

**Minutes of Meetings of Haigh Parish Council
Held Monday 10 May 2021
6:35pm Virtual Meetings**

Present: Councillors R Lawson (Chairman), R Darbyshire, P Kenyon, C Hatherall, I Parker and A Wilson and the Clerk, Mrs K Pilkington
No members of the public were present.

Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

295 Election of Chairman

Cllr R Lawson, the outgoing Chairman, opened the meeting and invited nominations for the Office of Chairman.

A nomination was received for Cllr R Lawson.

Resolved: That Cllr R Lawson would serve as Chairman until the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May 2022.

296 Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr R Lawson made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and would sign it at a future date. The Clerk would sign as witness to the declaration.

297 Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr C Hatherall was nominated for the office of Vice Chairman.

Resolved: That Cllr C Hatherall would serve as Vice Chairman until the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May 2022.

Members had a discussion about whether there should be a restriction on the number of years that any individual could serve as Chairman. The Clerk advised that there was no legal limit, but many parish councils did restrict the number of years that any one person could serve as Chairman. Such a restriction would need to be incorporated into the Standing Orders.

298 Audit, Governance & Standards Committee

Resolved: That Cllr R Darbyshire was appointed to serve on Wigan Council's Audit, Governance & Standards Committee until the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May 2022.

299 Casual Vacancy

The Council had been informed by the Elections Officer at Wigan Council that there had been no requests from residents for an election and that the seat could now be filled by Co-option. The process was discussed.

Resolved: The Council agreed that the position would be advertised and that the deadline for applications would be 11 June.

Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council

300 Apologies for Absence

None

301 Declaration of Interests

Cllr C Hatherall w.r.t. Item 305: A/21/90931 (*personal*)

302 Matters Raised by Members of the Public

It was reported that a member of the public had asked that the Council consider planning application A/21/90931. This was discussed under Item 305.

303 Minutes of the Last Ordinary Meeting (15 March 2021)

Resolved: The Minutes of the Last Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Monday, 15 March 2021 were agreed to be a true and correct record.

304 Matters Arising

Bawk House Footpath

The Clerk explained that writing to the LA was still a work in progress. She reported that she had received further information from a resident about the issues, but the information had related mainly to the planning consent given several years ago for the route of the footpath to be moved so that it skirted the property rather than passing through it and had included mapping of the original route taken by the footpath. This had led to uncertainty about the focus of the letter the Clerk was asked to write to the LA and she needed further advice.

Cllrs P Kenyon and A Wilson joined the meeting.

The matter was discussed. The discussion covered the process in which the Parish Council could maintain the footpath themselves, but, for a variety of reasons, this was not considered feasible. It was agreed that the letter should focus on a request to the LA for regular maintenance of the footpath so that access was improved.

Speeding on the B5239

The Clerk reported that the contact details for the leader of Survey Group 1 had been shared with Survey Group 2, but did not know whether contact had actually been made. The Clerk had also asked for the evidence of speeding collected by Survey Group 2 to be forwarded so that it could be passed on to the Chairman, but to date had not received any information. This would be chased up.

Bridge 63

The Clerk had contacted the district councillors to find out what needed to happen to enable the LA to do something legally about this historic building. She had received a reply to the effect that the LA could only act if the structure

of the property was found to be in poor condition. A check on the structure of the building had been carried out a few years ago and the district councillors had agreed to make arrangements for another check to be carried out. It was observed that this could now be left to the district councillors to deal with.

Cleaning of Waterways

Cllr P Kenyon reported that the Douglas River Association wished to clean up Yellow Brook at the point where it joined up with the River Douglas to make the river accessible to migratory fish. At the moment there was quite a lot of debris there. It was hoped that a working party of volunteers would be set up to clear the debris. As this would involve the use of a chainsaw, Wigan Council would need to be involved. The group wished to submit a proposal to the LA to put the wheels in motion and were seeking the Parish Council's moral support, as the work to be carried out would be in the Parish.

Members were of the view that they would need more details before the Council could put its weight behind the proposal. Cllr Kenyon would circulate the details as soon as they were available, so that the Council could determine its next steps. He also agreed to write an article for the newsletter to publicise the project.

The issue below was raised between Items 316 and 317.

Canal Aqueduct Near Canal Row

It was reported that a repair had been carried out to the canal aqueduct running over the old railway line / bridleway at Red Rock in 2020. The repairs had been carried out by the Canal & River Trust and had been aimed at stopping the leak onto the bridleway / footpath below. However, the leak was now worse than it had been before the repairs were carried out. Not only was the tanking leaking, but water was coming out of the supporting walls.

This had been flagged up by several residents of the parish who were concerned that the structure could catastrophically fail, as well as causing a hazard whilst riding or walking down the pathway. Cllrs P Kenyon and I Parker would report the issue to both Wigan Council and the Canal & River Trust and try to find out whether the latter had any plans in place for further repairs to the aqueduct.

In response to a request from Cllr Parker, the Clerk agreed to send him a Parish Council letterhead.

