



Minutes Of The Meeting Of The Parish Council
Held On Thursday 11th January 2024 at 7.45 pm
in The Parish Hall, Montrey Crescent

Present:

Cllrs

S Murphy
B Ashcroft
J Pearson
B Pilkington
J Shawcross
J Stevenson

Cllr S Murphy, Chairman wished everyone at the meeting a healthy and happy new year then opened the Public Session (see report at the end of these Minutes)

2023/104 To pass as a true record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday 14th December 2023

Resolved: for the Chairman to sign the above Minutes as a true record.

2023/105 To Note Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Houghton and Cllr E Murphy

Resolved: to note the above apologies

26023/106 To Receive Declarations of Interest from Members

Cllr S Murphy declared an interest in the School Lane issue raised in Public Session. Cllr J Shawcross declared an interest in the container issue under Estates Working Group Agenda item.

Resolved: to note the above Declarations

2023/107 To resolve whether, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 members of the public and press be excluded whilst Agenda Item 15, is discussed (likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Para 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Act).

Resolved: to agree for members of the public and press to be excluded whilst Agenda Item 15 is discussed

2023/109 *To Receive any Chairman, Councillors and Clerk's Updates (verbal)

Cllr Sue Murphy offered thanks to all residents and especially Cllr Shawcross for donations, time and effort during the local Christmas Toy Appeal.

Resolved: to note the above thanks

2023/110 To Resolve to accept the Update from Planning Committee

No Applications

Decisions:

P/2023/0498/FUL 52 Garswood Road Change of use of the property from a residential dwelling house (Class C3) to a Childrens home (Class C2) for the care of up to 4no children. GRANTED

P/2022/0837/FUL Garswood United Football Club 601 Garswood Road Installation of floodlights to a football pitch along with a 50 seater covered stand. REFUSED

Resolved: to receive and note above update

2023/111 Financial Matters

Members were requested to resolve whether to authorise payments listed below on the Schedule of Accounts for 8th December 2023 to 6th January totalling £7255.15 – there were no S137 payments

23158	Utilities Gas PH Nov	174.60
23159	HMRC quarterly payment	673.57
23160	O2-phone Dec	31.44
23161	Utilities 6 Dec-5 Jan	80.30
23162	Contractor - new noticeboard CH	159.00
23163	Utilities - CH Gas Dec	253.53
23164	Utilities Gas PH	193.88
23165	SMART Pension	628.54
23166	Utilities Elec CH	512.94
23167	Utilities Elec PH	61.26
23158	Contractor - ceiling tiles PH	250.00
23159	Staff Jan Salary	1328.00
23160	StaffJan Salary	823.51
23161	Staff Jan Salary	286.16
23162	Utilities Gas PH Dec	193.88
23163	PWLB	1604.47

Resolved:

to authorise the above schedule of accounts totalling £7255.15 and to note there were no S137 payments

2023/112 Precept 2024/25

Members were requested to consider fully the information on the Precept for 2024/25 circulated prior to the meeting to support their decision making: this included current year actual expenditure and income, forecast expenditure and year-end forecast budget figures for 2024/25 also Salaries /Expenses, Hire Costs, Members Allowance and Precept payment dates proposed by St Helens Council: 50% on 11 April 2024 50% on 13 June 2024.

Cllr S Murphy commented on the information supplied and asked for Members' careful consideration in the face of the current financial climate and further commented on the potentially significant cost of replacing the aged water heaters at the Community Hall, then asked the Clerk to make comment: she expanded on the range of information supplied to support decision making and invited queries. Cllr Stevenson also commented on the high cost of utilities and the Clerk also reported a further budget pressure in relation to Leased Land Charges. Option C was proposed (£50 per band D equivalent), giving an overall Precept of £69,600 for 2024/25.

