

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held at Whitegate Primary School Hall on Monday 13th May 2024 at 7.30pm

Members of the public present: 24 members of the public attended, list of attendance taken and Ward Cllr Stuart Bingham.

Cllr Rayner invited visitors to speak at the open forum part of the meeting:

Bawsgate Farm Barn conversions (Greenwood House and Fairvale House) - Tom, resident of property adjacent to barns outline his concerns. Planning conditions stipulate requirement to give privacy due to close proximity, this includes a requirement that eight windows would not open and be frosted and restriction on number of bedrooms (3) all north facing, this has not been complied with. Property is being used as holiday lettings (Airbnb type) advertised as 5/6 bed properties, even the utility room has been converted to a bedroom. Recent rental to young adults (late teens) renting property and several taxi loads of people arriving for a party. Owners of the property refused to answer telephone. They are not abiding by their planning consent/conditions, like living next to a club. Currently they cannot rent out past 90 days, resident is monitoring this, concern may become all-year-round letting. A neighbouring property has been vacated by the elderly residents who were struggling with the situation and property has since been put up for sale. This matter was brought to the attention of the PC recently and steps already taken to raise with planning enforcement. Resident thanked the PC for their help so far. Ward Councillor Gina Lewis was also alerted to the situation and agreed to make enquiries.

Cllr Rayner has researched the lettings (sleeps 10 in 5 bed, and sleeps 10 in 6 bed), despite the delegated report restricting to 3 bedroom properties due to closeness of other residential properties. Tom said even the utility room has been converted to a bedroom. Ward Councillor Stuart Bingham was asked to make comment and how we can escalate this? He confirmed that planning enforcement is a borough wide problem, with problems recruiting staff to the positions and backlog of cases. Suggested contacting noise complaints team too, this has already been done. Resident confirmed this was initially reported in February, also raise a complaint with the Council and not received any response.

Parish Councillor aware of a similar situation elsewhere and believed that planning can stop continuation of Airbnb immediately?

Other visitors to the meeting asked how they could support this, Ward Councillor Stuart Bingham said they were free to raise concerns if they have been affected by the situation, perhaps noise? Resident of Grange Lane confirmed they had seen lights and heard loud noise.

Police also contacted, they can't do anything unless a crime has been committed, confirmed it's a civil matter. Resident at meeting (Police Officer) recommended reporting online via 'Single Online Home', this will be triaged and directed to the right team for action. If you believe there are drugs, violence, or a crime is being committed ring the police. Crime stoppers? this is anonymous, so may not be as effective. 'Single online home' recommended so the local 'beat team' can contact you back. Noted when the teens were leaving, they were shouting abuse.

Further discussion took place on why enforcement had not already taken action as initially raised in February. This will be on the agenda next month for further discussion.

School congestion/parking/admission numbers at school: scheme for parking was granted planning permission a couple of years ago, however the scheme did not progress due to no resolution over access to land (Diocesan won't give access and Petty Pool brook local farmer won't give us access). At the time the project was estimated to cost £150k-£200k, it is likely due to the exonymic climate that project costs will have significantly increase. Until access is resolved we can't do anything about it.

Admission numbers in school have increased and Parish Council / residents were never consulted or informed. Previously 125 now 165. Cllr Rayner suggested a group of resident representative's (Kevin, Paul, Lynn) and Cllr Rayner arrange to meet with Headteacher to discuss the issues. The PC have been previously informed that only circa 5% of school children are from within the parish. This has impacted Cinder Hill, grass verge is a mess with drivers going onto the verge to pass, and Grange Lane driving on footpaths, parking over driveways.

Resident unclear why we cannot use the existing access for the car park? Confirmed does not meet highways regulations which requires 2 lanes and wide entrance for visibility splays onto the public highway. Residents counted over 90 cars as school drop-off/collection times, often left with engines running. Discussion continued regarding 'forcing the diocesan to enter negotiations', use of grant funding for the project. Cllr Rayner reiterated we have spent many years pursuing this project and is currently not an option.

