

**Minutes of Meetings of Haigh Parish Council
Held Monday 23 May 2016
6:40pm St David's Parish Rooms**

Present: Councillors R Darbyshire (Chairman), J Wild, G France, A Thomson, R Howarth, G Fairhurst and the Clerk, Mrs K Pilkington

Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

73 Chairman Opens Meeting

Cllr R Darbyshire welcomed everyone.

74 Ejection of Chairman

A nomination was received for Cllr R Darbyshire.

Proposed: Cllr J Wild; Seconded: Cllr A Thomson.

Resolved: That Cllr R Darbyshire would serve as Chairman until the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May 2017.

75 Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr R Darbyshire duly made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. The Clerk signed as witness to the declaration.

The Council's appreciation of the Chairman's work on their behalf over the past year was put on record.

76 Ejection of Vice Chairman

A nomination was received for Cllr G Fairhurst.

Proposed: Cllr J Wild; Seconded: Cllr R Darbyshire.

Resolved: That Cllr G Fairhurst would serve as Vice Chairman until the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May 2017.

Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council

Standing Orders were suspended.

77 An Update on Developments at Haigh Hall

Cllr Darbyshire introduced Ms Penny McGinty (Assistant Director of Property at Wigan Council) and Mr Pete Burt (Managing Director of Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles), who talked to the Council about progress with the developments at Haigh Hall.

Ms McGinty reported that:

- The Hall had received planning permission for conversion to a hotel.
- With effect from 23 May 2016 Contessa Hotels would be the operator.
- Not many internal changes were envisaged. The building had originally been intended for entertainment, which was excellent news with respect to conservation.
- Other developments would be taking place elsewhere on the site. New operators and businesses would be based there.

- The free play area had been completed and was proving very popular. There had been a tiny amount of vandalism, but this was being monitored and any necessary repairs were being undertaken.
- Good progress was being made with the 'paid for' activities. The high ropes section was due to open on 30 July. Work on the adventure golf was progressing.
- Buildings were being re-modelled.
- The work on the car park had created issues for both visitors and residents, but this had now been finished.
- The area around The Stables was also being re-modelled.
- An area where performances would in future be held was being developed.
- Wigan Council were working well with the Friends of Haigh Hall, who have put forward a request that the train should return. Fortunately, the train had been kept 'in storage' and would be returned to the site.
- A new location needed to be identified for the figure of a lion, which was being moved the following day.

Ms McGinty told the Council that Wigan Council were trying to maintain links with residents and would respond to any issues they raised with respect to the project. They were mindful that the more of a success they made of the woodland park the better and the fewer the issues were likely to be.

Several events had been arranged for the park and would be going ahead as planned. They included the 'Race for Life' and the 'Playday'.

Mr Burt reported on the changes anticipated in The Stables area. There would be a focus on the sale of organic foods and it was hoped that vendors would include a butcher, baker, chocolatier, florist and a craft operation. The Tea Room was going to be expanded to cover two floors. Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles were keen to get as much finished as possible by the Summer and were recruiting additional staff to do the work, so that they could complete earlier. They were aware of the issues that concerned residents.

Ms McGinty and Mr Burt took questions from those present:

Q.1: *What was happening to the Golf Club changing rooms?*

A new location had been identified for the changing rooms. Both the 18 and 9 hole golf courses were still there and would remain open. The intention was to grow the facility.

Q.2: *What was happening with the entrance from the Lodge?*

The entrance would still be there. Works were to be carried out in relation to this entrance, but it would be for use by hotel guests only, not as a service entrance or by the general public. They would access the facilities by the old way.

Q.3: *Work on the fabric of the Hall would lead to an increase in construction traffic. Where would this traffic enter?*

This had not been entirely decided yet. An operational plan had still to be prepared. Most of the work on the Hall was external and would be done by the school Summer holidays to fit in with the National Play Days in early August.

Q.4: *Were Wigan Council confident that the hotel would control its traffic?*

The hotel management would have to work with Wigan Council over this.

