

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held at Whitegate Primary School Hall on Monday 14th August 2023 at 7.30pm

Members of the public present: Ward Councillor Stuart Bingham (Ward Councillor Gina Lewis sent her apology), Resident C Stafford, Rob Charnley (Head of Planning and Placemaking).

Rob gave a brief introduction about himself and his role with Cheshire West and Chester Council. The Parish Council has had initial correspondence with the Head of Planning enforcement but have some ongoing concerns regarding local enforcement and interpretation of our Neighbourhood Plan when taking decisions on applications. Ward Councillor Stuart Bingham kindly arranged for Rob to attend our meeting to discuss our concerns. A detailed discussion took place, Rob outlined some of the local and national problems with regards to recruitment and retention of staff with current resources focus on planning applications, there is only a small team dealing with enforcement across the borough, considerable backlogs continue post Covid. Enforcement has a right to enter premises, and legally all they have to do is investigate, no duty to provide an answer, they have to 'weigh the planning evidence'. Nationally government looking at planning reforms, planning is complex with legislation changes often. Currently out for consultation, likely a suite of national policies along with a 30-month fast track Local Plan, consultation ends in October. Rob was thanked for his time and the open discussion which took place.

Action: KR to send copy of or original letter to RC, clarify our policy 1 interpretation (previously shared with predecessor).

Members of the Council present: Cllr Rayner (Chair), Cllr Haigh, Cllr Campbell, Cllr Cotterill, Cllr Matthew.

1.1 Apologise for absence.

Cllr Leech - family commitments
Cllr Baldini & Cllr Heath - work

Declarations of interest.

Cllr Matthews – Hunters Retreat - neighbour

2.1 To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on Monday 10th July 2023. 1446/23 resolved that the Council approved the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on Monday 10th July 2023.

3. Matters arising from the minutes Ordinary meeting on Monday 10th July 2023.

3.1 updates noted as follows:

- A54 – moving forward, residents have all had letters, confirmed fully paid through member's budget.
- Whitegate Lane no update, Clerk to ask Cllr Lewis to progress
- Cassia Lane – no update, not as much a priority as Whitegate Lane
- Barclays signatory - completed online awaiting confirmation (paperwork / card / reader)
- PC email - Cllr Campbell completed
- Highways slides from meeting were circulated
- Review NP completed and on agenda for discussion
- Branches at the Beeches not done
- Cinder Hill – cut low foliage at bottom of lime trees - completed

4. Clerk's report and correspondence

4.1 Discussed and agreed action to Clerk's report and correspondence: actions complete or on the agenda. Noted further issues with HMRC, now taking the quarterly figures as monthly, Payroll administrator is dealing with the matter. VAT return submitted, and football field invoice issued (request copy of their insurance).

5. Planning

5.1 1447/23 resolved the following planning application responses:

23/02307/FUL	Poachers Pocket Dalefords Lane	Demolition of existing house and erection of new dwelling	The PC object - The proposed development is an over development for the site (increase of internal area from 145m2 to 239m2) and is out of character for the plot size and neighbouring houses. The design does not comply with the adopted Whitegate & Marton Neighbourhood Plan (Policy 1 number of bedrooms exceeds existing, exceeds 30% increase in floor area). It does not comply with guidance in the Whitegate & Marton Village Design Statement (roof windows in front facing aspect).
23/02431/FUL	Ringwood Foxwist Green	Single storey front extension and single storey rear/side extension. Conversion of loft space to include rear balcony. Replacement windows, new roof lights and render to front and rear elevations.	No objection
23/02141/LDC	Hunters Retreat	Certificate of lawfulness for the existing use of the land, stables and equestrian facilities at Hunters Retreat have and continue to be used as part of a livery yard, for a period in excess of 10 years. In addition, a hardcore track has been in place from the yard area to the muck heap to assist with the collection and removal of the muck all year round.	The Parish Council is concerned that there is insufficient evidence to support this application. We are aware that there have been a number of enforcement issues for the site for many years. For this application we would request evidence of use as a livery yard over an extended period (e.g. financial accounts to support usage) and evidence of the existence of the track (e.g. the recent brochure issued by the estate agent does not appear to show a track).

