

# Billinge Chapel End Parish Council

## DRAFT Minutes of Council Meeting held on 19 June 2023

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

### PUBLIC SESSION

*10 Members of the Public were in attendance.*

*The latest Crime Statistics had been supplied by PCSO James Harrison who gave his apologies. The statistics showed that, compared with last year, crime had reduced between 50-100%. PCSO Harrison's report also advised that speed checks had been carried out at three locations in Billinge and that 45 vehicles had been captured speeding. Speed Check locations were Main Street by Bankes Park, Newton Road by Royden Road and Birchley Road by Holt Avenue. The Clerk was asked to see if the Police could provide a breakdown between those captured speeding who lived in Billinge and those who did not.*

*Borough Cllrs Murphy and Peers were in attendance. Borough Cllr S Murphy advised that she had been approached by residents about their concerns relating to the licensing application that had been submitted by The Varini. This application would be decided by the Licensing Committee at St Helens Borough Council. The concerns that had been raised related to noise, increased traffic particularly taxis, and the proximity to residential property. She went on to say that St Helens Borough Council faced significant challenges and changes as their funding from Central Government had been reduced from £127 million in 2022/23 to £11 million in 2023/24. The Borough Council had decided to prioritise services to children in need, the elderly, and other vulnerable residents in the Borough.*

*Borough Cllr P Peers reported that St Helens Library Service were consulting on a Draft Library Strategy which proposed the closure of six libraries including Billinge Library. He advised that he was going to oppose the proposed closure. St Helens Council are holding a drop-in session in The Public Hall, 216 Main Street, Billinge on Monday 24 July 23 from 3pm-5pm and all welcome to drop-in to find out more about the draft Library Strategy proposals.*

*Members of the public representing The Varini advised that their proposals should not disturb local residents. Their plan was to provide an evening service with the intent that people could have tapas and wine in a licensed restaurant. It was not the same as a licensed public house. The Chair explained that the Parish Council were supportive of local businesses and recognised their importance in the local community but the Parish Council's role was to represent the local community. A number of local residents were concerned and so a letter detailing those concerns had been sent to the Licensing Committee.*

*3 members of the public left the meeting.*

*Members of the public then raised their concerns about flooding and the recently published Section 19 Report into the flooding that had occurred in December 2021. A detailed report (copy provided to Clerk/RFO) detailing the historic context for flooding in that area was read out and reference was made to the evidence that supported that report. It was reported that a video had been sent to St Helens Borough Council evidencing that the culverts were still not being properly maintained by Nugent Care Society. A number of criticisms were made of the report and, in particular, the long to-do list which lacked detail and timelines.*

*It was agreed to take the agenda item on flooding immediately after the apologies for absence and declarations of interest.*

*The Public Session closed at 8.30pm*

## **No 18**

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs C Betts and S Gardner and the reasons for absence were approved.

## **No 19**

### **Declarations of Interest**

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

## **No 20**

### **Flooding – S19 Investigation Report by St Helens Borough Council**

**Noted** the summary of the findings in the S19 Investigation Report by Borough Council Officers (M Catherall and S Cowan). The Officers advised that the Borough Council had to legally produce the report based on the circumstances of the flooding that occurred in December 2021 and, therefore, could not take

account of or refer to historical data/findings/etc in the report. They appreciated this was frustrating for local residents.

They reported that inspection measures had been put in place to monitor the culverts on Nugent Care Society owned land and evidence was being provided of the work done. Investment in improvements are being proposed by Nugent Care, however the Council cannot confirm or speak for the landowner at this time. The Council is guiding the landowners in aiding development with long term monitoring proposals.

They advised that fly-tipping had not helped the state of the culverts and asked for any instances to be reported to the appropriate authorities. St Helens were also in the process of identifying all the other relevant landowners and agreeing measures with them. They were also in contact with the relevant authorities such as the Environment Agency and United Utilities.

Local residents would be kept informed of measures taken to improve flood resilience and reduce risk. They understood that the Parish Council wanted to assure local residents that action was being taken to reduce the risks of future flooding events. They stressed that the Borough Council also saw the local residents as their priority.

Ward Councillors – C Betts, S Murphy and P Peers – would be the key method of communication between St Helens Officers and the residents.

Further studies are being planned; contacting all relevant landowners to inform their responsibilities was a priority; and applying for appropriate grant funding (managed by the Environment Agency) for capital only assets.

The residents have been placed on a property level resilience grant list, so when government grants (such as the ones undertaken in Storm Desmond/Eva in 2015) become available, we can put forward the properties.

It was recognised that the trust between Nugent Care Society and the residents had been badly affected and that it needed to be re-built.

**Resolved** that it would have been better if the Parish Council had been consulted (as representatives of the local community) before the S19 Report was taken to St Helens Council Cabinet Meeting for approval.

