

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held at Whitegate Primary School Hall on Monday 14th October 2024 at 7.30pm

Members of the public present: Ward Councillor Gina Lewis, Ward Councillor Stuart Bingham, Local Policing Unit (LPU) Inspector David Levins, Headteacher Caroline Mckenzie and 10 members of parish.

Members of the Council present: Cllr Rayner (Chair), Cllr Haigh, Cllr Campbell, Cllr Heath, Cllr Matthews (resigned), Cllr Baldini.

Resident asked Headteacher to confirm school numbers– 149 confirmed.

Bawsgate Barns holiday lettings – Resident confirmed he has submitted a diary of activity in view of 90 day restrictions. We are aware Planning Enforcement have had a conversation with owner and they are expected to put in an application for COU and to amend the planning conditions stipulated including No of bedrooms and opening windows. Resident has contacted MP, as have the parish council, he has escalated as much as he can. When the planning application comes to the committee, we have a voice. Our ward councillors are all members of the planning committee and therefore cannot comment. Decision will need to be taken as to whether to call the application in. From a policing perspective, main issue is the noise, mainly families visiting over the summer.

Residents were asked if they wanted to speak at the meeting, none.

Caroline confirmed Bishop Sam had visited school, she previously answered questions about pupil numbers, this has come down from 160, PAN (pupil admission numbers) 168 max / 24 per class. Caroline was asked about the criteria for increasing pupil numbers, it was confirmed they just look at building capacity only, square footage no other criteria. Resident asked how many come from village 5% village itself 7 children. Over the full W&M area would need to get back to us on that.

Cllr Rayner confirmed meeting with CWAC Highways tomorrow regarding access and congestion. It will be a useful meeting to get them to see a realistic picture of the issues. Someone from road safety team also attending. Previous correspondence has been disappointing. Resident asked about vehicles driving on the pavement. Insp Dave Levins has discussed with PCSO Lewis Railton, he has seen some of the behaviours. Need to look at how we can improve those behaviours. PC confirmed data of 60 speeding offences on Cinder Hill during first three months of the year, we are exploring getting interactive signage.

Insp David Levins confirmed enforcement is a short-term measure to a long term problem, giving 60 people tickets, doesn't fix problem, need to look at level of re-offending. Wider picture of road safety, such as reduction to 20 mph, traffic calming measure, can't speak for council about what is appropriate. Element of enforcement need long term approach. SIDS – when people being watched and monitored, change in surface, we have been told previously that as a major road for emergency vehicles they won't consider traffic calming. Residents asked about the location of the speed van at the top of the hill. Vans can only be sited where certain criteria is met (line of sight). Village is a rat run, Northwich and Winsford, congestion at school drop off / pick up. When no congestion speeding cars.

New PCSO name is Steve Bishop. Insp David Levins gave some statistics, for the month of September there were 120,000 999 calls; 101 system 140,000 10,000 other forms comms, answer 999's 99% with 8 seconds, 101 most within 11 mins, so need a little patience. Alternatively, use the online system, all reports are triage if you don't think it worthy of a 999 report online by completing the contact form, it has to go to someone to review, if we don't have data we don't know about it. Resident asked about challenging behaviour when blocking driveways. If there is a fear of violence phone up, don't be put in danger. If threatened by parent, if immediate threat of violence, assault, doesn't have to be physical.

Spoke about community speed gun and SIDS initiative, letters are sent out to offenders. Resident reiterated about road safety with parents observed in middle of road with children, darker nights approaching, concern for child safety.

Asked for clarification on powers of PCSO - PCSO can get vehicles moved, and can give a ticket. Driving on pavement – what recommend? The cause is parking at school drop off pick up time. When vehicles enter Grange Lane from Winsford end, curve of road, can't see if clear passage, meet oncoming traffic, sit there, only escape route is to drive on pavement, happens daily. Driving on pavement is an enforcement matter.

Residents informed the meeting they were holding a meeting with MP Andrew Cooper on Saturday.

Insp Dave Levins left meeting 8.04

1.1 Apologise for absence.

Cllr Leech – away

Cllr Cotterill - away

Declarations of interest.

None declared by Parish Councillors

2.1 To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on Monday 12th August 2024. 1497/24 resolved that the Council approved the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on Monday 12th August 2024 (no September meeting due holidays and therefore meeting not quorate, first time in over 15 years this has happened).

3. Matters arising from the minutes Ordinary meeting on Monday 12th August 2024.

3.1 no matters arising not included on the agenda.