Resolved:

to agree the proposed budget for 2024.25

to set the Precept for 2024/25 (based on this year's 1392 per Band D property) at £50 giving a total Precept of £69,600

to agree the Precept payment dates proposed by St Helens Council

2023/113 Miners Memorial

Cllr Shawcross commented on 'finishing off' the work required, and once this is done an 'opening' date can be set - he would prefer a forecast date and suggested this date is not included on the plaque so once wording is agreed the work can be done to order/put in place (wording options were given at the meeting but no decision reached).

Time capsule: Cllr Shawcross proposed information on the capsule to reflect the official sealing date and the eventual opening date (50 years time would correspond to the 100 years of Parish Council. He further proposed at least a month's notice for unveiling and for this to be sometime in the spring. Cllr Stevenson proposed we create a 'back story' to be publicly displayed including photos/information, he mentioned Steven Walsh in particular – he worked in mines and ended up miners leader, he became an MP and he final resting place is in Holy Trinity's churchyard. He proposed he be given recognition and mentioned maybe funding is available for the upkeep of the grave. Cllr Pearson commented many local miners have now passed away but their widows/families may wish to be invited to the opening and Clerk was requested to post a plea on social media an noticeboards asking for former miners/families to get in touch.

Resolved:

to note Cllr Shawcross' requests on setting date for the official opening and the eventual opening date for the time capsule

to note Cllr Stevenson's request on creating a back story.

to note Cllr Pearson's request for local miners/families to be invited to the opening and to ask for them to get in touch with us once a date is set.

2023/114 Health & Wellbeing Working Group Update

a) Library – inform of meeting with St Helens Council officers planned for 23rd January 2024 to discuss a volunteer-led service. The Clerk commented that it was not possible for this meeting to be a truly public one and Cllr S Murphy said as soon as they had information to report, they would get in touch with volunteers who had come forward.

Resolved: to note the above update

2023/115 Estates Working Group

a) Cllr Shawcross had provided plans and details relating to his proposal to site a container in the fenced area at the rear of the hall to Members. He spoke about storage needed for Remembrance silhouettes, associated items re Santa's Sleigh (not the sleigh itself), scaffold tower (used for lighting Parish Council Christmas tree) and a floor polisher/buffer for the halls.

Resolved: Members agreed for Cllr Shawcross to locate his storage container and the rear of the Parish Hall

2023/116 Public Transport Working Group

a) Railstation – the Clerk reported on the response from Northern Rail received re our complaint re number of cancelled trains, current impact on residents and future impact on data re use of station. The response requested detail of specific train cancellation/delay information to help identify if it is an ongoing poor performance or a temporary issue. The Clerk had forwarded this response to LCR Mayor/Transport Committee for comment. Cllr Stevenson reported he had read about a feasibility for a possible Carr Mill Station and also about provisions being made for the visually impaired at some stations but Garswood was not included in this either.

Resolved: to note the above update

2023/117 Communications Working Group

The Clerk reported Parish Council is in the process of changing to a .gov.uk email address. The government has now notified that all Councillors should have a .gov.uk email address for Council business. The Clerk requested those present to confirm they approve this change, along with any expenditure required for this (up to £250) and for the Clerk to liaise with the Chairman over

this

Resolved: for the Clerk to consult with all Members over the change in email address and to progress accordingly in conjunction with the Chair (up to a limit of £250 expenditure)

2023/118 Events Working Group

Cllr S Murphy spoke about the 50th Anniversary of the Parish Council and proposed we organise a summer carnival, connected to anniversary celebrations and asked the Clerk to write to former carnival committee Members in the first instance to gauge volunteer support.

Resolved:

For the Clerk to write to all former carnival committee Members re a proposed carnival.

2023/119 HR Matters

After a brief discussion the Clerk was requested to circulate appropriate documentation to Members. It was proposed Members sign off timesheets prior to payment of salaries each month.

Resolved:

For the Clerk to circulate requested documentation

For an HR Working Group to be formed

For Members to sign off timesheets each month

The meeting ended at 9pm

PUBLIC SESSION*

The Parish Council may not make any lawful decision during the public session. The public cannot take part at any other time in the meeting.

