

Clerk to the Council: -  
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**Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of Walton Parish Council held at St. John's Church Community Hall, Old Chester Road, Higher Walton, on Thursday the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2024.**

**Present**  
Councillor Y R Shaikh - Chair  
Councillor R Hardie – Vice Chair  
Councillor D M Karalius  
Councillor C J Hewitt  
Councillor V C Lacey  
Councillor S A Harris  
Councillor J C Greene  
Councillor A Williams  
Councillor D Hazeldine

**In Attendance**  
Parish Clerk R J Hallam  
Residents 0  
Borough Councillors Judith Wheeler (JW) and Mark Jervis (MJ)

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.00pm and welcomed everybody.

**Declaration of Interest.**

The Chair reminded Councillors of their duty to declare any interest and in particular on two areas of recent and current considerations.

1. Belonging to a lobby group or equivalent who are seeking to influence the Council. The Chair stated that councilors may belong to such groups, but they need to declare their membership and interest.
2. Offering someone or giving rise to an expectation of employment with the Council.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

The Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Bennett (holiday).

**2. Adjournment**

No adjournment.

**3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were reviewed.

***It was resolved that the minutes be accepted as a true record. Proposed by Councillor Hewitt and seconded by Councillor Lacey. All in favour.***

**4. Reports on Matters Arising from the previous minutes**

The report had been issued with the meeting documentation.

**Holly Hedge Lane.**

Redrow had contacted WBC about requirements and subject to reply and suitable weather conditions hoped to complete work in March. But no progress as yet.

**Good Employer Employment Committee from the February Meeting.**

The chair asked for the progress in proposing a remit for the committee. Councillor Lacey said that the terms of reference were being deferred until after the elections and a new council was in place.

**Clerk's Replacement.**

The Chair said one of the reasons for a 3 month notice period for the Clerk, was to allow the organisation to arrange some continuity. In the absence of arranging continuity, councillors will need to consider how it is going to function and councillors might need to prepare for a councillor, at the June meeting to take over the Clerk's role and take minutes. At the May meeting it could be arranged for a volunteer to step in. There are some responsibilities of the clerk that councillors are not allowed to take over.

Councillor Hardie said that it doesn't need a committee to place an advert for a new Clerk.

Councillor Harris said that a Locum Clerk could be considered in the interim, to ease through any transmission.

The Clerk mentioned items that will need to be handed over on his leaving.

**PCSO Report.**

None received.

It was reported that the PCSO's are in the middle of a re-organisation.

**Action – Clerk will chase this up.**

**5. Report from Borough Councillor.**

Challenge to 656 has been withdrawn and enquiry may now resume as planned on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

Following a question from Councillor Hardie, Borough Councillor Jervis said that owing to the large Labour majority it was difficult for the opposition to successfully challenge the spending plans of WBC.

**6. Creamfields.**

The Clerk outlined what had been done by the PC since the 2023 Event.

The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner David McNeillage had offered to organise a debrief meeting and the Clerk had written to him in November 2023 but nothing had transpired.

Councillor Harris said how disappointing it was that a debrief meeting had not taken place and one was required urgently.

**Action – Borough Councillor Jervis will speak to Andy Carter about this and then contact the Clerk.**

**7. Election and Nomination Papers.**

It was confirmed that those standing for election had submitted their Nomination forms.

**8. Annual Parish Council Meeting.**

*It was resolved that the PC sets the date for the Annual Parish Council meeting as the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024.*

*Proposed by Councillor Shaikh and seconded by Councillor Hewitt. Motion carried 7 voted in favour.*

This was to comply with Standing Order 5.a.

**9. Walton Parish Playground Trust.**

The Chair explained how and when the Trust came about and a brief description of the roles of the trustees and essentially that the Playground is looked after by the PC.

The Clerk had circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting a copy of the last minutes dated 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022. As Councillor Shaikh was not standing for re-election and Barbara Price had already resigned this only left Councillor Bennett as the sole remaining trustee.

In addition, as the Clerk had also resigned, it would be necessary to appoint a new secretary.

It was agreed that after some consideration by councillors, that new trustees would be appointed at the May Annual Parish Council Meeting.

#### **10. Letter of Concern.**

DMK had circulated a letter to the clerk and councillors dated 21<sup>st</sup> March. In the letter DMK had listed her observations of a number of events and behaviours that DMK felt had led to a cause for concern. Before DMK addressed the Council, Councillor Harris said that she had not read the letter and did not want to know and left the meeting for the duration of the agenda item.

DMK explained some of the content and the reason for circulating the letter and expressed her disappointment at issues that had occurred over the previous 9 months. She felt she could not stay silent on the subject and highlighted her main concern that the behaviours of some councillors towards the chair and the clerk were wrong and that she intended to seek advice from NALC and the appropriate officer at WBC.

Councillor Harris re-entered the room.

#### **11. 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, which included a copy of a Bank Reconciliation Statement, a copy of which is attached to these minutes, along with a copy of the Cash Book and the Budgetary Control Sheet.

The Clerk presented: -

|                      |                          |                                           |                           |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Cheque number 001545 | payable to ChALC         | Induction Training Councillor Hewitt      | £25.00                    |
| Cheque number 001546 | payable to R J Hallam    | Clerk's salary                            | £346.58                   |
| Cheque number 001547 | payable to HMRC          | PAYE                                      | £86.67                    |
| Cheque number 001548 | payable to D M Karalius  | Easter bunting                            | £61.75/RBL Womens soldier |
| Cheque number 001549 | payable to ThenMedia Ltd | Website hosting & support & email storage | £261.75                   |
|                      |                          |                                           | £270.00                   |

The Clerk advised that the PC had received a VAT rebate of £2196.16.

It was resolved that the Financial Report and the Accounts for Payment, including the Bank Reconciliation Statement, Cash Book and Budgetary Control Sheet be approved. Proposed by Councillor Hardie and seconded by Councillor Williams. All in favour. The cheques were signed by Councillors Hardie and Karalius.

The Clerk explained that he would complete as much of the Internal and External audit as he could in view of his leaving date being the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024.

#### **12. Report from Advisory Groups.**

##### **Planning Matters**

The Planning report had been circulated to councillors with the meeting documentation.

All the applications were no comment.

Lord Daresbury has sold up and planning application gone in for housing development, but there were no details. This would probably be a no comment.

The Shed application has been approved.

2024/00106 was rejected by Planning.

##### **Report from Village Betterment Advisory Group**

##### **Trees in Verges.**

There had been no progress made on this with Simon Twigg at WBC.

**Action - Councillor Hardie will prepare an email for the Clerk to send on to Simon Twigg.**

##### **Waterlogged Planters.**

***It was resolved that the PC spend up to £100 on 8 meshes for the Amberol planters (for drainage purposes). Proposed by Councillor Karalius and seconded by Councillor Harris. All in favour.***

**Events Advisory Group.**

Councillor Karalius will deliver the Woman Soldier, bunting, Christmas tree lights, water containers and the Poppies on Crosses to Councillor Bennett.

**Report from Donations Advisory Group.**

Councillor Harris confirmed that an application had been received from St. John's Church. Unfortunately, a template had been used and the application was dated May 2022. A new application had been asked for and the 2023 audited accounts would be supplied.

**13. Report on Parish Matters**

None

**Other Parish Matters**

**Bridgewater Canal Towpath**

Councillor Hazeldine said that it was the worst it had ever been and impassable. Parts were really dangerous.

The Bridgewater Canal Company were promoting the Bridgewater Canal Nature Trail, which seems ridiculous in view of the hazardous state of the towpath. Councillors and residents could express their concern about the towpath through the Bridgewater Canal Nature Trail social media platform.

**Action – Clerk to write to BSCC.**

**Ivy Killing our Trees**

In view of Councillor Bennett's absence this item will be carried forward to the May meeting.

**14. Reports from Appointed Representatives**

**Footpaths/Towpaths** – Councillors Hazeldine (DH) and Williams – Mill Lane to Runcorn Road footpath has been ploughed over. DH has made representations to WBC as a resident. The field is owned by Peel and the tenant is Willis.

**Roads/Traffic and Street Lighting – Councillor Bennett (RDB)** – reported blocked grids on both sides of A56 from the Toast Rack Bridge to Holly Hedge Farm.

The grid is blocked at the junction of Runcorn Road and Mill Lane.

Water is running down the left hand side of Hough's Lane, entering the Lane 100 yards from Park Lane down to the golf course crossing.

**Action – Clerk to advise Willis and WBC.**

**Walton Hall Estate – Councillors Harris and Hazeldine.** There had not been a report. Councillor Harris will enquire about how many weddings had been held and whether the Golf Club bookings had fallen.

**Action – Councillor Harris to enquire.**

Still concern about congestion in village over the heavy event period during June.

The village is still parked up everyday of the week not just weekends.

Village Liaison Group meeting to be arranged.

**15. Review of Correspondence**

None.

**Councillor Karalius.**

The Chair noted that Councillor Karalius would not be standing at the next election and that this would be the last meeting for her. On behalf of the council, the chair warmly thanked Councillor Karalius for both her inspiration and the execution for many of the events and parish betterments since her time in office.

**16. Date and time of next meeting**

**The next meeting will be The Annual Parish Council Meeting on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024, at St. John's Community Church Hall, Old Chester Road, Walton, commencing at 7.00pm.**

The meeting closed at 20.29 hrs.