3.2 action log update was noted:

- Christmas bulbs purchased
- Zig Zag lines – fully funded waiting for implementation, chased with Highways.
- Potholes at the Beeches – Highways filled those close to the highway, we agreed not to fill within 1m of the highway so it wasn't worth ordering. Cllr Baldini will have another look to see if we need to fill others.
- Cassia residents are dealing with someone high up at United Utilities regarding connectivity to the mains, properties are also getting Fibre to the premises installed as an extension of Winsford, some in process of being connected. Cllr Campbell will let us know if there any matters we need to be aware of, take off list. Potholes continue to be an issue.
- Abandoned vehicle was reported, it was SORN so had to be reported to DVLA.
- Asbestos has gone, took 3 months, external contractor, portal issues. Resident had issues with the portal reporting missed bin collection was not an option for the council to be at fault.

3.3 As Cllr Matthews has moved out of the area, he is no longer eligible to be a parish councillor and resigned his post. Robert was thanked for all his efforts, particularly involving solicitors. Parish Vacancy notice published 7/10/24, have to wait 14 working days, if no call for election we can co-opt. Cllr Rayner asked if anyone was interested, nobody commented.

3.4 We now to appoint new Vice Chair, all suggested discussing with Cllr Leech and Cllr Cotterill when they return. Whoever become chair can also be the additional bank signatory.

3.5 Cllr Rayner, Cllr Haigh and Cllr Campbell and Gina Lewis and Stuart Bingham met with MP Andrew Cooper on 20th September, Cllr Rayner has already circulated his notes from the meeting. MP Andrew Cooper had done his homework, and had similar responses to our own. It was a very open meeting, he was given copies of our Neighbourhood Plan (discussed policy 1 to maintain smaller properties), discussed enforcement issues, gave copy of our road safety risk register of our top six priorities. Discussed couple of main issues: panning enforcement, road safety/congestion and engagement with Highways. He has written a parliamentary question around the short term let sector as the regulations are unclear. Mike Duggie is leading Broadband project gigabit aimed to improve connectivity in rural areas. Provided Cllr Lewis with contact details for local flooding authority to take forward with regards to the Paddocks united utility problems.

Ward Councillors Gina Lewis / Stuart Bingham took away action to engage with Highways. Andrew agreed to write to the Arch Deacon, however Cllr Rayner suggested that the initial point of contact is the local vicar to support the project. In summary MP confirmed that he has no budget and no power just his letter head.

3.6 Invitation to police inspector – attended first part of meeting on agenda.

3.7 Cllr Heath listed to the Highways meeting briefing, the part on tree maintenance was useful, over 300,000 trees to check, discussed what volunteers in communities could do, but concerns over insurance were raised. Highways say they don't have any recourses.

3.8 ChALC annual meeting, Cllr Rayner attending and place for one other. Cllr Heath to confirm if she is available to attend.

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 correspondence from resident which suggests from their land registry searches that the land outside the old post office, is part of the adopted highway, not owned by the Delamere Estates as we had first thought. They have corresponded regarding the use of the area for parking by care staff. The Parish Council has had a desire to make this area a focal point for the village.
- Another resident commented that the verge outside school needs cutting, this was reported to CWAC as part of the adopted highway, however Caroline confirmed that her husband or Paul usually cut it.
- CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy), developer contributions, money received in April for last year so a nil return was submitted, we have not yet allocated how the funding will be used, will be discussing next years budget at the December meeting for agreement.
- Hawthorn bushes are being planted on Vale Royal drive.
- Cadnet have email as part of their consultation process, the pipeline skirts our parish so we are unaffected, nearest presentation is at Davenham on 24th October.
- Cllr Heath will try and sign up to the digital event.

5. Planning

5.1 1498/24 resolved the following planning application responses:

24/02693/CAT	Whitegate Church of England Primary School	Works to trees including crown lifting and removal - as detailed in tree report	No objection
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5.2 To discuss enforcement/complaints:

Rushmere Lodge, wall / fence refused application – awaiting decision re enforcement of fence

The mosses - lodge home - awaiting planning application

Bawsgate Farm barns used as holiday lets / renovations not in accordance with planning permission – awaiting application for COU.

Evening events at café – Directors are attending the November meeting to discuss further, they are currently raising funds to improve the toilets. Discussed opening times of the toilets do not coincide with closure of the gates, locked when café is closed. Agreed to discuss this further when they attend the November meeting.

