



**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on
Thursday 14th March 2024 in the Parish Hall at 7.45 pm**

Present: Cllr S Murphy
Cllr B Ashcroft
Cllr J Pearson
Cllr J Shawcross
Cllr J Stevenson

The Chairman introduced the Public Session prior to the start of the meeting (see Appendix A)

- 2023/132** **To pass as a true record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday 8th February 2024**
Resolved: to agree the above Minutes as a true record
- 2023/133** **To Note Apologies for Absence**
Apologies had been received from: Cllr Pilkington, Cllr Houghton
Resolved: to note the above apologies
- 2023/134** **To Receive Declarations of Interest from Members**
No Declarations were received
Resolved: to note the above
- 2023/135** ***To Receive any Chairman, Councillors and Clerk's Updates**
The Clerk reported that the budget had announced additional funding to Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee from June 2022 to support work needed to rural village halls and that the fund is managed by ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) however part of their criteria for application includes "Your village hall must be a charity owned and managed by the community" and as such Parish Council is not eligible to apply
Issues reported on/raised under this Agenda item are for information only.
Anything requiring further discussion/decision will appear on the Agenda of a future meeting
- 2023/136** **To Resolve to accept the Update from Planning Committee**
There have been no applications and just one decision since last meeting.
P/2024/0013/FUL Lancashire Power Boat Club Garswood Old Road Retrospective change of use to convert on-site residential flat to be included within commercial property. Granted

The Clerk reported a current Call for Sites: "*St Helens Borough Council is inviting interested parties to submit suggestions for new housing development as part of the St Helens 2024 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The primary role of the SHLAA is to identify sites with potential for housing and assess when they are likely to be developed. This enables the Council to assess whether there is an adequate local housing land supply. The SHLAA is not a statement of Council policy, it does not allocate sites for housing, and it does not signify the start of a new Local Plan. Please note, any Green Belt sites submitted will not be assessed at this time. The Council are specifically looking for brownfield or greenfield sites within the urban areas*"
Resolved: to receive and note the above update

2023/137

Financial Matters

Members were asked to consider authorisation of payments listed on the Schedule of Accounts below totalling £5281.12 and to note there were no S137 payments

The Clerk drew attention to £383.24 (item 23186) – *“this figure matches the Direct Debit taken in February (and acknowledged on the invoice) but it doesn’t match the actual invoice amount which is £17.72 less. I have liaised with new utility provider to explain this doesn’t comply with out Financial Regs so they have organised for us to receive quarterly bills that will match DD payments – the balance will also be sorted out from April as we are currently in credit”.*

The Clerk further reported no E-on invoice is listed this month because they had issued an incorrect bill - a corrected one is awaited.

23186	Smart Pension	600.12
23187	Contractor	172.80
23288	Phone	31.44
23189	Utilities	905.08
23190	Utilities	65.61
23191	Staff salary March	1383.12
23192	Staff salary March	898.98
23193	Staff salary March	369.63
23194	Contractor	120.00
23195	Utilities	177.44
23196	Utilities	383.24
23197	Utilities	80.30
23198	Consumables Supplier	93.36

Resolved:

To pass the Schedule of Accounts totalling £5281.12 for payment and to note there are no S137 payments

To note Clerk’s comments

2023/138

Health & Wellbeing Working Group

Cllr Pearson had met with Holy Trinity but they were unable to commit to providing space for a library service. Cllr Murphy is holding a meeting for all those who expressed an interest in assisting in a volunteer service at the Parish Hall on Thursday 4th April at 7pm

Resolved: to note the above update

2023/139

Estates Working Group

Members were asked to consider approving the following:

- a) Renewal of lease on Community Hall and Playing Fields – it was proposed for Members to approve negotiations with St Helens Council in relation to the renewal. The Clerk will report back at a future meeting
- b) *Seneley & Garswood Juniors have requested consideration of the approval of a 20ft. container being sited on the playing fields which would be subject to landlord permission and possibly planning permission. Their other outline plans are on hold at the moment pending a visit from FA Technical Surveyor whose report would inform any future grant application. Clerk is currently liaising with St Helens Estates over landlord permission for the above and also with St Helens Planning over any permissions required*

It was proposed for for permission for container to be agreed in principle by full Council and liaison and decision be delegated to Estates Working Group.

Resolved:

to approve negotiations with St Helens Council over renewal of the lease due to expire in 2027

to agree in principle to the request from Seneley & Garswood Juniors to site a 20ft. container on the playing fields and to delegate liaison and decision to the Estates Working Group once additional detail and permissions are received.

2023/140

Public Transport Working Group

Railstation: the Clerk reported a response from Cllr Gomes Aspron (see Appendix A) re an update on the following actions picked up at the last meeting:

- To chase up a response on the bridge at Spindle Hillock;
- explore solutions to the current problems in getting on and off trains - given the 30 year old trains we have at *present (he did confirm these are starting to be scrapped and replaced)*;
- explore the possibility of the one track use at Garswood (in common with the system in place at Earlestown)

We circulated on Facebook and on our website the link to the current LCR consultation on public transport for residents' information/action.

Cllr Stevenson commented he felt pre-Covid passenger figures are now disregarded in any consideration for improvements at the station. He also commented on the one-platform boarding/alighting idea – he felt the cost would be prohibitive. It was proposed to ask the Liverpool City Mayor to meet on site at the rail station.