1. Statement (if any) from Merseyside Police: Crime figures from 11/12 to 9/1/24: Att Burg Garswood Rd 11/12/23 Burg Station Rd 16/12/23 front door left unlocked car stolen Burg Victoria Rd 18/12/23 Insecure No Vehicle crime
No Nuisance calls

2. The public may speak of any matters of concern

Query re any progress with The Stag site. Cllr S Murphy reported there had been no update from the developer/company who now owns the site so Parish Council is not aware of the current status.

Query re the library/library service - Cllr Sue Murphy commented the Health and Wellbeing Working Group's upcoming meeting with library officers re voluntary service. In the face of resident ongoing concern about the loss of the library, Cllr Murphy then briefly commented about financial pressures facing St Helens Council in catering for vulnerable children/children in care and vulnerable older residents.

Two residents reported School Lane traffic/parking problems – their drives had been blocked by parked cars and on complaining to drivers, were met with verbal abuse. Cllr Murphy advised to call police if that happens again. The two residents spoke about their wish to ensure their road becomes more safe for everyone. They further reported it is near impossible to get off the drive

without speeding cars creating a hazard and that years ago their request for consideration of one way system being created (on the basis of improving safety) for road was refused. Cllr Shawcross advised to report it at upcoming police surgery and possibly take photographs of any offending parked cars in the meantime.

There was a further general complaint on the condition of local roads like the junction of Leyland Green Road and Winstanley Road and also the continuation of the road past Railway pub (Strange Road) it was commented the road surface is dreadful. SM commented she had reported individual areas over recent months. Pavements are also in poor condition (alongside Recreation Ground in particularly). J Shawcross reported an area near his own home, took photographs and submitted complaint which was dealt with. Billinge Road/Smock Lane, huge pothole was reported by a resident but no action has yet been taken other than the hazard being marked out. Report has now been closed but clearly hasn't been fully addressed. Other residents reported similar issues. The Clerk was asked to write to St Helens – inspect and give inspection schedule and advise of upcoming work scheduled.

General observation on Council Tax that is paid to St Helens by local residents is perceived by them to be going elsewhere as Seneley Green appears not to have any success in getting St Helens Council to support resident requests and the overriding reason is always that there is no funding when clearly other areas seem to be gaining disability play equipment, for example, and creation of pitches at local leisure centre. Clerk was asked to write to St Helens Council re residents' concerns (to Chief Exec). Cllr Pilkington commented some of our Parish is as 'deprived' as other areas and yet, along with other parished areas, appears to be treated differently. He asked if other Parish Councils were unhappy with this and the comment was that it is believed they are.

A comment re fly tipping at Holy Trinity and whether there is funding anywhere to support the removal of 25 blacks of rubbish. Cllr S Murphy commented that there wasn't – as it is private land. Residents raised the matter of the Installation of a lift at Earlestown Station under 'Access for All' funding whilst there appeared to be no funding available for Garswood Station. The Clerk was asked to write deputy leader to ask re information on funding for a lift at Garswood. A resident asked if it would help for each individual councillor to write to St Helens Council in relation to this. A comment relating to the railway bridge at the junction of Strange Road and Spindle Hillock still being completely herras fenced with no sign of permanent work to the bridge being carried out. A deadline of 2024 had previously been given. The Clerk was asked to include this in communication with Cllr Gomes Aspron who is Cabinet Member – Strategic Transport. Unfortunately a resident reported they had experienced an accident alighting a train at Garswood Station and reported there were no staff on duty and no access to a first aid kit. A resident asked re Parish Council's 50th anniversary commemorations. Cllr S Murphy commented the Events Working Group would be looking to organise commemorative activities.

Please note: The Public Session held just prior to the meeting plus Agenda Item 4 are for information only. issues that require further discussion will appear on the Agenda of a future meeting.