Residents want PC/PCSO to enforce, they know the times of the day affected. New initiative (Parksafe) requires residents to film drivers, but that puts them in danger recording vehicles driving on the pavement etc.. If ring 101 delay in attending, often too late. Residents also commented that parking the ANPR van at the top of the road is ineffective as they are going slower on approach to the junction. Resident again advised using 'single online home' to report anything, you get a reference number and it is sent to the relevant department.

Café – Cllr Rayner asked the Café Directors to outline their proposal for evening events, one scheduled for later in May. Mike (former ward councillor) spoke on behalf of the café directors to confirm that they did not want to discuss the matter, they refused to further elaborate in front of the Clerk. Mike asked why the Clerk had not declared an interest in the matter and left the room. Cllr Rayner confirmed the Clerk does not have a vote on any matter.

The Parish Council has questions they wanted to ask, the Café Directors refused to discuss the matter in front of the Clerk, but confirmed that there were no scheduled events planned at the café. Cllr Rayner asked about the event planned in May, and reminded them of their planning conditions restricting opening in the evening (9am – 7pm to protect residential amenity). It was re-confirmed there were no planned evening events at the café for the foreseeable future. Cllr Rayner asked who he was emailing when he sent an email to 'admin', it was confirmed all directors see the email, Cllr Rayner asked who was responding, a name was not provided. Cllr Rayner asked who was the Chair and asked him to email separately to outline what they did not want to say at the meeting.

Carl (husband of Clerk) neighbours to café (live next door but one), spoke about the time he and family had invested over the years in the café, from laying the floor, fixing the roof, painting and serving, managing the trikes etc... Café close to our hearts, and wish every success but it concerns us where the venture is going, with evening events. Previous idea for music outside and we don't want that, gates close 5pm/8pm which we do to protect the carpark.

Cllr Rayner confirmed current hours of operation 9am – 7pm as stipulated in the planning conditions, we would not support a change until protect people living nearby.

Action – Parish Council to arrange meeting with Headteacher and Cllr Rayner to speak to Vicar. Clerk to email the Police Inspector for the area (details to be provided).

Some residents left (clerk was unable to record who left the meeting).

Cllr Rayner opened the start of the ordinary meeting.

Five members of the Council present: Cllr Rayner (Chair), Cllr Leech, Cllr Haigh, Cllr Matthews, Cllr Campbell.

1.1 Apologise for absence.

Cllr Cotterill - holiday / Cllr Baldini - working

Cllr Heath – apology not provided (*later confirmed family bereavement*)

(*noted Clerk interest in Café item*)

Declarations of interest.

None declared by Parish Councillors

2.1 To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on Monday 8th April 2024. 1483/24 resolved that the Council approved the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on Monday 8th April 2024.

2.2 Agreed the notes of the annual meeting.

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

3.1 no matters arising not included on the agenda.

3.2 action log update was noted:

- A54 Chester Lane Brook - approved scheme and fully funded, still awaiting implementation by CWAC (former Ward Cllr Mike Baynham funded this). When the 40 mph is implemented we can display interactive signs to advise drivers and use bin stickers as reminder of the speed limit. We have been trying to contact the contractor and now have an email address we can try.
- Winsford to Hartford (Whitegate Lane) got down to 50mph (again part funded by Mik Baynham)
- School Zigzag lines (extend down towards the vicarage) awaiting approval -for safety reasons children walking on the road/
- DD bench – purchase bench 80-th anniversary, delivery in 2 weeks, need to agree date to install (on agenda).
- Christmas tree lights – action for Chris Leech.
- Improvements at the Beeches (fill in holes, cutting trees back), Highways have filled in some at the edge of road (resident enquired with contractor who said they can only fill the holes marked as they get penalised by CWAC if they do more).
- Emailed correspondence from Chairman between Clerk and highways. Unsatisfactory response from Jerry Gibbs, Highways.
- Clerk contacted Chalc regarding savings accounts, they provided their list but they were charity accounts, we still need to search for a better saving rate.
- Cllr Cambell has just returned from holiday, Chair was going to ask Cllr Campbell to liaise with residents of Cassia Green regarding their many issues. One resident has a contact a United Utilities and was to make initial contact, nothing heard back, Cllr Campbell to enquire.
- Clerk has emailed Headteacher to send out a reminder about considerate parking to parents and staff.