Resolved:

To receive and note above

To request a meeting with LCR Mayor Steve Rotheram

2023/141

Communications Working Group

Clerk continues to update website, Facebook and noticeboards. The Clerk request consideration of a a new larger external noticeboard for the Parish Hall due to faults being experienced with the current one, now five years old. She also proposed re-siting to the wall at the bottom of the ramp.

Resolved: for the clerk to purchase a new noticeboard and arrange to install on the wall at the bottom of the ramp.

2023/142

Events Working Group

Cllr Murphy updated that she is holding a meeting on Thursday 21st March at 7pm in Parish Hall for anyone interested in helping organise/take part in a Carnival in June (date tbc).

Cllr Murphy also proposed consideration be given to recognising volunteers in the area, and to possibly present these awards at the Carnival which is also being held to celebrate the Parish Council's 50th Anniversary. She also proposed consideration of a possible separate event for this.

Resolved:

To receive and note the update

To agree on awards to recognise volunteers in our community and for further consideration be given to a possible separate presentation event.

2023/143

Vacancy in the Office of Councillor of the Parish Council

St Helens Electoral Services reported no requests had been received to hold an election for the current vacancy and Members were asked to consider if they

- a) wish to leave the post vacant, or

- b) to co-opt to fill the vacancy. Expressions of interest in the role would be requested and a decision on appointment of co-opted Member would be carried out by full Council at a future meeting.

It was also proposed to send a letter of thanks to Cllr Elaine Murphy for her services during her time as Parish Councillor.

Resolved:

To co-opt to the current vacancy in the office of Councillor of the Parish Council

To publicise the request for expressions of interest in the role.

For full Council to consider those received and to appoint a co-opted Member at a future meeting.

The meeting closed at 20.30

APPENDIX A

PUBLIC SESSION

Derek Wainwright updated on Parish Council funded planters: he reported they are in place at Tithebarn and Rectory Road, Booths Brow, Simms and there are another three in progress. FoSG are in the process of looking for sponsors, they have two and will continue with this. The Chairman commented on behalf of Parish Council on how lovely they look and also mentioned The Knit and Natter group's Easter decorations brightening the area.

Mr Wainwright also reported being in touch with LCR Mayor relating to the 'temporary' but long term fencing to the railway bridge at Spindle Hillock but it was reported back there was no progress from Network Rail on this and it was unlikely to be this year. Clerk updated on reply from Cllr Gomez Aspron on the same issue under Public Transport Working Group Agenda item.

Potholes – the Clerk reported a response from St Helens Council confirming that main roads are regularly inspected and any issues noted. All of these would be subject to a contract for remedial works as a whole and will be scheduled as soon as possible after the award of contract. Cllr Murphy confirmed she had also reported all potholes in the area and had asked for inspection of all roads. Residents reported some on Garswood Road had been done, but not all, sections at Billinge Road, Spindle Hillock, Rectory Road too . . . Top of Low Bank Road seems a decent job but the one opposite Smock Lane is already breaking up. No potholes had been done on Leyland Green Road.

The budget announcement on £5M additional grants for village halls was reported but the Clerk had already looked at this and Parish Councils cannot apply. She also updated during Clerk's Update Agenda Item.

Future use of library building was queried – clerk reported she had contacted Liverpool Archdiocese Estates in relation to this and is awaiting response.

Residents queried St Helens CIF monies – Cllr Murphy reported none are available

Trees initiative by St Helens Council was queried as other areas appeared to be benefitting from this, however Parish Council was unaware of this and the Clerk was asked to investigate. FoSG are happy to be consulted/involved in this.

The lack of PCSO in our area was queried but one resident was under the impression the former PCSO had now been replaced. The Clerk was asked to investigate/report to Crime Commissioner.

APPENDIX B

Response from Cllr Gomez Aspron

"Garswood Railway station temporary fencing: Council officers with the support of Merseytravel colleagues continue to reach out to Network Rail for an update and explanation on the works being undertaken and when works are expected to be completed. Merseytravel colleagues are scheduled to speak with Network Rail colleagues this week (w/c 11/03) and updates will be relayed directly back to yourself (our Member) asap.

Garswood station DDA compliance – Regarding the potential of providing step-free access to both platforms at Garswood, Merseytravel provided the following information and guidance.

Accessibility improvements to Garswood or other stations within St Helens will be delivered across multiple partners. Some are provided by the train operator and/or the Combined Authority such as toilets or Harrington Humps and some like the provision of access to both platforms would come through the Combined Authority.

The Combined Authority aspire to make all stations across the city region step free and we have an ongoing dialogue with Council colleagues with regards the provision of step free access at the stations within the borough. In addition, officers visited Garswood station and spoke to Councillors about the prospect of step free access last year following the submission of an application to the DfT for funding via the national Access for All scheme.

There are 2 stations (out of the 10 in the borough): Garswood and Earlestown that are not currently step free. The submission to the DfT prioritised the stations based on key (DfT defined) data (population, patronage, % pop over retirement age, % life limiting disability, etc.) to provide a list of 10 schemes to be put forward for consideration for the current round of funding. Earlestown was included in this submission, but Garswood was not. Whether this bid is successful or not or whether stations are included or not doesn't mean we will not make either station step free in the future. Funding for the Access for All programme is cyclical and will be available again in 5 years.

Options for using single platforms can be explored.

I appreciate it's not as detailed as we wanted but we rely on Network Rail's information".