

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held at Whitegate Primary School Hall on Monday 12th February 2024 at 7.30pm

Members of the public present: Andrew Ingleby, Ward Councillor Gina Lewis

Members of the Council present: Cllr Matthews (Chair), Cllr Leech, Cllr Haigh, Cllr Cotterill, Cllr Baldini, Cllr Campbell, Cllr Heath

1.1 Apologise for absence.

Cllr Rayner - unwell

Declarations of interest.

None

Andrew Ingleby attended to discuss Neighbourhood watch; he has been in contact with the Chair of Cheshire Neighbourhood watch. At present David Roston is the registered co-ordinator, the chair has emailed him to confirm handing over but has not received a reply. There 13 other people registered in the parish on their database. Andrew is going to take this on, but may be some initial delays. Suggested launching this at the Annual assembly at the end of April. It was suggested there would be some funding available from the Parish Council to support this, there is also some free resources available from the scheme. Neighbourhood watch is usually done at street level, the whole parish is too large an area. Once Andrew has access to the database he will make contact with the 13 names to gauge interest. Clerk to contact Dave Roston and copy Andrew in to share contact details.

2.1 To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on Monday 8th January 2024. 1460/24 resolved that the Council approved the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on Monday 8th January 2024.

3. Matters arising from the minutes Ordinary meeting on Monday 8th January 2024.

3.1 updates noted as follows:

- A54 – still no date. Cllr Heath tried to contact Colas directly, this is chased up monthly.
- Speed reduction Whitegate Lane – Complete. Cassia Lane no updates, but not likely to happen soon.
- Zig Zags on the agenda.
- Cllr Matthews visited Barclays with the paperwork, Clerk has now received a further letter requesting information. Defer until Clerk can contact Barclays or visit branch as we are going around in circles with this.
- Cllr Baldini has not yet spoken to landowners regarding PRWO keeping paths clear from obstructions.
- Cllr Matthew has compared companies online and circulated what he proposes is a good price and suggested bench for DDay.
- Clerk has contacted enforcement – Jill Falkner is leaving soon.
- Cllr Leech has done an audit of light bulbs, agreed to get what is needed to ensure a variety of colours.

Ward Councillor Lewis arrived 19.40 Andrew Ingleby Left 19.49

Cllr Lewis gave some updates on matters arising:

Rushmere Lodge – informed this was refused by inspectorate and now with enforcement to deal with in relation to the high fence and part of wall.

Cllr Lewis has also been in contact with Highway regarding A54 speed limit reduction, there was another consultation and she doesn't understand why; she will keep checking with highways, it was noted they are overwhelmed with potholes.

Zig Zag lines – Parish Council to pay cost.

4. Clerk's report and correspondence

4.1 Discussed and agreed action to Clerk's report and correspondence: actions complete or on the agenda. None

5. Planning

5.1 1461/24 resolved the following planning application responses:

A discussion took place regarding the number of TPO in the parish and agreed additional wording noting our concerns about the number of trees being felled or works being undertaken, as well as referring to the Tree Officer with relevant experience.

Discussed relevance of village plan in planning process, Cllr Lewis confirmed we have had some success. If we are very concerned about an application, we should call it in, this gives opportunity to emphasis the village plan. Whoever calls in has opportunity to give comment, 80% of applications are delegated to a planning officer, rarely delegated decision overturned 10 in past 12 months. All three ward councillors are on the planning committee.

24/00193/TPO	Abbots Barn Vale Royal Courtyard Vale Royal Drive	1x large dead Sycamore tree (T1) - request to fell 1x Sycamore tree (T2) - remove all dead branches greater than 25mm in diameter	Whilst we refer to the tree specialist at CWAC as the expert, we are very concerned about the amount of trees being felled or work being undertaking within the parish on historic trees.
24/00415/TPO	Poachers Pocket Dalefords Lane	3x Mature Oak - Request to crown lift to 5m to clear building and garden, request for a 2m overall reduction to maintain health shape and avoid more failure of long lateral limbs and crown clean to remove large amounts of deadwood.	Whilst we refer to the tree specialist at CWAC as the expert, we are very concerned about the amount of trees being felled or work being undertaking within the parish on historic trees.

