

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 2nd September 2021.

Present
Councillor S A Harris - Chair
Councillor S Davies – Vice Chair
Councillor D M Karalius
Councillor B M Price
Councillor R Hardie
Councillor Y R Shaikh
Councillor R D Bennett
Councillor L Smith
Councillor A Bowles

In Attendance
Parish Clerk R J Hallam
Residents 1

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.30pm and welcomed everybody.

68. Apologies for Absence

The Chair reported that an apology for absence had been received from Borough Councillor Judith Wheeler (Lower Walton).

69. Adjournment

There was no adjournment.

70. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 1st July 2021 were reviewed.

It was resolved that the minutes be accepted as a true record. Proposed by Councillor Shaikh and seconded by Councillor Price, all in favour.

71. Reports on Matters Arising from the previous minutes

The report had been issued with the meeting documentation.

Litter Picking.

Possible litter pick in October. Including the Chair, Councillors Bowles, Davies and Karalius volunteered. Chair will send out an email with possible dates for a meeting. Paul Connor will set up a Walton PC Litter Network, Facebook page and WhatsApp Group.

Lamppost Poppies.

VBAG will decide where they are going, how many are needed and then a costing.

Ellesmere Road Fencing.

The poor state of the fence was raised by Councillor Hardie at the July meeting and as a result the Clerk had written to Peel Holdings. The Clerk advised that a new fence had now been erected.

Reflected Strips on posts at the Junction of A56 and Holly Hedge Lane.

The Clerk advised that these had not been put there by WBC.

72. Report from Borough Councillor.

No report.

73. 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: -

Chq No. 001304	pay to R J Hallam	Clerk's Salary (2 months)	£581.74
Chq No. 001305	pay to HMRC	PAYE/Tax	£145.44
Chq No. 001306	pay to R J Hallam	Off Exp (Ink£9.99X2/Zoom£14.39X2 New laptop £299	£347.76
Chq No. 001307	pay to Gardenia Gardens Ltd	Warden JulyAcc (Inv1346 33hrs VAT£82.50)	£495.00
Chq No. 001308	pay to Warrington Bor Co	Election Expenses	£425.65
Chq No. 001309	pay to D M Karalius	Plants & laying of flags for new planters	£494.65
Chq No. 001310	pay to PKF Littlejohn LLP	External Audit	£240.00

It was resolved that the Financial Report and the Accounts for Payment including the purchase by the Clerk of a new laptop be approved. Proposed by Councillor Shaikh and seconded by Councillor Bennett. The cheques were signed by Councillors Hardie and Shaikh.

External Audit

The Clerk reported that the auditor had advised that Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR was in accordance with Proper Practices and that no other matters had come to their attention

Councillors thanked the Clerk for his work on both audits.

74. Remote/Zoom Meetings.

Councillor Hardie (RH) asked whether we should reconsider holding remote meetings and ask WBC whether this was a possibility and felt that the PC should even consider being non-compliant. Councillor Shaikh pointed out that we are not legally allowed to do that. RH said that we should perhaps make ready to go back to remote meetings. RH asked for it to be recorded that in his view ***"This room does not meet the recommendations for holding meetings in, and I believe the PC is remiss in using it"***.

In support of this he cited the increase in the number of Covid cases and the rise in death rate. He didn't think our current room was suitable and it doesn't even meet the ventilation recommendations for an office. To hold shorter meetings was another suggestion put forward.

Action – Councillor Hardie to draft a suitable letter for the Clerk to send to WBC.

Action – Councillors to contact the Clerk with suggestions for alternative venues.

75. Planning Matters

The Planning Advisory Group Report had been circulated to all Councillors and Councillor Hardie added that there was nothing else of any significance to be added.

It was resolved that the PC accept the Planning Advisory Group Report dated 2nd September 2021.

76. Standing Orders (SO)/Financial Regulations(FR).

Councillors Shaikh, Hardie and Harris are members of the working group reviewing the SO. The latest 2018 SO have been used as a template with our existing set being superimposed on to this latest version. The draft will be circulated to councillors for comment 2 weeks before the October meeting, when it will be presented for approval and adoption by the full Parish Council.

Councillor Shaikh has been through the FR. Councillor Hardie has also emailed his comments. The aim is to try and simplify these as much as possible whilst covering all the processes. He will go through these with the Clerk, again with the aim of approval at the October meeting.

77. Local Plan/SWPG.

The Chair went through the report which she had prepared and this had been circulated by the Clerk to all councillors.

