



# Appleton Parish Council

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

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## **Minutes of the monthly Parish meeting of Appleton Parish Council held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 7.30pm**

**Present:** - Councillor J Wheeler (Chairman) Present from 7.37pm.

Councillor K Arnett, Councillor B Axcell, Councillor I Axcell, Councillor R Johnson, Councillor G Skentelbery, Councillor J Price, Councillor S Bengler, Councillor P Walker, Councillor J 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 P Walker welcomed everyone to the meeting. Councillor T Stansfield sent his apology for 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. Councillor G Skentelbery stated that he had reported a disturbance near to his property as neighbours were having a party. However, the police took no action regarding the noise or disturbance and he was concerned that this did not send the correct message to members of the public. The clerk was asked to contact the PCSOs regarding this matter.

The clerk had circulated a response dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020 from Warrington South Beat Team regarding the concerns regarding the increase in anti-social behaviour.

Councillor P Walker informed the Parish Council that not all incidents are brought to the attention of the PCSOs and may not appear on the monthly Police report.

Councillor J Wheeler was present from 7.37pm onwards and thanked Councillor P Walker for taking on the role of Chair in her absence.

## **5. Minutes of last Parish Council meeting and matters arising**

Subject to minor amendments it was;

**RESOLVED** that;

The Minutes of the annual meeting held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (copies of which had been circulated to each Member) were approved and signed by the Chairman.

The Minutes of the Parish Council's monthly meeting held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (copies of which had been circulated to each Member) were approved and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor J Wheeler reported that there was a virtual Bawming of the Thorn at the weekend and the clerk was asked to put notification of this on the Facebook site.

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

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes meeting held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (copies of which had been circulated to each Member) were approved and signed by the Chairman.

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes meeting held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (copies of which had been circulated to each Member) were approved and signed by the Chairman.

## **7. Investment Strategy and Savings accounts**

The clerk reported that the amount of £29,516.26 will be transferred from the NatWest current account into the Nationwide Savings Account on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020 following the decision of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

The clerk had contacted United Trust bank in order to open a 100-day notice account however this account had now been withdrawn due to Covid-19. The clerk will research alternatives, and this will be discussed at the Finance and General Purposes Committee in July.

## **8. End of year accounts and Internal Auditor report**

This item been discussed at the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020. It was;

**RESOLVED** that;

The report from the internal auditor was accepted by the Parish Council.

## **9. Reserves**

This item was discussed at the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020. It was;

**RESOLVED** that;

The reserves were amended to the following;

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| Bank Balance as at 31.03.20                     | 179087.21     |
| <b>Ear-Marked Reserves for 2020/2021</b>        |               |
| Elections (ER)                                  | 4000          |
| Parish Hall (ER)                                | 50000         |
| Youth Work (ER)                                 | 0             |
| Parish Ranger Van Replacement (ER)              | 2000          |
| Environmental Improvement Schemes (ER)          | 8000          |
| Community Scheme/ consultant costs for PDO (ER) | 25000         |
| South Warrington Library, Stockton Heath (ER)   | 15000         |
| Contingencies (ER)                              | 75,000        |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>179000</b> |

Councillor P Walker reported that he was surprised at the request to increase the contingency budget from the internal auditor.

#### **10. Risk Assessments**

This item been discussed at the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

Councillor P Walker noted that there were further amendments required. These amendments would be emailed the clerk and amended accordingly and put on the next Parish Council agenda in July.

#### **11. Parish Van**

The clerk reported that the van insurance is due for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020. The costs of renewal is £601.46.

The clerk informed the Parish Council that the MOT was due on the van on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and the annual service was due at the same time. Central Government have stated that any MOT due from 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020 will be extended by six months due to Covid-19.

**RESOLVED** that;

The van insurance was renewed at the cost of £601.46.

The van is serviced, and a MOT be undertaken at the cost not exceeding £500.00

#### **12. Donation Request from British Red Cross**

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

**RESOLVED** that;

The amount of £700 was not given as a donation to the British Red Cross as the Parish Council could not donate to national charities and was not in keeping with the grant policy of the Parish Council which was to provide financial assistance to local causes.

### **13. Planning**

**RESOLVED** that;

The Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 and 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (copies of which had been circulated to each Member) were approved and signed by the Chairman.

The clerk had received an email dated 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020 regarding the application by Liberty Properties Developments and Eddie Stobart Ltd for National Distribution Centre, at Land North of Barleycastle Lane, Appleton Thorn, Warrington (application no: 2019/34739). This planning application has been called in by the Secretary of State. Councillor J Wheeler reported that she had attended a meeting of the South Warrington Working party group and that the Planning Consultant is in the process of preparing a response in order to submit this to the Secretary of State. In addition to this individual Parish Councillors can submit their objections in writing to the Secretary of State if they wished.

**RESOLVED** that;

A letter would be sent from the Parish Council supporting the South Warrington Working party letter and expressing the Parish Council's objections to the proposal.

### **14. Clerk's Report and approve of accounts and payments**

The May 2020 statement of accounts for the Financial Year 2019/2020 was noted, and the Members noted the Bank Statements as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020.

**RESOLVED** that;

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

The clerk has confirmed that she had received the signed PCSO agreement for 2020/2021. This has been signed by the chairman of both Stockton Heath Parish Council, Appleton Parish Council and Cheshire Constabulary.

The clerk has re-started the Trade Waste collection for the Parish Hall from Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020 as the Parish Ranger needs the collection for the disposal of waste.

