

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held at Whitegate Primary School Hall on Monday 10th November 2025 at 7.30pm

Members of the public present: Two members of the public attended and Ward Councillor Gina Lewis.

Members of the Council present: Cllr Rayner (Chair), Cllr Cronin, Cllr Haigh, Cotterill, Cllr Leech. Cllr Heath (remote).

1.1 Apologise for absence.

Cllr Campbell – holiday

Cllr Baldini - work

Declarations of interest.

None

2.1 To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council 13th October 2025. 1541/25 resolved that the Council approved the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on Monday 13th October 2025.

3.1 Matters arising from the minutes of the Ordinary meeting on Monday 13th October 2025.

3.2 Action Log:

- Litter pick on Whitegate lane – the parish council volunteered for the pilot of rolling road closure of road several months ago but we have not heard anything back. Cllr Bingham was going to follow this up, we've not heard anything.
- Cinder Hill – Resurfacing, wig wag signs and reduced speed limit still not completed. Cllr Rayner would like a meeting with Jayne Black, Head of Highways as it was 12 months ago when we raised concerns, Ward Councillor Gina Lewis to follow up. Highways listed 18 schools to be completed, with Whitegate scheduled for October. Cllr Lewis confirmed Highways Board was not held during purdah, with issues taking time across Winsford to resolve. Lots of messages on social media regarding resurfacing of road past the Salt Mines and commenting on the state of Cinder Hill, it's just not acceptable.
- Cllr Baldini to speak to the farmer regarding the scheduled monument/plaque. Clerk to send reminder. Action: Clerk/PB
- Review of overgrown hedges – Cllr Baldini to cut back the hedge overhanging the footpath through the Beeches. Cllr Lewis confirms some of the delays with CWAC cutting hedges due to contractors focusing on estate contracts they have to fulfil. Clerk reported the footpath impassable on St Mary's drive (right hand side) that has still not been actioned. Noted some works was carried out on Cinder Hill due to the power lines by the utility company.
- Community donations paid, Cllr Rayner ordered bulbs for residents, and K Garvey confirms lots have already been planted.
- Wildflower planting – CWAC officer came back with some options. Email was circulated with suggestions, Cllr Heath gave a brief overview of the two suggestions on bend/straight piece of verge both areas would need work before seeding and ongoing maintenance. Due to low light at the Beeches suggested wild garlic, bluebells which would need planting sooner rather than later. Cllr Heath to recommend 1 or 2 areas for priority (noted if wanted to plant bluebells need to be done sooner rather than later). Action: CH
- Rob Charndley to attend March meeting to update us on local plan and neighbourhood plan implications.

3.3 Cllr Rayner and Cllr Leech attended two meetings, first the ChALC AGM at the Duke of Westminster Estate held on 22nd October 2025 (about 60 parish councils from Cheshire West & Cheshire East attended):

- NALC website has been launched to provide guidance and resources for parish councils. Individuals are asked to register themselves.

- Annual subscription for 2026 has been increased by 2.5%

- Alsager Town Council proposed a motion for ChALC to engage with Cheshire East & West councils to ensure that funding for highway repairs is prioritised and communicated to town & parish councils.

- a grounds maintenance contractor described the difficulty in establishing wild flower meadows.

CWAC Connections Locality meeting held on 29th October 2025 (about 40 representatives from town & parish councils in Northwich & Winsford attended).

The event was run by Charlotte Walton, Director of Adult services. This was the second event - the first held about a year ago.

- a booklet to communicate A to Z of CWAC services has been issued
- an investment of £4.5M has been made in Northwich library due to open in 2026.
- Northwich market at Baron Quay is due to open in summer 2026.
- 100 new homes are planned to be constructed in Weaver Square, Northwich.
- a discussion session to hear parish councils questions and concerns focussed on the poor service received from CWAC Highways - many of the parish councils had examples of poor planning & communication. Some examples of good practice were shared (eg Project Gigabite which has delivered broadband to many rural areas and community buildings – but which has now ended due to lack of funding). The Station Cafe at Whitegate was highlighted as a great success for community volunteering. Admin costs for road closure events along with the event licence raised as a concern for T&PC's.

4. Clerk's report and correspondence

4.1 Discussed and agreed action to Clerk's report and correspondence: actions complete or on the agenda.

5. Planning

5.1 1542/25 resolved the following planning application responses:

Cllr Cronin declared an interest in this application, being a friend to the applicant.

25/03027/FUL	Paddock House Foxwist Green	Change of use of holiday let accommodation to residential dwelling (C3)	Whitegate & Marton Parish Council object to this application as it does not comply with Local Plan STRAT 9 or the adopted W&M Neighbourhood Plan requirements for development in rural areas. The application does not comply with the conditions granted in the original application no 17/00714/FUL which permits use as holiday lets and shall not be occupied as a persons sole or main place of residence. This was granted to ensure a satisfactory standard of control over occupation given the location of the site and the relationship to the main dwelling on the site.
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The planning history of this application was discussed and noted: originally a detached garage, converted to gym/accommodation in 2016, and then to tourist accommodation in 2017.

Some councillors have received an email from a resident of Sandy Lane regarding a planning in principle application; this will be discussed when we formally receive the application.