78. Co-option Process.

The need for a Co-option process had been identified as the Parish Council had three applications for two vacancies and it was felt that a clear and transparent process should be adopted.

The Clerk sought advice from Electoral Services, WBC and Jackie Weaver at ChALC and the process put forward by the Clerk and the Chair were in line with recognised, legal NALC policies. The process had been circulated to all Parish Councillors for comment prior to the meeting for comment. None were received. Councillor Hardie didn't think that in this instance the Chair should have a casting vote on what could turn out to be a political matter.

Cllr Shaikh felt that rather than a stand-alone policy, the procedural element should be incorporated into the Standing Orders which will be presented to the Parish Council in the October meeting.

Action – Comments on the process should be fed by councillors into the Standing Orders Working Group compiled of Councillors Harris, Hardie and Shaikh.

The procedural element will then be part of the Standing Orders which will be on the agenda for approval at the October meeting.

79. Creamfields Feedback.

Councillor Bennett decided to leave the room.

Several matters were raised by councillors following the event.

Lack of awareness of drop off points. Not properly marshalled, no police presence. Lack of security was an issue, and the litter pick was poor.

Councillor Karalius felt we should write to the licencing authority (Halton Borough Council) regarding the security issues.

Councillors were asked to forward comments to the Chair for incorporation into a report for Creamfields.

Action – Chair to prepare a report .

Councillors Karalius and Price to attend the follow up meeting with Cream and interested parties.

Councillor Bennett returned to the meeting.

80. Report on Parish Matters

Website.

The Working Group had met by Zoom.

Councillor Smith went through the Options Report that she had helped to produce, which had been circulated by the Clerk to all councillors, prior to the meeting.

A discussion followed on all aspects and implications of a new website and Councillor Shaikh was concerned about the lack of specifications, but these had been provided and were attached to the bottom of the options document produced by Councillor Smith.

It was agreed that Councillor Smith would be delegated the action to engage with Then Media, who she felt provided the best value for money and compliant package and have initial discussions with them, with a view to them providing our new website.

Action – Councillor Smith to make contact with Then Media and have initial discussions about them providing our new site.

Forward Plan.

Councillor Davies had further reviewed the Plan, she explained that this is a working document and could be updated on a monthly basis as plans were completed and new ones came along.

Action – Clerk to send out latest plan for councillors to comment on.

Action – Councillors to send their comments to Councillor Davies.

It will then be presented to councillors at the October meeting for the format to be agreed.

Other Parish Matters.

Restoration of Mile Stone on A56 outside Fox Hill House.

Councillor Bennett explained that it was a slab of concrete, which needed whitewashing or painting and the letters highlighted.

It was agreed that this was referred to the V BAG.

Ellesmere Road Speeding.

Deferred till next meeting.

Newsletter Budget.

It is proposed to do two newsletters per year.

A new proposal will be brought to the meeting once the costs involved are properly established.

81. Report from Village Betterment Committee

Councillors were asked to bring forward suggestions for the planting of bulbs.

It was resolved that the PC spend up to £305 on the purchase of winter plants and bulbs. Proposed by the Chair and seconded by Councillor Karalius.

82. Reports from Appointed Representatives

Footpaths – Councillor Price – nothing to report.

Roads/Traffic and Street Lighting – Councillor Bennett will replant the bollards on the A56.

Vegetation an issue at Thomason's Lane Bridge as this is a bigger issue it will be brought up at next meeting.

Vegetation on Hobb Lane and state of road. The Clerk has already reported these to WBC and the Chair has written to Jamie Fisher.

Councillor Price to email clerk about overhanging hedges and trees on Osbourne, Walton and Wardley Roads.

Councillor Hardie will email the Clerk about overhanging hedge on Walton New Road.

Walton Hall Estate – Cllr. Price – No new update from Neil Simpson, but all going well at WHE. The sandstone wall on corner of Park Lane and Warrington Road has been repaired.

83. Review of Correspondence

Queens Platinum Jubilee – Stockton Heath PC have set up a working group and we will look to join up with them.

Cheshire Community Action Membership Invitation – It was decided not to take this up.

Email from resident regarding poor state of Hobb Lane – potholes, speeding and overgrown hedges were the issues. The Clerk advised that he had reported all items to Councillor Contact and he would keep the resident informed of any actions proposed by WBC.

84. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be Thursday 7th October 2021, at St. John's Community Church Hall, Old Chester Road, Walton, commencing at 7.00pm.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 21.37 hrs.