

Clerk to the Council: -  
Mr. R. J. Hallam  
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**Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of Walton Parish Council held remotely by Zoom Conferencing, on Thursday the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021.**

**Present** Councillor D M Karalius - Chair  
Councillor Y R Shaikh – Vice Chair  
Councillor S A Harris  
Councillor R Hardie  
Councillor S Davies  
Councillor S H Taylor  
Councillor R D Bennett

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

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.34pm and welcomed everybody.

**126. Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Price (IT issues).

**127. Adjournment**

There was no adjournment.

**128. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021 were reviewed.

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

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

The report had been issued with the meeting documentation.

There was nothing further to add as items appeared later in the agenda.

**130. Report from Borough Councillor.**

Some updates from the leader of the Council, but generally business as usual.

Elections will be held in May 2021, unless the Government changes policy.

Councillor Hardie asked what WBC were doing about drain cleaning, in the light of recent flooding, ongoing maintenance needed looking at. Also a historic issue as to where houses had been built. The PC need to ensure that WBC keep on top of these issues.

**131. 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 001262	payable to R J Hallam	Clerk's Salary	£281.13
Cheque number 001263	payable to HMRC	PAYE/Tax	£70.28
Cheque number 001264	payable to R J Hallam	Office Expenses	£24.38
Cheque number 001265	payable to Gardenia Gardens Ltd.	Dec Acc. Grounds (10 hrs)	£150.00
Cheque number 001266	payable to K Dakin	2XYrly Hosting&BackUp(Jan20to21&Jan21to22)	£147.28
Cheque number 001267	payable to RD Bennett	Two Christmas Trees	£242.40
Cheque number 001268	payable to R Hardie	Various Expenses	£103.86
Cheque number 001269	payable to Grapp & Thel PC	SWPCLPLG (prof fees 12m)	£62.56

A question was raised about Councillor Hardie's various expenses. He gave an explanation and the Clerk had a breakdown. Councillor Shaikh suggested that in future a breakdown of this type of account should be detailed.

Following a question raised by Councillor Shaikh, the Clerk explained that the SWPCG account covered the cost of professional fees from February 2020 to January 2021 (Walton PC's share 1.59% of total)

The Clerk asked whether an account he had received after sending out the Financial Report could be added to the list for payment, otherwise it would be 4<sup>th</sup> March before payment could be requested, this was as follows:-

Cheque number 001270	payable to ChALC	Virtual Zoom Training (DMK)	£25.00
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Councillor Hardie did query whether this was following procedure. The Clerk did say that he had made similar requests many times previously, but would bear this in mind for the future.

***It was resolved that the Financial Report, with the addition of cheque 001270 and the Accounts for Payment be approved. Arrangements would be made for the cheques to be signed. Proposed by Councillor Karalius and seconded by Councillor Davies. Motion carried.***

### **132. Clerk's Salary.**

The Clerk left the virtual meeting.

***It was resolved that the Clerk should receive an increase of 3.46%, which implemented the NALC increase, along with an additional merit rise. Proposed by Councillor Shaikh and seconded by Councillor Karalius. Motion carried.***

The Clerk rejoined the meeting.

### **133. Planning Matters**

The Planning Advisory Group Report had been circulated to all Councillors.

Application 2020/37267. A neighbour had raised a question (and copied the PC in) with DMC as to why permission had been granted and concern about the procedures followed. Councillor Hardie explained the reasoning behind the PC's objection.

***It was resolved that the Planning report dated 4<sup>th</sup> February be accepted. Proposed by Councillor Hardie and seconded by Councillor Taylor. All in favour.***

Councillors Harris asked a question about how residents know what PC planning recommendations are and what opportunities do residents have to come and put a case forward.

Councillor Hardie went on to explain how the process currently worked.

Councillor Taylor said it is not the duty of the PC to go to residents and say that we are objecting or commenting. We are just another party in the process and this information can be found on the WBC planning website.

It was pointed out that some PCs do have separate meetings with a specific date and open to the public.

Councillor Shaikh explained why Walton has an Advisory Group rather than a Committee. This makes recommendations to the full PC and there is not a requirement for them to have a published meeting time and date, which is also open to the public.

It was agreed that a statement should go on the website which would make it clear to residents how planning applications are dealt with and how a resident could go about speaking to the PC about an application.

### **134. Local Plan**

Councillor Harris reported.

The Local Plan process has been paused in October 2020. However, the target date for adoption of the Plan is 2023. It is uncertain how much it will have changed and if a further consultation process will be needed. If only minor adjustments, but in all likelihood another consultation will be needed. If the Local Plan changes then infrastructure plans also need to change (schools, health/hospital and transport). The key question is about the Council's ability to deliver a sustainable plan.

The data on housing numbers is not forthcoming yet as the new methodology for calculating this may well reduce numbers over the planned period. Levels of growth within the town may well have changed over the past year and this will also impact on the expected levels of growth and housing needed. Bear in mind that WBC has always had difficulty in fulfilling past housing targets. The plan period is also subject to change from 20 years to 15 years i.e 2037 - also has an impact on housing projections.

There is a focus on Town Centre development and regeneration and an extra £22m has been secured for a number of projects which will unlock the town centre and may also reduce the need for green belt land.