Q.5: *Did Wigan Council foresee banning parking on the roads?*

That was one of the options being considered. The Council had to consult stakeholders and go through a process before a decision was made. If at all possible, parking would be controlled on the site. The LA wanted to encourage people to walk to the venue rather than drive.

The volume and speed of traffic in the area around the Haigh Estate was discussed. Ms McGinty informed the Council that the traffic engineers needed to assess the situation and advise on the best way forward.

Ms McGinty told the Council that the LA were preparing a Heritage Lottery bid in connection with the conservation of the historic features of the estate. It was a big undertaking and the restoration project would last between five and ten years, but it would also benefit other areas.

Wigan Council had funded the repair work on the wall of the walled garden. This counted as maintenance of a heritage feature. They wanted people to enjoy the facilities. The task of maintaining the whole estate, including the woodland, for the next twenty years was a big one.

One major change would be that the common rhododendrons would have to be removed. A programme of pruning and spraying with fungicide would be used to kill them off. The programme of regeneration was being managed by Graham Workman. The containment noticed currently in place would need to be lifted so that the woodland could be used for timber. Timber removed would be replaced through heritage planting.

The Chair thanked Ms McGinty and Mr Burt for their time and they left the meeting.

78 Matters Introduced by Members of the Public

Footpath Maintenance

A resident reported that the LA carry out footpath maintenance, but they only come up Red Rock Lane as far as the woodyard. They had recently sprayed footpaths along the length of the road between the canal bridge and the former nursery. They needed to ensure that the entire length of pavement was wide enough for people to walk safely. The Clerk would write to the LA about footpath widths.

Speed Limit Signs

A resident observed that most people seemed to ignore the speed limit on the main road that circumvents the Haigh Estate. Most people were unaware that the speed limits kept altering along this road. Many of the 30mph speed limit signs were covered in slime and needed cleaning. Some were obscured by branches. Because of this motorists were not being properly informed about the speed limit changes. These issues would be reported to the LA.

High Hedges Along Riley Lane

It was reported that the hedges along Riley Lane had been cut down so low that they appeared to have died off. The Clerk would write to the farmer to suggest that he should plant new ones and to advise him that grants were available for planting new hedges.

Residents' Engagement with the Parish Council

A resident observed that, in reading past minutes, he had noticed that there had been a lot of comment about people not engaging very much with the Parish Council. This led to a short discussion about the future of the Parish

Council and the Casual Vacancy that had arisen. The Clerk explained the procedure involved in filling the Casual Vacancy.

Planning Procedures

The Parish Council's role in relation to Planning procedures was discussed. The Clerk informed the Council that legislation had very recently been passed which would enable parish councils to lodge appeals against planning consents with which they disapproved.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

79 Minutes of the Meeting (11 April 2016)

Resolved: The Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 11 April 2016 were agreed to be a true and correct record.

Proposed: Cllr R Howarth;

Seconded: Cllr A Thomson

80 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

81 Planning Applications

Since the last meeting the following applications had been received by Wigan Council:

A/16/82257/FULL	1 Gothic Cottages, School Lane	Erection of detached garage	Noted
A/16/82416/HH	1 Leyland Mill Farm, Hall Lane	To extend dwellinghouse – single storey to rear	Noted

82 Meeting with Wigan Council Officers

A selection of three dates and times had been offered to the Council for its meeting with Wigan Council officers. These were discussed.

Resolved: The Council agreed to meet with Wigan Council officers at 10am on Wednesday, 28 September.

83 Direct Communication with Wigan Council Officers

Wigan Council have decided to offer their parish councillors direct access to their officers. If there is an issue that members' wished Wigan Council to deal with, they were invited to report it directly to Wigan's officers via the 'Report It' app on the Wigan Council website.

At present this was limited to environmental issues, but the plan was to expand the facility. The officers that manage the app had been instructed to screen reports coming from parish councillors and would fast track members' reports to the appropriate officer, who would then get in touch with the member, if necessary.

Wigan Council's offer was discussed.

Resolved: The Council agreed to try out the facility.

