



Walton Parish Council

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Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held at St John's Church Community Hall, Old Chester Road, Higher Walton, on Thursday 3 April, 2025.

The meeting commenced at 19:00.

Present Councillor S Harris – Chair

Councillors: C Hewitt (Deputy-Chair), A Williams, V Lacey, H Allison, J Greene, R Hardie, S Saberi, D Hazeldine, J Cooke.

Attending Clerk- Madison Brotherton-Baker, PCSO Jordan Burke.

The Chair opened the meeting at 7pm and welcomed everyone.

186 Apologies for absence

The Chair stated that apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Bennett and Matt Scott (WBC).

187 Minutes from the Annual Parish Meeting of the 4 April, 2024

The previous minutes of the meeting were sent to all prior and hard copies were also available at the meeting. The minutes were discussed and it was **resolved** that the minutes are a true record of the meeting. The minutes were then signed by the Chair.

188 Chair's Report

The Chair, Cllr. Harris read from a prepared report, on her year in office as Chair of the Parish Council.

Chair's Report for the Annual Parish Meeting 3 April, 2025.

Good evening colleagues,

Once again, it has been a busy year for the Parish Council which continues to go from strength to strength.

Our previous Clerk, Ray Hallam, retired in May and whilst we miss him, I have heard he is getting in quite a few extra rounds of golf. Finding ourselves without a Clerk, we were able to call on the services of Lara Jacob (the then clerk for Stockton Heath) to act as interim clerk until such time as we were in a position to advertise for a permanent clerk. In February this year we were delighted to welcome our new Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Madison Brotherton-Baker to Walton Parish Council. I know she will put her own stamp on the role.

We were without a Clerk for some months and whilst this considerably increased the workload of a number of councillors, I am pleased to report that the Parish Council has emerged from this period with an increased depth of knowledge on the governance of our Parish Council and the role of our Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

In order to recruit a new Clerk, an Employment Committee was formed and this Committee invested a lot of time understanding the recruitment process. The Committee has updated the Clerk's employment contract and has ensured that all legal processes have been complied with. In addition, the Committee introduced a number of new policies which all good organisations employing staff should have in place - Grievance and Disciplinary policies for example. Although we have just one employee, we aim to be a model employer.

Walton Parish Council aims to be an exemplar Parish Council in terms of governance and as a consequence, we have updated a number of policies such as our Complaints Policy, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Co-option. Other policies will be reviewed on an annual basis. We continue to ensure that the Civility and Respect Pledge that we signed up to as a Parish Council is embedded in all our actions and communications.

Further, to ensure the integrity of our emails and good governance Parish Council emails we have just transferred our email addresses to a .gov uk domain.

Similarly, after many years of procrastination the Parish Council will now be moving to internet banking and this will, not only assist in the day-to-day financial organisation of the Parish Council, but also form part of our internal/external audit.

To ensure that the views of our residents regarding the Creamfields annual event are registered with the organisers, Walton Parish Council has organised a Resident's Meeting and will give feedback direct to Cream. We are delighted that it will be attended by Sarah Hall, MP for Warrington South; Officers from Warrington Borough Council and Halton Borough Council as well as Chief Inspector Lewis, Cheshire Police and our local PCSO.

We have several Advisory Groups which work for the benefit of the community. These are:

The Betterment Advisory Group which ensures that the Parish looks the best it can by planting seasonal bulbs, looking after our planters and working with our garden sub-contractor (Gardenia) as well as organising local litter picks. You will soon see Information Boards in and around.

Our Events Advisory Group is another industrious group of Parish Councillors who work diligently to put on events for the community. Our most high profile one is our Christmas Extravaganza when Father Christmas pays a special visit to the residents of Walton and, unbelievably, this popular family event gets better and better every year. At Easter the QEII Field and the Walton triangle is beautifully decorated by this Group.

They also organise the Remembrance Service at the Walton Cenotaph and will be hosting a VE Day Tea Party. These events are funded by a donation from Creamfields and we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to them as without this donation, these community events would not happen.

The Donations Advisory Group has recommended donations for WODAC, Stockton Heath Festival, St John's Church and the Weaver Scout Group.

Planning applications are considered when they come in. The Parish Council considers each application very carefully and submits a report to the Borough Council.

This year we said 'goodbye' to two parish councillors – Yousuf Shaikh and Denise Karalius and the Parish Council is grateful for their services.

This left us with two vacancies for new councillors and we were pleased to welcome Cllr Stephen Saberi who joined us in September, Cllr Helen Allison in October and also Cllr Jane Cooke who just joined us in March. We now have a full complement of hard-working and dedicated councillors who bring a wealth of skills and talents to the Council.

The Parish Council continues to develop and work for the benefit of the community. We are blessed with the high quality and dedication of our councillors who volunteer a lot of their time to make Walton Parish the best it can be.

As I step down as Chair, I would like to thank each and every Parish Councillor for their hard work and for the support they have given me. I would particularly like to thank Cllr Christina Hewitt who has been an amazingly supportive colleague and Deputy-Chair during a year of change for the Parish Council.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish the incoming Chair in May every success.

SAH

2.4.25

189 Parish Matters

There were no Parish matters.

The Chair thanked everybody for attending. The meeting closed at 7:10pm.