

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Haigh Parish Council  
Held Monday 7 May 2024  
6:30pm St David's Parish Rooms**

**Present:** Councillors Paul Kenyon (Chairman), Andrew Keogh, Roberta Darbyshire and Marie-Clare Kenyon  
Mr Chris Pennington (Street Lighting Engineer, Wigan Council)  
The Clerk to the Council: Mrs Krystyna Pilkington  
One member of the public

**151 Election of Chairman**

Cllr Paul Kenyon, the outgoing Chairman, opened the meeting and invited nominations for the Office of Chairman.

A nomination was received for Cllr Paul Kenyon. The nomination was seconded.

**Resolved:** That Cllr Paul Kenyon would serve as Chairman until the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May 2025.

**152 Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office**

Cllr Paul Kenyon made and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman. The Clerk signed in witness to the Declaration.

**153 Election of Vice Chairman**

In the absence of the out-going Vice Chairman, this item was deferred to a future meeting.

**154 Audit, Governance & Standards Committee**

**Resolved:** That Cllr Roberta Darbyshire was appointed to serve as a Co-opted Committee member of Wigan Council's Audit, Governance & Standards Committee until the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May 2025.

**155 Register of Interests**

Members present confirmed that no changes needed to be made to their Registers of Interests forms.

**156 Casual Vacancy**

The Clerk reported that the Council had received an expression of interest from a resident in the casual vacancy. The resident had requested and been sent additional information about the Parish Council. The resident had also been invited to the meeting to meet the Council and observe what happened.

Members were invited to consider and agree the best way forward. The Clerk advised that, if the resident and the Council so wished, it would be possible to co-opt the resident as a parish councillor at this meeting.

The Council agreed to return to this item after the resident had arrived and had had an opportunity to observe the Council in session.

### **157 Apologies**

Cllrs Andrew Wilson and Ian Parker

### **158 Declaration of Interests**

None

### **159 Christmas Decorations**

*The resident who wished to observe proceedings and meet the Council with a view to being co-opted as a Parish Councillor joined the meeting during this item.*

The Chairman welcomed Mr Chris Pennington of Wigan Council's Street Lighting department, who was attending the meeting in order to talk to the Council about the possibilities and associated costs with regard to the lamp standards in the part of Haigh Road that was in Haigh.

Mr Pennington informed the Council that the first thing to consider was the cost of the infrastructure that needed to be installed in each lamp post. At present the cost was £350 per lamp post. He explained that, because the columns in Haigh Road were not as strong as those in the centre of Shevington, they would not be able to cope with motifs of the size used in Shevington. The columns were suitable for garlands or smaller motifs, although very small motifs would look 'lost'.

Mr Pennington provided the Council with examples of designs currently on the market of both garlands and motifs. Garlands would be purchased by the Parish Council and stored free of charge by Street Lighting. Motifs could be purchased outright and stored by Street Lighting or hired over several years from one of the companies that provided festive lighting. The hire charges included storage, installation, testing, cleaning and refurbishment.

As a result of the discussion that followed it was agreed that Mr Pennington would look into designs and costs of smaller motifs for the Council meeting on 1 July, when a decision about the way forward would need to be made.

The Chairman thanked Mr Pennington for his presentation.

*Mr Pennington left the meeting.*

### **160 Matters Introduced by Members of the Public**

#### **Road Closure at Red Rock Canal Bridge**

The Chairman reported that a resident had written to him about the planned road closure, which was due to last several weeks. The resident had been concerned about the possibility of traffic being diverted away from the bridge and along Sennicar and Pendlebury Lanes during the period of closure.

Another member reported that he had noticed that the planned road closure had, without any explanation, recently been removed from the list of pending road works. The Clerk had advised in her report that the Community Payback Scheme were only

able to carry out the work of clearing the footpath along Red Rock Lane if Wigan Council were prepared to close the road, as the speed of the traffic along the road made the activity too high risk. It was suggested that, if the road were being closed to traffic anyway, it might be possible to carry out the work during this period of time. The Clerk was asked to look into the possibility of co-ordinating the two activities.

