



Local Government Act 1972

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD via ZOOM ON THURSDAY 8TH APRIL 2021 AT 7.00 PM (to be agreed at the Annual Parish Meeting 2022)

Present:

Cllrs J Pearson
S Barton
Mrs B Ashcroft
Mrs E Murphy
Mrs S Murphy
P Peers
J Stevenson

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr B Pilkington

Resolved: to note above apologies

2. To confirm the minutes of the last Parish Meeting held 10th April 2019

Resolved: the Minutes were agreed as a true record

3. To receive the report of the Chairman of the Parish Council

“Good evening everyone and thank you for joining tonight’s Annual Parish Meeting.

In particular I would like to thank the members of our community who regularly attend Parish Council meetings throughout the year and make such a valuable contribution to the work of the Council and the life of our village.

This year has been like no other within the living memory of most of us here tonight and most of the wider community . All of our personal lives have been affected by the Covid pandemic to a greater or lesser degree and so it has been for the Parish Council.

On a sad note we have lost two valued members of the Parish Council community; David Bentham who for many years was the Clerk to the Council and was valued and respected by all, and Ken Cleary MBE, our recent chairman and former Mayor of St Helens whose contribution to the Council and to the community should never be underestimated and on behalf of us all I would like to offer our condolences to their families.

One of our Council members Bernard Pilkington has been absent from our meetings for most of the past year due to the fact that he has been stranded in Australia, a victim of the global travel restrictions. Nevertheless, Bernard has kept in regular contact with us through telephone calls, email and social media – he hopes to be with us again very soon.

A welcome addition to the Parish Council is Elaine Murphy who was co-opted on to the Council recently and is already making a significant contribution to our work.

Despite the difficulties, we have been able to conduct most of our normal business as usual.

During the first three months of the pandemic, myself and the clerk dealt with all essential council matters until we were able to resume full Council meetings via online Zoom meetings.

Planning matters continue to be dealt with by our Planning Committee and residents' concern and queries have been reported by phone, email and online contact forms. We have produced extra newsletters which, along with new noticeboards, Facebook and Website keep residents regularly updated.

Use of the halls has been severely restricted: however they have continued to be open for essential cleaning, repair, maintenance and statutory inspections: they were used for flu vaccination by Garswood Surgery several times in the Autumn; Garswood Dance and the sports teams have managed to continue their activities at various points over the year (when allowed by national/local restrictions). Some groups have not been able to meet in person while others, like some of the Guiding units have maintained their meetings and activities online.

I would like to offer thanks on behalf of us all to the Parish Volunteer Group, established last March, for their work in supporting the community. Their work has included delivering meals, prescription collection and delivery and phone support for those shielding or in need of extra help in their daily lives.

I would also like to thank those local businesses that act as foodbank collection points, including Bargain Booze; The Store (Rectory Road) and the Garage on Garswood Road and last but by no means least, Amanda's Sandwich Shop for once again this year for providing so many meals for the sick and housebound in the community.

Our schools and nurseries in the area have worked hard throughout lockdowns to support vulnerable children and the children of key workers and have supported home learning. Our thanks go out to them

Events and activities arranged or supported by the Parish Council over the last year include the following:

- *VE Day decoration of halls and also for the Remembrance period in November*
- *Lamp Post poppies in November*
- *Support for litter picking session*
- *Halloween pumpkin competition*
- *Lights Decoration at the halls for Christmas*
- *Santa's visit to schools and tour of Seneley Green streets*
- *Funding towards Christmas Concert by Tom Loughlin*
- *Funding support for ward councillor's Christmas Toy Appeal (this was also overwhelmingly supported with toy donations by residents),*
- *Funding support for Christmas Dinner project*

Finally I want to thank all my colleagues on the Parish Council for their support and hard work during this difficult time and to thank all members of our community for their hard work in supporting one another.

We hope to begin a number of new and exciting projects in the near future, indeed the refurbishment of the Parish Hall is already under way."

4. Parish Matters

Matters raised by Local Government electors for the Parish:

Query re continued closure of library due to Covid: Cllr S Murphy commented St Helens Council had confirmed it will re-open as soon as it is safe to do so. It was queried whether it could re-open with restricted capacity? Cllr S Murphy said she would take up with St Helens Council as a District Councillor and proposed the Clerk write to St Helens Council in relation to this proposal. Cllr Stevenson commented it isn't just a simple case of opening the doors; issues with books etc. being returned and resultant isolation of items, sanitisation of doors, shelving, seating, adequate ventilation etc. Cllr Pearson thanked him for his valid comments.

Relocation of the Noticeboard from Garswood Primary School: a request to relocate the current Community noticeboard to Hamilton Road shops was made. Cllr S Murphy asked for residents to contact her directly in relation to the and she will speak with them about it.

Query re walking/cycle track around perimeter of Birch Grove Playing Fields: Cllr Pearson commented this request is still under consideration

Query re improvements at the rail station: Cllr Pearson commented the Clerk had regularly written to Cllr Liam Robinson with no response since January so he would now take this up with him at the meetings he is involved in via his St Helens Councillor role.

Resurfacing of roads in the area: it was commented Garswood Road had recently been done and queried other roads, particularly School Lane. Cllr Pearson said he had referred to St Helens Council weeks ago and would try to expedite the programming of the work.

Parking issues at junction of Argyll Close and Hamilton Road; Cllr S Murphy explained this had been a temporary issue which the school had addressed but she would ask the headteacher to write to staff and parents in relation to this and also request the local police officer to attend in the event of obstructive parking.

Query re Cllr Pilkington's continuing absence and whether a temporary Member can be co-opted in the meantime. Cllr Pearson commented that Cllr Pilkington had kept in touch and up to date with Parish matters. He then proposed for the Clerk to liaise with Cllr Pilkington in relation to his current absence.

Query re Youth Council: Cllr Barton updated that the pandemic had prevented physical meetings and no online meetings had been held. He further commented as restrictions start to lift then then it would be up and running again. A volunteer had come forward to assist in running the group.

Resolution:

***For Cllr S Murphy to liaise with St Helens Council over the re-opening of the library
For the Clerk to write to St Helens Council re the proposal to re-open library with reduced capacity.***

For Cllr S Murphy to speak direct to concerned residents in relation to requests to relocate the Community noticeboard sited in the grounds of Garswood Primary School

For Cllr Pearson to effect a response from Cllr Liam Robinson re essential maintenance and repair to the bridge and waiting room (Liverpool bound side) at the rail station

For Cllr Pearson to liaise with St Helens Council to try to expedite resurfacing of School Lane

For Cllr Murphy to liaise with headteacher at Garswood Primary re recent parking issues at the junction of Hamilton Road and Argyll Close

For the Clerk to liaise with Cllr Pilkington in relation to his continuing absence

For Cllr Barton to liaise with volunteer over re-commencing Youth Council meetings/activities when restrictions allow.

Meeting closed at 19.26