5.2 To discuss enforcement/complaints: No updates, our local contact for enforcement matters is leaving, Cllr Lewis confirmed a number of officers are leaving under a government scheme Mutual Agreed Resignation Scheme (MARS), it is not yet clear which posts will be replaced. Cllr Lewis has asked form names of key officers in each directorate and will pursue enforcement progress with Brian Leonard.
Action: GL

A caravan has been sited on Nova Scotia Lane, opposite Nova Scotia Cottage. Clerk to notify enforcement.
Action: Clerk

Cllr Leech took a phone call from owner of Case Farm regarding storage items and why this is on our list. Owner confirmed items are for use on own land. Agreed Cllr Leech to visit site and determine at next meeting if to take off list.
Action: CL

5.3 Updates Granted/declined/public speaking/enforcement – none – clerk will review the list for updates.

6. Finances

6.1 The bank statements: Lloyds account showed a balance remaining of £61,085.81. The Barclays account balance is £13802.55 (£77930.62 including savings accounts).

There were the following payments to be made **1462/24 agreed:**

Reimbursements to Cllr Rayner (Chairmans fund) £229.35

8. Road Safety update

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

Cllr Lewis informed the meeting regarding the new pot hole repair machine, some delays due to wet weather, new contractor Colas doing a much better job. Government is doing a piece of research regarding what utilities are doing with roads repairs.

8.2 Consultation school zig zag lines, notice from Highways and meeting update.

Cllr Rayner and Cllr Cotterill met Highways on site to discuss the zig zag line consultation as there were some errors. Highways were able to see firsthand the traffic problems at school pickup time, with parents walking in the road. Highways confirmed the turning out of Grange Lane is irrelevant for the purpose of this consultation. Cllr Rayner has responded on behalf of the Parish Council to the consultation. It is expected that this consultation will be withdrawn and replaced by another which meets our objectives. Once that has been consulted upon, they can progress with the painting of the zig zag lines, PC pay for.

Cllr Cotterill informed the meeting that Cllr Rayner has been approached by local residents enquiring why the car park is not taking place. They are concerned that there are more vehicles at school (numbers have increased since 2019), Cllr Cotterill confirmed they are expected to decrease again to 140 due to low birth rate.

It was raised again why the school doesn't have a 20 mph limit, Cllr Lewis suggested we need to pursue again with Highways. With the vehicles parked along the road it is self-policing, in that cars cannot travel fast. Parish Council cannot see how reconsidering the carpark is feasible.

9. Parish Issues

9.1 The Beeches – update following meeting with Highways. Cllr Rayner and Cllr Matthews met with Highways and agreed to go back with thoughts on what we want to do with the area, it would need to meet highways standards and we would need to pay for it. Cllr Rayner and Cllr Mathew will draft a proposal for PC consideration. Urgently need to fill potholes as we have been doing for years (Cllr Baldini to make enquiries about costs of plainings). Highways very clear in that although it is adopted it is off their radar it is not supposed to be carpark it's a verge. We are therefore limited to soft improvements only. Action: KR/RM

It was commented there were lots of vehicles tonight parked all over the road, Cllr Cotteril to follow up. Action: PB / RM look tomorrow at carpark at 9.15am and confirm cost.

Noted abandoned car gone, it was there for 5 days (taxed and insured).

9.2 United Utilities (UU) works to improve treatment at existing site, there has been a roadway and temporary compound area hardstanding installed. Cllr Haigh confirmed this is temporary for H&S with a temporary welfare unit. They are digging a trench along field and installing new storage tanks. Access from Cassia Green and previous application gave permission to cut tree. It is expect to take 12 months to complete. PC queried if there was a need for planning permission for new pipe and assumed it would need to go under road and brook. Cllr Lewis thought planning permission would be needed as the carbon capture use of existing pipes in Ellesmere Port needed planning. Action: Cllr Lewis to check on planning permission for works and pipe.