### 161 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council (25 March 2024)

**Resolved:** The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Monday, 25 March 2024 were agreed to be a true and correct record.

### 162 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

### 163 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 – revisions still awaited</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 - non determination appeal dismissed by Planning Inspectorate</i>
A/24/96773/LA	Old Zoo Site Haigh Woodland Park School Lane Haigh	Erection of 3 glasshouses, tool shed/store and change of use of Bothy Cottages and stores to create a multi-purpose space for education, training, horticulture and events together with associated works and restoration works including replacement roof, additional window and door openings, works to garden wall, hardstanding and landscaping following demolition of existing barn and stores and removal of stone wall section	<i>Noted</i>
A/24/96774/LB	Old Zoo Site Haigh	Listed Building consent for erection of 3	<i>Noted</i>

	Woodland Park School Lane Haigh	glasshouses, tool shed/store and associated works and restoration works including replacement roof, additional window and door openings, works to garden wall, hardstanding and landscaping following demolition of existing barn and stores and removal of stone wall section	
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Members noted the current status of the above applications. No new applications for consideration had been submitted since the last meeting.

#### **164 Bridge 63**

The Service Manager over Development Management and Building Control at Wigan Council had replied to the Council's enquiry to the Planning Department about the current situation with regard to Bridge 63. He had confirmed that Planning Enforcement officers had visited the pub in September 2023 and determined that it was not in a state where action could be taken under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act in relation to the *'power to require proper maintenance of land'*. He had informed the Parish Council that Wigan Council was in ongoing contact with the building owner, who also owned additional land in the vicinity, over future plans for the site. However, as with any informal discussions with a landowner, because of their potentially commercial nature the discussions were to be kept confidential at this stage.

If any formal planning application were made, such an application would be publicised in accordance with statutory requirements and the Council's guidance and code of practice. He had advised that in the meantime it might be worth the Council's while to contact the owner directly for further information on any development proposals.

The Clerk reminded members that the owner of the property had been contacted earlier in the year. He had replied to that email and had agreed to update the Parish Council once there was something that could be shared.

The Council noted the above information.

#### **165 Canal Towpath**

The Chairman reported that the Area Manager for the Canal & River Trust had suggested arranging a site meeting with the representative of the Community Payback Scheme to discuss what they could offer. News of progress with this was awaited.

#### **166 Meeting with Wigan Council Officers**

The next meeting with Wigan Council officers had been scheduled for Monday, 17 June at 4pm via MS Teams. Members discussed topics for the agenda.

**Resolved:** Members agreed that the following topics should be included on the agenda:

1. Improvements to the Canal Towpath Between Arley and New Springs
2. Update on Progress with the Joined-Up Bridleway
3. Update on Work with Regard to Footpath No.37
4. Traffic Management at Haigh Woodland Park During Events

#### **167 Annual Parish Meeting 2024**

It had been established that the larger room above Graze was no longer available for hire to outside parties. So the Annual Parish Meeting would be held, as agreed, at 7pm on Tuesday, 21 May in the School Room at the Stables Courtyard.

AI&AI had confirmed with Cllr Clare Kenyon that they would provide an update on progress with the Haigh Hall development and had booked the school room. The agenda for the meeting would be as agreed at the Council meeting on 25 March.

Cllr Clare Kenyon had prepared the posters advertising the event and they had been put on display at the usual locations in the Parish and on Facebook. Residents had been asked to book by 14 May 2024, as admission would be restricted to residents and Parish Council members and would be by ticket only. The maximum that the venue could accommodate was 30 residents plus Council members and presenters.

It had been agreed on 25 March that light refreshments would be served during the evening. AI&AI were looking into the possibility of sourcing them from one of the outlets based at the Stables Courtyard.

Parking, access to the school room and egress from the site were discussed. The Clerk advised that she would need to inform attendees beforehand about the arrangements. Cllr Clare Kenyon would look into this and provide the Clerk with the information she needed.

