

**Minutes of the Meeting of Haigh Parish Council  
Held Monday 4 September 2023  
7pm St David's Parish Rooms**

**Present:** Councillors Paul Kenyon (Chairman), Andrew Keogh, Roberta Darbyshire, Ian Parker and Andrew Wilson  
The Clerk to the Council: Mrs Krystyna Pilkington  
One member of the public

**47 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Clare Kenyon

**48 Declaration of Interests**

None

**49 Matters Introduced by Members of the Public**

**The Recent Developments at Kilhey Court**

Macdonald Hotels, the owner of Kilhey Court (Wigan's premier hotel), had recently confirmed that it was closing the complete operation "temporarily" and handing its running to SERCO, which was contracted by the Government to run facilities for asylum seekers. The company had cited post-pandemic and cost-of-living crisis challenges for this commercial decision. Kilhey Court was not in the parish, but it was certainly in Aspull Ward. A resident wished to raise concerns about this development going ahead, as it was likely to have a significant effect on many in the Parish and was, in the resident's view, totally inappropriate. The resident asked whether, if the Parish Council agreed, they could raise these concerns with Wigan Council.

Taking advice from the Clerk, the Chairman informed the resident that the Parish Council could not make an official comment unless, at some future date, the development had a negative impact on the residents of the Parish.

**The Condition of the Pavement on Red Rock Lane**

A few years ago a number of parish councillors, together with members of the public, cleared the pavement from Hampsons Green to Red Rock Lodge. A resident reported that the lower section of the pavement on Red Rock Lane, approaching the canal bridge, was now in a worse condition than before and constituted a safety hazard to all walkers, particularly those with children, prams or pets. He asked whether, with or without Wigan Council's help, the exercise could be repeated.

The way forward was discussed. The Parish Council were supportive of the suggestion that a working party should be set up to clear the pavement. It was now only 18 inches wide and posed a danger to any pedestrians using it. The farmer cut the hedge annually, so the pavement clearing should be done after this had taken place. He estimated that the stretch of pavement that needed to be cleared would involve a day of work for a small group of volunteers.

The resident agreed to look into how the support of the 'Community Pay-Back' group could be accessed and to find out from the farmer when he was likely to be cutting the hedge. For its part the Council would appeal for volunteers' via its social media platforms.

**50 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council (3 July 2023)**

**Resolved:** The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Monday, 4 September 2023 were agreed to be a true and correct record.

## 51 Matters Arising

### Removal of Structures on the Land to the North of Pendlebury Lane

It was reported that local residents would continue to press Wigan Council to enforce the removal of the structures to the Land North of Pendlebury Lane once the Planning Inspectorate had decided the reasonable period for the clearance to take place. This was discussed briefly. The Chairman would compose a letter of support for the residents to be sent to Wigan Council. The Clerk would advise the residents of this.

## 52 Planning Applications

A/21/92629/MAJOR	Leyland Mills Leyland Mill Lane Wigan WN1 2SB	Residential development of 17 two & three storey detached dwellings following demolition of former mill buildings	<i>Objection sent – decision deferred subject to submission of revisions by September 2023 deadline</i>
A/22/94184/FULL	Rothwell's Stud Sennicar Lane Wigan WN1 2SN	Erection of four detached dwellings, following demolition of indoor riding arena, stables and store	<i>Objection sent - awaiting decision - not determined appeal lodged with Planning Inspectorate (appeal dismissed)</i>
A/23/96005/PDQ	Tuckers Hill Farm Tuckers Hill Brow Haigh Wigan WN2 1LJ	Change of use of agricultural buildings to 2 dwellinghouses (use class c3) and for building operations necessary for conversion	<i>Noted</i>
A/23/96003/NMAS	Martholme Toddington Lane Haigh Wigan WN2 1LF	Working Amendment application for previously approved application A/22/93422/HH - Add a dormer window with obscured glass to the en-suite in the main attic bedroom at the back of the house	<i>Noted</i>

## 53 Casual Vacancy

The vacancy was advertised early in July and a deadline of 7 August was set for applications for co-option. It was reported that to date no applications had been received.

**Resolved:** The Casual Vacancy would be re-advertised. The closing date for applications would be a month from the date of publication of the advert.

## 54 Meetings with Wigan Council's Senior Officers

### **(a) Feedback from Meeting Held on Tuesday, 27 June 2023**

The minutes of the meeting with Wigan Council's senior officers in June were received. Members not present at the Parish Council meeting in July were given the opportunity to provide feedback from the meeting in June.

With regard to the joined up bridleway: in future a section of the Whelley Loop Line would also be open to horse riders. Another route was also under consideration for inclusion in the bridleway.

With regard to ownership of Leyland Mill Lane viaduct: the Chairman reported that members of Wigan History Society were currently researching this.

Public footpath no.37: Cllr Ian Parker had met with Wigan Council's Rights of Way officer and senior Highways officer and they had walked the footpath.

