

Clerk to the Council: -
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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 6th April 2017.

Present Councillor B M Price – Vice Chairman
Councillor G J Greenshields
Councillor D M Karalius
Councillor H A S Hardie
Councillor Y R Shaikh
Councillor A Jones
Councillor D A Meacock

In Attendance Parish Clerk R J Hallam
Borough Councillor S Harris
Resident 1
PCSO Steve Parr

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7.31pm.

1. Apologies for Absence

The Chairman reported that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor R Hardie (holiday), Councillor Taylor (work) and Councillor Bennett (holiday).

2. Adjournment

The Chairman asked for an adjournment to allow The PCSO and the resident to address the meeting.

It was resolved that the meeting should go into adjournment. Time 7.32pm.

Steve Parr is the PCSO for Hatton, Stretton and Walton and comes free of charge.

He explained his role. There have been 7 recorded crime incidents in the last 30 days, but none really to worry about. In his role as Traffic Enforcement Officer on the 16th March, in a one and half hour period, 16 vehicles exceeded the speed limit, 2 were local and the maximum speed was 60mph.

His attention was drawn to the parking issue outside the cottages next to the entrance to the new Ship Inn development. He was aware of this and has been keeping an eye out, but there have been no problems since it was highlighted. He will continue to monitor.

He gave out leaflets on the Herbert Protocol Safe and Sound Scheme. This scheme encourages carers and family members to compile useful key information about family members with dementia, on a form which can be handed to the police in the event of them going missing, saving valuable time.

He will be very happy to come along to future meetings.

Ed Aston had come along to the meeting to explain the ongoing problems he is experiencing with WBC Planning Dept. He had also been to an earlier meeting on the same issue. He gets no helpful feedback, with the process taking a long time and the house remaining empty.

A single storey application has been approved and he has recently submitted an application for a 2nd storey.

He had commissioned a daylight and sunlight report in respect of his application but the Planning Dept. did not upload this to the planning site. He will forward this on to the Clerk.

Borough Councillor Harris offered to refer this to Bor. Cllr. Peter Walker.

Action – Clerk to forward report to Borough Councillor Harris and to Councillor R Hardie, Chairman of the Planning Advisory Group.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 2nd March 2017 were reviewed.

It was resolved that the minutes be accepted as a true record.

4. Reports on Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

The Clerk referred to the report. Items which required further comment were covered later, on the agenda.

5. Report from Borough Councillors.

Borough Councillor Harris (BCSH) reported that the Hough's Lane sandstone wall has now been repaired. The drainage work on Warrington Road it has been too wet to complete. She continues to raise the damage to the wall on Park Lane at the Walton Hall Liaison Meeting, although at moment there is no budget for this.

The Walton towpath has now been cleared. There is a lot of litter at the bottom of Holly Hedge lane/Runcorn Road and she may organise a litter pick. WBC are looking at DNA testing in respect of dog fouling. They are also looking at pavement parking.

A Read to Relax session is to be held at the Sandy Lane Community Centre on Thursday 27th April at 3pm.

6. Civic Service.

The Clerk explained that although it had been agreed that Sugar and Spice would do the catering an amount had not been recorded in the minutes and the budget for this had been set at £450.

It was resolved that the PC would spend the sum of £475 on catering for the Civic Service.

7. 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 001013	payable to R J Hallam	Clerk's Salary	£258.31
Cheque number 001014	payable to HMRC	PAYE/Tax	£64.60
Cheque number 001015	payable to Stockton Heath Festival	Sponsor Warr Male Voice Choir	£300.00
Cheque number 001016	payable to Warr Bor Co	Planting of 4 trees on A56	£537.60
Cheque number 001017	payable to R J Hallam	Office Expenses (Renewal AVG Int Prot	£69.99

Following approval of the proposal under agenda item 6 the following account was also included;

Cheque number 001018	payable to P A Lumsden	Civic Service Catering	£475.00
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The Clerk also asked for the following account to be added to the list, which had been received following issue of the Financial Report;

Cheque number 001019	payable to Walton Lea Partnership Ltd	Planting & Tidying	£100.00
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Councillor Greenshields (GG) asked whether we are not contravening any of our standing orders by adding something verbally. Councillor Shaikh explained that although the standing orders don't say that you can do that, in the past it was decided to take a pragmatic view for relatively small sums and for work already approved, the Standing Orders are silent on some points. GG said that if we are saying it is fine then he is

quite relaxed, he was just trying to say that if we have processes we should follow them rather than ignore them. He also said that we should review our processes at some stage in the near future.