4. Clerk's report and correspondence

4.1 Discussed and agreed action to Clerk's report and correspondence: actions complete or on the agenda. Nothing further to discuss all on agenda.

5. Planning

5.1 1484/24 resolved the following planning application responses:

24/00897/FUL	Spanns Garage Dalefords Lane Marton	Demolition of rear lean to building, conversion of existing garage/ workshop to residential dwelling.	Use of existing building, same footprint, will enhance the site and visual aspect of village– no objections
24/00896/FUL	Spanns Garage Dalefords Lane Marton	Conversion of existing garage workshop into residential dwelling	Use of existing building, same footprint, will enhance the site and visual aspect of the village – no objections
24/01129/ful	Land at Blakeden Cottage	Retrospective application COU of land to storage and distribution for animal feed supply business. Storage building and new access (retaining existing access)	Clarified location (A54), retrospective application for existing business, creating employment– no objection
24/01259/TPO	1 Abbots Barn Vale Royal Courtyard Vale Royal Drive	Pedunculate oak tree 1003 (identified as tree T2 in Tree Preservation Order V/63/00054/ORD) Remove deadwood - 1cm diameter. Remove a secondary limb at 15m N. Reduce the crown generally by 25% (equivalent to the removal of 2.5m of limb length) by pruning to suitable growth points.	The Parish Council does not have the expertise to comment and we defer to the recommendation of the CWAC Tree Officer.

5.2 To discuss enforcement/complaints:

Rushmere lodge – still with planning inspectorate decision on wooden fencing.

No update from planning enforcement regarding The Mosses mobile home.

Bawsgate Farm – as discussed above.

Whitegate Café – Parish council would like to know what the café are planning to do, noted no evening event now planned for 27th May. Cllr Rayner has asked for the Chair (Iain Ranson) to email him about what they are planning to do, and concerns. Cllr Rayner confirmed the PC are supportive of the café and was impressed at the annual meeting with everything going on. The PC must be fully consulted. Director confirmed the toilets are looking rough, got plans to improve, and will be asking residents to support that, it was suggested crowd funding. Cllr Rayner further confirmed the PC can support with funding to make improvement to the toilets. This will be kept on the agenda and we await confirmation of what the café is planning to do.

5.3 Updates Granted/declined/public speaking/enforcement –Appeal Hunters Retreat for Change of use from Holiday lodge to permanent dwelling, PC objected, CWAC objected and has gone to appeal.

6. Finances

6.1 The bank statements: Lloyd's account showed a balance remaining of £61,056. The Barclays account balance is £34,293.16 (£98,650.58 including savings accounts)

In answer to question raised at the start of the meeting by visitors. Cllr Rayner explained we draw a precept of £19,500 per year to do the work we want, pay clerk, donations to community groups. We have allocated £10k this year into the project fund. Accounts displayed on notice board (and website).

We were building funds toward the £150k identified as costs of the carpark several years ago, that money remaining is now being used on road safety projects/The Beeches. Whether we can get authority from Highways to spend that money is another matter. Highways email has not consider our requests to reduce speed limit outside the school or permanent interactive signs (£5k each). PC disappointed by Highways stance on the matter, Cllr Rayner read out the recent email received from Highways. Clerk to enquire how much the speed survey will cost. Action: Clerk

1485/24 agreed the following payments

- 6.2 Note paid Simply Signs for banners £235.20
- 6.3 Paid Zurich Municipal - insurance fee £306.39
- 6.4 To pay balance owed for bench when received £700
- 6.5 To pay grass cutting contact when complete £245
- 6.6 Agreed purchase of new PC laptop £616 incl VAT