Balsam bashing: the Chairman reported that, due to circumstances beyond his control, he had not been able to organise the balsam bashing this year.

With regard to the Traffic Management Plan for event days at Haigh Woodland Park: this had not yet been received and needed to be chased up. The feedback for the last event was that the notice advising of it had been too close to the entrance on this occasion. One located further away was needed.

*Cllr Paul Kenyon withdrew from the meeting and Cllr Ian Parker took the Chair.*

The introduction of an additional permanent car park at Haigh Woodland Park was proposed for an area near New Road. It was reported that a group of residents had recently formed a pressure group to oppose it.

*Cllr Paul Kenyon re-joined the meeting and returned to the Chair.*

### **(b) Items for Discussion at Next Meeting**

The next meeting with Wigan Council's senior officers was due to take place on Thursday, 21 September 2023. It would be held via MS Teams and would begin at 4pm. Members considered suggestions for the agenda.

**Resolved:** The Council confirmed that the meeting would go ahead.

The following were approved for inclusion on the agenda:

- Feedback from Wigan Council's officers about the condition of the footpaths that had been walked since the last meeting.
- Update on the fitting of litter bins at locations selected by the Parish Council.
- Concerns raised by the Kitchen Garden volunteers.
- Progress with the Traffic Management Plan.

Members were asked to let the Clerk know if there was anything else they wished to be included on the agenda by the end of the week.

## **55 Listing of Viaduct Over the River at Leyland Mill Lane**

At the meeting in July it was suggested that, if the Parish Council wished to take this forward, the best way to progress it might be to propose it via Vocal Eyes and see whether a working group of interested people, with a relevant skill set, could be established. The matter was raised with the Wigan Council officers during the Council's meeting with them in June. The officers would not commit the LA to supporting an application to list the viaduct in Leyland Mill Lane, but confirmed that the

LA would also not oppose such an application. As this was a project that had been put forward by members who were not present, the matter was deferred to this meeting.

The ownership of the land on either side of the viaduct was registered with the land registry, but that of the viaduct itself was not known. The Clerk was continuing with efforts to identify the owner, but had so far been unsuccessful.

## **56 Haigh Parish Award**

A communications plan for seeking nominees for the award was discussed.

**Resolved:** Cllr Andrew Keogh would draft the wording for a call for nominations for the Haigh Parish Award. This would be circulated via the usual social media channels, displayed on notice boards and sent to leaders of community groupings in the Parish. The deadline for nominations would be mid-December.

## **57 Christmas Lights**

Cllr Andrew Keogh reported that this was still a work in progress. The LA were currently working on providing costings for both the lights for the tree and their fitting and removal. It was reported that the pub management were very supportive of the idea of holding a carol singing session around the tree at the appropriate time.

## **58 Parish Council Website**

The contents of a previously circulated document prepared by Cllr Andrew Keogh was discussed. It contained an analysis of costs – both initial and on-going.

In addition to the above, the Clerk advised that legislation existed with which the content and design of a parish council website had to be compliant. With regard to the design: it has to be compliant with WCAG (Website Content Accessibility Guidelines) 2.1AA. With regard to content: the website could carry whatever the Parish Council wished it to contain, but, in order to comply with the requirements of the Transparency Code, it had to carry all of the information currently carried on the Haigh Parish Council pages of Wigan Council's website.

A xxx.gov.uk domain was more expensive to purchase and run than a xxx.org.uk domain. The Wordpress web content management system was simple to use, compliant with WCAG 2.1AA and was to be recommended if the Parish Council needed to have its own website.

The Clerk advised that from 2023-24 it was mandatory for parish councils to have a parish council email address based on either .gov.uk or .org.uk that was accessible to the Council.

The way forward was discussed.

**Resolved:** It was agreed that, as there was currently no need for the Council to have its own website, the status quo would be maintained. However, to comply with current legislation, a standalone .org.uk email address would be set up for the Council. Cllr Andrew Keogh would look into the feasibility and costings involved.

## **59 Remembrance Sunday**

Remembrance Sunday this year would be on 12 November. At present it was being assumed that all would be as normal as far as the Parish Council were concerned.

Mr John Hilton would, as usual, order the wreath for the Parish Council. It would be available for collection from Aspull RBL before the parade. Arrangements for collection and laying of the wreath and the amount of the donation would be agreed at the Council meeting in October.

The Council owned display poppies which in previous years had been attached to lamp posts or telegraph poles around the Parish by a contractor. The poppies remained on display throughout November, after which the poppies had been removed by the same contractor. The contractor in question was no longer available to do this. The Council considered the options for the way forward.

**Resolved:** Cllr Andrew Keogh would advertise via social media for volunteers in the Parish to take responsibility for putting up and removing the display poppies. If no volunteers came forward, he and his son would undertake to do this. Insurance cover for the activity would be provided by the Parish Council's insurer and a risk assessment would be carried out.

