

Billinge Chapel End Parish Council

Minutes of Council Meeting on 19 December 2022

Present: Councillor S Gardner (Chair)
Councillors J Barnes, B Bradbury, F Gill
H Broatch (Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the Council)

PUBLIC SESSION

9 Members of the Public were in attendance

The PCSO provided an explanation of the latest crime statistics which were circulated to the Parish Councillors and are attached to the Minutes. He advised on the action taken to identify those responsible for throwing eggs mainly at one property but also another. He also asked the public to be aware of the rise in catalytic convertor theft. If anyone saw what they believed to be a theft in action he advised ringing 999 but if that was not the case to ring 101.

He advised that the volunteers would soon get their online training about speed monitoring and that eight would be selected to do speed watches. He also advised that in the New Year additional speed measures would also be put in place by Merseyside Police.

The PCSO was brought up to-date on the parking issues on Carr Mill Road and agreed he was happy to attend any future meetings with the residents, schools, and/or Highways etc and that he would look into what the Police might be able to do to help with the problem.

Borough Cllr P Peers updated the meeting about progress of his discussions with the Eddleston Field Society about parking issues on Rainford Road. He understands that there will be a meeting of interested parties in the new year and the Parish Council would be invited to send representatives to the meeting.

The meeting was opened to the public. The Parish Council video recordings were raised and why they did not appear to be saved for any significant length of time. The Clerk advised that the minutes are the record of the meeting, and that the video recording is not suitable for use as evidence of what transpired in a meeting.

Flooding was raised by the residents affected by the flooding last December. They advised that they had individually raised formal complaints with St Helens Borough Council about the length of time it has taken to do the Section 19 Investigation. They had had

acknowledgements but had not received written responses within the 10 working days for Stage 1 as laid out in St Helens Borough Council s Policy on Comments, Compliments and Complaints (June 2020). The Policy states that if their "investigation into the complaint is going to take longer than the maximum 10 days our Customer will be notified that that is the case". It was now 20 working days since they had submitted their formal complaints. One resident advised that they had rung and asked why but did not get an answer although they got an apology. None of the residents who have submitted complaints had been advised that the process was going to take longer than 10 working days. In the meantime they continued to fear that their properties would flood again in the light of no action being taken until the reasons for the flooding last year are investigated and reported in the Section 19 Investigation Report.

Another Member of the Public reported that he had counted 18 cars parked on Carr Mill Road whilst there were only 10 cars parked at Nugent House School. He felt that the Headteacher should be ensuring that his staff parked in the school car park.

The Public Session closed at 8.15pm

No 93

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs A Armstrong, B Bates, C Betts and S Murphy and the reasons for absence were noted.

No 94

Declarations of Interest

Cllr B Bradbury declared interests as a Governor of Nugent House School and of Chapel End School.

No 95

Minutes of Last Meeting

Resolved that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 November 2022 were confirmed as a true record and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

Noted the update from the Clerk/RFO on the Action Log.

No 96

Appointments

Resolved to appoint Cllr J Barnes as Vice Chair.

Resolved to not appoint any further Members to the Food Bank Working Group in light of the proposals to work with St Aidans Church who want to set up a Food Pantry for Billinge.

Resolved that the Events Coordinating Group continue with Cllrs Betts, Gill and Murphy and if, in the future, they felt they needed additional Members to bring this matter back to the Parish Council.

No 97

Parish Council Vacancy

Noted that an election had not been requested so the Clerk/RFO had advertised that the Parish Council was looking for people who were interested in filling the vacancy to apply for co-option in writing to the Clerk/RFO by 1200 on Tuesday 10 January 2022.

Noted that the candidates would be invited to declare that they were eligible for co-option; provide background information of what they would bring in terms of skills, experience, knowledge etc to the Parish Council; and be prepared to talk for 5 minutes on why they should be co-opted. The Parish Councillors would then elect the successful candidate who (after signing the Acceptance of Office) would join the Meeting.

No 98

Car Parking on Carr Mill Road

Noted the issues raised by a member of the public who resides on Carr Mill Road at the last meeting; the photographic evidence he submitted to the Clerk; and the wording for a leaflet to be placed on car windscreens (submitted to the Clerk and circulated to all Parish Councillors). He was asking the Parish Council to resolve to post his proposed wording for leaflets on the parked cars.