#### **168 Haigh Parish Awards**

As the larger room at the Stables Courtyard was no longer available for hire and there were no other suitable facilities available at Haigh Woodland Park, alternative arrangements for their presentation had to be made.

**Resolved:** it was agreed that the awards would be presented on 1 July at St David's Parish Rooms.

The Council had received several nominations, which would need to be discussed before the awards were ordered.

**Resolved:** It was agreed that the nominations would be circulated by email and voted on electronically. Members were asked to email Cllr Andrew Keogh by Friday, 17 May. The outcome of the voting would be ratified by the Council at their meeting on Monday, 1 July.

#### **169 Bubblefest 2024**

A working party meeting had been held on 16 April. The notes from the meeting had been circulated. Several recommendations that needed to be ratified by the full Council had been made during the meeting.

**Resolved:** The Council approved the following:

- (a) That local community groups could be approached to find out if they would be willing to provide help on the day. If they are willing to do this, the Parish Council would make a donation to the group in support of its activities. The size of the donation would be decided once the number of groups involved and the likely income were known.
- (b) Tickets to the Bubblefest would be priced £6. They would go on sale in mid-May and be sold online via Eventbrite. The Eventbrite fee would be absorbed. Children under the age of THREE would be FREE.
- (c) Free entry will be available for ONE carer accompanying an individual with special needs.

Progress in relation to recommendation (a) was reviewed.

Cllr Bobbie Darbyshire informed the Council that she had spoken to the Brownie Leader at St David's and had explained what was needed on the day of the Bubblefest. Cllr Darbyshire had asked the Brownie Leader to report to the Clerk. The Clerk advised that the Brownie Leader had been in contact with her and had booked an information stall for Wigan Guiding. She had also secured the help of 4 volunteers (5 including herself) on the day. They would cover both the Guiding stall and the Parish Council stall.

The Chairman reported that he had not yet spoken to the Venture Scouts about the possibility of volunteering.

The Clerk reported that a resident was working on securing the help of up to 20 volunteers from Aspull Rugby Club.

The need for carpets for the 'Have a Go' area and somewhere to store them prior to the Bubblefest, if necessary, was discussed.

It was agreed that the next Bubblefest Working Party meeting would take place at 7pm via MS Teams on Tuesday, 4 June.

## **170 Parish Council Email Address**

A report on the requirements relating to the Parish Council's new email address was received. Most of the information it contained had been discussed by the Council during previous meetings and a new generic email address ([clerk@haighparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@haighparishcouncil.org.uk)) had been approved, set up and was now in use.

In 2023 the External Auditor had brought to the Council's attention the fact that from the financial year 2023-24, to enable the work of the Council to continue in the unexpected absence of the Clerk, there was an expectation that a method of accessing passwords, etc (as referenced in the template Financial Regulations) should be adopted.

**Resolved:** The Council adopted the following procedure (referred to above) with regard to accessing passwords in the unexpected absence of the Clerk:

*6.11. Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be handed to and retained by the Chairman of the Council in a **sealed, dated envelope**. The same will apply to the council's email addresses and websites. This envelope **may not** be opened other than in the presence of **two other councillors**. After the envelope has been*

*opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the Council.*

The responsibility for acting as custodian lay with whoever held the role of Chairman, **not** a named individual. In the event of a change in role holder, the out-going member should pass the sealed envelope on to their successor.

#### **171 Budget Out-Turn 2023-24**

The budget out-turn for 2023/24 had been previously circulated and was received. The Clerk reported that virements agreed during the meeting in March had been actioned. This had resulted in some active cost centres showing substantial increases and un-earmarked reserves being re-distributed amongst ear-marked reserves. Consequently, the General Reserve was slightly lower than the revenue expenditure for the year.

Most active cost centres showed small underspends. Balances in the remaining active cost centres totalled £2,214 (including expenditure contingency). Because Bubblefest 22 had been cancelled due to circumstances beyond the Council's control, no new bubbling stock had been purchased in 2023. Hence only £1 was paid out in VAT and a claim had not been submitted.

