



Appleton Parish Council

Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road, Appleton, WA4 5EQ

Telephone 01925 268153 Email clerk@appletonpc.org.uk

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Appleton Parish Council held on Tuesday 19th May 2020 at 7pm.

Present: - Councillor J Wheeler (Chairman)

Councillor K Arnett, Councillor B Axcell, Councillor I Axcell, Councillor S Bengier, Councillor J Price, Councillor G Skentelbery, Councillor T Stansfield, Councillor J Walker and Councillor P Walker.

Mrs. J Monks (Clerk)

The Deputy Chair Councillor Brian Axcell opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

1. Election of the Chairman of the Parish Council

Councillor J Wheeler was elected as Chairman of the Parish Council for 2020/2021.

2. Election of the Deputy Chairman of the Parish Council

Councillor P Walker was elected as Deputy Chairman of the Parish Council for 2020/2021.

3. Code of Conduct and declarations of interest forms

Each Parish Councillor had reviewed their declaration of interest forms and confirmed that there were no amendments necessary or had completed and returned a new form to the clerk. The clerk asked each Parish Councillor to complete a new form if and when any circumstances change.

RESOLVED that;

The Parish Council confirms the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by Warrington Borough Council as the council's code of conduct under section 27(2) and 27(3) of the Localism Act 2011.

4. Members of Committees and Working Parties

The following members were appointed for 2020/2021:

Planning Committee – Councillor S Bengel, (Acting Chair), Councillor B Axcell, Councillor R Johnson, Councillor T Stansfield and Councillor J Walker.

Finance and General Purposes Committee – Councillor P Walker (Chair), Councillor B Axcell, Councillor S Bengel and Councillor J Wheeler.

Working Parties

Environment Working Party –Councillor J Wheeler, Councillor K Arnett, Councillor T Stansfield and Councillor J Walker.

Media Working Party – Councillor G Skentelbery and Councillor J Wheeler.

Employment Working Party – Councillor J Wheeler, Councillor S Bengel and Councillor P Walker

PCSO Liaison Working Party –Councillor S Bengel.

Community Event Working Party - Councillor T Stansfield.

Youth Working Party - Councillor J Wheeler

Councillor J Wheeler asked if both Councillor T Stansfield and Councillor R Johnson could attend planning training sessions in the future.

5. Members of Outside Bodies

The following members were appointed for 2020/2021:

- a) Warrington Public Rights of Way Forum – Councillor K Arnett and Councillor J Wheeler.
- b) Parish Path Warden – Councillor J Wheeler.
- e) Police and Crime Commissioner Surgery Meetings –Councillor P Walker
- f) Bridgewater Canal Users Group – Councillor B Axcell
- g) Manchester Airport Liaison – Councillor K Arnett.



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Present: - Councillor J Wheeler (Chairman)

Councillor K Arnett, Councillor B Axcell, Councillor I Axcell, Councillor S Benger, Councillor J Price, Councillor G Skentelbery, Councillor T Stansfield, Councillor J Walker, Councillor P Walker.

Mrs. J Monks (Clerk)

Part One – This part of the meeting was open to the press and members of the public

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Councillor J Wheeler welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Members Code of Conduct

None declared.

3. Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

4. PCSO / Police report

The clerk had circulated a copy of the Police report for the month. Concerns were raised regarding the increasing number of incidents that had been reported by the Police. Appleton seems to be a hotspot for anti-social behaviour and the clerk was asked to contact the Police regarding this.

Councillor J Wheeler reported that there also a couple of homeless people now living in Appleton. They had been offered support and accommodation however they were not engaging with services. The Police were aware of their presence.

Councillor J Price reported that he had spoken to the PCSO regarding the amount and speed of traffic on London Road and was concerned regarding the increase of petty thefts in sheds and outbuildings. Councillor G Skentelbery stated that the Police had issued a warning recently regarding this.

5. Minutes of last Parish Council meeting and matters arising

The Minutes of the Parish Council's monthly meeting held on Tuesday 21st April 2020 (copies of which had been circulated to each Member) were approved and signed by the Chairman.

Following comments from Councillor B Axcell and Councillor I Axcell the clerk confirmed that the Part 2 agenda items would be confidential and would not be accessible for members of the public.

Councillor I Axcell said that the names Peter Gleave and John Harper should be in the minutes rather than the impersonal word "representative".

Councillor J Walker reported that the planters at Bridge Lane will be planted soon by the contractors following a delay due to Covid-19.

6. Minutes of Finance and General Purposes committee meeting and matters arising.

Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of 7th May was deferred to the June Parish Council meeting.

