

**Minutes of Meetings of Haigh Parish Council  
Held Monday 5 December 2022  
6:30pm via MS Teams**

**Present:** Councillors Robert Lawson (Chairman), Roberta Darbyshire, Paul Kenyon, Marie-Clare Kenyon and Ian Parker  
The Clerk to the Council: Mrs Krystyna Pilkington  
Four members of the public

**524 Apologies for Absence**

Cllrs Andrew Wilson and Anita Edwards-Hooson  
Dist Cllrs Ron Conway, Chris Ready and Laura Flynn

**525 Declaration of Interests**

The Clerk wrt Item 549 (*personal*)

*Standing Orders were suspended.*

**526 Matters Introduced by Members of the Public**

None

*Standing Orders were re-instated.*

**527 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting (24 October 2022)**

**Resolved:** The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Monday, 24 October 2022 were agreed to be a true and correct record.

**528 Matters Arising**

**Friends of St David's, Haigh**

Cllr Clare Kenyon reported that she had made contact with the Chair of the Friends of St David's C of E Primary School, Haigh and they had exchanged email addresses. They had agreed to liaise with each other about the Friends becoming more involved in the community.

**New Code of Conduct**

Cllr Bobbie Darbyshire reported that members of Wigan Council were currently being consulted about the draft version of the new Code of Conduct.

*Standing orders were suspended.*

**529 Planning Applications**

A/21/92629/MAJOR	Leyland Mills Leyland Mill Lane Wigan WN1 2SB	Residential development of 17 two and three storey detached dwellings with roof terraces,	<i>Representation objecting to the application submitted – Planning</i>
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		landscaping, parking and associated works together with new access from Wingates Road and new pedestrian access from Leyland Mill Lane following demolition of former mill buildings	<i>Committee date not yet available - decision awaited</i>
A/22/94132/FULL* (Re-submission of A/21/90931/FULL)	Land North of Pendlebury Lane Haigh WN2 1LT	Erection of a new stable block, associated horse exercise area, storage/sitting cabin and resurfacing of access road	<i>Objection submitted</i>
A/22/94184/FULL	Rothwell's Stud Sennicar Lane Wigan WN1 2SN	Erection of four detached dwellings, following demolition of indoor riding arena, stables and store	<i>Objection submitted</i>
A/22/94493/FULL and A/22/94594/LB	The Coach House Haighlands Copperas Lane Haigh, Wigan WN2 1PB	To convert and extend former coach house to use for residential purposes, together with alterations to external elevations	<i>Objection submitted</i>
A/22/94669/PDQ	Tuckers Hill Farm Tuckers Hill Brow Haigh Wigan WN2 1LJ	Change of use of agricultural buildings to 2 dwellinghouses (use class c3) and for building operations necessary for conversion	<i>Representation under consideration</i>

**\*A/22/94132/FULL (Re-submission of A/21/90931/FULL)**

Application A/21/90931/FULL was originally refused by Wigan Council. The applicant then submitted an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, who upheld Wigan Council's decision. Because the deadline for representations fell before the date of this meeting the representation had been submitted following a discussion amongst members via email.

*Standing Orders were re-instated.*

**Resolved:** Members approved the representation objecting to the proposals in the planning application retrospectively.

*Standing Orders were suspended.*

A member of the public observed that the re-submitted application differed very little from the original. He had understood that it was a breach of planning law to re-submit an application that was virtually the same as the one

that had been rejected. When he had challenged this, the planning enforcement officer had advised that this had been the last opportunity for the applicant to re-submit.

*Cllr Paul Kenyon joined the meeting.*

**A/22/94184/FULL**

It was reported that this application had been called in by a Wigan ward councillor for determination by the Planning Committee. Dist Cllr Ron Conway had also requested that a site visit be made.

**A/22/94493/FULL and A/22/94594/LB**

Because the deadline for representations fell before the date of this meeting the representation had been submitted following a discussion amongst members via email. The Chairman informed the meeting that the Parish Council had recently received from the applicants an email in which they had addressed in detail all of the points the Council had made in their representation. He advised that the Council would have to formally approve the representation or rescind it, if they agreed with the comments made by the applicants.

A member of the public (who - in view of the fact that he lived in the neighbouring property - declared an interest in the application) provided the Council with the history of the Coach House and the many planning applications relating to it that had been approved and not acted upon. The neighbour challenged a number of the assertions made by the applicants in their email.

The application was discussed at length.

*Standing Orders were re-instated.*

**Resolved:** The Council approved the representation objecting to the proposals in the planning application retrospectively.

**A/22/94669/PDQ**

The applicants had applied for permission to convert an agricultural building into two dwellings. The deadline for representations was 23 December. It was observed that there would not be any significant changes to the visual impact of the building. The alterations would require some access and some parking provision. If members wished to make a representation, comments should be sent to the Clerk by Friday, 16 December.

**530 Community Engagement Strategy**

**Resolved:** The revised Community Engagement Strategy was approved.

**531 Social Media Policy**

**Resolved:** The revised Social Media Policy was approved.

## 532 Community Engagement

### **Community Engagement Working Group**

A summary of the meeting of the Community Engagement working group on 15 November 2022 had been circulated to members. The Working Group had discussed the way forward with the Vocal Eyes platform. A Facebook Group called 'Haigh Parish Community Group' had been set up to bring the VE platform to the attention of the local community. The Group page was linked to the Parish Council's main Facebook page, but would be used purely for engagement with the local community. During the brief time it had been trialled there had been a good response from the community, particularly with respect to establishing a joined up bridleway in Haigh.

Working Group members had been invited to use the VE platform and the Community Group page, monitor the activity on both and report back to the Full Council at this meeting. The Chairman thanked the Working Group, and particularly Cllr Clare Kenyon, for their work in launching the digital platform and the Community Group page.

**Resolved:** The Haigh Parish Community Group page was approved retrospectively.

### **Joined Up Bridleway Working Group**

Cllr Clare Kenyon had reported that 10 people had expressed an interest in getting involved in a project to establish a joined-up bridleway in Haigh. She had arranged to meet with them via Zoom before this Parish Council meeting and the meeting with Wigan Council. The meeting took place on Tuesday, 29 November and was attended by Cllr Ian Parker and the Clerk as well as several members of the local equestrian community.

Following the meeting, Cllr Kenyon had shared a draft report with members about the findings from the meeting and recommendations for the next steps.

The equestrian community had made a good case for the need for more bridleways and particularly a joined up route in the Parish. At present riders were finding it very difficult to enjoy the activity and at the same time ensure that they avoided the dangers posed to their horses by arterial roads.

Cllr Kenyon would be taking the matter forward to the meeting with Wigan Council. She proposed to ask Wigan Council if they would be willing to set up a Working Party consisting of members of Haigh Parish Council, Wigan Council officers and the local horse community.

Wigan Council had refused to designate the footpath through Haigh Plantations as a bridleway on the grounds that allowing horses to use a footpath that was also used by large numbers of pedestrians, many of them children, was not a good idea for H&S reasons. However, they had been willing to consider an alternative route.

**Resolved:** The Council received and accepted Cllr Kenyon's report and agreed the following 'Next Steps':

1. Representatives of the horse riding community would plot out their ideas for potential routes for a joined up bridleway using an OS map of the area.
2. The report would be discussed at a scheduled meeting with Wigan Council officers on Tuesday, 13 December under an agenda item about bridleways and a request would be made to set up a Working Group with representatives from Haigh Parish Council, the horse riding community and Wigan Council to take the project forward.

Cllr Kenyon would report back to members of the Joined Up Bridleway Working Group about the outcomes of the meeting on 13 December.

### **533 Parish Plan**

Copies of the Parish Plan adopted in 2019 had been previously circulated. Members reviewed the Parish Plan. A number of changes were proposed. These were discussed. It was agreed that the document would be updated and re-submitted for approval at the meeting in January.

A member asked why *‘to encourage the development of high speed internet connectivity for the whole parish’* had been included as one of the Council’s aims. The Chairman explained that this was a provision that was lacking in some parts of the Parish and when the Plan was adopted there had been grants available to geographical groups of residents who together wished to have high speed internet installed. This led to a discussion about the quality of local connectivity, which varied significantly across the Parish.

### **534 Date of Annual Parish Meeting / Presentation by AI & AI**

Cllr Clare Kenyon reported that AI & AI had agreed to make a presentation about their plans for Haigh Hall as part of the Annual Parish Meeting. They had asked the Parish Council to provide them with a selection of dates. Once the date was confirmed, AI & AI would arrange the venue, which would probably be either The Stables classroom or the vestibule at Haigh Hall.

The Clerk explained that the Annual Parish Meeting had, by law, to take place between 1 March and 1 June inclusive. She also advised on the possible pitfalls to avoid during this period in an election year. Proposals were discussed.

**Resolved:** The Council agreed that 7, 14 and 21 March would be suggested to AI & AI as possible dates for their presentation.

Cllr C Kenyon would contact AI & AI and report back to the Parish Council.

### **535 Bubblefest 2023**

#### **(a) Date of Bubblefest 2023**

The Clerk reported that Keith Bergman had suggested four possible dates in June for the Bubblefest. The bubble artists had been asked about their availability on the four dates. Two of the acts had confirmed that they were available on all of the dates – the third was only available on three of them. Members discussed the way forward.

**Resolved:** The Council agreed that, if they were still available, the Clerk should book the walled gardens for Sunday, 25 June and then book all three bubble artists, who had said that they would be charging the same as in 2022.

Once the bubble artists had been booked, the Clerk would begin approaching food vendors.

#### **(b) Transfer of Eventbrite Rights**

Cllr Rob Lawson currently held the Eventbrite rights. As he was resigning as a parish councillor, the rights would need to be transferred to another person.

This was discussed briefly.

**Resolved:** It was agreed that the Eventbrite rights would be transferred to the Clerk.

(c) Transfer of Stock

Cllr Lawson reported that he had a significant amount of Bubblefest stock. He wished to pass on miscellaneous items (ie wristbands, hi-viz vests, fencing & posts, signage, lanyards) to others. He was happy to store the bubble merchandise and carpets until they were needed or a suitable storage location had been identified. Members discussed the best way forward.

**Resolved:**

- Cllr Bobbie Darbyshire would ask representatives of St David's Church if they could accommodate the large stock within the parish buildings.
- The Clerk would enquire about insurance cover for the stock.
- Until a storage facility had been identified Cllr Lawson would keep the large stock and Cllr Paul Kenyon would take responsibility for the box of small items.

**536 Meeting with Wigan Council Officers**

A document containing information about items to be discussed with Wigan Council officers had been previously circulated. The item relating to the hearings currently being held with developers over the proposals in the Places for Everyone documents had not been included on the list, as there did not at present appear to be any areas in the Parish under threat of major development.

The meeting would be on Tuesday, 13 December at 4pm. It would be held via MS Teams. Members present indicated whether they would be joining the meeting and agreed the items on which they would lead:

- A Bridlepath for Haigh – Cllr Clare Kenyon
- Footpath Issue – Cllr Paul Kenyon
- Community Infrastructure Levy – The Clerk

Wigan Council officers had been asked to provide updates on the Phase II funding for Haigh Hall and on Levelling Up funding. The Clerk was asked to contact members who were not present to remind them about the following week's meeting and, if she was attending, whether Cllr Edwards-Hooson would lead on the item about the Provision of Bins.

**537 New Councillors' Training**

Four members had confirmed that they were available to join the online training session - 'A Whistlestop Tour for New Councillors & Clerks' - on 17 January so they and the Clerk had been booked in.

**Resolved:** Members approved the payment of course fees totalling £175 (5 @ £35) by the Council once it had been invoiced.

**538 New Councillors' Information Pack**

In May 2023 the terms of office of all parish councillors would end and, if they wished to continue, they had to put themselves forward for election.

Successful candidates would be provided with an information pack. The contents of the pack were discussed.

**Resolved:** The following documents were approved for inclusion in the pack:

1. Standing Orders
2. Financial Regulations
3. Code of Conduct
4. Guidance on how to complete the Register of Interests form
5. Register of Interests form – for completion
6. Declaration of Acceptance of Office form – for completion
7. Email permissions forms – for completion
8. Roles & Responsibilities
9. Privacy Statement
10. Map of Haigh Parish
11. Parish Plan
12. Policies

It was suggested that many of these documents could be made available electronically via a link.

### **539 Generic Emails for Parish Councillors**

During the Council meeting in October a brief discussion was held about councillors having generic emails for use purely for Parish Council business.

The Clerk had a generic 'gmail' address which did not make use of her personal name and was free. Councillors, however, could not be anonymous and their email addresses needed to include their names as well as the name of the Parish Council.

Three councillors had now set up email addresses for themselves on the above basis and were using them for Council business. As there were no financial implications for the Parish Council, this was recommended as the best way forward. Following a short discussion, it was agreed that other members would be encouraged to follow suit.

### **540 Casual Vacancy**

Cllr Rob Lawson had announced his resignation as a parish councillor with effect from this meeting. This would have to be reported to the Elections Officer at Wigan Council, which would immediately trigger the election process.

In 2023 the terms of office of all parish councillors would end four days after the elections on 4 May. This included the term of office of anyone elected or co-opted to replace a parish councillor finishing during the six months preceding the date of the election. Because of the timescales involved in the election and co-option processes, the law allowed a parish council to choose to run with a vacancy for the balance of the period prior to the elections.

The matter was discussed.

**Resolved:** Members agreed that the vacancy created by Cllr Robert Lawson's resignation would remain vacant and the Council would continue with a membership of six councillors until the local council elections in May.

#### **541 New Signatory for Bank Account**

Cllr Rob Lawson was currently an approved signatory for the Council's bank account. In view of his resignation, members were invited to appoint another councillor to replace him. However, as it might be a little while before the bank actioned this, Cllr Lawson had agreed to continue to act as a signatory on the bank account until he had been replaced. The way forward was discussed.

**Resolved:** The Council agreed that

- (a) Cllr Paul Kenyon would become a signatory to the Parish Council's bank account.
- (b) 'If the Council added Cllr Paul Kenyon as an Authorised Signatory in the "Add or remove individuals" section of the Natwest Bank's form, the Bank would update the Council's mandate accordingly for the accounts specified in the form's "About your business" section,
- (c) the Bank was authorised to phone the individuals identified as "Call Back Contacts" to confirm or correct any instructions or information provided by the Council to the Bank
- (d) and the current mandate would continue as amended.'

**Resolved:** Cllr Robert Lawson would continue to act as a signatory to the bank account until his replacement had been confirmed by the bank, after which he would be removed from the list of signatories.

#### **542 WhatsApp Group Admin**

Cllr Rob Lawson had been acting as the principal admin for the Parish Council's private WhatsApp group. All group participants had recently been set up as admins and were now able to add participants. In view of his retirement, he would remove himself from the group.

#### **543 Appointment of External Auditor 2022-23 to 2026-27**

The Council had been informed by SAAA that the external auditors for parish councils in Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside would be PKF Littlejohn LLP. As the Parish Council had an income / expenditure below £25,000, it was exempt from external audit. However, an external auditor had to be appointed just in case a resident had an issue that needed to be referred to the auditor.

**Resolved:** The Council approved the appointment of PKF Littlejohn LLP as its external auditor for the financial years 2022-23 to 2026-27.

#### **544 Asset Register**

The Asset Register was reviewed. It had been updated to include the disposal of the damaged bench at Red Rock car park and its replacement.

**Resolved:** The Asset Register was approved.

#### **545 Review of H&S Risk Assessments**

The H&S risk assessments were reviewed.



**Resolved:** The H&S risk assessments were approved.

#### 546 Accounts 2022/23

Income: £nil

Expenditure:

No	PAYEE	NARRATIVE	NET	VAT	PAYMENT
46	Employee No.1	Salary (Nov + Backpay)	£280.30	N/A	£280.30
47	HMRC	Tax (Nov + Backpay)	£ 70.00	N/A	£ 70.00
48	Employee No.1	Mileage	£ 5.20	N/A	£ 5.20
49	Glasdon	Bench	£531.81	£106.36	£638.17
50	J Parker	Bench fitting	£360.00	N/A	£360.00
	<b>Total:</b>		<b>£2050.74</b>	<b>£117.41</b>	<b>£2168.15</b>

**Resolved:** The above items were approved for payment.

Balance at bank on 31 October 2022 = **£10,441.07**

Estimated balance at bank after the above expenditure = **£9,087.40**

#### 547 Quarterly Budget Monitoring

The previously circulated quarterly budget monitoring document was received and discussed. Most cost centres were on line. However, there were some that needed to be brought to the Council's attention.

##### Community Engagement/Events

The cancellation of the Bubblefest had meant that expenditure relating to the event could not be covered from income. The only income at the time had been that from stallholders and this had to be returned. Hence the cost centre was showing an overspend of £975. This excess expenditure had to be covered from the General Reserve.

**Resolved:** Members approved a virement of £975 from the General Reserve to the Community Engagement/Events cost centre to balance the overspend.

##### Street Furniture

The proceeds from a successful insurance claim were used to purchase and install a new bench at the entrance to Red Rock Car Park. The income from the claim had been added to the Street Furniture cost centre. The excess for the claim was £100. This meant that a balance of £400 remained in this cost centre.

##### Reserves & Contingency

The amounts shown in the General Reserve and Contingency were estimated prior to any virements having been made.

#### 548 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's Report (see Appendix A) was received and discussed.

Members agreed in principle that it would be a good idea to publish a newsletter in the first few months of 2023, but some were of the view that

alternative approaches to distribution should be considered. The newsletter would be an agenda item at the next meeting.

The Chairman reported that a resident had offered to submit an article for inclusion in the newsletter. The Vice Chairman agreed to contact the resident.

## **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM**

**Resolved:** That, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be excluded, and they were instructed to withdraw.

*There were no members of the public remaining in the meeting.*

*The Clerk withdrew from the meeting.*

### **549 NJC National Pay Award**

NALC had informed parish councils that the National Joint Council had agreed the new rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2022. These were inflation (not merit) related increases. The information supplied was discussed.

**Resolved:** The Council approved the pay award agreed by the NJC. It would apply immediately and be back-dated to 1 April 2022.

**Resolved:** To cover the overspend created by the pay award the Council approved a virement of £147 from the 'Expenditure Contingency' cost centre to the 'Clerk's Salary' cost centre.

This would leave a balance of £353 in the 'Contingency' cost centre.

The Clerk was invited back into the meeting and informed of the Council's decision.

### **550 Date of Next Meeting**

23 January 2023 via MS Teams

As this was Cllr Rob Lawson's last meeting, the Vice Chairman, Cllr Paul Kenyon, thanked him for his exemplary and dedicated service throughout his six years as a parish councillor. Cllr Lawson had been the Chairman of the Council for four of those years. The amount of time and effort that he had put into the role and the relationships he had forged had been much appreciated. As a mark of that appreciation Cllr Kenyon presented Cllr Lawson with a book about the history of Haigh & Aspull.

Cllr Lawson thanked the Vice Chairman for his kind words and the gift. He assured the Council that they could always count on his support and wished them all the best for the future.

The meeting closed at 8:45 pm

**Chairman**