**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at St John’s Church Community Hall on 6th February 2025**

The meeting commenced at 19:00. Councillors present : Sharon Harris (SH) (Chair), Anita Williams (AW), Viv Lacey (VL), Helen Allison (HA), Christina Hewitt (CH) (Vice-Chair and Temporary Clerk), Richard Bennett (RB), John Green (JG). Robert Hardy (RH) joined at 19:15. Stephen Saberi (SS) joined at 19:45.

The meeting was attended by Warrington Borough Councillor Matt Scott ( MS).

# **144** **Apologies for absence**

Apologies from David Hazeldine (DH).

# **145 Declarations of Interest**

*Councillors are reminded of their responsibility to declare disposable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests which they have on an y item on the agenda no later when the item is reached. Declarations are a personal matter for each member to decide and the decision to declare, or not, is the responsibility of the councillor.*

**146 Matters to be considered with the exclusion of the press and public**

[using Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s. 2]

To consider if any items on the agenda should be considered in closed session because of the nature of the information to be disclosed, whether pertaining to an individual, a contract or legal advice. Two matters were postponed to later in the meeting, to be disclosed in a closed session. Minutes in Part 2.

# **147 Public Participation**

In accordance with Standing Orders, members of the public and any visitors in attendance may address the meeting.

147.1 PCSO Report – circulated prior to meeting  
147.2 Two members of the public, in attendance. One observing. The other wishing to raise an objection to planning application ref 2024/01620/CLDE which requests a change of use of the bowling green at the Stag pub, on Chester Road. The Chair shared the comments made by RH as member of the Planning Advisory Group. Councillor Hardy gave further advice, when he joined the meeting. Objections need to be registered by 27.02.2025. It was agreed Councillor Scott would attend the next planning meeting to register our PC’s opposition, on the grounds of noise and annoyance to the neighbouring area.   
147.3 Borough Councillors – As part of Warrington Bourough Council’s (WBC) savings plan there are proposals to: a) review parking charges at Stockton Heath’s Car Park, including the abolition of free parking times; b) close the Stockton Heath Recycling Centre; c) consider Library savings. SH pointed out that, in the past, plans to close the re-cycling centre were rescinded, following opposition. SH added that there is no other local Recycling Centre in the area. AW commented that the Recycling Centre in Stockton Heath is difficult to access and does not meet the recycling needs of the population, as many materials are not accepted.

HA pointed out that abolishing free parking in the evening, would have a negative effect on local hospitality businesses. SH reported that, with the exception of the town centre, South Warrington is the only part of town where there are car parking charges. MS and SH do not know what plans have been made for savings in the Library Services.

**148 Approval of Minutes**

RH requested that the following amendments should be made to the minutes of the PC meeting of 16.1.25:

142.2…”Councillor Hardy handed over three envelopes, two of which were open”…

It was agreed the amendment would be made and the minutes would be considered accepted and signed by The Chair.

Majority approval obtained.

# **149 Banking Update**

Attempts have been made to change the Clerk’s details to the new Temporary Clerk, prior to changing bank accounts. This proved very complex, as previous signatories would have to be involved. The decision was made to postpone this to when the new Clerk is in postand we can migrate bank accounts to online banking.

**150 Employment Committee (Cllrs Harris/Hewitt/Lacey/Williams)**

Session held with the exclusion of the public. See part 2.

**151 Cadent (Cllr Hewitt)**

There is a third and final consultation in place, regarding the location of the local HAGI. Comments are due by 23.2.25. The proposal is that the new HAGI site should be HWH9, which is on the other side of the Ship Canal on the Solvay Complex. There has been no explanation on where the pipe will cross the Ship Canal. It is assumed the two possible sites are Mill Lane and/ or an adjoining field. CH has been with MP Sarah Hall’s office. RH asked if the HSE has been consulted, but this information is not available to us. CH and SS will write a response to the new consultation on behalf of Walton PC.

**152 Creamfields (Cllr Harris)**

SH proposed thatWalton Parish Council organizes a consultation meeting and invites local residents, Creamfields, the Highways Department, the MP and the Police. Meeting to be organized by SH, VL and SS for late March/early April.

SH confirmed that Walton PC received a £5000 donation from Creamfields, on 09.01.25. She has written to thank them.

**153 South East Warrington Urban Extension (SEWUE**)

Notes attached of meeting held on 22.1.25 and attended by SH. Joining SEWE will cost Walton Parish Council £10. This has been calculated according to the impact of developments on the area. Proposal to join made by SH and seconded by VL. Majority vote to accept.

**154 Election Expenses**

See email sent 24.1.25 from Cllr Harris to WBC concerning election charges requesting a breakdown of the charges. These are: Lower Walton £82.43; Higher Walton £1,651.40; Total £1733.92

A discussion was held on whether to challenge the Higher Walton charge, in view of the advice given to Councillors by the office of Democratic Services. Funding for the charges is available having been retained by the PC yearly, for the event of an election. It was agreed to write to Democratic Services office and offer to share responsibility and share cost. Proposed by Cllr Lacey; seconded by Cllr Hewitt. Carried with a majority vote.