## 60 Review of Internal Audit 2022-23

The Council reviewed the internal audit process for the 2022/23 accounts. The Council agreed that the internal auditor:

- a) was a person competent to carry out the work.
- b) was independent in relation to elected members and the Clerk.
- c) provided the Council with a short report on the work she had carried out.
- d) examined procedures and how decisions were recorded.
- e) checked that the transparency requirements had been met.

One minor issue had been identified. It had been addressed immediately.

## 61 Appointment of Internal Auditor 2023-24

**Resolved:** Heelis & Lodge were appointed as the Council's internal auditors for 2023/24.

## 62 Accounts 2023/24

### Income:

Crazy Golf day = £200.00 (received & banked in August)

**TOTAL = £200.00**

### Expenditure:

No	PAYEE	NARRATIVE	NET	VAT	PAYMENT
23	Employee No.1	Newsletter postage	£ 20.25	N/A	£ 20.25
24	Employee No.1	Stationery	£ 2.00	£0.40	£ 2.40
25	LALC	New Cllrs training	£ 35.00	N/A	£ 35.00
26	Employee No.1	Salary (July & Aug)	£366.34	N/A	£366.34
27	HMRC	Tax (July & August)	£ 91.60	N/A	£ 91.60
28	Employee No.1	Mileage	£ 5.20	N/A	£ 5.20
29	Wigan NE PCC	Room rent (Sept)	£ 20.00	N/A	£ 20.00

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<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>£540.39</b>	<b>£0.40</b>	<b>£540.79</b>
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**Resolved:** The above items were approved for payment.

The Clerk reported that:

Item 15 for £145.50 (*approved in July*) had still not been invoiced and so, to date, the payment had not been made.

Items 23 & 24 above were paid in July.

Balance at bank on 30 August 2023 = **£25,774.60**

Estimated balance at bank following payment of Items 25 to 29 = **£25,233.81**

### **63 Quarterly Budget Monitoring**

The budget monitoring information for (a) the quarter to the end of June and (b) the quarter to the end of September was received and discussed.

At the end of June all cost centres were running on line. By the end of September the 'Conference, membership, fees' cost centre would be overspent by £35. This was because the course for new councillors attended by a new member had been invoiced.

**Resolved:** The Council approved a virement of £35 from the 'Contingency' cost centre to the 'Conference, membership, fees' cost centre to cover this.

The £145.50 owed to one of the food vendors had not yet been invoiced and so had not yet been paid.

The proceeds of events had boosted the Parish Council's net income by £11,382.

**Resolved:** Members approved the transfer £11,182 of the above amount to the General Reserves and the balance of £200 to the Canal Towpath reserve.

Reserves were shown in the report as they had been estimated to be at the end of September. Preliminary budget preparation for 2023-24 and the assignation of funds to reserves would be an agenda item at the meeting in October.

### **64 Clerk's Report**

The Clerk's report was received and discussed. *See Appendix A*

The Council agreed that the fee required by Wigan Council's Planning Department for a reply to an enquiry about whether planning permission would be required for a notice board could be paid, if required.

### **65 Bubblefest 2024**

A Bubblefest Working Group meeting was held on Wednesday, 9 August 2023. The notes of the meeting had been previously circulated. A document updating the Council with progress in relation to Working Group agreements with respect to the way forward arrived during that meeting had also been circulated. Further matters for members' consideration were raised in the document.

The above documents were received and a discussion followed.

**Resolved:**

- In 2024 the Bubblefest would take place on Sunday, 7 July in the Walled Gardens at Haigh Woodland Park.
- Subject to the agreement of Haigh Woodland Park and the Bubble artists, there would be an early session at 10am specifically for SEND attendees and their companions. The session would run with reduced numbers, but it would involve increasing the total number of tickets to be sold.
- Bubblefest 24 would be a ticketed event with tickets sold via Eventbrite only. Tickets will not be sold at the entrance. This will be made clear in all advertising and communications with the public.
- The only stall permitted to sell bubbling equipment would be the stall belonging to the Parish Council. Other stallholders would be informed that they were NOT allowed to sell bubbling equipment.
- Three bubble artists (eBublio, Bigbubbleman and Memorabubble), the 'Have a Go' area and the interactive Foam sessions would be booked at a total cost of £1,600.
- A 'Punch & Judy' show, a balloon modeller and a juggler/unicycle rider would be booked via Wigan Pier Promotions Ltd at a total cost of £1,175.
- The Clerk was asked to look into the availability and cost of a musician recommended by Haigh Woodland Park who interacted with her audience.
- An appeal for volunteers would be made via social media.
- A date for the first Working Group meeting would be agreed at the October Council meeting.

Agreement about the charges for stall fees was deferred.

## **66 Date of Next Meeting**

23 October 2023

The meeting closed at 9:10 pm  
**Chairman**