5.2 Appeals:

Appeal – Hunters Retreat – no update yet.

Appeal - Vale Farm – converting outbuilding to domestic property, no update yet.

Appeal - Old Oak Stables – recent appeal for retrospective extension, no update yet.

Action: Clerk to check for updates

5.3 Planning enforcements:

- The mosses – awaiting outcome of planning application; request update on application.
- Static Caravan, land on Clay Lane – awaiting pictures/activity log to share with planning enforcement, not received from residents, clerk followed up with planning enforcement who confirm an officer has not yet been allocated.

- Folley Cottage – this has been reported, no update, Clerk to chase up.
- Rushmere Lodge fencing due to be replaced in September. An enforcement notice was issued with 3 months to comply, they have until 10th November to appeal.

6. Finances

6.1 The bank statements remain unchanged. Barclays account showed a balance remaining of £104,794.98. The total account balances is £108,099.40 (including savings accounts) after payments and CIL contribution detailed below:

6.2 Annual budget preparation 2026/27 – discussed adding in £8k for improvements to the Recreation Room for solar panels and £2k for the Beeches. Discussed reducing / keeping precept same levels, noted difficult once reduce precept to increase again would need a referendum. Agreed to keep at current levels as there are community projects we would like to complete. Clerk to amend and present for approval at December meeting. Action: Clerk

6.3 Note receipt of CIL for 25/26 £5780.38 relating to Poachers Pocket (paid in full) and Bawsgate farm. We are due a further instalment of £3185.90 in March/Oct 2026 for Bawsgate Farm.

6.4 Pay wreath donation £35.

7. Road Safety update

7.1 Wig Wag signs – further discussion to the above actions. Wig Wag signs were reset, Cllr Cotterill to check if they are now working at the correct time. PCSO has visited twice, parking up the road and walking down. Speed Camera has also been observed at the Beeches once a week for the past few weeks. Action: VC

Cllr Cronin left meeting 8.30pm, but reminded everyone of their community event £12 in advance and £15 on the day. 13th December at 5pm, all welcome.

8. Parish Issues

8.1 The Beeches - discussed above.

8.2 United Utilities – Whitegate site tidier, but still tankers arriving.

8.3 General parish issues – none

8.4 Footpath action log –good progress, 31 actions working through, with some completed. Mike Gilmore from Mid Cheshire Footpath Society always helpful. Liz Holmes very helpful, ask Cllr Lewis to pass on our gratitude to recognise efforts. Liz has written to farmers where established footpaths across fields have had crops grown over them, with no response from landowners. CWAC enforcement plan remains in draft, currently powerless until this is finalised, Cllr Lewis to follow-up. Last CWAC improvement plan was 2017. Noted base of replacement bench on Whitegate Way has been installed. Action: Cllr G Lewis

8.5 Climate action plan – discussed above. Solar panels at Recreation room, - Cllr Heath to explore further. Action: CH

8.6 Cllr Baldini to suggest locations for tree planting. Noted free trees (saplings from Woodland trust) not large enough to withstand planting in hedge. Cllr Baldini to confirm location and suggestions for planting. Action: PB

8.7 Christmas lights switch-on – arrangements in hand. Date for tree erection Sat 29th November at 10am, Cllr Leech has sourced a tree collecting 18th November. School has been asked to decorate the star. Clerk to purchase some small solar lights for the planted tree on the green.

8.8 Whitegate Conservation Group – management plan. K Garvey now the chair of the fabric committee. Various projects proposed including: sight lines, can't see church spire anymore; yew trees obscured line of sight of the war memorial; cherry tree has damaged the sandstone wall, apply to fell them; Wall has damage, look at adjusting wall to allow a footpath width at the corner; replace timber posts; refurbish conservation area plaque; kerb damaged – agreed to work together.

9. Items for information and discussion only.

9.1 Gina Lewis informed meeting of a fly-tipping initiative in November.

Plaque for young people at Recreation Room has not been updated since 2017, agreed not to put up and further discuss next month.

There being no further business meeting was closed by the chairman at 8.50pm.

Signed by the Chairman Dated

Outstanding actions (if removed they are complete)

Ref	Date	Action Log	Responsible
	Aug 25 reminders. SB chase up	Actions for Stuart Bingham / Gina Lewis: Put WMPC forward as volunteers to trial road closures for litter picking	SB
7.1	Sept/Nov 25	Ask GL to arrange meeting with Jayne Black re 20 mph; Cinder Hill surface, wig wag signs.	GL
8.3	Sept 25/Oct/Nov 25	Listed monument sign, investigate where it has gone. PB chat with farmer	PB
8.1/8.3	Oct/Nov 25	Review overgrown hedges and tree planting	PB
8.5	Sept / Nov 25	Continue climate actions – wild flower planting locations / solar panels at RR	CH
6.2	Nov 25	Update changes to draft budget for approval at Dec meeting.	Clerk
7.1	Nov 25	Check times of wig wag signs	VC
8.4	Nov 25	Ward councillor to thank Liz Holmes for her efforts. Find out what is happening with Enforcement plan in draft; and CWAC improvement plan	GL

Agenda Call forward

Ref	Call forward date	Description
	Tbc	VRA re gritting, nuns grave
	Feb 26	Littler pick date

Notes: