

Billinge Chapel End Parish Council

DRAFT Minutes of Council Meeting held on 15 May 2023

Present: Councillor Fiona Gill (Chair) Councillor B Bates (Vice Chair)
Councillors J Barnes, C Betts, B Bradbury, S Gardner, Frank
Gill, M Webster
H Broatch (Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer)

Annual Meeting

No 1

Appointment of Chair

Resolved: Cllr Fiona Gill appointed Char for 2023/24 municipal year. Moved by
Cllr B Bates – Seconded by Cllr M Webster

Cllr Fiona Gill signed the Declaration of Office.

Cllr Fiona Gill thanked Cllr S Gardner for the significant contribution he had
made as Chair for 2022/23 and, in particular, the resilience and persistence he
had demonstrated in dealing with a number of challenging issues.

No 2

Appointment of Vice Chair

Resolved: Cllr B Bates appointed as Vice Chair for 2022/23 municipal year.

No 3

Appointments

Resolved the following appointments:

Estimates Committee 8 January 2024 – All Members

Personnel Committee – Cllrs Fiona Gill, B Bates and S Gardner

Planning Advisory Group – Cllrs C Betts, Frank Gill, and M Webster

Billinge Beacon/Local Life – Cllrs Fiona Gill and Frank Gill

Press Advisor – Cllr J Barnes

Events Coordinators – Cllrs Fiona Gill, Frank Gill, S Murphy, M Webster

Social Media Advisor – Cllr B Bates

Dam Slacks Play Ares – Cllr C Betts

No 4

Delegation Arrangements for Urgent Decisions

Resolved: That if the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer believes an urgent matter arises between Council Meetings, it shall be determined by the Clerk/RFO in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair. Any such matters will be reported to the next meeting.

No 5

Standing Orders and Financial Regulations 2023/24

Resolved: to approve the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations 2023/24.

Noted: that updates are being made nationally particularly with regard to GDPR and that both would need reviewing and revising in the near future.

No 6

Council Policies 2023/24

Resolved: to approve the policies (Accessibility Charter, Code of Conduct, Complaints Procedure, Co-option Arrangements, and Filming Protocol.

Noted: that Disciplinary and Grievance policies have been recently reviewed nationally and that the Clerk would bring a report to the next meeting.

Resolved: to set up a Working Group at the next meeting to review all the policies and procedures.

No 7

Internal Audit 2022/23

Noted: the letter from the Internal Auditor following a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal financial control stating that the processes were satisfactory.

Noted: the asset register and risk assessment were under review and a report would be brought to the next meeting.

No 8

Annual Return 2022/23

Resolved: to approve the Internal Audit Report; the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statement and authorised the Chair to sign.

No 9

Council Meetings 2023/24

Resolved: to agree the proposed dates and times for ordinary meetings and Committees.

Ordinary Parish Council Meeting

Public Session

Seven members of the public were present.

Merseyside Police were not present but the latest crime statistics had been circulated to all Members and were noted.

Borough Cllrs Murphy and Peers had given apologies. Borough Cllr Betts reported that he was in discussions with the Highways Authority about the roadworks at Trent Road where the cobbles had been exposed after works. He was awaiting a response about dates/methodology/implications for traffic control etc. He would continue to monitor the situation.

Flooding continued to be a significant and unresolved issue for those local residents affected in December 2022. Land ownership and, therefore, clarity about who was responsible for maintenance that would mitigate flood risks continued to be of concern. The S19 Flood Investigation Report being undertaken by St Helens Council should clarify this matter. This report is imminently due to go to a meeting of the Cabinet at St Helens Council. The Parish Council was asked to write and ask for a list of landowners and their landholdings. Matters had not been helped by members of the public being advised by St Helens Council Officer to address any questions to the Contact Centre rather than directly to him. They felt as if this meant they had gone back to where they started 17 months ago.

St Helens Council consultation questionnaire on the future of the library in Billinge was raised by a resident. The questions raised in the questionnaire

were not relevant due to the fact that the Billinge Library had been closed for safety reasons for the past two years. Effectively this meant Billinge residents had no means of expressing their views on the proposals. It was also felt that the questionnaire was not inclusive and concerns were raised as to its compliance with the Equalities Act.

Questions were also raised about Billinge in Bloom and the work it was doing in the village. Was the aim for it to be self-funding or reliant on grants? The Chair explained that she understood the aim was that it would be self-funded and it was looking for pump priming funds.

No 10

Apologies for Absence

Noted: apologies for absence were received from Cllr S Murphy and the reasons for absence were approved.

No 11

Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received.

No 12

Minutes of Last Meeting

Resolved: that the Minutes of the meeting on 17 April 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

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

No 13

Consultation by St Helens Council on Future of Library Service

Resolved: to write to St Helens Council about the fact that the consultation questionnaire made no sense in the context where Billinge Library had been closed for over 2 years for safety reasons and in effect Billinge residents were being excluded from the consultation. No hard copies were available for this same reason. The Clerk was asked to write as a matter of urgency and complain about this impossible situation and about the concerns about accessibility etc.

No 14

Road Safety Issues on Carr Mill Road

Noted: the exchange of emails between Cllr S Gardner and the Acting Head of Nugent House School. It was clear that the issue for staff was the slope into

the school's car park and potholes. These are matters for Nugent Care Society who are responsible for property maintenance.

Resolved: the Clerk write to CEO at Nugent Care Society asking them to prioritise these issues. The key reason being that the safety of children attending Chapel End Primary School had to be the top priority.

Resolved: that the Cllr S Gardner would also approach the Headteacher at Chapel End Primary School about working together to address these safety concerns.

No 15

Billinge Medical Practice

Noted: that the re-inspection was scheduled for the summer months in recognition of the improvements that had been made by the Practice.

No 16

Community Event for The King's Coronation

Noted: that the Picnic In The Park on Sunday 7 May 2023 organised by The Billinge Residents Association had been excellent and a very successful community event.

Resolved: that the Chair would write and thank the Residents Association for the hard work that ensured this was such a successful event.

Resolved: that the Clerk would write and thank Kids Planet Day Nursery for allowing car parking on their premises which had been an immense help.

Noted: that the Big Help Out Celebration of Volunteering in the Community on 8 May 2023 had also been a great success with 28 people being nominated for awards and over 100 in attendance at the award ceremony in The Public Hall.

Resolved: that a Working Group be set up to look at how this could evolve into an annual event celebrating all dimensions of volunteering including citizenship etc. The Working Group would be chaired by Cllr Frank Gill and include Cllrs J Barnes, B Bradbury, F Gill and S Murphy.

No 17

Financial Matters

Resolved: to authorise the payments listed on the Schedule of Payments for May 2023 (VN 12-22 totalling £3571.15).

Resolved: to grant (Section 137 payment) £650.00 to enable them to undertake summer planting around the village and to purchase planters.

The meeting closed at 8.57pm.