5.3 Updates Granted/declined/public speaking/enforcement – planning list updated manually by

6. Finances

6.1 The bank statements: Barclays account showed a balance remaining of £28,904.91. The total account balances is £92,227.20 including savings accounts. 1499/24 agreed the following:

6.2 Paid ICO fee - DD £35 paid in September

6.4 Paid Clerk Wages (paid Sept) £1060

6.5 Paid HMRC (paid Sept) £265

6.6 Paid Quay Payroll (paid Sept) £15

6.7 Paid reimbursement to Clerk for purchases made on behalf of PC incl reimbursement for purchase of 2 defib batteries and 2 AED pads. £664.13

6.8 Paid Grass Cutting contract £245

6.9 Paid AC&E email support 1/6/24-31/5/25 £126

6.10 Bank mandate changes – wait for appointment of Vice Chair.

6.11 Community Donation requests:

Request for donations 2024/25	Request for	Awarded
		£
Whitegate WI	Annual village show	332.00
Recreation Room	Contribution towards £1k deep clean	250.00
Church Wood	Insurance - tree survey medium risk remove 18 months	1000.00
Whitegate PCC - general request	Contribution towards keeping trees in church yard safe £624	300.00
WSCG	Contribution towards toilet block improvements £12k - agreed to wait until they attend the November meeting before agreeing amount.	250.00
Whitegate Scout Group	Contribution towards small items pioneering poles and sports equipment	500.00
Friends of Whitegate School	Contribution towards final costs The Grove, regen of outside space, replace play equip trim trail	500.00
Whitegate Football Club	Already paid towards security improvements	500.00
Budget £2000		3632.00
The Royal British Legion		35.00

Action: clerk / KR

6.12 Cllr Rayner reviews and signed half year accounts as a correct record.

6.13 Note was circulated by Cllr Rayner ahead of the meeting to councillors, agreed clerk salary of 5.6% to £5600 in recognition of the increased responsibility financial, inefficiency reminders all the time.

6.14 Clerk to order wreath, usual contact no longer doing the wreaths, clerk has contact details for regional lead to ensure we have one ordered.

Action: Clerk

7. Road Safety update

7.1 Cllr Rayner met with residents of Grange Lane on 16th August to discuss in more detail their desire for passing places and work together. It was agreed to update the road safety risk register with some additional changes. Meeting taking place tomorrow as discussed above with Ward councillor, headteacher, highways and parish council, will look at the parking problem first before the meeting. Main aim to reduce the speed limit to 20mph outside the school and address congestion. To reconvene in December to follow up on progress of actions from meeting earlier in the year.

9. Parish Issues

9.1 The Beeches potholes – discussed above

9.2 United Utilities – info from MP, otherwise nothing new.

9.3 Parish Issues – Annual lights switch on Sat 7th December at 5.15pm, usual arrangements.

9.4 As noted above, fly-tipping has been removed after 3 months. Cllr Haigh and Cllr Rayner to arrange follow-up meeting with Liz Holmes, she is the only footpath officer for the LA, making some progress. Finger post looks good with flower around it. Gina Lewis reminded the parish council to notify of footpaths if they are not registered else they will disappear, Cllr Haigh confirmed ours are all registered, we know where they are we just can't see some of them. Cllr Rayner would like a working party to tidy the footpaths at the Beeches. Mike Gilmore from Mid Cheshire Footpath Society attended the last meeting he was really helpful. Gina Lewis suggested Chris Mosely might be able to help uncover some of the paths. Action: SH

10. Items for information and discussion only.

There being no further business meeting was closed by the chairman at 9.30pm.

Signed by the Chairman **Dated**

Outstanding actions (if removed they are complete)

Ref	Date	Action Log	Responsible
8.1	June 23	Zig Zag lines – pending - clerk to chase up	
9.1	Apr 24	The Beeches – check if we need to fill holes.	PB
9.4	Apr 24	Order litter pick circles	Clerk
6.1	Apr 24	Saving account's investigate	Clerk
3.2	July 24	Actions from meeting with Headteacher 5/7 Communicate events with residents Explore installation of H bars with CWAC (Aug meeting KR meet with residents 16/8 re requirements) Explore staff parking options Capacity review – should consider parking	Various VC Clerk KR/Headteacher Headteacher
6.14	Oct 24	Order wreath	Clerk
6.11	Oct 24	Community donation payments	Clerk / KR
9.4	Oct 24	Arrange next meeting with PROW	SH
9.3	Oct 24	Christmas Lights arrangements – Clerk circulate list	Clerk

Agenda Call forward

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

Notes: KR, VC, SH not available Sept meeting