7. Annual Review of Internal Financial Controls, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Internal Financial Controls

The Finance and General Purposes Committee had undertaken a review of the internal financial controls

RESOLVED that;

the arrangements for financial controls as detailed below are acceptable:

- a. All payments are raised in accordance with a payment schedule, which includes agreed direct debit and bacs payments, with supporting documentation available, and these are signed at the Parish Council meeting.
- b. Details are then again provided to Members as a schedule for formal approval with the subsequently produced Parish Council Meeting minutes which includes a copy of the relevant payments Schedule for the month.
- c. The Chair at the next Parish Council meeting reconciles the Receipts and Payments Schedule and the Bank Statement and signs and dates each.
- d. With regard to internet banking, the payments are input on the Parish Council's internet banking account by the Assistant Clerk and then they are checked by the Clerk. Once input, each payment needs dual authorisation from two Parish Councillors to approve and authorise the payment in accordance with the payment schedule. Once a payment has been input and approved by either party, it cannot be amended in any way by the internal banking system, it can

only be cancelled. Payments are made in accordance with the Financial Regulations adopted by the Parish Council.

- e. Four samples of payments are selected at random each month and these invoices are cross matched with the internet banking payments to match the bank details on each invoice with the payments being made.

Standing Orders

The Parish Council reviewed the Standing Orders and it was

RESOLVED that;

the Standing Orders were confirmed for the Parish Council.

Financial Regulations

The Financial Regulations were reviewed and it was necessary to amend point 6.18. The current wording was as follows:

6.18 Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk and Assistant Clerk in order to carry out their duties and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1,000 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Parish Ranger in order to carry out their duties and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.

This was to be amended to the following:

6.18 Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Parish Ranger in order to carry out their duties and will also be restricted to a single transaction of maximum value £1,000 unless authorised by the council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.

RESOLVED that

the Financial Regulations were updated with the above amendment.

Councillor P Walker asked if the Financial Regulations could be added as an agenda item for the next Finance and General Purposes Committee.

8. Publication Scheme, Complaints Procedure, Grant Policy, Social Media Policy and Safeguarding Policy

Councillor I Axcell made a comment in connection with the publication scheme by saying, "When approved minutes are put in the public domain (web site or Stockton Heath Library), the footer 'Draft minutes only, these are subject to review and Amendments' should be removed from each page."

RESOLVED that:

(a) The publication scheme should be amended to show that agendas and minutes are posted to Stockton Heath Library.

(b) The complaints procedure will be updated with the new Chairman's details and then it should be confirmed for the Parish Council

(c) the grant procedure was discussed as concerns were raised regarding expenditure. The assistant clerk has suggested looking at grants once or twice a year to monitor and review expenditure as the grant budget for 2019/2020 was considerably over budget. Councillor B Axcell stated this would limit the Parish Council's ability to respond actively to grant applications when needed, for example the donation to Warrington Foodbank due to the Covid-19 crisis. It was recommended that the current grant policy should be confirmed by the Parish Council however the grant budget would be closely monitored in the future.

(d) the Social Media policy was confirmed for the Parish Council.

(e) the Safeguarding policy was confirmed for the Parish Council.

9. Direct Debits, Debit cards and payment by Bank Transfer

Direct Debits

The clerk confirmed that the following payments were made by variable direct debit.

British Telecom paid quarterly

CNG Energy (gas bill) paid monthly.

Information Commissioner Office for data protection registration fee paid yearly.

Scottish Power, paid quarterly.

Tesco mobile, (Booking Secretary phone), paid monthly.

Veolia, (Trade Waste collection), paid monthly.

RESOLVED that;

The use of variable direct debit for the above supplier should continue.

Debit Cards

The clerk, Mrs Joanne Monks, Assistant Clerk, Mrs Irene Derbyshire and Parish Ranger, Mr David Pearce are authorised to use a debit card on behalf of the Parish Council.

RESOLVED that

The above arrangement should continue.

Payment by Bank Transfer

The following were authorised to use internet banking and to authorise payment by bank transfer.

Mrs J Monks, Clerk
Mrs I Derbyshire, Assistant Clerk
Councillor Judith Wheeler
Councillor Peter Walker
Councillor Sandra Benger
Councillor Brian Axcell

The clerk advised that it would be beneficial to have additional authorised users.

RESOLVED that

The use of payment by bank transfer for the above should continue.

10. Asset Register

The Asset Register had been updated and subsequently circulated to all the Parish Councillors by the clerk.

Recommended that

The asset register is confirmed to be correct and the total value of the asset register as at 31.03.20 is £412,931.

11. Breakdown of Grant budget

This item was deferred until the next Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

12. Donation Request from British Red Cross

The clerk had received an email dated 15th April 2020 requesting a £700 donation from the Parish Council to the British Red Cross.

This agenda item was deferred until the next Parish Council meeting in June.