It was resolved that the Financial Report and the Accounts for Payment be approved. The cheques were signed by Cllrs. H A S Hardie and Meacock

8. Payment to Councillors.

Responses had been received from Joanne Crawford at the Legal Dept. of WBC, the Internal Auditor, ChALC and SoLCC. These had been documented on the Matters Arising Report for transparency, so they were part of Parish records.

The Clerk offered a summary, in that his interpretation was, that there was not a problem with the payments made to both councillors over the last 5 years, but that there was an issue with any arrangement with a councillor in an on-going Parish Warden role.

Councillor Greenshields (GJG) said as far as a councillor in the role of Parish Warden goes, we couldn't go there. However, payments to councillors for odd jobs done is acceptable, as long as we get the processes right. He stated that as a follow on from the review we had done, we should have a review of the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, to see if we can improve them.

A discussion then took place on whether the Councillor should be paid for the work completed, as part of tasks allocated and overseen by Councillor Meacock. This was 12 hour's work (£150) and included the cleaning of road and street signs, cutting back at the War Memorial and pruning and tidying.

Councillor Shaikh (YRS) stated that, it is not the point that he is profiteering, but whether he is classed as an employee of the PC. In good faith he has done work, which councillors agreed to. He thinks he is entitled to payment for services and it is reasonable for the PC to say that this is not an arrangement we will continue with. It must be much more of an arm's length service contract and we can do that and say we have an obligation which needs to be closed and then go forward on that basis.

YRS felt it was more pressing that the councillor updated his Declaration of Interests, which he said was blank and that this should include the value of services he had provided for the PC over the last 3 years. The Clerk did query the fact that the DPI was blank as the Internal Auditor had confirmed to him during a telephone conversation that he had seen his business name detailed, but that this may be on the WBC website as part of the PC information.

In response to a question raised by GRG as to whether YRS was saying that we should continue to use the councillor. YRS said that we need to formalise the contract so that it is clearly a service contract. GRG said that we must also look for competition.

YRS said that we had done enough of asking other people and that it can be sorted out ourselves.

GJG referred to the 4 requirements of the parish councillor awarded the contract as listed by Joanne Crawford. Three out of four were satisfied and the fourth one in respect of declaration of Interests needs clarifying.

YRS said it had to be two things. One is what his company is and two what contracts he has with the PC and the work he's done for the PC over the last few years.

GRG said he was happy to go with point 2 as detailed by Joanne Crawford (see April Matters Arising Report), but that everybody would have to agree that we are trying to enter into a contract for services.

YRS said he was happy to work with the Clerk and to give a written opinion back to the PC to indicate how he was thinking and it can then be approved or otherwise. Councillors asked YRS to go ahead and do this.

Action – The Clerk to meet up with Councillor Shaikh and compile report.

9. Planning Matters

The Planning Advisory Group Report had been issued with the meeting documentation.

Planning application 2017/29941 The Barn was discussed and Councillor Greenshields gave some background information to the application.

A neighbour has some concerns about height and overlooked issues and has been in contact with Borough Councillor Peter Walker. BCSH will forward copies of these to the Clerk, for passing on to the PAG.

Action – Clerk to pass on to PAG.

10. Boundary Commission/Borough Councillor's Title Change.

The Clerk explained that both Hatton and Stretton had emailed to offer their support with the Ward title change.

The Clerk explained the process that WBC would have to follow, i.e. seek permission of BC for any change and then carry out a consultation followed by resolution. The cost of this process could be an issue. Councillor Shaikh said that his preference would be to wait the 5 years (2020) as permission from BC would not then be required.

