

**Minutes of a Meeting of Haigh Parish Council  
Held Monday 21 October 2019  
6:30pm St David's Parish Rooms**

**Present:** Councillors R Lawson (Chairman), R Darbyshire, C Hatherall, I Parker, P Kenyon, C Higham and the Clerk, Mrs K Pilkington.  
Two members of the public.

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed all those present.

**78 Apologies for Absence**

Cllr A Goodman

**79 Newly Co-opted Councillors' Declarations of Acceptance of Office and Registers of Interests**

Cllr P Kenyon had made his declaration of acceptance of office, which was witnessed by the Clerk, on Monday, 30 September and had submitted his completed Register of Interests on the same occasion.

Cllr C Higham made his declaration of acceptance of office, which was witnessed by the Clerk, and submitted his Register of Interests.

**80 Declaration of Interests**

None.

*Standing Orders were suspended.*

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

The Council engaged with members of the public over the following matters:

- Speeding traffic along the B5239
- The outcome of the retrospective planning application for a change of use for a part of Toddington Farm
- Activities at Greenfield Farm
- Footpath No.18
- The cutting of grass verges along the B5239
- The frequency with which roads and roadside gutters were cleaned.

*See Appendix A.*

*Standing Orders were re-instated.*

**82 Minutes of the Last Ordinary Meeting (9 September 2019)**

**Resolved:** The Minutes of the Last Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Monday, 9 September 2019 were agreed to be a true and correct record.

## 83 Planning Applications

A/19/86710/RET	Toddington Farm, Toddington Lane, Haigh	Change of Use of land to commercial wood storage and wood chipping	Representation submitted (to be determined)
A/19/87494/RET	Grass verge at Unit 5 Valley Gate, Leyland Mill Lane, Wigan	Creation of 4 parking spaces & 1m high fence	Approved with conditions
A/19/87674/FULL	Grazing land northeast of The Alms Houses, Hall Lane, Wigan	To construct new menage with stables	Representation submitted (to be determined)
A/19/86882/FULL	Woodland south west of Hanfield, Hall Lane, Wigan	Construction of equestrian menage with the erection of 5 stables, hay barn, tack room, toilet and septic tank	Representation submitted (to be determined)
A/19/87937/HH	1 Samuels Fold, Pendlebury Lane, Haigh, Wigan	To extend dwellinghouse single storey to side with detached garage	Noted

The Clerk reported that a letter raising the Council's concerns about the lack of information carried within the weekly lists and delays in displaying statutory neighbourhood notices had been sent to the Assistant Director of Environment. She had received a response from his PA informing her that the letter had been forwarded to the Planning Department, but had so far not received a response from the latter.

## 84 Remembrance Sunday & Lamp Post Poppies

- (a) Parish councillors would be joining the Remembrance Day Parade and Service at Aspull War Memorial and the Chairman would lay the wreath on behalf of the residents of Haigh Parish. The wreath had been ordered.

**Resolved:** The Council approved a donation of £100 to the Royal British Legion.

- (b) In 2018 the Parish Council had purchased 50 poppies which were displayed on lamp posts in the Parish throughout November. The poppies were put up and taken down by a contractor who had charged £50. It was reported that he was willing to do this again for the same fee.

**Resolved:** The Council agreed that this activity would go ahead once again and approved the appointment of the contractor, Mr C Horridge, to carry out the work for the price quoted.

## 85 Haigh Woodland Park Stakeholder Session II

Cllrs R Darbyshire and I Parker represented the Parish Council at the second Stakeholder session in connection with Phase II of the development of Haigh Woodland Park on 17 October and provided feedback.

The session was led by Stuart Holden and Cherry Lumby of Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles and Colin Burton of Plincke. They were in the process of preparing a preliminary submission for a £4m bid to National Lottery funds on 19 November with the intention of a full submission in March.

The total cost of the project was expected to be £6m and it would focus on four areas:

### The Plantation Gates

Repairs and renovations would be carried out to the gate and the gatehouses. One of the gatehouses would become a gallery, while the other would carry an exhibition of the history of Haigh Hall.

### The Area Beyond the Plantation Gates

On entering through the Plantation Gates – some way in – a Forest Centre Building would be constructed, along with toilets and a kiosk selling refreshments. The lake to the rear of this would be developed as part of an activity centre providing training for boating activities. More advanced practitioners would be able to use the canal. There would also be a natural play area and an outdoor learning forest school. The Forest Centre Building would be available for hire for private parties. A parking facility, accessed via Hall Lane, was planned for 80 cars. A board walk would lead from the car park to the activity centre.

### The Greenhouse / Pond Area

A natural amphitheatre would be created to the rear of the greenhouse area and facing the pond. This would be used for outdoor concerts and theatrical productions. To enable the creation of this green open space the crazy golf would be moved into the walled garden, the model village area would be demolished and the high ropes would be moved into the Upper Plantations. Additional parking spaces would be provided for people using these facilities.

### The Bothy Area

This would be developed into offices, a volunteer hub and educational facilities - opening up the Stables block for more commercial opportunities. There was a plan to create a space in the walled garden, which would be accessed on one side through the Bothy area. It was envisaged that a marquee could be provided in the walled garden for weddings and events.

The LA's Assistant Director (Corporate Contracts & Assets) had been present and was asked about the situation in relation to Contessa Hotels. She had responded that she could not comment, because at the moment the LA were in discussion with the Hotel chain.

On this occasion there had been no discussion about plans for the golf course.

The Parish Council discussed the proposals. It was observed that, if the project was successful, the volume of private traffic would increase, particularly as there was a lack of public transport provision in the area.

Residents of Haigh had recently received invitations to a consultation session on the project. The Chairman would attend the meeting.

## **86 Wigan Council's Lease of Haigh Hall to Contessa Hotels**

Following a series of breaches of contract and other unacceptable activities on the part of Contessa Hotels which resulted in very active lobbying by the large membership of the Friends of Haigh Hall Heritage & Open Access for All, Wigan Council had terminated the lease of Haigh Hall to Contessa Hotels. This was discussed briefly.

**Resolved:** The Clerk would write to Wigan Council to ask that, because of the impact on the Parish, the Parish Council should be included in decisions being made about the future of Haigh Hall.

## **87 Feedback from the Late Summer Social**

Approximately 30/40 people had attended the Social, which had been held at Two Left Feet Tap. A vote of thanks to everyone who had donated prizes for the raffle, which had raised £78, was recorded.

Residents attending the Social had been invited to complete a questionnaire, which had been previously circulated together with a summary of the responses. The adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan was amongst the things that were high up on people's agendas in terms of popularity. No complaints were received by the Parish Council. There was a general consensus that the Parish Council should host more socials in the future.

It was reported that the Chairman and Cllr C Hatherall would be meeting with Keith Bergman of Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles to book dates in the diary for future events that could be held within Haigh Woodland Park.

The Parish Council discussed the possibility of holding a social during the VE Day celebration period in 2020.

## **88 Community Engagement Strategy**

At the meeting in September it was agreed that the Parish Council should develop a policy document for its Community Engagement Strategy. Three example documents prepared and adopted by other parish councils had been previously circulated. They were discussed. Members indicated a preference for the document adopted by Tarporley Parish Council

**Resolved:** Cllr C Hatherall would adapt Tarporley Parish Council's Community Engagement Strategy and present it to the Parish Council at the meeting in December for adoption.

The Clerk reported that the Community Facebook page had been set up and would soon be going live. It was suggested that the questionnaire residents were invited to complete during the Late Summer Social could be included on this page as well as on the website.

## **89 Parish Council Logo**

The quotation for the design of a logo in all file formats for the Parish Council was discussed briefly.

**Resolved:** The Council approved the quotation of £250 from Cultivate Creative for the design of a logo which should incorporate the windmill.

The proofs would be circulated to members for final approval at the meeting in December.

Cllr B Darbyshire took the opportunity to announce that the Parish Council had been asked by the Friends of Haigh Woodland Park to run the Crazy Golf on the Thursday afternoon of the current week. Cllr Darbyshire and a volunteer were able to do this. The Chairman was also able to be there.

## **90 Red Rock Lane Pavement Clearing**

It was reported that Cllrs A Goodman and C Higham would be organising a working party to clear the pavements along Red Rock Lane. Some sections of pavement were so severely obstructed that only about 18 inches of pavement were available for use by pedestrians. Cllr Higham would carry out a risk assessment for the activity and Dist Cllr C Ready had arranged for the LA to lend hi-viz jackets and the equipment to the volunteers. The date agreed for the activity was Sunday, 10 November.

**Resolved:** The clearing of the pavements in Red Rock Lane was approved as a Parish Council initiative.

## **91 Dealing with Invasive Non-Native Species**

Cllr P Kenyon had proposed that the Parish Council discuss a possible way forward for dealing with Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) that were starting to run rampant in numerous areas around the parish. Wigan Council's Confident Council Scrutiny Committee had considered a proposal for a strategy going forward regarding this in 2018 and the LA had set aside a budget for dealing with them. There was concern amongst members that, because the amount of INNS had multiplied exponentially, particularly this year, the funding set aside by the LA was insufficient.

The original intentions behind the planting of INNS during the nineteenth century had been good. What had not been known at the time was that the indigenous species that kept the plants categorised as INNS under control in their native environment were not present in this part of the world and so there was no way of preventing them multiplying to such an extent that they were causing the extinction of plants that were native to this country.

This year there had been much more Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed growing in Haigh. The Haigh Hall estate was being taken over by INNS. Even floating pennywort had been seen on the canal.

Herbicides could be used successfully to remove the floating pennywort. It was agreed that the Canal & River Trust would need to be informed. Japanese Knotweed caused issues in relation to buildings and was difficult to eradicate. This had to be done by professionals. Himalayan Balsam was easy to remove and could be done by volunteer working parties. However, to be successful, it had to be removed before it went to seed and the same areas had to be cleared annually over several years, because seeds could lie dormant in the soil for up to five years and then germinate.

These plants had attractive flowers and many people were not aware of the negative impact they were having on the ecosystem and on buildings. The public in general needed to be educated with regard to INNS. Cllr Kenyon had written to the LA to enquire about their strategy with regard to dealing

with INNS and was awaiting a reply. In his letter he had asked whether there was any way in which the Parish Council could help.

During the discussion it was suggested that a survey needed to be carried out to establish where the problem areas in the Parish were. It was agreed that the issues created by INNS should be highlighted on the Council's Facebook page.

## **92 Feedback from Councillors' Training Session at Wigan Town Hall**

The training session was provided by members of Wigan Council staff and had been attended by new members of the Council and the Clerk.

The Session had covered areas such as:

- Community Engagement,
- GDPR,
- the functions of different departments of Wigan Council and their staffing structure,
- communication channels for ward and parish councillors with staff,
- the functions of Wigan Council's committees,
- Brighter Borough funding and
- Conflicts of interest.

Members reported that they had found the latter part of the session more useful than the earlier part.

## **93 Inviting Ward Councillors to Parish Council Meetings**

One suggestion that had emanated from the recent training session for new councillors provided by Wigan Council was that Ward councillors should perhaps be invited to attend Parish Council meetings on a regular basis. This would enable Ward and Parish councillors to develop working relationships for the benefit of the local community. This was discussed.

**Resolved:** In future Ward councillors would be invited to Parish Council meetings as a matter of routine.

Dist Cllr C Ready had offered to attend a future meeting to talk about The Deal and Wigan Council's Investment Fund. It was agreed that he should be invited to do this at the first meeting of 2020.

## **94 Meeting with Wigan Council**

Every couple of years the members attended a meeting with the Chief Executive and other senior officers of Wigan Council to discuss issues of concern and ways of working together. The possibility of arranging such a meeting in the next few months was discussed.

**Resolved:** The Clerk would contact the Chief Executive to arrange a date in the New Year for a meeting with her and senior officers.

Selection of items for discussion at the meeting would be an agenda item at the meeting in December.

## 95 Handling Residents' Complaints / Concerns

At the training provided by Wigan Council it was mentioned that there was an on-line system which allowed Ward councillors to send issues raised by residents to the officers at the LA. This was the Report It App for Councillors. Wigan Council officers were under an obligation to respond to enquiries raised via the app within a specific period of time. The Clerk reported that this system had been extended to include the parish councils. As the LA wished all enquiries to be raised via the app to be channelled via the Clerk, the Clerk had prepared and circulated a proforma template to be used for forwarding residents' complaints / concerns to her.

Members were of the view that they needed access to this system directly. They needed to be seen personally to be following up on these complaints and reporting back to the residents. The Clerk reported that the IT staff were seeking permission for them to be able to do this, and, if permission were given, they would need individual councillors' email addresses in order to set them up on the system. In view of this members signed a document giving the Clerk permission to share their email addresses with Wigan Council officers.

**Resolved:** Residents' complaints / concerns would be assigned to individual members to handle and a record of the issues and progress with them would be maintained and reported at each meeting.

## 96 Committees / Working Groups

Members of the Parish Council discussed ways of working on specific issues between Council meetings. The possibility of delegating them to committees had been suggested. A Legal Topic Note prepared by NALC on the subject of committees and working groups had been circulated previously for members' information.

The Clerk advised that, because of the formal nature of committees, creation of informal working groups to deal with specific issues was the option that many small parish councils selected. Working groups held informal meetings, which could take place anywhere. Their meetings did not have to be advertised, minuted or be open to the public. However, working groups could not have delegated authority to make decisions (particularly decisions involving finance) on behalf of the Council – they could only make recommendations to the Council.

**Resolved:** The Council agreed to delegate work on projects between meetings to small informal working groups which would report back to the Council. The following members were delegated to lead on specific projects:

Cllr R Darbyshire - Crazy Golf events  
Cllr C Higham - Traffic / pavement clearing / footpaths  
Cllr C Hatherall – Community engagement  
Cllr I Parker – Environmental issues  
Cllr P Kenyon – Invasive Non-Native Species  
Cllr R Lawson – Planning matters

## 97 Asset Register 2019/20

The Asset Register was reviewed. No changes were made.

**Resolved:** The Asset Register for 2019/20 was approved.

The Clerk reported that the bench at the entrance in Red Rock Lane to the old railway line was hidden by overgrown shrubs. Cllr C Higham agreed to prune back the overgrowth.

## 98 NAO Consultation on Audit Code of Practice

The National Audit Office was consulting over the the draft Code of Practice proposed for 2020. NALC were planning to respond on behalf parish councils and were seeking comments from member parish to three questions. The consultation was discussed briefly.

**Resolved:** The Council noted the consultation.

## 99 Accounts 2019/20

### Income

Crazy Golf Day = £17

Late Summer Social Raffle = £78

**TOTAL = £95**

### Expenditure

No	PAYEE	NARRATIVE	NET	VAT	PAYMENT
18	Employee No.1	Salary (Sept & Oct) (net)	£325.96	N/A	£325.96
19	Employee No.1	Mileage, postage, cable ties, cloakroom tickets	£ 16.01	£2.00	£ 18.01
20	HMRC	Tax (Sept & Oct)	£ 78.60	N/A	£ 78.60
21	St David's H&A PCC	Room rent (October)	£ 20.00	N/A	£ 20.00
22	Employee No.1	Facebook mailshot	£ 7.99	N/A	£ 7.99
23	Royal British Legion	Donation	£100.00	N/A	£100.00
<b>Total:</b>			<b>£548.56</b>	<b>£2.00</b>	<b>£550.56</b>

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

Balance at bank on 2 October 2019 = **£6,119.73**

The following prior payments had not been presented by 2 October 2019:

Employee No.1 = £ 8.00 (Facebook mailshot)

Wigan Council = £40.00 (Small lotteries registration fee)

**TOTAL = £48.00**

Estimated balance at bank after the addition of the above income and subtraction of the above expenditure and upresented prior payments  
= **£5,616.17**

## 100 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report was received. *See Appendix B.*  
It's contents were discussed briefly.



**101 Dates of Meetings 2020**

**Resolved:** The dates of meetings for 2020 were approved.

**102 Date of Next Meeting**

Monday, 2 December 2019 at 6:30pm.

The meeting closed at 9:50 pm

**Chairman**