5.2 To discuss enforcement/complaints: No updates to planning queries, Enforcement confirmed Coachwood Farm are actively trying to sell static caravan to ensure it is removed from site.

Rushmere Lodge – application declined in relation to the fence.

5.3 Updates Granted/declined/public speaking/enforcement – Clerk updated the planning list following a review of system as we are no longer receive automatic updates.

The following applications were refused: as above

5.4 Neighbourhood plan review – Cllr Haigh and Cllr Cotterill were thanked for their review, which concluded that no significant changes were required and NP still valid. Next steps included encouragement of renewable energy such as solar panels, and environmental improvements.

The NP review was considered and agreed subject to adding a caveat to consider national/local policy changes which might impact where necessary. VC to update and clerk to post on website.

Action: VC / Clerk

Cllr Bingham informed the meeting that housing targets have been removed, so protections have gone.

6. Finances

6.1 The bank statements remain unchanged: Lloyds account showed a balance remaining of £61,085.81. The Barclays account balance is £19,039.53 (£83,371.83 including savings accounts).

There were two payments to be made **1448/23 agreed:**

6.2 Pay ICO fee £40 online

6.3 Pay Cheshire Community Action £50 online (agreed to continue to support them)

6.4 CIL – agreed report which shows no additional income for 22/23 but spend the 21/22 money as part of The Beeches project in 2022/23. Action: Clerk

7. The Beeches

7.1 CWAC Highways/Legal team has confirmed that they are legally liable (not landowner) as it forms part of the adopted highway. PC cannot make any changes without highways agreement and at considerable expense. PC agreed to continue as we are doing with regards to maintenance and upkeep, agreed not to share our RA reports with Highways. Clerk to remind Cllr Baldini to trim the low hanging branches when pulling out of Clay Lane need to improve visibility.

Action: Clerk remind PB

8. Road Safety update

8.1 To discuss general road safety updates / speed limits objectives around parish:

Speed limit updates discussed above as part of actions.

School parking – Planning have confirmed no change of use or planning application is required. Agreed Cllr Cotterill to forward correspondence to clerk who will write to Highways to confirm school wish to formally recognise the ‘rear’ entrance as a entrance and ask for zig-zag lines to be painted.

Action: VC/Clerk

8.2 Litter, footpaths, styles, tree planting. – Cllr Haigh has updated the list, PC reminded to report any defects via the online reporting tool (particularly where there is a risk of injury), in the absence of a footpath officer to liaise with.

9. Parish Issues

9.1 United Utilities (UU) update – no further updates.

10. Items for information and discussion only.

None

There being no further business meeting was closed by the chairman at 9.31pm

Signed by the Chairman Dated

Outstanding actions (if removed they are complete)

Ref	Date	Action Log	Responsible
3.2	ongoing	Road safety - A54 speed limit reduction (40mph) PENDING/ Whitegate Lane (50mph) PENDING/ Speed limit 40mph Cassia Lane PENDING Clerk to ask GL to chase progress	Pending implementation
7.4	Feb 22	Add RM to bank signatory for Barclays A/c – completed online awaiting confirmation and receipt of paperwork/card/reader	RM
8.1	June 23	Take forward school action regarding zig zag lines with Highways following confirmation no planning required	Clerk
5.4	July 23	Amend summary and display NP on website	VC / Clerk
7.1	July 23	Cut low lying branches at Beeches	PB
5.0	Aug 23	Thank R Chandley and send some additional info	KR
6.0	Aug 23	Payments ICO / CCA	Clerk/KR
6.4	Aug 23	Return CIL report and publish on our website	Clerk

Agenda Call forward

Ref	Call forward date	Description
	Tbc	VRA re gritting, nuns grave
	Oct 23	Tree planting PB

Notes: KR / VC / not at Sept meeting RM - tbc (check if CL can chair meeting).