305 Planning Applications

A/21/90686/NMAS	Brock Mill Farm Wingates Road WN1 2SJ	Non material amendment approved	<i>Noted</i>
A/21/90685/CON	Brock Mill Farm Wingates Road WN1 2SJ	Condition Discharge application to discharge conditions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 in respect of application A/20/88767/HH - Replied	<i>Noted</i>
A/21/90612/HH	8 Hampson	Approved with	<i>Noted</i>

	Green Haigh WN2 1LY	conditions	
A/21/91180/CON	Red Rock Lodge Red Rock Lane Haigh WN1 2UW	Condition discharge application to discharge condition no.4 in respect of application A/20/90485/FULL	<i>Noted</i>
A/21/90946/HH	Astley House Pendlebury Lane Haigh WN2 1LU	To erect first floor extension over garage and kitchen with decked area attached to gable and access staircase	<i>Under consideration</i>
A/21/90931/FULL	Land North of Pendlebury Lane, Haigh	To erect a new stable block, associated horse exercise area, storage/sitting cabin and resurfacing of access road	<i>Representation objecting to the application to be submitted</i>

A/21/90946/HH

The application was discussed. All members were asked to look at the application on the LA's Planning Portal and to share their comments with each other via email in order to form a collective view.

A/21/90931/FULL

This application had been brought to members' attention by residents living in neighbouring properties. It was discussed.

Resolved: A representation objecting to the application would be made by the Parish Council via the Planning Portal.

The Chairman would prepare a draft response and circulate it to members for comment before it was submitted.

306 Duke of Edinburgh Award – Candidate's Reports

The first two of three monthly reports from the Duke of Edinburgh award candidate working on a project which involved undertaking voluntary work for the Commonwealth Graves Commission in the local community were received. The members had found them very interesting and had enjoyed reading them. They were very impressed with the candidate's commitment to the work.

In response to a request from the candidate, the Chairman agreed to act as an assessor and validate the work on behalf of the Parish Council. In the meantime, the Clerk was asked to find out whether the candidate would be willing to write an article for publication in the newsletter. This would need to be a condensed version of the reports. The Clerk was also asked to establish a date when the candidate would be able to make a presentation to the Parish Council.

307 Bubblefest 2021

A working party consisting of Cllrs R Lawson, C Hatherall and R Darbyshire and the Clerk had met virtually on Monday, 12 April and had discussed outline arrangements for the Bubblefest. The working party then met on site on Saturday, 17 April to assess the area in and around the walled gardens with respect to risk, access / egress, layout and crowd control.

The working party noted that the walled gardens were next door to the Crazy Golf course and it was decided that the Clerk would seek permission for the Council to run the Crazy Golf that day. The Friends of Haigh Woodland Park had since confirmed that this would be possible. Funds raised would be added to the Canal Towpath reserve.

Cllr R Darbyshire agreed to organise the Crazy Golf. This included identifying volunteers to run it on the day.

Cllr C Hatherall had established that both areas of the walled gardens could be used by the Parish Council. This would provide much more scope for the event.

Since the site meeting Cllr Hatherall had also set up a folder on OneDrive for the Bubblefest and he and Cllr Lawson had been populating it with information. He had shared the folder with all members of the Working Party and would provide access to the folder to all other members of the Parish Council.

Plans for the Bubblefest were discussed. Planning meetings needed to be scheduled to take place on a regular basis between this month and September. A 'to-do' list needed to be agreed. It was agreed that the next planning meeting would take place via MS Teams on Tuesday, 1 June. This could be followed by a meeting with Keith Bergman later in the month to discuss plans in greater detail.

The event would need to be promoted. One way of doing this was by setting up an event page on Facebook and asking people to express an interest in attending by ticking the appropriate box. Another way was to ensure that it was advertised on the Haigh Woodland Park Autumn Events board.

308 Spring Newsletter

Cllr C Hatherall updated the members on the material he had received so far. He reported that more items were needed. Some members offered to provide articles and were asked to forward them to Cllr Hatherall by the end of the week. He would circulate a draft copy to members as soon as it was ready and would aim to have it ready for publication by the end of May.

The newsletter would only be published electronically. It would either be circulated directly to those on the mailing list who had provided their email addresses or pinned to the Facebook page. The Clerk reported that a couple of residents had requested hard copies. It was agreed that this request would be honoured.

309 Documenting PROWs

The LA's definitive map and list of the PROWs was on their website. Received local knowledge had suggested that information about some of the footpaths in the area had been mislaid some years ago, but Cllr Parker had received historical and anecdotal information from local residents about the locations and routes taken by footpaths that had not been recognised as PROWs and, therefore, were not on the LA's map.

Cllr I Parker reported that there had been no further progress with the documenting of the Public Rights of Way since the last meeting. He explained his reasons for wishing to have a face-to-face meeting with the LA's PROW officers to discuss the position, but appreciated that Covid regulations made this difficult at present.

Issues relating to PROWs in the area were discussed. It was decided that documentation would only be provided to the LA's PROWS officer at a face-to-face meeting, rather than in advance (as agreed at the last meeting with Wigan Council's senior officers in February).

310 Update on Haigh Hall

Most members had attended the virtual meeting with Wigan Council officers to receive feedback after the announcement of the Court ruling in favour of the LA with regard to the lease for Haigh Hall. Members had been told that Contessa Hotels had the right to appeal and that the LA could not actually re-enter the property until the window for this had closed and the matter was settled.

Cllr R Darbyshire reported that she and Cllr I Parker had accepted invitations to join a stakeholder meeting on Thursday, 13 May. The purpose of the meeting appeared to be to update stakeholders on developments in relation to Phase II of the HLF bid. The Chairman observed that some of the Hall Lane residents were hoping to attend after having been made aware of the meeting.

311 Meeting with Wigan Council Officers

The next meeting with Wigan Council Officers was scheduled to take place virtually on 24 May 2021 at 4pm via MS Teams. Members discussed items for inclusion on the agenda.

Resolved: The following were agreed as items for inclusion on the agenda for the meeting:

1. Haigh Hall
2. Haigh Woodland Park – Phase II Lottery Bid
3. PROWs, Bridleways and Cycleways
4. Planning Applications & Approvals
5. Communication
6. Footpath at Bawk House

The Clerk would send the list – together with brief explanations – to Democratic Services.

312 Budget Out-Turn to 31 March 2021

The previously circulated budget out-turn for the financial year ending on 31 March 2021 was received and discussed briefly.

It was reported that a few savings had been made due to Covid restrictions. This had resulted in a smaller than expected reduction in reserves, which ended the financial year only £132 lower than in 2019/20. Unfortunately, also due to Covid restrictions, no additional fundraising took place during the year. Balances remaining in the active cost centres totalled £1,083 (including expenditure contingency).

Resolved: The budget out-turn for the year ended on 31 March 2021 was approved.

313 Income/Expenditure Account 2020/21

The Income/Expenditure Account for 2020/21 was received.

Resolved: The Income/Expenditure Account 2020/21 was approved.

314 Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

The previously circulated Annual Governance Statement was considered.

Resolved: The Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 was approved.

315 Accounting Statements 2020/21

Resolved: The previously circulated Accounting Statements 2020/21 were approved.

316 Exemption from External Audit 2020/21

The Council's eligibility to certify itself as exempt from external audit was considered.

Resolved: As all criteria had been met, the Council certified its accounts for 2020/21 as being exempt from external audit.

An issue raised at this point in the meeting was reported under Item 304.

317 Insurance

The quotation for insurance provided by the Council's current insurer, Zurich Municipal, was discussed briefly. It was £2 more than in 2020/21. Competitive quotes had been sought, but other insurers had declared that they were unable to beat this quote. The Council were advised of the elements covered by the Policy – they were part of a standard package.

Resolved: The quotation of £361.84 from Zurich Municipal was accepted and approved.

318 Accounts 2021/22

Income:

Precept = £2,880

Council Tax Support Grant = £1,032

Total = £3,912

Expenditure

No	PAYEE	NARRATIVE	NET	VAT	PAYMENT
1	Employee No.1	Salary (April & May) (net)	£332.80	N/A	£332.80
2	HMRC	Tax (April & May)	£ 83.20	N/A	£ 83.20
3	Employee No.1	Mileage	£ 6.50	N/A	£ 6.50
4	LALC/NALC	Annual subscriptions	£186.54	N/A	£186.54
5	Zurich Municipal	Insurance	£361.84	N/A	£361.84
Total:			£970.88	N/A	£970.88

Resolved: The above items were approved for payment.

Following a discussion about the merits of supporting the CPRE, the Council agreed that they would not make a donation this year.

Balance at bank on 1 April 2021 = **£8,321.53**

Unpresented on 31 March 2021:

HMRC = £41.60

The above was presented on 6 April 2021.

Balance at bank on 30 April 2021 = **£8,279.93**

Estimated balance at the bank after the above expenditure = **£7,309.05**

319 Clerk's Report

Face-to-Face Meetings

The Clerk reported that Central Government had not extended the Coronavirus regulations which had given local councils permission for formal Council meetings to take place virtually beyond 7 May 2021. The Local Government Association (supported by NALC) and several other local government professional bodies had tried to persuade them otherwise and, not having succeeded, had gone to Court to try to make them extend the permission, but the Court had upheld the Government's case.

Strictly speaking this meeting should have been taking place face-to-face, but, as it had already been advertised when the failure of the legal challenge was announced, and, because Covid regulations did not currently permit meetings indoors, it had gone ahead virtually, as planned.

It was anticipated that the arrangements for holding safe face-to-face meetings once they were allowed in mid-May would be somewhat complex. The matter was discussed. The Clerk would look into the requirements for the meeting in July.

320 Date of Next Meeting

5 July 2021

The meeting closed at 8:45 pm

Chairman