BCSH said that borough councillors would support the attempt to change, but this could depend in the long run on costs involved. She also said that borough councillors would continue to include the names of the parishes in their titles. Councillor Greenshields proposed that we take the next step and write to WBC and this was agreed.

Action – Clerk to write to WBC about seeking permission from the BC.

11. Report on Parish Matters

Creamfields

The Police and Crime Commissioner had advised that the planning of the event was being led by Inspector Mark Gammage. Inspector Gammage had indicated that he would be happy to attend one of our meetings. Councillor Karalius suggested that we invite him to the next Working Group Meeting, as all the parish councils would be represented. This was supported.

Action – Clerk to write to MG about the Working Group Meeting. Alternatively invite to June PC meeting.

Stockton Heath Library

The Clerk said he had emailed a copy of a letter sent by Peter Walker, Borough Councillor and Chairman of Stockton Heath Parish Council to Tony Higgins the Executive member for Leisure, Culture & Community at WBC.

BCSH gave an update on the activity taking place to preserve the future of the libraries.

Action – Clerk to resend a copy of PW's letter to all councillors.

Two Acre Caravan Site

The Clerk read out a section of an email from Malcolm Eldridge where he outlined resident's concerns about the delay in the new application. Also, that the application may be unable to be commented on due to insufficient time.

BCSH confirmed that Planning were waiting for further information. She also commented, that would any other applicant have been given the same patience and consideration. It was agreed that we should invite Mike Davies from Planning to attend our May meeting to explain the situation. In view of the fact that our May meeting is the Annual Parish Council Meeting, the start of the meeting will be brought forward to 7pm.

Action – Clerk to send invite to Mike Davies and advise Malcolm Eldridge.

Microphone system for Community Church Hall

The Clerk went through the email from Mr Priestner, regarding his request for low cost microphone facilities.

The Clerk advised on the systems available at Maplins. Three wireless microphones would cost £190 plus wiring to existing hi-fi system, five would cost £320. The Clerk at Appleton PC had advised that their system had been put in by ACTS Sound at a cost of £3000 and that a licence for the use of microphones is required every 2 years.

Councillors decided not to support the introduction of a microphone system.

Other Parish Matters

None

12. Report from Village Betterment Advisory Group

Councillor A Hardie advised that there had not been a meeting.

Action – Clerk to include Waste stored at Warrington Dock, Birchwood Lane, Moore on the May agenda.

13. Reports from Appointed Representatives

Publicity – Councillor Karalius – No magazine.

Footpaths – Councillor Price – There is a ROW meeting next week. She will raise the issue of the state of the towpath from Red Lane bridge to Hough's Lane bridge

Roads/Traffic and Street Lighting – Councillor Bennett – Councillor Karalius raised her serious concerns about the Japanese knotweed coming through the tarmac on the A56 cyclepath from the Runcorn Road junction to Holly Hedge Lane.

Action – Clerk to notify WBC.

South Neighbourhood Board – Councillor R. Hardie – No report.

Walton Hall Estate – The Heritage Lottery Fund grant application has been approved. The front of the Hall has been repointed.

14. Review of Correspondence

Public Space Protection Order Consultation – Insufficient interest for Parish involvement.

Mr. Priestner email re HGV signage on Holly Hedge Lane. – The Clerk went through the email which he had forwarded to WBC. WBC had responded that any new signing had been declined due to the national highway de-clutter agenda, adopted by WBC, as only minimum signs will be provided.

Action – Clerk to reply to Highways to explain that the problem is not the weight limit but the size of the HGV vehicles, as many of the HGVs are within the weight restriction but still far too big to get over the bridge and that the weight limit signage should be replaced by No HGVs.

Police and Crime Commissioner meeting with parish reps on 25th April.

The Clerk advised that he had observed from the minutes of the last meeting that many of the Borough's parish councils had attended the previous meeting, including Stretton and Hatton, but not Walton. Councillor A Hardie said that Councillor R Hardie would attend this meeting.

Action – Clerk to recirculate the email regarding the meeting.

15. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be the Annual Parish Council meeting on Thursday 4th May 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 21.55 hrs.