

Billinge Chapel End Parish Council

Minutes of Council Meeting held on 11 April 2022

Present: Councillors D McDonnell (Chair) D Clift (Vice Chair)
Councillors B Bradbury, H Craig, S Gardner, T McEvoy, S Rahman
H Broatch (Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer)

PUBLIC SESSION

The Clerk/RFO advised that the Police had had to reorganise the drop-in session at Billinge Police Station and it would now be on Friday, 22 April 2022 from 1600 to 1800. The Clerk was asked to see if the Parish Council could receive crime statistics at each of its Meetings.

The Clerk read out an email from Parish Councillor P Peers and a letter from the Headteacher of Nugent House School.

15 Members of the Public were present. The majority had come to raise their continuing concerns/make comments on progress regarding the flooding. They especially raised their lack of confidence about the actions that the Assets and Facilities Manager (as outlined in the letter from Headteacher of Nugent School dated 31 March 22) was to take. They argued that based on past experience they would be surprised if this did actually happen. This lack of confidence was based on the history of promises being made but not delivered. A resident circulated a document which stated that "there had been 16 floods since 2015" and he argued these were caused by inadequate maintenance of Nugent's culverts.

The residents noted the letter from the Headteacher and the details of the action being taken. The letter stated that the information on action taken was being logged in a "water hygiene logbook, which is an official document, supplemented with digital evidence." Members of the Public asked the Parish Council to see if access to these records would be in the public domain.

All agreed that although technically Nugent School was not responsible for the maintenance of the culverts that the failures were not good for its relationship with the local community.

The Chair advised that he would (as a Health and Safety Advisor) do a risk assessment of the fence line; he would raise the ongoing concerns with the Portfolio Holder for Highways, St Helens Borough Council; and he would also raise the issues regarding maintenance of public footpaths with Portfolio Holder. He advised that unfortunately the Principal Flooding Engineer was on sick leave so his report would be delayed.

9 Members of the Public left at 8.05

The Chairman called a recess to enable those who wanted to leave to do so safely.

The meeting restarted at 8.15.

No 111

Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs S Murphy and P Peers and reasons for absence approved.

No 112

Declarations of Interest

Noted:

Cllr D McDonnell declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 as a Member of St Helens Borough Council's Planning Committee.

No 113

Minutes of Last Meeting

Resolved that the Minutes of the last meeting of the Council, held on 21 March 2022, were confirmed as a true record and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

No 114

Flooding

Noted the Chair's Report and the letters from Nugent House School and Conor McGinn MP. The Chair said that due to ill health the report due from the Principal Flooding Engineer for St Helens Borough Council would be delayed. This expert report was critical to getting a detailed understanding of the issues. The Parish Council would also ensure that the Portfolio Holder for Highways was fully aware of the issues. The Parish Council had already escalated the matter up to the MP who had written to advise that he had been in touch with St Helens Borough Council on behalf of residents.

Resolved that the Parish Council would write to the Trustees of the Nugent Care Society on behalf of the residents. The Chair and Parish Councillor B Bradbury are on the Governing Body of the School but the Governing Body has no authority with regard to property matters. The Parish Council would also ask Nugent Care Society for access to the documentation referred to in the letter from the Headteacher which would record and evidence action taken.

No 115**Billinge Medical Practice**

Resolved the Parish Council would contact the Clinical Commissioning Group in the Summer 2022. If there was no improvement they would arrange to meet with them again. It was noted that the MP had written to the Clinical Commissioning Group. They have advised him that they are helping the Practice to address communication with patients more effectively. They have prioritised the telephony issues and these are being addressed as a matter of urgency.

No 116**Library Service**

Noted that the Clerk (in consultation with the Chairman) has instructed an architect to assess the site at The Public Hall; then give advice on the feasibility of building on site; and provide a "ballpark figure" for the cost of building a new library. Once available this information will be shared with St Helens Borough Council Library Service as part of their deliberations for the report that they aim to take to the Borough Council in June 2022. The Library Service is developing a strategy that looks to the longer-term future of library services in St Helens Borough. They have advised that the solutions for the retention of a Library Service will be different in each Ward in accordance with the availability of options. The Parish Council will consult with Parishioners on the options recommended by the Library Service Plan when issued.

No 117**Planning**

Resolved:

To submit no observations on the following applications- P/2022/0197/HHFP.

No 118**Financial Matters**

1. Noted that Cleaner/Caretaker is on the statutory minimum wage from 1 April 2022.
2. Noted the budget monitoring report as at 31/3/2022.
3. Resolved to pay the accounts payable in March 2022 (numbers 125-126 totalling £443.58) and in April 2022 (numbers 1-9 totalling £5,008.61)

No 119**Grounds Maintenance**

Resolved to award the contract for the grounds maintenance of Dam Slacks Open Space and the Millennium Garden for 2022/23 at the total quoted cost of £2228.17 plus VAT and to authorise the Clerk/RFO to complete the relevant work forms.

No 120**Wall on Main Street**

Resolved that the Clerk/RFO report this matter to the Enforcement Team, Planning, St Helens Borough Council and ask them to inspect the site for compliance with its planning conditions and the fact that it is an eye sore. She was asked to tell them that the Parish Council has received a number of complaints from Parishioners about it being an eye sore.

No 121**Clerks Report**

Noted the Report.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.