84 Training for Parish Councillors

Wigan Council's Democratic Services department had offered their parish councillors the opportunity to attend a training session in relation to some of the things that might be relevant to the role of a councillor, eg:

- Social Media & Acceptable Use of ICT
- Safeguarding
- Code of Conduct & Interests
- Declaration of Gifts & Hospitality
- FOI & Data Protection
- Effective Community Leadership
- Personal Safety for Councillors

The session, which was expected to last half a day, and the opportunity to attend was discussed.

Resolved: Members agreed that they were interested in attending such a session, should one be provided.

85 Casual Vacancy

The casual vacancy had been advertised on Wigan Council's website and on the Council's notice boards for the requisite time. Democratic Services had written to say that no requests for an election were received by the deadline of 4pm on 5 May, so the Council could now begin the process of co-opting a new member.

The co-option process was discussed.

Resolved: The co-option would be advertised on the notice boards and on Wigan Council's website. Interested parties will be asked to send an expression of interest with a pen portrait to the Clerk. The closing date would be the date of the next meeting - 5 September – when applications would be considered.

86 Annual Governance Statement 2015/16

Resolved: The completed Annual Governance Statement 2015/16 was approved.

87 Statement of Accounts 2015/16

Resolved: The Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2016 was approved.

88 Accounts 2016 / 2017

Income

Precept & Council Tax Support Grant (1 April) = £2,796

New Balance = £7,943.71

The following items was presented for payment:

No	PAYEE	NARRATIVE	NET	VAT	PAYMENT
2	St David's Haigh & Aspull PCC	Room rent	£ 20.00	N/A	£ 20.00
3	Employee No.1	Salary (April & May)	£306.56	N/A	£306.56
4	K Pilkington	Mileage, postage	£ 8.39	N/A	£ 8.39
Total:			£334.95	N/A	£334.95

After the above authorised spend there would be £7,608.76 in the bank account.

Resolved: The above items were approved for payment.

88 Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that:

- Since the last meeting she had received a complaint from a resident of one of the properties near the junction of Pendlebury Lane with Wingates Road and Sennicar Lane. The resident wished to complain about the amount of rubble left in the area following the digging of a ditch intended to prevent flooding in Pendlebury Lane and had provided photographs of the area. The issues had been reported to Wigan Council.
- LALC had sent the new salary scales effective from 1 April 2016. The NJC had agreed a 1% increase in 2016 and a further 1% increase with effect from 1 April 2017.
- Jonathan Owen, the CEO of NALC, had circulated a briefing on the Queen's speech. The key elements of the speech that were of relevance to parish councils included
 - a) the Neighbourhood Planning & Infrastructure Bill, which would give more power to local councils,
 - b) the Bus Services Bill, which would devolve powers over bus services to directly elected mayors and
 - c) the Local Growth & Jobs Bill, which would enable LAs to retain business rates collected in their areas.

89 Any Other Business

Standards Committee Membership

Resolved: Cllr A Thomson was nominated for appointment to Wigan Council's Standards Committee.

Aspull Surgery PPG

It was reported that only one person had attended the last meeting of the PPG. More members were needed from amongst those patients who were registered with Aspull Surgery.

90 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 5 September: 7pm

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.

The members of the public withdrew from the meeting.

91 Clerk's Terms

The Clerk's terms, contract and the NJC's recent national agreement were discussed.

The Clerk withdrew from the meeting.

Resolved:

- a) The NJC's national agreement to increase all salary scale points by 1% with effect from 1 April 2016 and a second 1% with effect from 1 April 2017 was accepted and approved.
- b) The Council agreed that Mrs K M Pilkington would be appointed as Clerk/RFO to the Parish Council on SCP 23 with effect from 1 April 2016.
- c) The Clerk's contract was approved for signing.
- d) The mobile phone once used by a previous clerk would be re-instated and the costs would be monitored.

Proposed: Cllr R Darbyshire Seconded: Cllr A Thomson

The Clerk re-joined the meeting.

Meeting Closed at 8:20 pm

Chairman