Chester University is relocating to the town centre - good move. Brownfield land first. A new SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) for brown field sites is due out soon. Fiddler's Ferry will potentially come into play - part if not all - housing/economic zone. May or may not be within the initial time frame.

Infrastructure would need to deal with existing problems in transport and there is no indication yet as to changes in the PSV may impact on proposed schemes. It seems that the Western Link is still being pursued - what is the driver for this? Committed as they have been awarded the funding? Peel Port appeared to be the main driver but in the past year Peel Port's business plan seems to be less reliant on Port Warrington.

The Western Link is a key element in using land in Walton for 1600 houses - South West Urban Extension. With a review of housing projections, use of town centre and brown field sites this may mean that the SWUE is less vital to the overall plan. It could be a reduction in numbers? Questions therefore remain as to the rationale for pursuing the Western Link.

A new east-west rail link across south and west Warrington could also have major implications for Walton. The presentation 'New Plan for a Changing World' which was presented by SWPG was very well received by the public and also by Steve Park, WBC. There is now a receptive, meaningful dialogue taking place and this is positive.

SWPG is considering its future role - to question WBC constructively on timescales, housing numbers, scale and nature of greenbelt release, confirm consultation process, infrastructure provision, confirm HS2 and HS3 routes;

to challenge WBC before and as revisions to the Local Plan emerge;

to lobby WBC, WBC members, MP and residents

### **135. Report on Parish Matters**

#### **Website.**

The Clerk explained that he needed more time to consider the options open to the PC.

There didn't seem to be any obstacles in transferring our existing site, administered by Karen with Easy Space, to the ownership of Walton PC, other than she would need to obtain our permission when it was necessary for her to talk to Easy Space about administrative issues when they arose.

However, there was a question mark over whether or not our existing site was compliant in respect of WCAG 2.1AA (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines). An Accessibility Statement and Privacy Statement

would need to be added and kept up to date, if possible and it should also enable residents to have interaction with the website.

Eyelid Productions had provided a quote of £978 for the first year, which included the transferring over of existing information. The site would be a gov.uk one and up to 50 emails parish related would be available. Second year costs would be £180 and third year £280 (includes biennial domain). Training in the inputting of information was included along with training videos.

Eyelid Productions is run by an existing parish councillor Mark Millmore and a Clerk James Stirling. They did Stockton Heath's and have done 82 parishes in the Hereford and Bedford area.

The Clerk also explained that he needed to look further into examples of other parish council site providers as suggested by Sharon Jones, she was the trainer of a Zoom course that Councillor Karalius had attended.

Following requests from member councils, ChALC had set up an event on 23/02, where ThenMedia Ltd., who provide their facility, would provide information on the package they offer.

A debate followed where councillors expressed differing views in relation to how much of a priority this was. Councillors Shaikh and Hardie felt this was less of an urgent matter, which should be looked at, but over a period of time. Councillors Harris and Davies said that this was the outward facing profile of the PC and as such should be given high priority. The Chair felt that this needed to be brought in house as soon as possible.

**Action – Clerk to continue to explore the options available.**

### **The Village Triangle Trees.**

Councillor Harris had emailed Simon Twigg (ST) at WBC asking about his views on the Tree Report. The Clerk pointed out that he had only sent ST the report that afternoon, so it would be sometime before he responded.

Councillor Shaikh gave an outline of the positive telephone conversation he had had with the resident. He had explained that the Tree Report now gave parishioners an authoritative statement to move forward in any discussions with WBC.

**Action - Councillor Harris will follow this up with ST once he has had the opportunity to consider the report.**

**Action – Clerk to write to resident and keep her informed.**

**Action - Councillor Hardie asked the Clerk to write to Matthew Cumberbatch to see if he had any intention of responding to our earlier email.**

### **Other Parish Matters.**

**Superfast Broadband** – Councillor Taylor reported that Openreach had now got 60 properties reachable under the Community Fibre Scheme. All had to sign up for the voucher scheme, which should cover the cost.

There are other cases, but these will be dealt with separately.  
Sign up must be by the end of March.

### **136. Report from Village Betterment Advisory Group.**

There had not been a meeting of the group.

### **137. Reports from Appointed Representatives**

**Footpaths – Councillor Price** – Nothing to report.

**Roads/Traffic and Street Lighting – Councillor Bennett** – Still 4 blocked grids 2 on either side of A56 from Hobb Lane to the boundary. There is a lot of rubbish on the A56.

The tree on Holly Hedge Lane near to the bridge is still hanging a long way over the boundary fence and needs reporting to Bridgewater Canal Co.

Councillor Harris brought up the state of Mill Lane. She had advised WBC on 27<sup>th</sup> January. Apparently work was scheduled to start on 3<sup>rd</sup> February. She asked Councillor Contact again today when work was going to start. Several residents had raised the matter earlier in the day.

**Action – Clerk to advise Highways.**

**Walton Hall Estate – Cllr. Price** An updated report had been circulated.

**138. Review of Correspondence**

None.

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

**The next meeting of the Parish Council will be Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 by Zoom conferencing, commencing at 7.30pm.**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 9.24pm.

DRAFT