13. Planning

RESOLVED that;

The Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 4th May 2020 and 18th May 2020 (copies of which had been circulated to each Member) were approved and signed by the Chairman.

14. Clerk's Report and approval of accounts and payments

The April 2020 statement of accounts for the Financial Year 2019/2020 was noted, and the Members noted the Bank Statements as at 30th April 2020.

RESOLVED that;

Payments were to be made in accordance with the payment schedule for May 2020. The bank reconciliation and bank statements were both signed by the Chairman.

The clerk reported that she had received written authority and instructions from Councillor J Wheeler, Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor B Axcell, Deputy Chairman and Councillor P Walker, Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to purchase a Zoom subscription on 19th May 2020 at the cost of £11.99 per month plus VAT. The method for future virtual meetings will be discussed at the next Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

The clerk reported that the Parish Council insurance policy had been renewed as the Parish Council was in the final year of a three-year deal. The cost of the renewal was £1642.80.

The road tax for the Parish van expired on 31st May 2020 as such the clerk had renewed the road tax at the cost of £265.00 for the year.

The clerk received an email dated 27th April 2020 from the Treasurer of St Cross Church Parish Church Council confirming that they had received £200 for the grant towards the new flagpole at St Cross Church. The Church thanked the Parish Council for their support with the grant.

The clerk had received a thank you from the Treasurer of Warrington Foodbank for the Parish Council's and Hall users' donations.

15. Bawming Tree

The clerk has not yet received permission from Warrington Borough Council to trim the Bawming tree in Appleton Thorn. A resident has suggested that the Bawming Tree should be cut in October rather than in April.

The clerk was asked to liaise with Team Thorn and the contractor to have the tree cut in Autumn.

16. Website and Photographer

The clerk reported that there was an ongoing issue with the current website as it can be only accessed from the Parish Council office and the hard drive on the PC is failing and as such it is becoming increasingly difficult to upload agendas.

The clerk confirmed that a draft of the new website has been received and photographs have been taken.

Several Parish Councillors expressed their disappointment at the new website and photographs, and this will be the feedback to the developer.

17. Online Training

The clerk reported that every year members of staff had online fire training as this was a requirement of the Fire Risk Assessment.

RESOLVED:

Fire Safety training was approved at the cost of £15 plus VAT each for the Parish Ranger and Booking Secretary/Cleaner.

Fire Safety and Fire Warden training was approved at the cost of £20 plus VAT each for the clerk and assistant clerk.

A IOSH course for the clerk was approved on 17th March 2020 by the Parish Council at the cost of £350.00 plus VAT. This can now be undertaken online due to Covid-19.

RESOLVED:

The clerk had permission to undertake the IOSH course online at a cost not exceeding the previous amount of £350.00 plus VAT.

18. Cheshire Association of Local Councils Membership

The cost of the membership of Cheshire Association of Local Councils is £1470.04 for the financial year 2020/2021.

RESOLVED:

The Parish Council would not be a member of Cheshire Association of Local Councils for the financial year 2020/2021.

19. Development Management Committee

Councillor J Wheeler reported that Warrington Borough Council had proposed changes to delegated powers for the Development Control Committee and reported that they had been meeting virtually to clear a backlog. If a Parish Council wishes for a planning application to be considered by the Development Management Committee the Parish Council will have to raise it with the Ward Councillors for that area.

20. Parish and Borough Councillors Reports

Councillor G Skentelbery reported that there had been damage in The Dingle from trail bike riders. Councillor J Wheeler had reported this to the Woodland Trust and to the PCSOs for their attention.

Councillor T Stansfield asked if anyone knew when Stockton Heath tip was re-opening. Councillor B Axcell reported that Warrington Borough Council are phasing the re-opening of tips and hopefully this would be open in the next couple of weeks.

Councillor J Wheeler reported that large CCTV cameras that had been installed on Green Lane and Cann Lane North and she had obtained information from the Information Commissioner's Office and had sent the owners a letter regarding the matter.

Councillor J Price, Councillor B Axcell, Councillor I Axcell and Councillor S Benger were all assisting with the AIM Covid-19 response campaign.

Councillor J Wheeler reported that the PCSOs have been continuing to use the hall whilst it has been closed. The clerk informed the Parish Council that the Parish hall has not been cleaned since 23rd March 2020 and is now filthy and there are Health and Safety issues and concerns from using the hall. The Parish Council decided that the hall could be continued to be used by the PCSO however this would be at their own risk. The clerk would send a letter to the PCSOs regarding hall usage.

21. Date and time of next meeting Tuesday 16th June 2020 at 7.30pm.

Part Two – This contains confidential information and only Councillors and reporting officers can be present

22. Staffing matters

This item was confidential and as such the contents have been removed.

The meeting closed at 20.47.