8. Road Safety update

8.1 Following on from the road safety survey, Clerk has drafted a special flyer to ask residents to support titled Safer Road in your parish. Identified four priorities 1) pot holes 2) Chester Lane Brook implementation of the speed limit 3) School speed limit 20 mph 4) action to improve safety for crossing at the Beeches. Once finalised will be published on the newsletter and available at certain locations in paper format. Asking residents to write of highways only to explain dissatisfaction with issue. Cllr Rayner to proof read flyer. Resident mentioned streetlight still not working after 18 months, new cable is imminent. Cllr Matthews/Cllr Rayner to provide some pictures. Clerk ask for price of speed survey outside school. Action: KR/RM/Clerk

9. Parish Issues

9.1 The Beeches – talked briefly earlier about this. Cllr Matthews to co-ordinate improvements we are completing, including filling the potholes on layby. We had success with Highways going through Jackie Weaver, helped us make contact with Jamie Barron (Head of Highways) so we can improvements. Action: RM

9.3 United Utilities - no further updates. Cllr Campbell to contact Cassia Green resident regarding United Utility contact. Cllr Haigh confirmed no work in parish at the moment, using the site to park vans. Action: LC

9.4 Litter, footpaths, styles - Cllr Rayner & Cllr Haigh and representative from Mid Cheshire Footpath Society met with Footpaths Officer, she's only one person for whole of CWAC. Lot of backlog due to nobody in post. She has contacted farmers regarding access across field full of crops. Action list of 10 items, including replacing the wooden finger post on Beauty Bank, quote £200 to CWAC, can't afford to replace it, PC agreed to fund it, Cllr Haigh to confirm. Action: SH

9.6 Installation of the bench -arriving Thursday 23rd May, Cllr Mattherws / Cllr Leech / Cllr Baldini to install, need concrete, steels to anchor down and paving slabs or York stone. Need to liaise with the Vicar regarding the specific location. Unveiling 15th June at 10am (not D-day) . Action: RM/PB/CL

9.6 Annual meeting review – good turnout the advertising helped. Any improvements? Worked well, would have been helpful to have a school representative there in the absence of the Headteacher. Residents felt the question time at the end was cut short due to time taken for community groups to provide their updates. Suggested the monthly meeting are the best forum to raise concerns, great to see so many people here tonight. Will sign those notes.

10. Items for information and discussion only.

Memorial items on bench along Whitegate Way have been removed.

Grange Lane residents -suggested do what residents of Great Budworth have done and line the street with resident cars so visitors cannot park. There were less cars for one week following the Annual meeting, suggested school can do more with the issue. Ask if Headteacher or deputy can attend future meetings to discuss concerns. School has recently said that the music festival scheduled to take place on 6th July in the school hall cannot take place in school hall as it is now needed for school. The music event would still like access to the toilets.

Wooden bollard erected on Old Vale Royal drive lasted 48 hours, before being removed.

There being no further business meeting was closed by the chairman at 9.25pm

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) Speed limit 40mph Cassia Lane PENDING Clerk contact contractor	Pending implementation
8.1	June 23	Zig Zag lines – pending	
8.1	Oct 23	Speak to landowners regarding PROW and respond to walkers	PB
9.5	Dec 23	D-day commemoration bench installation	RM, CL, PB
9.4	Jan 24	Purchase replacement bulbs green/yellow for tree	CL
9.1	Apr 24	Progress improvements at the Beeches Order MOT for filling in the summer holidays/when dry.	RM / PB
8.1	Mar 24	Email Highways regarding speed indicator signs and 20 mph at school – Chair to provide wording for response. Ask Highways for cost of survey	KR / Clerk
9.4	Apr 24	Order litter pick circles	Clerk
6.1	Apr 24	Saving account's investigate	Clerk
9.2	Apr 24	LC to liaise with Cassia Green residents and find out contact details for UU	LC
3.2	May 24	Arrange meeting with Headteacher, and representative and KR Contact Police Inspector regarding parking concerns	KR / VC
6.1	May 24	Find out cost of speed survey	Clerk
8.1	Apr 24	Flyer special newsletter – Review KR / Clerk edit	KR / Clerk
9.3	May 24	Finger post Beauty Bank – PC fund – SH inform footpath officer	SH

Agenda Call forward

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

Notes: KR not available June. RM might not be available if not CL Chair