**155 GDPR**

Session held with the exclusion of the public. See part 2.

**156** **Finance**

The following payments have been made but remain unpresented at 17/01/2025

001588 Hayley Beardall 40.00

001590 Christina Hewitt 17.65

001592 WODAC Donation 100.00

001593 Gardenia Gardens Ltd

INV 8965 342.00

INV 9123 126.00

001594 R. Hardie 36.00

CH asked RH to confirm what the £36 was for. RH reported the payment was for Christmas lights. CH and AW pointed out that this expenditure was neither requested at the time, nor approved. RH confirmed that he had not made the Events group aware of the need for extra lights when the Christmas arrangements (including budget) were made.

HA needs to follow up the £288 payment to Gardenia with the precious Clerk, as it appears to be two bills paid together.

One new payment to be authorised on 06/02/25 to Gardenia Gardens Ltd. INV 9180 for £173.00

NB There is another Gardenia Invoice sent in recently from 1/10/2024 for 288.00 which needs to be researched before payment as it was in the previous Clerk's time and may have been paid together with another Invoice but no Invoice numbers on cheque stubs.

\*No Bank Statement received at 31/01/2025.

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| --- | --- |
| 20/01/24 Balance brought forward | 32,144.98 |
| Less unpresented cheques | 661.65 |
| **Balance in hand @ 31/01/25** | **31,483.33** |

**157 Strategic Plan (Cllr Lacey)**

Verbal update. Postponed.

**158 Reports from Advisory Groups**

**158.1 Planning**

Report received this afternoon and circulated.

Applications since January meeting:

2024/01031FULH I Warrington Road- no objection

2024/01620CLDE The Shed Moore-no objection

2025/00751FULH 13 Granby Road- no objection

2024/01620CLDE The Stag- see item 147.2. RH suggested the Parishioner canvass the opinion of neighbouring residents.

**158.2 Betterment Advisory Group**

Verbal Report.the group has met to discuss what we would like Gardenia to focus on in future. A review of the contract is scheduled for May.

AW presented information on the Community Payback scheme and where they might be able to help with some maintenance of the Parish, for example the re-varnishing of benches, agreed at the January meeting. The scheme supports low level offenders who have been ordered to do unpaid work, instead of a prison sentence. Help is in the form of learning new skills, applying for jobs, literacy skills. Councillors agreed that AW should follow up her initial contact with the scheme.

**158.3 Events Advisory Group**

AW proposed, to spend £56 for VE day lamp post signs. seconded by ? Majority approval obtained.

**158.4 Donations**

No written report. SH proposed that the Parish Council donate £425 to the Stockton Heath Festival, which benefits Walton residents, due to its closeness. JG seconded the motion. Majority vote to make payment.

**159 Report on recent dog attacks in Walton (Cllr Harris)**

For information only. E-mail circulated.

**160 Reports from Portfolio Holders and Outside Body Representatives**

160,1 Footpaths/Towpaths. No report.  
160.2 Highways, Vegetation & Street Lighting. Numerous matters reported to WBC. Details held by DH. Flooding on Chester Road near the Walton Lea access Road continues. Bollards and signs have not been removed by contracted companies following the completion of works. AW reported that a local resident had a cycling accident on black ice created by the persistent flooded area on the corner between Old Chester Road and Warrington Road. The resident needed to be hospitalized and received considerable injuries. SH asked AW to pass on Councillor’s best wishes. AW stated that the matter had been reported to WBC by two local residents. RH reported that the white lines on Osborne Road, Stetchworth Road and Hill Cliffe Road are no longer clearly visible.

Trees in Verges – Discuss – Correspondence attached to agenda of letters between two local residents and Walton PC about maintenance of trees, bought by Walton PC and placed by WBC on Mertoun Road and Worsley Road. WB has shared their tree policy but it is not clear whether they will take responsibility for the maintenance of the trees, which were purchased by Walton Parish council, but planted by WBC. Parish Clerk to write to the resident of Mertoun Road and suggest they approach Open Reach, as the issue is, that the trees are now hitting the BT overhead lines. The Parish Clerk will also write to Open Reach with the same request.

160.3 Walton Hall EstateNo updates.

**161 Report on Actions taken and correspondence received since the previous meeting**

SH reported correspondence action list has been completed but not printed. Information will be circulated.

**162 Any Other Business**

**162.1** A card of condolence was signed for Sarah Hall, MP following her family bereavement .

**162.2** RB informed the Parish Council that a 5-G mast has been installed locally, so Parishioners will be able to access 5-G.

**163 Set date and time of next meeting**

The next Walton Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 6th March 2025 at St. John’s Community Church Hall, Old Chester Road, Walton commencing at 7.00pm.

(Minutes taken by Cllr Williams)