this be added to the above list as payment terms were 30 days and the next meeting was not until the 6<sup>th</sup> July. The details are indicated below.

Cheque number 001029	payable to JDH Business Services	Internal Audit	£141.60
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***It was resolved that the Financial Report and the Accounts for Payment be approved. The cheques were signed by Cllrs. HAS Hardie and R Hardie.***

#### **The Pensions Regulator**

The Clerk gave an update on the above, adding to information he had given to councillors previously following the 2008 Pensions Act. All employers are now required by law to provide a workplace pensions scheme. Staff who earn above £833pm and are aged 22 or over and under state pension age must be auto enrolled. As the only employee, the Clerk does not fall into this category and therefore auto enrolment does not apply. However, if the Clerk wanted to, he could still ask to join a pension scheme and this would apply to any future Clerk or employee. Any employee who earns over £490pm and wishes to join, has to put in a minimum of 1% of earnings and WPC would also have to contribute. For earnings below this figure WPC would not have to contribute.

WPCs staging date was the 1<sup>st</sup> May and certain processes had to be followed, after that date.

- 1) The Clerk (as the only employee) would have to be written to with an explanation of his rights under the legislation. The Clerk had prepared a letter (template provided by Pensions Regulator) and this was signed by the Chair and handed to the Clerk.
- 2) The Clerk had completed a Declaration of Compliance on behalf of WPC and an acknowledgement had been received from the Regulator.

At this moment in time this completes the requirements to be actioned by WPC.

#### **Internal Audit (IA)**

The Clerk advised that the books had been returned on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> May.

The IA had raised three issues and recommendations.

- 1) The 2 litter bins purchased during the last financial year need to be added to the asset register.
- 2) The Clerk had inadvertently used the bank balance as at 23<sup>rd</sup> March in preparing the bank reconciliation statement, there had been a transaction on the 31<sup>st</sup> March which he had not picked up. This however does not affect the cash and bank balances disclosed on the annual return. The balance at the 31<sup>st</sup> March should always be used.
- 3) The IA referred to the query we had raised during the year in respect of whether a contract awarded was a contract for services or remuneration. They had reviewed the responses from WBC legal dept. and were satisfied that WPC had taken action to secure the correct legal advice. He

concluded with the 6 recommended actions listed by WBC legal dept. and that WPC should implement these promptly. It was also recommended that WPC ensure that the Register of Members Interests is always up to date for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and that minutes always show whether a member has declared an interest and played no further part in debate or discussion regarding a contract in which they have an interest. The IA had recommended by email that WPC should query with the Monitoring Officer whether the format of the Register of Interests requires the actual award of a contract for services to an enterprise in which a member has an interest to be disclosed on the register.

**Action – Clerk to ensure that the above are implemented.**

The Clerk confirmed that the contracts for services awarded to the companies owned by the councillors had been included in the relevant RMIs.

**Cream Donations/Expenditure/Reserves.**

The Clerk referred to the updated spreadsheet he had prepared, as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, which indicated the total donations received, expenditure to date, along with planned spending for 2017/18.

Total donations stood at £43332.

Total expenditure net of VAT £25849. Balance of Cream funds remaining £17483. Amount allocated for spending during 2017/18 £7550.

Current level of reserves (precepted money) held in bank account £10772.

The agreed spend from precept 2017/18 is £9296 against a precept of £7970. This would reduce reserves by £1326 leaving reserves at £9446 plus any recoverable VAT.

**42. Planning Matters**

Councillor R Hardie gave an update on the report that had been issued.

**43. Casual Work**

Councillor R Hardie (RH) said that the trees planted by WPC around the Parish were still awaiting attention and that we need to give the work to the person most appropriate to get it done and move on. Blackbird Garden Company (BGC) had given a quote for some of this work dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016, two days labour for 1 man £280. Councillor Ward was not present at this meeting. RH thinks that the work should still go ahead and explained some of the issues that required attention.

We are still waiting for Councillor Karalius to come back to us on the use of free labour, but they don't do this kind of skilled work.

Primrose and Walton Lea also don't do this kind of work.

The Clerk asked whether we should consider getting a further quote.

RH said that his interpretation, is that there is no reason why we can't give BGC a contract every month to do specific work, if a quote had been given and as long as his rates were seen to be competitive or advantageous to us compared with other contractors.

We do have the rates of another contractor who had contacted us and these are held on file, the rates were in excess of that quoted by BGC.

