

Clerk to the Council: -
Mr. R. J. Hallam
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Minutes of the remote Parish Council meeting of Walton Parish Council held on Thursday the 7th May 2020 via Zoom Conferencing.

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

Residents 0

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.32pm and welcomed everybody.

1. Apologies for Absence

The Chair reported that 3 apologies for absence had been received. Councillors Greenshields (ill), Price (ill) and Bennett (work commitment).

2. Adjournment.

No adjournment.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 5th March 2020 were reviewed.

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

4. Reports on Matters Arising from the previous minutes

The report had been issued with the meeting documentation. The Clerk stated that there were a number of matters to be added to the report since its issue.

Air Monitors.

The Clerk reported that he had not received any data from Richard Moore the Environmental Protection Officer (Air) at WBC, from their monitor sited on Chester Road. Possibly owing to the Coronavirus issue.

Action – Clerk to follow this up.

Tree Maintenance Walton QEII Jubilee Playground.

The Clerk had received a call from Rob Haslam of Holly Oak Tree Services advising that he would be unable to carry out the maintenance work on the 24th April as originally agreed. Most of his staff had been furloughed owing to the Coronavirus and he would be in touch to arrange a new date once people were able to get back to work.

Stockton Heath Festival.

The donation had been returned following the Festival cancellation with the Coronavirus.

Risk Management Review.

The Clerk reported that he had put together a list of all the Parish Council's Accounts and Passwords, which would be placed in a sealed envelope and would be handed over to the Chair, to ensure continuity in the event of anything happening to the Clerk. The hand over will be arranged as soon as it is safe to do so under the Coronavirus restrictions.

Community Fibre Partnership.

Action – Councillor Taylor to forward the email he had received from Openreach to the Clerk.

Walton Towpath.

Action – Clerk to write to Peter Parkinson to try and rearrange a site meeting using social distancing.

Fence on Walton Lea Road.

Action – The Clerk and Borough Councillor to chase up Neil Simpson about replacement of the fence.

5. Report from Borough Councillor.

SAH had circulated her report (attached to these minutes) by email to all councillors earlier in the day. It covered, Walton Estate Grounds, Development Management Committee, Waste and Recycling, Local Plan, Western Link, Stobarts and South Warrington Parish Councils.

Concern was expressed about the temporary change in procedure (reviewed after 3 months) whereby the Parish Council is now required to express any objection or comment on planning applications via the Borough Councillor. The Parish Council can express more detailed comments to the DMC, as it would if making a personal presentation at the meeting.

Action – Clerk to write to the Chair of DMC, Nicky Gallagher, Stephen Broomhead and Matthew Comberbach, making our view known.

Councillor Hardie stated that WBC should take steps as early as possible to re-open the waste re-cycling centres.

Action – Borough Councillor Harris will check on the current funeral waiting time at the Crematorium.

Councillor Taylor had stated that strict security measures were in place at Walton Hall Estate following the setting up of temporary Morgue facilities, owing to serious incidents occurring at a similar facility in Halton.

6. 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 Financial Report also included Accounts that had been paid in April, as there had not been an April meeting owing to the Coronavirus.

The Clerk presented: -

April Accounts

Chq no. 001209	pay to R J Hallam	Clerk's Salary	£281.13
Chq no. 001210	pay to HMRC	PAYE/Tax	£70.28
Chq no. 001211	pay to R J Hallam	Office Expenses (ink & internet protection)	£87.98
Chq no. 001212	pay to Gardenia	Feb £412.50/Mar £390	£802.50
Chq no. 001213	pay to WBC	Planting 7 trees on A56	£960.00

May Accounts

Chq no. 001214	pay to R J Hallam	Clerk's Salary	£281.13
Chq no. 001215	pay to HMRC	PAYE/Tax	£70.28
Chq no. 001216	pay to R J Hallam	Office Expenses (Ink)	£7.99
Chq no. 001217	pay to Gardenia	Warden/Ranger work April	£360.00
Chq no. 001218	pay to St. John's PCC	Donation for Churchyard maintenance	£300.00
Chq no. 001219	pay to Zurich Municipal	Insurance Renewal	£531.12

Receipts

£350 refund from Stockton Heath Festival.

£13182 precept received after bank statement received.

It was resolved that the Financial Report and the Accounts for Payment be approved. However, cheque number 001219 to be held in abeyance to enable the Clerk to seek an alternative quote for the Parish's insurance. As long as there is no significant difference in any fresh quote received, then subject to the Chair's approval the cheque can be issued. Arrangements will be made for the cheques to be signed.

Action – Clerk to seek alternative quote for Parish Council Insurance.

