

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Parish Council held at Whitegate Primary School Hall on Monday 9th February 2026 at 7.30pm

Members of the public present: NS, GN.

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

1.1 Apologise for absence.

Cllr Cotterill – family matter.

Declarations of interest.

None

2.1 To approve the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council 12th January 2026. 1547/26 resolved that the Council approved the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council meeting held on Monday 12th January 2026.

3.1 Matters arising from the minutes of the Ordinary meeting on Monday 12th January 2026.

3.2 Action Log:

- The monument has been exposed, and the plaque has been found. Cllr Rayner found an article from the Northwich Guardian dated 1991. The stone is a 'seat' and forms the base of a stone cross placed by the monks from Vale Royal Abbey to mark the route, thought to be a wishing seat. Article also refers to the Beeches as 'clump of trees'. There was another 'seat' towards Winsford but that is no longer visible. Have chatted with farmer, and need to decide how to mount the plaque. Agreed Cllr Leech will consider how best to mount plaque so it is visible. Action: CL
- Clerk reforwarded reply from CWAC to Cllr Bingham regarding the litter pick along Whitegate Lane.
- Clerk to email Highways for another update regarding the 20mph installation and other matters. Road due to be closed Monday 16th – 20th February 8am – 5pm as far as old post office, unclear what will be included in the works. *Addendum 20mph installation now complete and resurface only, not interactive signs.* Action: Clerk
- Cllr Baldini has cut back overgrown hedges and was asked to submit bill for his expenses. Of the trees previously planted some 4 out of 6 have survived of those planted November 2024. Discussed planting them all 1m from hedge, will still give access for hedge cutting. Have identified 6 places plus replacement 2 trees (8 total). Still time to plant now due to wet weather conditions. Cllr Leech to purchase trees. Action: CL
- Wig Wag sign faults, Clerk to chase for update. Action: Clerk
- No update on the footpath enforcement policy document, clerk to chase up Cllr Lewis on its progress. Action: Clerk/GL
- Clerk reported Covert Farm as there is concern that the rebuilding is more than the planning application was initially for. Action: Clerk
- Clerk circulated the planning permission for Redwood which has been granted permitted development for a large shed. Owners of land confirmed they have planted 2500 trees and have until 2030 to erect the large shed, clerk to remove from planning list.

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 resident has written to CWAC regarding litter at Chester Lane Brook, Cllr Heath recently cleared the layby which was full of broken car pieces. No further action.
- Cllr Rayner would like more information regarding the issue on Clay Lane before agreeing to share an outdated letter sent to planning enforcement several years ago.

5. Planning

5.1 1548/26 resolved the following planning application responses:

26/00099/TPO 23 Vale Royal Drive for T1 Sycamore - Tree is in decline and we are looking at completing a full pollard to remove several decaying/dead branches, and the existing canopy. With hope that it encourages the tree to regenerate again from lower and safer pruning points. It has already shed branches twice on neighbouring 23A driveway. T2 Beech tree - Reduce overall canopy of tree by approx. 30% or 3-5m to bring back into shape and keep tree appropriate size for roadside location in the corner of the front garden. Tree overhangs road so a slight crown lift to keep clear of the road. All dead wood to be removed. T3 Sycamore (on boundary of TPO area) - This tree has been pollarded/topped out before. Re-pollard top of tree and allow it to regenerate again from pollard points. Bring in lateral branches as appropriate and rebalance to reduce the damage of previous 'topping' works. The Parish Council does not have the expertise to comment and we defer to the recommendation of the CWAC Tree Officer.

26/00059/PDR Land At Whitegate Lane Winsford for change of use of agricultural building into flexible commercial use. The parish council has no objections to this PDR application for an agricultural building change of use with no building operations involved.

26/00125/FUL Lunesdale Grange Lane Whitegate for single storey front extension, double and single storey rear extensions, replacement doors and windows and application of render to entire property. Alterations to rear garden including erection of patio and installation of steps to lower level garden. The Parish Council object to this application on the ground of overdevelopment of the site which does not comply with the adopted Whitegate & Marton Neighbourhood Plan (Policy 1) as the proposed floor area exceeds 30% of the floor space of the original dwelling. The ground floor of the two storey extension (extending by 4 metres) will adversely impact neighbouring properties which are situated closely together and will suffer loss of day light."

26/00146/FUL Freshfield Cassia Green Marton Erection of a pergola in garden - no objection

25/04008/FUL Land Off Dalefords Lane Marton Winsford for erection of agricultural building for the storage of machinery and livestock housing. The parish council objects to this application as the proposed agricultural building (30m x 16m x 7m) is too large for the agricultural needs of the approx 12acre site. The operation of a commercial business in an agricultural building should be refused. The application does not comply with the adopted Whitegate & Marton Neighbourhood Plan (Policy 4) as the large building would have a significant detrimental impact on the rural character of the parish.

5.2 Appeals:

- APP/A0665/X/24/3356072 Hunters Retreat Cassia Green Farm Cassia Green Marton - 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. Appeal dismissed – Clerk to check with enforcement following appeal decision. Action: Clerk
- Rushmere lodge have formally appeal removal of 1.8m fence along the highway. Planning Inspector ref: APP/A0665/C/25/3375569 no update.
- Land at Vale Royal Drive for a conversion of a small workshop into a one-bedroom accommodation. Inspector ref: 6003063. Meeting though the appeal decision was known. *Addendum the appeal has not yet taken place deadline for responses was this week, the officer report for the planning application decision was circulated as actioned at previous meeting, this was mistaken for the appeal outcome, to remain on list.*

5.3 Planning enforcements:

- The mosses – awaiting outcome of planning application; Clerk has requested an update on application.
- Static Caravan, land on Clay Lane – clerk followed up with planning enforcement who has confirmed that the static caravan will be removed once repairs to tac room roof have been completed along with the container. Leave on list until removed.

