

**Minutes of the Meeting of Haigh Parish Council
Held Monday 28 October 2024
6:36pm St David's Parish Rooms**

Present: Councillors Paul Kenyon (Chairman), Ian Parker, Marie-Clare Kenyon, Andrew Wilson and Jill Ingram
The Clerk to the Council: Mrs Krystyna Pilkington
Ten members of the public

224 Presentation of Parish Council Award

Cllr Jill Ingram joined the meeting.

Two joint recipients of an award who had not been able to attend the presentation evening on 26 September had been invited to join the meeting to receive their award. The Chairman introduced Tricia and Frank Livesey, who had for many years given their time on a daily basis to litter pick in Haigh Woodland Park and the surrounding area. The award was just a small token of appreciation made on behalf of the residents of the Parish for Mr & Mrs Livesey's commitment to what was often regarded as a thankless task.

Cllr Andrew Wilson joined the meeting.

225 Apologies

Dist Cllr Laura Flynn

226 Declaration of Interests

None

227 Casual Vacancy

Two casual vacancies had been created earlier in the year by the resignations of Cllrs Andrew Keogh and Bobbie Darbyshire. As there had been no requests from residents for elections, it was now possible to appoint two parish councillors by co-option. The vacancies had been advertised and eligible candidates had been invited to submit their expressions of interest to the Clerk by 31 October 2024. The Clerk reported that she had so far received two expressions of interest and there was still a possibility of further EOIs being received by the deadline. Three interested parties were present as observers at this meeting.

The way forward was discussed. It was agreed that members would review the expressions of interest that had been submitted after the deadline and applicants would be interviewed virtually via MS Teams in November on a date to be agreed.

228 Matters Introduced by Members of the Public

None

229 Haigh Windmill

Haigh Windmill (a machine that was once used to harness the power of the wind to pump water for the nearby brewery) was the property of Wigan Council. Earlier this year attempts were made by persons unknown to break into it. The break-in had resulted in some damage being done to the steel door. Repairs had been undertaken by Wigan Council.

Some years ago Wigan Civic Trust had helped The Friends of Haigh Windmill when they raised funds for the windmill's refurbishment, which had been completed in 2011. The disbanding of the Friends group had resulted in the distribution of the remaining funds between the Parish Council (£350) and Wigan Civic Trust. The funds received by the Council and the Trust were designated to reserves intended for future maintenance of the windmill. At the time the Parish Council agreed to add £300 annually to this reserve, but in practice – due to a low annual precept - only £50 have been added each year. The Parish Council's reserve currently stood at £1,000. It was noted that, had £300 been set aside each year, the reserve would by now have reached £4,250.

Mr Peter Taylor, the Treasurer of Wigan Civic Trust, was present at the meeting and provided information about the ring-fenced funds held by the Trust (£750) and also about the routine maintenance that needed to be carried out, eg the sails needed to be turned periodically and the machinery needed to be greased. The bricks used in the refurbishment had been specially made, as they were curved; some bricks had been left over and these (together with some of the long linkages) were stored inside the windmill.

Cllr Clare Kenyon led the discussion. Cllr Kenyon informed the meeting that Haigh Windmill held a special place in Haigh's history. Originally serving as a water pump for Haigh Brewery, it was an iconic structure that included two unique features invented by a Wigan resident and highlighted its heritage value to the community. A significant Heritage Lottery grant had enabled its restoration. Unfortunately, since that time, maintenance had been minimal, leading the structure to once again show signs of disrepair.

Cllr Clare Kenyon proposed that members should explore taking on the windmill's preservation as a collaborative project between Haigh Parish Council, Wigan Civic Trust and Wigan Council, which had assumed ownership of the windmill from the Earl of Crawford. This partnership would enable the pooling of resources and expertise to protect and maintain this valuable piece of Haigh's history for future generations.