## **No 21**

### **The Varini License Application**

**Noted** that the Chair had written to the Licensing Committee at St Helens Borough Council outlining the concerns raised by local residents.

## **No 22**

### **Carr Mill Road Car Parking**

**Noted** response from Nugent Care Trust and welcomed the fact they were again directing staff to park in the school car park; had purchased additional entry fobs; and were scoping additional work to be done to the car park to improve both the surface and the access.

## **No 23**

### **Litter**

**Resolved** to write to St Helens Borough Council (who are responsible for Highways which includes pavements) requesting additional litter bins.

## **No 24**

### **Community Led Library Service**

**Noted** that Book Cycle had met with the representative of the Eddleston Trust and that the latter was going to talk with Trustees and get back to them as soon as possible.

**Noted** that St Helens Council were consulting on the Draft Library Strategy 2023- 2028 and would be holding a drop-in session at The Public Hall, 216 Main Street, Billinge on Monday 24 July 2023 from 3pm to 5pm for those who wanted to find out more about the proposals.

## **No 25**

### **Community Improvement Aims and Objectives 2023/24**

**Resolved** to adopt the following:

Dam Slacks – to identify a range of options and assess implications for further development of the land currently not used for the benefit of the community;

Defibrillator - to add an additional defibrillator in the middle of the village (noting one already in place at St Mary's School and another near the Eagle and Child);

Community Led Library Service -to continue to support Book Cycle in developing the service based on their experience at Orrell, Wigan and elsewhere in the UK;

Food Pantry - to continue to work with St Aidans Church and others as appropriate ; and

Community Events to continue to work with others on providing a range of events for the community and responding to national and other events as appropriate.

**Resolved** to set up a Working Group to develop options (including assessing the implications and feasibility) for the land currently not used at Dam Slacks. Cllrs Fiona Gill (Chair), B Bates (Vice Chair), Frank Gill, S Murphy and Malcolm Webster were appointed to the Working Group.

## **No 26**

### **Civility and Respect Pledge**

**Resolved** to adopt Dignity at Work Policy.

**Resolved** to sign the Civility and Respect Pledge which states that the Parish Council agrees to treat Councillors, Clerk, Employees and Members of the Public, representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their roles.

And that it has:

put in place a training programme for councillors and staff;

signed up to Code of Conduct for Councillors;

good governance arrangements in place including staff contracts and a dignity at work policy;

Will seek professional help at the early stages should civility and respect issues arise;

Will commit to calling out bullying and harassment if and when it happens;

Will continue to learn from best practices in the sector and aspire to be a role model/champion through, for example, attaining the Local Council

Award;

Supports the continued lobbying for change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.

**Noted** that Cllrs Fiona Gill and Malcolm Webster had attended training on being a Parish Councillor. It is also planned for Cllr Frank Gill to attend this training at a future date and that he and Cllr Webster were attending training on planning and finance. The Clerk and the Cleaner have done the training which means they are now both Fire Wardens for The Public Hall.

**Noted** that the Clerk will bring a report to the next meeting on what is needed and what is already in place to apply for the Local Council Award (Foundation Level).

## **No 27**

### **Policies and Procedures**

**Resolved** that the Clerk would report to the next Parish Council Meeting on the policies and procedures needed for 2023/24 and make recommendations for changes or otherwise.

## **No 28**

### **Financial Matters**

**Noted** that the Clerk had not joined the Merseyside Pension Fund and had been advised recently that this was still not an issue. She would report if this changed.

**Resolved** to authorise the payments listed on the Schedule (VN 23-34 totalling £3369.53)

**Resolved** to approve the change to VN17 to show that the payment was made to Trophy Shack Ltd rather than to Frank Gill.

**Noted** that the application had been submitted to Unity Trust Bank to add Cllr Fiona Gill (Chair) to the signatories and to those approved to authorise

payments on behalf of the Parish Council.

**Noted** that the St Helens Borough Council Community Improvement Fund will not be available in 2023/24. **Resolved** that the Clerk/RFO will bring a report on any implications for the Parish Council Budget 2023/24 to the next meeting.

**Noted** that the Public Right to Inspect Accounts 2022/23 had been advertised and was from 5 June 23 to 14 July 23. This notice and the AGAR have been published on the website and noticeboards. The AGAR 2022/23 has been submitted to the External Auditors.

## **No 29**

### **Fire Alarm**

**Noted** this had been installed and hall users have been advised about the implications. The Clerk will undertake monthly checks. She is also going to seek advice about the safest way to access the Assembly Point in the Millennium Garden and will report back.

## **No 30**

### **Planning Decisions**

**Noted** the following decisions:

P/2023/0183/FUL	Land to Rear of 111 Carr Mill Road	Approved
P/2023/0175/HHFP	18 Larch Close	Refused
P/2023/0175/TPO	6 Delph Meadow Gardens	Approved