- Folley Cottage – aware resident has had a letter from enforcement stating they should not have put fence and laurels on agricultural land.
- Covert Farm – building works appear to be more substantial than the planning permission originally granted in 2021 for alterations to roof of barns 2 and 3. Looks like a substantial rebuilding on the same footprint. Clerk has reported it.
- The Dingle, Foxwist Green. Concerns were raised with the Parish Council relating to the permitted development and these have been passed to the CWAC planning team (amended wording April 2026).
Action: Clerk

6. Finances

- 6.1 The bank statements remain unchanged. Barclays account showed a balance remaining of £102,663.06. The total account balances is £105,967.48 (including savings accounts).
- 6.2 Clerk has asked for website developer to make improvements to the website.
- 6.3 Pay reimbursement to Cllr Rayner chairman's fund £137.45.

7. Road Safety update

- 7.1 Noted air ambulance at Dalefords Lane, just outside of parish following a head on collision, further details not known.
- 7.2 As noted above the resurfacing of Cinder Hill is scheduled for half-term.
- 7.3 Clerk to report pothole/edge deterioration causing a gully on Whitegate Lane, near Earnslow Grange, Cllr Haigh confirms this is where she had a flat tyre.
Action: Clerk

8. Parish Issues

- 8.1 The Beeches - Cllr Leech to follow up with secretary on quote for surfacing as discussed at Recreation Room meeting.
Action: CL
- 8.2 United Utilities – work at both sites continues.
- 8.4 Footpath action log – no update, another dates needs to be scheduled for March/April. Cllr Cronin mentioned about a fallen tree along the canal, alternative route is being made to bypass the fallen tree.
Action: SH
- 8.5 Litter pick Sunday 8th March at 9.30am meeting at the Recreation Room.
- 8.5 General parish issues – young volunteer award enquiry, rather than recognise on the plaque which was removed a while ago, agree to recognise individual deserving cases and reward with a voucher, clerk to respond back to enquiry.
Action: Clerk
- 8.6 Climate action plan – as above. Cllr Rayner attended the Recreation room meeting mid-January to further discuss solar panels at the Recreation Room. Agreed for 3 quotes to be sought and proposal further explored, not to include heating. Agreed solar panels with battery and invertor. The committee do not want them on front, prefer on back but need to be south facing; also need to ascertain if the roof structure is suitable. Cllr Heath who is also on the Recreation Room committee is exploring options.
Action: CH
- Agreed to purchase bulbs in autumn, daffodils and snowdrops which will look after themselves, put a call forward on the agenda for September.
- Infra-red camera. Cllr Rayner has found one which has good reviews for £228, agreed Cllr Rayner to purchase and he will take responsibility for its use. Action: Clerk to reimburse Cllr Rayner when purchased.
- 8.7 Whitegate Conservation Group - Kevin Garvey was going to put plan together no update, Cllr Rayner to chase up.
Action: KR
- 8.8 Annual meeting Tues 21st April or Tues 28th April 7pm.
Action: Clerk
- 8.9 Reminder CWAC officer attending our PC meeting 9th March to update on Local Plan and implications for the parish council to consider.

9. Items for information and discussion only.

- 9.1 None
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There being no further business meeting was closed by the chairman at 8.48pm.

Signed by the Chairman Dated

Date of next meeting 9th March 2026.

PB absent 9/3/26

Clerk absent 13/4/26

Outstanding actions (if removed they are complete)

Ref	Date	Action Log	Responsible
3.2	Aug 25 reminders. SB chase up	Actions for Stuart Bingham: Put WMPC forward as volunteers to trial road closures for litter picking Whitegate Lane	SB
3.2	Feb 26	Source mount for plaque for 'seat'	CL
3.2	Feb 26	Clerk to enquire with Highways about what's included in schedule of works for half-term and update on wig wag signs	Clerk
3.2	Feb 26	To claim expenses for hedge cutting	PB
3.2	Feb 26	Purchase 8 trees for planting	CL
3.2	Jan/Feb 26	Footpath enforcement report – ask GL to chase up where this is at	Clerk
3.2	Feb 26	Covert farm	Clerk
5.2	Feb 26	Enquire with Enforcement following appeal outcome for Hunters Retreat	Clerk
5.3	Feb 26	The Dingle	Clerk
7.3	Feb 26	Report edge deterioration Whitegate Lane	Clerk
8.1	Feb 26	Resurfacing quote	Clerk
8.4	Feb 26	Arrange footpath officer meeting March/April	SH
8.5	Feb 26	Young volunteer award	Clerk
8.6	Feb 26	Explore solar panel options and quotes	CH
8.6	Feb 26	Purchase infra-red camera	KR
8.7	Feb 26	Whitegate conservation group – chase up proposals	KR

Agenda Call forward

Ref	Call forward date	Description
	Tbc	VRA re gritting, nuns grave
	Feb 27	Littler pick date
	Sep 26	Purchase bulbs for The Beeches

Notes: