

Clerk to the Council: -
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Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of Walton Parish Council held remotely by Zoom Conferencing, on Thursday the 4th March 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
Councillor B M Price

In Attendance
Parish Clerk R J Hallam
Residents 0

As Councillor Karalius was having some IT issues, Councillor Shaikh took the Chair. The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.34pm and welcomed everybody.

140. Apologies for Absence

None.

141. Adjournment

There was no adjournment.

142. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 4th February 2021 were reviewed.

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

143. Reports on Matters Arising from the previous minutes

The report had been issued with the meeting documentation. The Clerk said that he had a number of updates since the report was issued.

Bank Account Signatures.

Councillor Harris will send signature.

Planning Process Statement for Website.

Statement received from Councillor Hardie and Clerk to circulate to all councillors for approval at next meeting.

Action – Clerk to circulate statement and include on April's agenda.

Boundary Review.

Virtual meeting with Stretton Parish Councillors arranged for the 9th March 2021.

Village Triangle Trees.

The Clerk confirmed that he had asked Simon Twigg for his comments on the Tree Survey Report.

Financial Report Accounts for Payment.

Councillor Shaikh referred to a point raised by Councillor Hardie at the last meeting in relation to accounts received after the Financial Report had been issued. Standing Orders confirmed that such items could be added, as long as the amount didn't exceed £100.

144. Report from Borough Councillor.

Budget Meeting was held on 1st March and the budget was passed, although it was not unanimous. Council tax will rise by 4.98% (last year it was 3.98% and roughly two thirds of this goes towards funding Adult Social Care and Families and Wellbeing services, including children's services i.e. protecting the vulnerable in our town.

Band D households (in parished areas) will now pay £1,898.31 per annum.

The 2021-22 budget includes £11.6 million of savings and cuts and it is interesting to note that WBC is one of the lowest funded local authorities in the North West and, in fact, the whole country.

The council's debt currently stands at just under £1.3 billion but is forecast to reach close to £2.3 billion in 2023 and many questions have been raised by residents about the Council's investment policies.

At the beginning of the pandemic Local Authorities were told by central government to spend whatever was needed and they would be reimbursed. However, the Borough Council is upset that they haven't yet been fully reimbursed and there is a significant shortfall.

A Road Traffic Regulation has just been posted introducing a 24 hour clearway, effective from 5th March. It is to help address possible large numbers of visitors to Walton Hall and Appleton Reservoir. It will affect Firs Lane, Hough's Lane, Park Lane, Walton Lea Road, Warrington Road from its junction with Old Chester Road and Whitefield Road from its junction with Walton Lea Road, to the junction with Old Hall Close.

Green bin collections started this week.

Warrington's Own Bus Services 62 & 62A will return to operating between Warrington and Halebank via Runcorn with some morning and afternoon journeys going via Manor Park and Sci-Tech at Daresbury.

Local Elections will take place on 6th May.

Normal political party campaigning has been suspended but from 8th March doorstepping and leafleting can re-commence 1:1; from 29th March groups of up to 6.

Candidate nominations need to be in by 8th April.

There may be changes to some polling stations as some may not be able to be made covid-secure.

Residents need to check their cards for changes.

The Count will take longer than usual, and results may not be in until after the weekend.

Councillor Hardie (RH) asked about how WBC had spent the Covid 19 money received from the Government and whether WBC had changed procedures in relation to the cleaning of drains.

RH was asked to email Councillor Harris (SAH) with a list of questions he would like her to put to the Council.

Councillor Hardie to email list of questions.

Councillor Harris to put these to WBC.

145. 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 001271	payable to R J Hallam	Clerk's Salary	£281.13
Cheque number 001272	payable to HMRC	PAYE/Tax	£70.28
Cheque number 001273	payable to R J Hallam	Office Expenses	£24.38
Cheque number 001274	payable to Gardenia Gardens Ltd.	Jan21 Acc. Grounds (14 hrs)	£210.00
Cheque number 001275	payable to Information Commissioner	Data Prot Renewal Fee	£40.00

It was resolved that the Financial Report, and the Accounts for Payment be approved. Arrangements would be made for the cheques to be signed. Proposed by Councillor Hardie and seconded by Councillor Karalius. Motion carried.

146. Planning Matters

The Planning Advisory Group Report had been circulated to all Councillors and Councillor Hardie (RH) asked if there were any questions.

RH went on to elaborate on Planning Applications 2020/37267, 2020/37764 and 2021/38518 and the issues involved.

On looking at these cases it had been brought to our attention that the objection had not been recorded at Development Control.

The Clerk was asked to send objections to Development Control as well as Peter Walker.

The Clerk was also asked to check the process with Peter Walker.

Action – In future Clerk to send objections to Development Control as well as Peter Walker.

Action – Clerk to check process with Peter Walker.

It was resolved that the Planning report dated 4th March be accepted. Proposed by Councillor Hardie and seconded by Councillor Karalius. All in favour.

147. Local Plan

Councillor Harris reported.

According to the most recent update, Warrington Borough Council plan to take an updated version of their draft Local Plan out to public consultation this summer, with further details expected after the local elections on 6th May.

The need for another full public consultation suggests that the updated version will feature significant changes compared with the 2019 Proposed Submission Version which met with widespread public anger.

It is far too early as we simply don't have any details on which to be optimistic. We do expect changes, SWPG continue to demand that Green Belt is protected and that the focus for the next plan should be to regenerate and repopulate our Town Centre, addressing inequalities and fixing our infrastructure problem.

With a public consultation expected for the summer, the suggested timeline could see the plan going to examination next summer with adoption unlikely to be until early 2023.

148. Report on Parish Matters

Website.

The Clerk reported that he had attended along with Councillors Davies, Harris and Karalius a virtual presentation by Then Media Ltd, who provide website facilities for ChALC and many other parish councils. This is another option for the PC to consider. Their tier 1 scheme would be £100 fee then £20pm and tier 2 £500 fee and £40pm. It is likely that tier 1 would meet Walton's requirements.

The Clerk stated that he did not feel it was appropriate for him to make a recommendation on which option the PC should go for as he didn't feel he had the required experience.

It was decided that the PC would set up a temporary Website Advisory Group involving the Clerk, along with Councillors Harris, Hardie and Davies to look at the website options.

In addition, at Councillor Hardie's suggestion the Clerk was asked to provide a 5 year costing analysis on the options available.

Action – Clerk to put together a costing comparison on website options.

Golf Club Wall.

Councillor Harris to make contact with Neil Simpson and ask him to resurrect this project.

The Village Triangle Trees.

The Clerk had followed up his request for Simon Twigg's comments on the report, but as yet had not received a reply. This matter to be carried forward.

Other Parish Matters.

WhatsApp.

Councillor Hardie raised the matter of whether the Parish Council should consider joining some of the Social Media platforms and it was agreed that it is something the temporary Advisory Group should consider when looking at the website options.

Action – To be considered by the Website Advisory Group when considering options.

Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill

Councillor Harris reported that Warrington BC declared a climate emergency in June 2019 and resolved that by 2030 it would be carbon neutral in its operations and activities. We also approved our **Green Energy Strategy** in September 2019.

Parish Councils can help by promoting strategies and ideas to help residents i.e. through our website. Encourage green planning applications, car lift shares, reduces pesticide use - what does our Ranger use? Is this something we should consider? As a Parish Council she said that we should have an influence and promote ideas amongst residents and Councillor Davies commented that as a Parish we should have a view as this could affect our residents and other parishes had taken this on board. What could Walton Parish Council do?

Councillor Taylor said he had no objection to the sentiments to support ways to improve the environment, but did not support the Bill as it was Extinction Rebellion who were behind it.

Councillor Hardie thought that it shouldn't come down to the level of local councils.

Action – Councillors Harris and Davies to put together a paper explaining more specifically what we as a Parish Council could do.

149. Report from Village Betterment Advisory Group.

The Group met on the 23rd February and the minutes had been circulated.

The Chair referred to the two proposals on the agenda and commented that at the VBAG meeting on the 23rd February there had not been a consensus on agreeing a way forward, other than that the barrels are in a poor state and need replacing.

Councillor Hardie explained the reasoning behind his proposal to spend up to £400 on 8 new oak barrels, however, there was no seconder to his proposal.

Councillor Bennett Proposed an amendment for the PC to purchase on a 50/50 basis 4 oak barrels and 4 Amberol planters, this was seconded by Councillor Hardie but the motion was defeated (3 for and 4 against)

In view of Councillor Karalius's proposal being outside of budget the Clerk was asked by the Chair to explain how this would impact on the PC's finances. The Clerk went on to explain this, with £1700 of the total spend of £2700 coming from reserves.

Councillor Karalius then went on to explain the reasoning behind her proposal for the PC to spend £2700 on 8 new Amberol, self watering, 1m square planters. This was seconded by Councillor Price.

It was resolved that the PC spend the £1000 already allocated in the budget, plus an additional £1700, making a total of £2700 on 8 new 1 metre square Amberol self watering planters. (4 votes for and 2 against).

150. Reports from Appointed Representatives

Footpaths – Councillor Price – Nothing to report.

Roads/Traffic and Street Lighting – Councillor Bennett – congratulated the litter pickers on Chester Road who had done a magnificent job. Councillor Davies explained this had been done by a group that she

was associated with called 'Clean up my Community' and she would let them know that the work had been noticed and was very much appreciated.

Councillor Hardie expressed some concern that it had not been made known in the minutes the appreciation for the people involved in the putting up and taking down of the Christmas trees. This must be put right in the future.

Walton Hall Estate – Cllr. Price An updated report from Neil Simpson had been circulated.

151. Review of Correspondence

Telephone complaint from resident about fencing replacing hedges on Towpath.

The Clerk explained that he had taken this up with BCC. It came to light that Stockton Heath PC had also received a complaint earlier and had in fact received a letter from BCC advising them of the actions taken and their policy on the matter.

On further investigation the issues appear to be in Stockton Heath Parish not Walton, but nevertheless what has been done is an eyesore and in poor taste.

Action – Clerk to contact resident with outcome.

Launch of consultation relating to a Public Space Protection Order for Alcohol in Warrington.

Councillors to respond individually if they so wish.

National Model Design Code Consultation.

Councillors to respond individually if they so wish.

The state of Mill Lane as a result of farm vehicles.

The Clerk had received a complaint from a resident following on from the potholes issue, which WBC had now repaired. It related to the mud left on the road by huge tractors which invariably blocked the drain, causing flooding during heavy rain on the corner with Runcorn Road.

Following a discussion, it was established that there is no weight limit on farm vehicles. The fields either side of the Lane are owned by Peel Holdings and tenanted by J H Willis. It is a legal requirement for farmers to clear up a road after use.

Councillor Harris also pointed out the danger created by JH Willis lorries queuing on Runcorn Road when the fields are being treated with slurry.

Action – Clerk to make JH Willis aware of their responsibilities.

Action – Clerk to write to resident advising that an option would be for them to contact the police if the Lane is not cleared after slurrying.

152. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be Thursday 1st April 2021 by Zoom conferencing, commencing at 7.30pm.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 9.12pm.