During the discussion that followed Mr Taylor informed the Council that the Civic Trust would not be able to take part in such a collaborative project. However, they wished to transfer the ring-fenced funds that they held to the Parish Council. The Clerk would send the Council's bank details to Mr Taylor so that the funds could be transferred.

The condition of the information board about the windmill was brought to the Council's attention. The wooden frame was showing signs of rotting. As it was in need of restoration, it would be added to the project.

It was observed that the Parish Council did not have a large precept. The Bubblefest was its major source of additional funding. In view of this other funding sources would need to be investigated.

Resolved: The matter of on-going maintenance of Haigh Windmill would be an agenda item at the meeting with Wigan Council's senior officers in December.

230 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council (2 September 2024)

Resolved: The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Monday, 2 September 2024 were agreed to be a true and correct record.

231 DRAFT Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting (21 May 2024)

The DRAFT minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday, 21 May 2024 were received.

A vote of thanks, proposed by a member, to AI&AI for coming along and giving a wonderful presentation to the Parish was recorded.

232 Matters Arising

Letter from Parish Award Recipient

The Clerk read out a letter from Jordan Leeds, who had received an award for spearheading the reconstruction of the miniature railway at Haigh Woodland Park. In the letter Mr Leeds expressed his gratitude for the recognition and invited members to the railway for a 'Walk and Talk' through the project on a mutually convenient date. Mr Leeds's letter was received and its contents were noted. His invitation was discussed and the Clerk was asked to contact Mr Leeds to let him know that the members would be interested and to try to arrange a date for the visit.

Standing Orders were suspended.

233 Enforcement in Regard to Activities on Land in Pendlebury Lane

The resident who had asked for this matter to be included on the agenda was present and thanked the Parish Council for their ongoing support. Over the past three years this support had been of great assistance.

The resident spoke on behalf of himself and other residents of Pendlebury Lane, who felt that it had been necessary to continually press Wigan Council to act properly and in accordance with planning law in relation to the activities on the land in question. In the view of the residents Wigan Council had not at any time put residents' interests ahead of the actions of the tent pegging group.

The residents were almost at the end of a three-year struggle and just needed Wigan Council to enforce what they had set out in their legal Notice. The Enforcement Notice had been upheld by the Planning Inspectorate and had been reinforced by the recent decision at Wigan Magistrates Court which required the Council to ensure that the Enforcement Notice was complied with.

Residents' main concerns in relation to the remaining items on the Notice not being completed lay with the increased water run off on to Pendlebury Lane. Prior to 2021 the ground water from the field percolated into neighbouring fields and then eventually to the River Douglas. The stoning up of the track in the field and its excessive use resulted in the creation of a drainage channel which now directed water onto the surface of the track down to Pendlebury Lane. If this track were to be returned to pasture, as it was previously, then the land would eventually recover and the land drainage would be re-established.

The final element of the Notice involved the removal of substructure pad foundations and the base of the shelter to return the land to "as it was before". If these were

removed as required by the Notice, it would be more difficult for "temporary" structures and shelters to be erected and the whole cycle of enforcement restarted.

The second strand of the residents' complaint in relation to Wigan Council was the lack of enforcement of the agricultural use of the site. Residents were aware and accepted that agricultural land could be used for "events" on up to 28 days in any year. Residents had maintained a diary of the events – mainly children's parties – that had taken place over a number of months. They had received legal advice from a planning consultant, who had listed some of the activities that did not fall within the definition of "agricultural use" and therefore had to be considered as "events" or, alternatively, not permitted at all. This information had been shared with Wigan Council.

According to the consultant, in planning law any non-agricultural activity was considered an event. Because of the increase in non-agricultural activity in the area, wildlife was constantly being disturbed. There was concern that, if Wigan Council did not enforce the 28 day rule, non-agricultural activities would continue to expand across Haigh Parish. Residents were already aware of glamping sites being considered for the surrounding area. Wigan Council were saying that the remaining tents and vehicles on the site in Pendlebury Lane were moveable structures and, as such, were permitted.

Issues created by non-agricultural activities on agricultural land in the Parish were discussed further. Its current designation meant that the land was intended only to be used as arable land and for the production of meat.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

Resolved: The Chairman would write to the Enforcement Officer at Wigan Council to draw his attention to the residents' concerns. The letter would be sent to the lead resident at Pendlebury Lane for his approval before it was sent to Wigan Council.

Resolved: The matter would be an agenda item at the Parish Council's meeting with Wigan Council's senior officers.

234 Planning Applications

A/24/97280/OUT	Rothwells Stud Sennicar Lane Wigan WN1 2SN	Outline application for the erection of 3 detached dwellings, following the demolition of the existing steel portal frame building	<i>Objection submitted – there had been no further developments - Noted</i>
A/24/97940/LB	1 Gothic Cottages School Lane Haigh, Wigan WN2 1PD	Listed Building Consent for the installation of secondary glazing to all windows	<i>Noted</i>
A/24/97923/LUCP	Pennington Farm Pennington Lane Haigh, Wigan WN2 1NH	Certificate of lawful development for the proposed erection of two outbuildings within the garden of the existing dwelling, one to be used as a domestic swimming pool house, and one to be used as entertaining	<i>Action to be decided</i>

		space, garage and storage	
A/24/97922/LUCP	Pennington Farm Pennington Lane Haigh, Wigan WN2 1NH	Certificate of lawful development for the proposed conversion and renovation of existing barn into a home gym/fitness studio with associated changing facilities, and the first floor into a multi-purpose space incorporating games room, library/reading room, home office, and storage areas, with external alterations to elevations and roof	<i>Action to be decided</i>

A/24/97922/LUCP and A/24/97923/LUCP

The two applications were discussed briefly. Members were asked to consider the applications. A decision about whether a representation objecting to the applications would be made would be decided at a later date.

235 Haigh Hall

The latest edition of the Haigh Hall stakeholder newsletter had been received by the Parish Council and had been circulated to members. The publication included a brief announcement that AI&AI would no longer be contributors to the project. The Parish Council were not told about this by Wigan Council, but had made the discovery via social media prior to the publication of the newsletter. The Chairman had written to Wigan Council and had received a reply from the Director overseeing the project. The reply had not really clarified matters satisfactorily.

The situation was discussed.

The Haigh Hall restoration had over the years faced serious setbacks. Recent events meant that more issues had been created. The creative directors, AI&AI, who had guided the project since 2021, had, unexpectedly, not had their contract renewed by Wigan Council, sparking community outrage and a petition for their reinstatement. Additionally, the family of Wigan-born artist, Theodore Major, had withdrawn their support, citing a lack of confidence in the Council's management, its conduct and transparency.

These developments had raised concerns amongst the population about Wigan Council's ability to handle the project effectively, with calls for Haigh Hall to be managed by an independent charitable trust to protect its heritage and ensure it served the public interest.

Resolved: The proposal that Haigh Parish Council, as a significant stakeholder, should discuss the issues further and make a decision as to how the Parish Council responded was approved. The matter would be included as an agenda item at the next meeting with Wigan Council's senior officers.

236 Joined Up Bridleway

In December 2022 the Parish Council brought Wigan Council's attention to the lack of safe bridleways in Haigh and formed a working party that included AI&AI, the creative directors of the Haigh Hall project, to coordinate a joined-up bridleway system aligned with the new Bee Line path on the Whelley Loop Line. However, with AI&AI's recent contract termination, progress had stalled, and safety concerns remained unaddressed.

Despite new stables having received planning permission, Haigh's equestrians still only had two disconnected bridleways or busy, dangerous roads on which they could ride. This situation had led some riders to use restricted paths in the plantations for safer routes, highlighting the urgent need for a connected network.