The budget out-turn for 2023-24 was discussed.

**Resolved:** The Budget Out-Turn for 2023-24 was accepted and approved.

#### **172 Income / Expenditure Account 2023-24**

The Income / Expenditure Account for the year ending 31 March 2024 was received and considered.

**Resolved:** The Income / Expenditure Account for the year ending 31 March 2024 was approved.

#### **173 Annual Governance Statement 2023-24**

The previously circulated Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 was reviewed.

**Resolved:** The Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 was approved.

#### **174 Accounting Statements 2023-24**

The previously circulated Accounting Statements 2023/24 were considered.

**Resolved:** The Accounting Statements 2023/24 were approved.

#### **175 Exemption from External Audit 2023-24**

The Council's eligibility to certify itself as exempt from external audit was considered.

**Resolved:** As all criteria had been met, the Council certified its accounts for 2023/24

as being exempt from external audit.

## 176 Period for the Exercise of Public Rights 2023-24

**Resolved:** The Parish Council agreed that the period for the exercise of public rights with regard to information relating to the 2023-24 financial year should begin on Monday, 3 June 2024 and end on Friday, 12 July 2024.

## 177 Insurance 2024-25

The Parish Council's insurance with Zurich Municipal was due for renewal on 1 June 2024. The Policy Schedule and a letter confirming some essential features of the cover provided had been previously circulated and were discussed. The premium quoted for 2024-25 was £403.91. This was £9.59 more than in 2023-24.

**Resolved:** The Parish Council accepted and approved the quotation from Zurich Municipal.

## 178 Accounts 2024-25

### Income:

Precept = £8,400

Council Tax Support grant = £1,079

**TOTAL = £9,504**

### Expenditure:

No	PAYEE	NARRATIVE	NET	VAT	PAYMENT
1	Wigan NE PCC	Room rent (March)	£ 20.00	N/A	£ 20.00
2	Employee No.1	New email (Ionos)	£ 3.00	£0.60	£ 3.60
3	Employee No.1	Postage	£ 61.20	N/A	£ 61.20
4	LALC/NALC	Annual subscription	£184.29	N/A	£184.29
5	Employee No.1	Salary (April) (net)	£395.46	N/A	£395.46
6	HMRC	Tax (April)	£ 79.00	N/A	£ 79.00
7	Employee No.1	Mileage	£ 5.20	N/A	£ 5.20
8	Wigan NE PCC	Room rent (April)	£ 20.00	N/A	£ 20.00
9	Zurich Municipal	Insurance	£403.91	N/A	£403.91
10	Employee No.1	Email-basic 5 (Ion)	£ 2.50	£0.50	£ 3.00
11	Employee No.1	Email archiving (Ion)	£ 1.00	£0.20	£ 1.20
<b>TOTAL:</b>			<b>£1175.56</b>	<b>£1.30</b>	<b>£1176.86</b>

**Resolved:** The above items were approved for payment.

Balance at bank on 31 March 2024 = **£21,905.09**

Estimated balance at bank following receipt of above income on 3 April 2024 and payment of Items 1 to 11 = **£30,207.23**

## 179 Clerk's Report

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



**Minute 156** *(continued)*

Co-option of a Parish Councillor

On invitation by the Chairman Ms Jill Ingram told the Parish Council about herself and her background. Having read the information sent to her by the Clerk and having had the opportunity to observe the Council during a meeting, she affirmed that she still wished to be considered for co-option as a parish councillor.

A short discussion followed.

**Resolved:** Ms Jill Ingram was co-opted as a Parish Councillor – to serve until four days after the Parish Council elections in May 2027.

Cllr Ingram made and signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office before the Councillors present. The Clerk signed in witness to the Declaration.

**180 Date of Next Meeting**

1 July 2024 at St David's Parish Rooms.

The meeting closed at 8:40 pm  
**Chairman**