Internet Banking

Action – Clerk to get the signature details at the Bank up to date and make further enquiries with the Bank on the implications of Internet Banking for the Parish's banking arrangements.

7. Donations Advisory Group.

In the absence of Councillor Meacock, the Chair took up the proposal for St. John's Church, churchyard maintenance.

It was resolved that the PC donate the sum of £300 to St. John's Church for the maintenance of the churchyard.

The proposal to donate the £600 Civic Service budget (no longer taking place owing to Coronavirus) to Warrington Foodbank and or a Local Charity was debated and there was a cross section of views for both sides of the argument.

Councillor Harris explained the virtues of Care UK Charity. The importance of complying with Section 137 powers was raised by Councillor Taylor. In the end it was decided to refer the matter to The DAG for them to discuss and make a recommendation to the full Parish Council.

Both Councillors Davies and Harris felt that making a donation in this manner, was a way of the PC making a contribution during this pandemic and Councillor Harris wanted her disappointment at this outcome recorded.

8. Internal and External Audit.

It was resolved that the PC approve the Receipts and Payments Account for the Y/E 31st March 2020.

Review of the Internal Audit. It transpired that councillors had only received the first page of five of the Internal Auditor's Plan and it was therefore decided to defer this review to the next meeting once the Clerk has provided councillors with all pages of the document.

9. Planning Matters

The report had been issued with the meeting documentation.

Councillor Hardie talked through the cases on the report and there was nothing further to add.

10. Local Plan Proposed Submission Version.

In the absence of both Councillors Greenshields and Price this was deferred until the next meeting.

11. Report on Parish Matters

Civic Service

The Clerk reported that he had written to all invited guests advising that the event had been cancelled owing to the Coronavirus.

Pensions Regulator

The Clerk reported that he had completed the Re-declaration.

Other Parish Matters

None

12. Report from Village Betterment Advisory Group.

A meeting had been called for the 18th March but was cancelled owing to the Coronavirus. Instead there was an exchange of emails between members of the Group and Councillor Hardie produced a set of minutes, which were circulated by the Clerk and a copy attached to these minutes and on the relevant section of the website.

Flower Tubs for Holly Hedge Lane (Runcorn Road end)

Action – Clerk to set up site meeting with Jamie Fisher to discuss the siting of the barrels.

VE Day

It was resolved that the PC could spend up to £100 on the purchase of bunting for VE Day.

Thanks were given by Councillor Harris to the Chair for decorating the Walton QEII Jubilee Playground and War Memorial with the bunting, which she felt was a good community initiative, however she did feel that this went against the grain, when we did not support people in a more practical way.

Gardenia Gardens Ltd Contract Renewal

It was resolved that the contract with Gardenia is renewed for 12 months to run from 1st May 2020.

Councillor Hardie expressed the view that when considering contract renewal next year then re-tendering should be considered.

13. Reports from Appointed Representatives

Church Magazine/Publicity – Cllr Bennett – No magazine.

Footpaths – Councillor Price – No report.

Roads/Traffic and Street Lighting – Councillor Bennett – had spoken to the Chair and advised that the grids on Chester Road from the Toast Rack Bridge to Walton's boundary badly needed clearing out with a spade.

Action – Clerk to report to WBC.

Walton Hall Estate – Councillor Hardie said that there was no information available about how the Estate was doing financially.

Councillor Harris said that there had been a lot of successful events held at Walton Hall and that we could ask Neil Simpson to send us a report or join in our next Remote Zoom meeting. However, after further discussion, it was decided to let Councillor Price approach him and then report back to the PC accordingly.

Action – Councillor Price to make contact with Neil Simpson and then report back to the next meeting.

14. Review of Correspondence

Request for help with Local Electricity Bill – Decision not to respond.

Annual Parish Council Meeting

Councillor Hardie asked whether next months meeting should be the Annual Parish Council Meeting. In spite of the new legislation stating that this meeting did not now need to be held until May 2021, he saw no reason why we couldn't do this remotely. Councillor Harris also supported this view.

The Clerk had spoken to Jackie Weaver on this matter and it was her view that the new legislation enabling meetings to be carried out remotely had not been brought in so that Parish Councils could carry on with business as usual. But Councillor Harris said that delaying any APC meeting until May 2021 was there to protect some rural Parish Councils, who did not have reliable broadband and therefore could not hold remote meetings.

It was decided that the Clerk would consult with those not present and unless there is a strong objection and after consulting with the Chair, the Clerk will set up the June meeting as the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

15. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Thursday 4th June 2020 and will be held remotely via Zoom Conferencing, commencing at 7.30pm.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting closed at 21.25 hrs.