The way forward was discussed. It was observed that the Parish Council should re-engage with Wigan Council over this in order to secure new project leadership and funding. There was a need for the LA to collaborate with local stables and prioritise a joined-up bridleway network that ensured safety and accessibility for the Parish's growing equestrian community.

Resolved: Cllr Clare Kenyon would write to Wigan Council on the matter and it would be an agenda item at the Parish Council's next meeting with Wigan Council's senior officers.

237 Meeting with Wigan Council's Senior Officers

The last meeting with Wigan Council officers took place on Monday, 2 September at 4pm via MS Teams. The minutes of the meeting had been circulated. The next meeting had been arranged for Monday, 9 December 2024 at 4pm via MS Teams.

Resolved: The following would be included on the agenda:

1. On-going maintenance of Haigh Windmill
2. Enforcement relating to activities on land at Pendlebury Lane
3. Haigh Hall
4. Progress with the joined-up bridleway
5. 20 Bridges viaduct

238 Bubblefest 25

At the meeting in September the Clerk was asked to look into the possibility of holding the Bubblefest on a date during the second half of June.

The Clerk reported that at present Haigh Woodland Park could accommodate the Bubblefest on either of the selected weekends (21/22 June and 28/29 June). However, on checking with the three bubble artists involved the Clerk had established that two of the acts were available on both weekends, but the one that provided the 'Have-a-Go' area and the foam machine was only available on 28/29 June.

When consulted, most members were happy with either date, but, because the event lead had expressed a preference for Sunday, 29 June, the Clerk had asked the bubble artists to reserve that date and to provide the Council with information about their fees for 2025.

The Clerk had also asked Wigan Pier Promotions to look into the availability of the artists that had been booked through them for Bubblefest 24 and to provide the Council with information about their fees for 2025.

The information about costs had been previously circulated to members.

The Clerk advised that, because of the construction work scheduled for the Bothy areas, HWP had informed her that it would not be possible for the Bubblefest to be held in the walled gardens. The work on the exterior of Haigh Hall was due to be completed in the Spring. This meant that it would be possible for the Bubblefest to be accommodated in the area at the front of the Hall where HWP had previously held events such as 'Dino Days'.

Members discussed the way forward.

Resolved: The Council agreed that:

- (a) Bubblefest 25 would be held on Sunday, 29 June 2025.
- (b) eBublio, Big Bubbleman, Memorabubble, the 'Have a Go' area and the foam party would be booked at a total cost of £1,600.
- (c) A juggler / monocycle rider providing interactive activities for children, a Punch & Judy Show and a balloon modeller would be booked via Wigan Pier Promotions at a total cost of £1,275.
- (d) Stall fees would remain the same as in 2024 – £75 (catering pitches), £25 (traders' stalls), FREE (community and local charity stalls) in 2024.

239 Summer BioBlitz

Cllr Ian Parker had submitted a proposal that the Summer BioBlitz should be held in the walled gardens over the same weekend as Bubblefest 25, creating an opportunity for greater engagement with the local community. The Chairman explained what a BioBlitz was and members were invited to consider Cllr Parker's suggestion.

The way forward was discussed. It was agreed that the Summer BioBlitz would be held on a different weekend (to be agreed) to the one on which Bubblefest 2025 would be taking place.

240 New Bank Signatory

Following the resignation of Mrs Roberta Darbyshire as a parish councillor it was necessary to remove Mrs Darbyshire from the list of authorised bank signatories and approve another councillor to replace her.

Resolved: Cllr Jill Ingram would be added as an authorised bank signatory and Mrs Roberta Darbyshire would be removed from the authorised signatories list.

Resolved:

- if we added or removed Authorised Signatories in the "Add or Remove Authorised Signatories" section on the "About your request" page of the bank's form, the Bank would update our mandate accordingly for the accounts we had specified in the form's "About your business" section
- and the current mandate would continue as amended.

Cllr Andrew Wilson left the meeting.