Noted that Borough Cllr S Murphy had talked with the Highways Authority at St Helens Borough Council about single yellow lines with parking restrictions being installed on Carr Mill Road. She was in process of setting up a site meeting for 1100 on Friday 13 January 2023. Local residents and others were welcome to come to that site visit. The Parish Council would advertise the final

date and time on noticeboards and on its website.

Noted that letters had been received from the Headteachers of both Nugent House School and Chapel End School. The Headteacher of Nugent House School advised that if the registration number of the parked car is reported to them that they will talk with the member of staff.

Noted that the Parish Council is not an enforcement body, so could only act with the intention to persuade those parking inconsiderately. Some Parish Councillors felt to post leaflets might be counter-productive, so no decision to post a leaflet on cars was made. This would also address the concerns raised about harassment and the fact that the proposed statements about Chapel End School were challenged as not being accurate and potentially libelous.

Resolved that the way forward (as suggested by Cllr A Armstrong) was to set up meetings with the Headteachers of Nugent House School and Chapel End School. It was agreed by that working together with the schools, the residents, the parents, and the local Highways Authority to look at this issue from a long-term perspective (safety; air pollution and environmental impact; traffic number projections; etc) would be the best way forward.

Resolved to set up a meeting as soon as possible in the new year.

No 99

Library Service

Long Term

Noted that all households in Billinge had been consulted about their willingness to be involved in and set up a community led library service if Billinge was not able to get St Helens Council to re-open its existing library on a long-term basis. Consequently enough people expressed an interest for a public meeting to be held on 5 December 2022. It was attended by 19 Members of the Public.

Noted that work had already started on exploring options to set up an email group for the interested community volunteers and (those who expressed a specific interest) had set up a meeting to visit a community led children's library service in Wigan on Monday 16 January 2023. The Parish Council would support this work to help the community volunteers get off the ground. It

would then support in other ways, for example, giving the community led group access to The Parish Hall for meetings etc at no charge.

Short Term

Noted that the Clerk would place an order for two book swap hutches (supply and installation) and that the quote would be contained within the approved budget. These hutches are weather proof and one will be sited at the Millennium Garden. A site is still to be identified for the second one.

No 100

Flooding

Noted that the Parish Council had submitted a formal complaint to St Helens Council and had received acknowledgement of receipt. The complaint was about the length of time it was taking to complete the Section 19 Investigation which was not compliant with St Helens Borough Council's own policy. The ten working days for Stage 1 response are up on 20 December 2022. The Clerk/RFO will advise the Chair if a reply is received or not.

No 101

Billinge Medical Practice

Noted that the Practice had held a patient engagement event. This was welcomed by the Parish Council as a critical step in the right direction. Noted that concerns still existed and that the next meeting with the Integrated Care Board would update on progress.

No 102

Food Bank Working Group

Noted that a meeting will be held with representatives of the Church in the new year to discuss how to take forward a Food Pantry. The Church has welcomed and thanked the Parish Council for its offer to work with them on this matter.

No 103

Community First Responders

Resolved that the Clerk talk with other Clerks and bring a report back to the next meeting about the role, training, etc of community first responders.

No 104

Events

Resolved to thank Billinge Residents Association for all their work in organising the food, stalls etc for the Christmas Tree Lighting.

No 105

Planning

Resolved to submit no observations on application P/2022/0815/HHFP.

No 106

Financial Matters

Resolved to authorise the payments listed on Schedule of Payments for December 22 (VN 88 -103 totalling £4247.91)

Noted that St Helens Council are consulting on their Budget proposals for 2023/24 from 1730 – 1900 on 9 January 2023.

No 107

Estimates Committee

Noted that the Committee will meet on Monday 9 January 2023 at 7.30pm and that all Councillors attend this meeting. It is not open to the public.

Noted that the timings are very tight as the budget report for 2023/24 has to be published on Tuesday 10 January 2023 for the Parish Council Meeting on Monday 16 January 2023.

No 108

Green Spaces

Noted that the Clerk is in the process of getting quotes for supplying and installing a replacement frame and set of swings at Dam Slacks.

Noted that the essential tree works have been done at the Millennium Garden.

No 109 Clerks Report noted for information only.