The clerk received an email dated 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 from the Planning Director of the Appleton Cross site. They confirmed that measures had been implemented for safe working and that work on the Appleton Cross site has re-commenced from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020. Warrington Borough Council have extended the site working hours from 7am until 9pm for Monday to Saturdays on a temporary basis.

The clerk confirmed that she had submitted a claim to the insurance company on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020 for loss of income due to the closure of the Parish Hall as requested by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

The clerk confirmed that the contractors had planted the planters at Bridge Lane shops and they were being watered three times per week.

The clerk reported that the lock on the new noticeboard at Bridge Lane was broken and replacement parts had been ordered.

The clerk confirmed that the National Association of Local Councils had launched a consultation on a new model code of conduct for Parish Councillors. The closing date for the consultation was 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

The clerk confirmed that permission to trim the Bawming tree had been granted to the Parish Council on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020 subject to conditions.

The clerk had notified Cheshire Association of Local Councils that the Parish Council did not wish to renew the membership for 2020/2021. The Chief Officer of Cheshire Association of Local Councils had stated that she was disappointed that the Parish Council were not renewing their membership especially under the circumstances as the Parish Council would benefit from information and advice. Cheshire Association of Local Councils also stated that such the Parish Council need additional support such as employment support or advice they would not provide this on a contractual basis for a single payment.

The clerk informed the Parish Council that they may be eligible for a grant from Central Government via Warrington Borough Council due to the loss of income whilst the Parish Hall has been closed. The clerk was asked to apply for the grant to see if the Parish Council was eligible.

## **15. Covid-19 update**

Cheshire Association of Local Councils had been booked to undertake a training course on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July at 6pm for Parish Councillors. This has been cancelled due to Covid-19. Councillor J Wheeler asked the clerk to rearrange this for September.

The clerk has received an email dated 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020 from Cheshire Community Action stating that government guidance may allow halls to re-open from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July. The Parish Council would have to ensure that the hall is cleaned and maintained in accordance with the Covid-19 secure guidelines, have prepared a Covid-19 Risk Assessment and have written records of the actions taken. Further advice and

guidance will be sought, and this will be discussed in more detail at the next Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

## **16. Website Update**

The clerk had been liaising with the website developers regarding the website and the website will be going live as soon as possible. Minor alterations can be undertaken once the site is live.

Councillor G Skentelbery reported some amendments for the website to the clerk. Any further final amendments need to be sent to the clerk.

There was further discussion and the clerk would compile a list with comments on to be feed back to the website developer.

## **17. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20 – Section One Annual Governance Statement**

The Parish Council carried out a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and considered the annual governance statement in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/2020.

**RESOLVED** that;

1. The Parish Council have in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.
2. The Parish Council maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.
3. The Parish Council took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances
4. The Parish Council provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors rights in accordance with the requirement of the Account and Audit Regulations.
5. The Parish Council carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.
6. The Parish Council maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.

7. The Parish Council took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.
8. The Parish Council considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.

**RESOLVED** that;

The Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020 is approved and is signed and date by the Chairman, Councillor J Wheeler and the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Mrs J Monks.

#### **18. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20 Section Two – Accounting Statements**

**RESOLVED** that;

The Accounting Statements are approved and signed and dated by the Chairman, Councillor J Wheeler and the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Mrs J Monks.

The clerk confirmed that she would submit the Annual Return to the External Auditor the cost of the external audit was £200.00 plus VAT.

#### **19. Publication Scheme**

The amended publication scheme had been updated and it was;

**RESOLVED** that;

The publication scheme is approved by the Parish Council.

#### **20. Appleton Thorn Speed Indicators**

Councillor J Wheeler reported that she had a request from a resident regarding a permanent speed sign for Appleton Thorn. The Parish Council had recently looked into this and were aware that three permanent vehicle activated signs will be installed and funded by the Section 106 agreement for Appleton Cross. It was however unknown when these funds would be available. The clerk was asked to contact the Highways Department of Warrington Borough Council and the site developers at Appleton Cross for an update on this matter.

#### **21. Parish and Borough Councillors Reports**

Councillor R Johnson reported that he had received a complaint about four trees on Lumb Brook Road which were overhanging a private garden on Thorn Tree Green. The clerk was asked to contact Warrington Borough Council requesting that they cut the trees back.

Councillor J Price was concerned about number of keys for the Parish Hall. Councillor J Wheeler confirmed that she was aware of the issue and the Assistant Clerk was in the processing of obtaining quotes however this was difficult as many businesses had been closed to Covid-19. Councillor J Wheeler confirmed that this was on the agenda for the next Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

Councillor J Price thanked the Parish Ranger for undertaking the requested work on London Road.

Councillor J Wheeler confirmed that Sandy Lane tip in Stockton Heath still remained closed due to Health and Safety concerns, she informed the Parish Council that Warrington Borough Council were reviewing this on a weekly basis but no re-opening date was known. There had been a significant amount of fly tipping in Appleton and Warrington Borough Council were aware of this. Councillor J Wheeler reported that had been a significant litter issue on the field at Bridgewater High School, she had contacted the school regarding this matter and a large trade waste bin will now be provided.

Councillor J Wheeler stated that another contractor should be considered for the planters at Bridge Lane and the clerk was asked to put this as an agenda item for the next Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

Councillor G Skentelbery reported that trail bikes were still using The Dingle and that no signage had been erected by the Woodland Trust as requested. The clerk was asked to follow this up with the Woodland Trust and request increased patrols by the PCSOs.

## **22. Date and time of next meeting**

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July at 7.30pm.

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

## **23. Staffing matters**

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

Meeting closed at 8.37pm.