241 Direct Debits

Two monthly direct debits (to the value of £1.20 and £3) to Ionos for email services were currently being paid via the Clerk's personal bank account and being re-claimed.

Resolved: It was agreed that direct debits for the above payments would be set up from the Parish Council's account and those from the Clerk's personal bank account would be cancelled.

242 Request from St David's School PTFA

A parent member of the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA) at St David's School had written to the Council to ask if the Council would be willing to make a donation of selection boxes to support the PTFA's upcoming fundraising activities.

The parent had written that the PTFA worked year-round to raise funds that directly benefited the school's students, enhancing their educational experiences and providing essential resources that the school budget could not cover. This Christmas, they were planning to host a fundraising party at which selection boxes would make a wonderful addition as prizes or treats, creating added excitement and helping to attract support from the community.

The Council considered the request. The Clerk advised that, by law, parish councils were not permitted to fund curricular school activities, which were funded via the delegated budget from the Local Education Authority. However, they were permitted to contribute towards extra-curricular activities, which were paid for directly by parents, eg funding a coach to take a group of children on a school trip.

Resolved: The Council agreed to give St David's School PTFA a donation of £100 to be used to purchase selection boxes for prizes at their Christmas fundraising party.

243 Financial Risk Assessment (Review)

Members reviewed the previously circulated Financial Risk Assessment. No amendments were made.

Resolved: Members approved the Financial Risk Assessment 2024-25.

244 H&S Risk Assessments (Review)

The previously circulated H&S risk assessments were considered. A new one for the grit bin in Hall Lane had been included.

Resolved: The H&S risk assessments were approved.

245 Accounts 2024-25

Income: **£nil**

Expenditure:

No	PAYEE	NARRATIVE	NET	VAT	PAYMENT
42	Alexanders	APM refreshments	£ 84.00	N/A	£ 84.00
43	Employee No.1	Salary (September)	£316.26	N/A	£316.26
44	HMRC	Tax (September)	£ 79.20	N/A	£ 79.20
45	Employee No.1	Mileage (Sept)	£ 5.20	N/A	£ 5.20
46	Employee No.1	Eml-b5(Ins) (Sept)	£ 2.50	£ 0.50	£ 3.00
47	Employee No.1	Eml-arch(Ins) (Sept)	£ 1.00	£ 0.20	£ 1.20
48	Two Left Feet	Awards eve room hire & refreshments	£277.25	£55.45	£332.70
49	Councillor No.1	Printing (Dig Imp)	£ 16.00	£ 3.20	£ 19.20
50	Councillor No.2	Bouquets (Ch Bloss)	£ 75.00	N/A	£ 75.00
51	Employee No.1	Salary (October)	£316.26	N/A	£316.26
52	HMRC	Tax (October)	£ 79.20	N/A	£ 79.20
53	Employee No.1	Mileage (October)	£ 5.20	N/A	£ 5.20
54	Employee No.1	Eml-b5 (Ins) (Oct)	£ 2.50	£ 0.50	£ 3.00
55	Employee No.1	Eml-arch (Ins) (Oct)	£ 1.00	£ 0.50	£ 1.20
56	Wigan NE PCC	Room rent (Oct)	£ 20.00	N/A	£ 20.00
Total:			£1280.57	£59.85	£1340.62

Resolved: The above items were approved for payment.

Balance at bank on 2 September 2024 = **£30,186.92**

Item 41 (approved on 2 September) was settled by BACS on 5 September.

Estimated balance at bank after Item 41 and the above payments = **£28,826.30**

246 Clerk's Report

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

247 Dates of Meetings 2025

The proposed dates of meetings for 2025 had been enclosed. They followed the same pattern as in 2024. There was a short discussion during which it was agreed that in future meetings would begin at 7pm.

Resolved: The dates of meetings for 2025 were approved.

248 Date of Next Meeting

2 December 2024 via MS Teams.

The meeting closed at 9:05 pm
Chairman