RH proposed that WPC go ahead with the quote provided by BGC and also request quote for other work that may be required. This was supported by other councillors.

Councillor Meacock (DAM) was asked to look at the bus shelter and advise on work required. He will also get some quotes on the refurbishment of the War Memorial and the Betterment Advisory Group will look at moving forward on the tidying up of the area around the Memorial.

The benches and notice board also need work doing on them.

**Action - DAM to get quotes for work on the War Memorial and advise on work required to the bus shelter.**

**44. Report on Parish Matters**

**Microphone System for Community Church Hall.**

Councillor Karalius not at meeting.

**Support for Stockton Heath Library.**

The Chair referred to the minutes of the Donations Advisory Group meeting of the 23<sup>rd</sup> May, which had been circulated to all councillors. She pointed out that Stephen Broomhead the CEO of WBC had said that any library able to raise £10k should stay open. There was general agreement amongst councillors that we should support the Stockton Heath Library Working Group (SHLWG), but that the support should be in proportion to contributions made by other parishes. SHLWG are asking for a 5 year commitment. It was suggested that we should write and ask Democratic Services as to whether we as a parish council are able to give such forward commitments. It was agreed that we should write to Bor. Cllr. Sharon Harris (Chair SHLWG) to say that we are prepared to support the Group with a contribution, but we are not at the moment in a position to say how much, as we feel that any contribution made should be in proportion to that made by other parishes. Once this has been established, then we can agree the contribution to be made by WPC.

**Action – Clerk to write to Democratic Services.**

**Action – Clerk to write to BCSH Chair of SHLWG.**

**Holly Hedge Lane (HHL) Signage.**

The Clerk explained that a 'No Access to Port Warrington' sign had been placed on an existing post at the bottom of a group of 3 on the A56 Chester Road. But Councillor Bennett had said that this blocked the view of high levelled vehicles exiting HHL, as oncoming traffic cannot be seen. WBC had instructed the contractor to move the sign to a more suitable location.

Cllr. R. Hardie suggested that they are not authoritative signs, they are just giving information and therefore drivers don't have to obey them, as they are not obligatory. He asked why do WBC not use the obligatory signs that are in the Highway Code, i.e. 'No Vehicles Bigger than.....' or 'No Vehicles Wider than .....'. At least foreign drivers would then be familiar with mandatory signs, as they are used in Europe.

**Action – Clerk to write to Jamie Fisher about the use of mandatory signs.**

**Other Parish Matters**

**Phone box Refurbishment Costing** – Councillor Bennett not at meeting.

**45. Report from Village Betterment Committee**

Meeting was arranged for Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> June, at Councillor A. Hardie's house.

**46. Reports from Appointed Representatives**

**Church Magazine/Publicity** – Councillor Karalius – Not at meeting.

**Footpaths** – Councillor Price – Councillor R. Hardie advised that he had today sent the Clerk suggested letters to be sent to Peel Holdings and David Boyer of WBC in respect of the Walton Towpath.

**Action – Clerk to forward these letters.**

**Roads/Traffic and Street Lighting** – Councillor Bennett - Not at meeting and nothing further reported.

**South Neighbourhood Board** – Councillor R. Hardie – There has not been any meeting and the future outcome is awaited.

**Walton Hall Estate (WHE) – Cllr. R. Hardie (RH)** – Reported that he had regularly questioned the performance of WHE, as he felt it was the duty of the Parish to represent the public and to see that management were doing a good job. If as reported WBC will have put in about £10m, then he wanted to see that there was a year on year improvement, as this level of investment should mean that WHE is financed by itself, rather than chunks of land having to be sold off for housing, to raise capital. At the last meeting Peter Carey, the Chair had put RH down and said that he was fed up of RH asking these probing questions. RH found this offensive and sought the support of the PC in him being able to remonstrate with

The Chair in a polite way, to say that he felt it was inappropriate for him to react in this way, when he was in fact only looking after the best interests of the general public. Councillors supported RH in this.

**47. Review of Correspondence**

**Police & Crime Commissioner's Road Safety Conference 29<sup>th</sup> June.**

Invitation to parish councils circulated 18/05/17.

**Stockton Heath Festival Complimentary Tickets**

Councillor R and A Hardie requested these for the male voice choir event.

**Action – Clerk to notify Stella Cragg.**

**48. Date and time of next meeting**

**The next meeting of the next Parish Council will be Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at St. John's Community Church Hall, Old Chester Road, Walton, commencing at 7.30pm.**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 21.18 hrs.

DRAFT