9.3 Discuss any general parish issues: Memorial benches and memorabilia – since raising concerns about the bench on the Whitegate Way, there has been complaints from residents and correspondence from the family regarding the bench at the football field. Items have been removed against the family wishes, unsure who has removed them but suspect a local resident. Clerk has been corresponding with CWAC about their policy. Agreed need to strike a balance between wishes of family and community interest. Clerk to draft a form of wording for PC guidance until we have a council policy. Cllr Lewis agreed to also pursue this with CWAC. Action Clerk / GL

9.3 Litter, footpaths, styles – no updates

9.5 DDay celebrations – 80 years anniversary – 6th June 2024, agreed purchase of bench, 5 ft oak bench to be located (in agreement with St Mary's PCC) on Church Green. Cllr Matthews confirmed lead in time 10 weeks so need to order soon, can later agree fixing, cost £1k all agreed purchase. Cllr Campbell has liaised with WI about a small event around 3.15pm when parents are picking up the children, sing some songs, children do some readings, school older year groups are studying WW2 so all ties in. Discussed who could do the unveiling of the bench asking one of our older residents, Clerk to pass details to Cllr Campbell regarding our suggestion. If wet weather would hold the event in the school hall. Clerk to pass Mews booking contact details too. Spec for bench to be provided to Clerk to order. Action: LC, RM, Clerk.

9.6 Agreed change of date for our annual assembly as Monday 29th April, Cllr Cotterill and Cllr Campbell are not available, Clerk to check hall available with school. Action: Clerk

10. Items for information and discussion only.

Cllr Lewis informed the meeting regarding the local plan consultation, opportunity to decide housing traveller site, defines what type of development and determines planning for next four years. There are sessions at Winsford, Ellesmere Port and Chester, further details to follow.

Extra information from Government on national planning framework. Constraints for building green belt (green fields not green belt). Initial feeling is cannot deny developers charter, giving more flexibility to put developments where we don't want them.

A large shed has been erected at Cookstool Farm, to enquire with enforcement if permission is required. Action: Clerk

There being no further business meeting was closed by the chairman at 9.23pm

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) COMPLETED/ Speed limit 40mph Cassia Lane PENDING	Pending implementation
7.4	Feb 24	Add RM to bank signatory for Barclays A/c – Clerk received further correspondence	Clerk
8.1	June 23	Zig Zag lines – await revised consultation	
8.1	Oct 23	Speak to landowners regarding PROW and respond to walkers	PB
9.5	Dec 23	D-day commemoration small event at school pick up time, order bench	Clerk, LC, KR, RM
9.2	Feb 24	Memorial bench policy	Clerk
9.4	Jan 24	Purchase replacement bulbs green/yellow for tree	CL
9.4	Jan 24	Book school hall for annual assembly – change of date	Clerk
1.1	Feb 24	DER contact for home watch	Clerk
5.2	Feb 24	Report touring caravan Nova Scotia Lane	Clerk
9.6	Feb 24	Cockstool shed is planning required	Clerk
5.2	Feb 24	CL visit Case Farm	CL
6.1	Feb 24	Receipt from KR for chairman's fund	KR
9.1	Feb 24	Draft proposal for The Beeches	KR / RM
9.1	Feb 24	Follow-up amount of cars for meeting at Recreation Room	VC
9.3	Feb 24	Memorial bench policy	Clerk
	Feb 24	GL reminder: A54 progress; liaise with Brian Leonard regarding planning enforcement progress due to staff leaving; 20 mph school; is planning permission required for the UU works for pipe and storage tanks	

Agenda Call forward

Ref	Call forward date	Description
	Tbc	VRA re gritting, nuns grave

Notes: LC apology for April meeting