



Walton Parish Council

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held at St John's Church Community Hall, Old Chester Road, Higher Walton, on Thursday 8 January 2026.

Present C Hewitt – Chair

Councillors: V Lacey (arrived 19:04), R Hardie, H Allison, R Bennett (arrived 19:11) and E Jones.

Attending Clerk- Madison Brotherton-Baker.

The Chair opened the meeting at 19:02, welcomed those present, and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

256 Apologies for absence

The Chair advised that apologies were received from Cllr Harris, Cllr Hazeldine, Cllr Cooke, Cllr Williams, Cllr Saberi, and Borough Cllr Matt Scott.

257 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made at this point in the meeting.

258 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.

Cllr Lacey arrived.

259 Public Participation

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

259.1 PCSO Report – No report was received. The Clerk advised that the report will be circulated once received.

259.2 Members of the Public - No members of the public were in attendance.

259.3 Borough Councillors – No Borough Councillors were in attendance.

260 Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 4 December 2025 were **Resolved** to be a true record and signed by the chair.

261 Microsoft 365 Annual Subscription

The Council considered the revised annual cost of the Microsoft 365 subscription, noting the increase from £79.99 to £84.99 and that the expenditure exceeds the allocated budget

provision for 2025/26. It was **Resolved** that the revised annual subscription cost of £84.99 for Microsoft 365 be approved.

Cllr Bennett arrived.

262 Budget and Precept 2026/27

The Clerk presented the 2026/27 budget allocation and recommended that the Council continue to review reserve levels through routine bank reconciliations and future budget-setting cycles. The Clerk noted that, based on the proposed budget allocation, the Council's reserves will equate to approximately 86% of the precept value for 2026/27, which sits within sector guidance, as referenced in WPC's most recent Internal Audit. It was **Resolved** that the 2026/27 budget forecast be approved.

The Council considered the proposed 2026/27 budget for the purpose of setting the Parish Council precept. It was **Resolved** that WPC would maintain the precept at the same level as the previous year and accept the Warrington Borough Council precept recommendation of £19,722.00. It was noted that the small difference compared to the previous year's precept is attributable to the revised Band D Council Tax equivalent as calculated by Warrington Borough Council.

263 Finance

263.1 The Clerk provided advice on the background and requirement for an additional policy in relation to Community Grants, should the Council wish to approve larger donations. The Clerk advised that WPC's current policy, which specifies a £200 limit for precept-funded expenditure, applies to all Council funds regardless of income stream, as all monies are accounted for together and are not treated as separate. As such, differentiation by income source is not permitted.

The Clerk advised if the Council wished to approve donations in excess of £200, the current Donations Policy value limit would need to be revised and resolved by Council, or an additional Community Grants Policy adopted, which would allow for larger donations to be formally approved

The Chair provided information regarding the Parish Council's donation powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972. It was noted that the 2025/26 spending limit for Parish Councils, as set by central government, is £11.60 per elector.

The Chair confirmed that the current number of electors for Walton Parish, as confirmed by the Elections Office, is 1,335.

It was noted that the current WPC Donations Policy includes a spending cap of 5% of the precept value. It was confirmed that, for the 2025/26 financial year, WPC has currently donated £670.

It was **Resolved** for the Clerk to draft a Community Grants Policy and to issue to the Donations Advisory Group for comment.

263.2. The Finance Report had been issued to Councillors prior to the meeting.

The Clerk advised that there had been issues with the payroll software and, as a result, the final figures following deductions for the Clerk's salary and an additional payment had not yet been able to be confirmed. These figures will be confirmed once the issue has been resolved

Proposed payments:

- Firefighters Charity Donation- £100.00
- Gardenia Gardens Invoice 11222 - £144.00
- CHALC Invoice 188 Clerk Training - £60.00
- Clerk Reimbursement Printer Ink- £32.98
- Clerk Reimbursement Microsoft Office Subscription- £84.99
- Cllr Williams Reimbursement for Christmas Light Batteries- £5.00
- HMRC PAYE- £21.03

It was **Resolved** to accept the Finance Report and approve the above payments, and for the Clerk to prepare and issue cheques accordingly.

264 Training

Approval was **Resolved** for the Chairs and Cllr Williams attendance at CHALC's Introduction to AI Training at the cost of £80.

The Chair noted the intention for Cllr Jones to attend CHALC training as a new Councillor. The Clerk will add the proposal to the agenda for consideration at the February 2026 meeting.

265 Walton Roads and Bridges

No further information was reported. The Council noted its frustration at the lack of responses from Warrington Borough Council. The Clerk was requested to write to Mark Tune (WBC) to seek updates regarding the closure of the Walton bridge

266 Strategic Plan

Cllr Lacey noted the ongoing work being undertaken in relation to the Strategic Plan.

Cllr Lacey also discussed the Port Warrington Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion application (2025/01650/SCR). It was noted that WPC had submitted a representation requesting that an Environmental Impact Screening be undertaken. Reference was made to recent research carried out by Cllr Saberi in support of the Strategic Plan, which was used within the representation to provide evidence as to why the screening should take place.

An update on the outcome of the Screening Opinion for this application will be provided in due course.

267 Reports from Advisory Groups

267.1 Planning

267.1.1 It was noted that the Planning Group had not yet elected a chair, nor updated its Terms of Reference.

267.1.2 Port Warrington. It was noted that application 2025/01650/SCR, relating to a proposed port-related modular unit at Port Warrington (discussed under Item 266), was listed on the agenda as a Planning Application. However, the application was in fact an Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Opinion application.

The Council expressed concern that information relating to this application had not been circulated to the Council, despite the direct impact the potential works could have on Walton and the surrounding areas.

267.1.3 The Planning report was included in the agenda pack, the following applications were discussed:

2025/00850/FUL - 152 Walton Road, Warrington, WA4 6NS- Proposed erection of a single storey dwelling.

WPC made no comment on this application.

2025/01486/FUL - United Utilities, Warrington South Waste Water Treatment Works Bellhouse Lane, Walton, Warrington, WA4 6TS - Motor Control Centre Kiosk including below ground concrete base.

WPC made no comment on this application

2025/01576/TPO - 1 Old Hall Close, Walton, Warrington, WA4 6SZ - Remedial pruning to two trees.

WPC made no comment on this application.

267.2 Betterment Advisory Group

The meeting notes from the Betterment Advisory Group meeting held on 16 December 2025 were discussed.

The Chair noted that the meeting was positive and updated the group on progress regarding a questionnaire for residents. The questionnaire will include information about the Parish Council and seek residents' opinions on the grassed triangle. It is intended that the questionnaire will be presented to the Council at the February 2026 meeting.

The potential for a leaflet drop to distribute the questionnaire is still under review. The questionnaire will also be posted on the WPC website and shared via social media.

It was noted that quotes for the refurbishment of the bronze plaque have been received and are currently under review, with discussion planned for the February meeting. The refurbished bronze plaque will be unveiled at the 106-year Anniversary of the War Memorial.

The Chair asked the group for suggestions for a local handyman and requested that any recommendations be passed to the Chair or the Clerk.

It was noted that the Christmas lights from the Christmas event were still in place. Cllr Hardie agreed to take action to have them removed.

267.3 Events Advisory Group

The update from the Events Group was covered under the Betterment Advisory Group, Item 267.2. It was noted that a further update from the Events Group would be provided at the February 2026 meeting.

267.4 Donations

The Council considered making an additional donation to the Lions Charity following their attendance at the Christmas Light Switch-On event. It was **Resolved** that WPC would donate an additional £50 to the charity. This donation will bring the total contribution in line with the £100 donation made to the Firefighters Charity for their attendance at the same event.

268 Reports from Portfolio Holders and Outside Representatives.

268.1 Footpaths/Towpaths

The Councillors' Contact Tracker was noted.

Cllr Jones to report a leaning uprooted tree covering Lady Daresbury walk, via Councillor Contact. The Clerk will send Cllr Jones the email address for the Councillor Contact system.

It was noted that the replacement bin for Hough Lane has been ordered by Warrington Borough Council. However, due to a shortage of bins, there have been delays in installation. The Clerk will monitor the situation and request updates from WBC as appropriate.

268.2 Highways, Vegetation and Street Lighting

A verbal report was received from Cllr Bennett.

Following the report, it was agreed that the Clerk would log the following issues via the Councillor Contact system:

Dirty signage along both sides of the A56.

Hedge maintenance required alongside the bus shelter towards the A56 / towpath bridge.

To chase completion of the cutting back of vegetation on Underbridge Lane. The Clerk asked that Cllr Bennett provides photographs to be included with the report.

268.3 Walton Hall Estate

No report.

269 Report on Actions taken and correspondence received since the previous meeting.

The Clerk provided a verbal update on correspondence received since the previous meeting. The following items were noted and discussed:

It was noted that a request had been received from St John's Church to present a parking proposal at the February meeting. The Clerk will circulate the presentation documents from the Church to Councillors once received.

The Council discussed correspondence from Cheshire Constabulary regarding PCSO redundancies. The Clerk advised that she had written to PCSO Jordan Burke to express the Council's concerns and to extend best wishes. The Clerk will share this correspondence with the Council.

It was noted that the Chair of Hatton Parish Council had written to share concerns regarding the closure of Walton Bridge and the Warrington Road / Park Lane crossroads. The Clerk will keep Hatton Parish Council updated with any information received.

270 Items for inclusion on the next agenda

Items to include Bronze Plaque to the War Memorial, Residents survey, review of Policies on the WPC website, review of Civility and respect Policy/ Code of Conduct, Walton Bridges and, new councillor training and St Johns Church Presentation. The chair noted any further suggested agenda items should be sent to the Clerk.

271 Set date and time of next meeting

The next meeting will be rescheduled and held on **Thursday 5 February 2026** at St John's Community Church Hall, Old Chester Road, Walton, commencing at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 20:27.