

# Billinge Chapel End Parish Council

## Minutes of Council Meeting held on 17 July 2023

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

### **PUBLIC SESSION**

*Seven Members of the Public were in attendance.  
Merseyside Police were not present.*

*Borough Cllr S Murphy had given her apologies but asked that people sign the petition which was on Facebook against the proposed closure of the ticket office at Garswood Railway Station. It was understood that all ticket offices would be closed apart from the one at St Helens Railway Station. This would discriminate against those who did not have access to ICT and disadvantage the elderly and other vulnerable groups in the local area. She asked everyone to attend a meeting at the Garswood Railway Station on Monday 24 July 23.*

*The Clerk read out a statement from Borough Cllr P Peers (who had given his apologies) in which he expressed his thanks to all who had gone to Brownheath Avenue on 8 July 23 to help when the flood water had started rise and had got into people's gardens and outlined his continued concerns about the flooding risk and its impact on local residents.*

*Borough Cllr C Betts reported on a meeting that had been held on 31 June 23 bringing together the key organisations involved in delivery of S19 Report on Flooding. He outlined the improvements to culverts to be undertaken by Nugent Care Society over the next 12 weeks. Borough Cllr C Betts advised that he was keeping the affected local residents informed.*

*A member of the public raised his concerns about large trees opposite his house and the fact he believed they were dangerous. The Clerk was asked to look into this (including identifying*

*the owner of the trees) and to report back.*

*A resident (who is also a Fire Officer) outlined his concerns about how the flooding in December 2021 at Brownheath Avenue had not been handled properly by Merseyside Fire Service. He advised that he lived near the flooding but worked for a different Fire Service. He had been there on the night and made a number of observations about how the response from the Merseyside Fire Service could have been improved (he left the meeting at 8pm). Borough Cllr C Betts noted his comments and would pass them back to LLFA.*

*Residents from Brownheath Avenue then raised their continued concerns. The recent flood risk they had faced on 8 July 23 had been a reminder of the much more significant event that took place in December 21.*

*They highlighted the poor communication with them from Nugent Care Society and others. This left them feeling vulnerable and did not give them confidence.*

*Borough Cllr C Betts advised that there was a 12 week plan in action for improvements on Nugent Care Society land etc and that it would start to address many of the concerns raised by residents. He was also aware of the emerging issue of excess surface water in storm events flowing down Carr Mill Road and pooling behind Brownheath Avenue. He took on board the point about improving communication and would pick this up with the Borough Council and the other Ward Borough Councillors. He and the other Borough Councillors – S Murphy and P Peers – were now the main contact between affected residents and the Borough Councils/LLFA (who are responsible for implementing the recommendations in the S19 Report). He asked that members of the public contact them directly with any questions/concerns.*

*The Public Session closed at 8.25pm*

## **NO 31**

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J Barnes, S Murphy, and M Webster and the reasons for absence were approved.

## **NO 32**

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr B Bradbury declared interests as Governor at Nugent House School and at Chapel End Primary School.

## **No 33**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2023**

Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 June 2023 were approved.

Noted the verbal report on progress with the Action Log from the Clerk.

## **No 34**

### **FLOODING 8 JULY 2023**

**Noted** that properties on Brownheath Avenue were impacted in their gardens by surface water flooding on 8 July 2023 . The water did not enter any home.

**Resolved** to write to the Ward Borough Councillors on behalf of the residents asking them to advise St Helens Council/ Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) about this recent incident and asking them to fulfil their responsibilities as LLFA and raising the residents concerns about the need to improve communication about the action following publication of S19 Report.

**Resolved** that a Working Group (including representatives of at-risk households, the Parish Council, and the Borough Council) be set up to look at how to improve flood resilience at individual homes. Membership would be Borough Cllr C Betts and Parish Councillors Fiona Gil and S Gardner. The Clerk would liaise with the residents to agree who would represent them. The Clerk was also asked to contact Andy Ainsworth of The Flood Hub to see if he would be willing to join the group and/or advise the group. The Clerk would support the Working Group when and if needed.

## **No 35**

### **COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS 2023/24**

**35.1 Noted** that a poster listing the community improvement aims and objectives for 2023/24 agreed at the last meeting is being displayed on noticeboards and the website.

**35.2 Noted** that a Working Group has been set up to identify a range of options for the land currently no used at Dam Slacks and to assess them for further development and how they would improve facilities available to the local community. The Working Group will report back on progress to the September Parish Council Meeting.

**35.3 Noted** that in the discussions about flagpole that Parish Cllr Bill Bates advised that he has a flagpole which he is willing to gift to the Parish Council. **Resolved** ( after a vote in which all were in favour except for Parish Cllr S Gardner) to accept Cllr Bates offer and to only fly the Union Jack Flag which would mean Planning Permission was not required. The Clerk was asked to make arrangements to have the flagpole delivered to The Public Hall and to find a suitable place for it to be installed. She would report to the next Parish Council Meeting.

**35.4 Noted** that Billinge in Bloom had requested that the Parish Council give them permission to install planters on top of the stone walls at the front of The Public Hall. Billinge in Bloom would provide plants and maintain the planters. **Resolved** to approve subject to Billinge in Bloom checking if they need approval from St Helens Council as the wall is adjacent to the pavement; next to a vehicle access area; and on the current exit route in the event of a fire at The Public Hall and if they do, then providing evidence of approval to the Parish Council and if not, confirming that approval is not required.

**35.5 Noted** that a Member of the Public has asked if the Parish Council could look into why the presence of the Community Police Officer in the village has reduced significantly over the past months. The Parish Council understood this was because of the area he covered had been increased significantly. They had written at the time to seek assurances this would not reduce the service. **Resolved** that the Chair would write to Merseyside Police to ask for an increase, as far as possible, to the visibility of the Community Police Officer in the village. The Chair was also asked to take this opportunity to thank the PCSO for the road safety work he had recently done in Billinge.

## **No 36**

### **Withdrawal by St Helens Council of the Community Improvement Fund 2023/24**

**Resolved** that the Parish Council would want to identify ways to ensure that the Childrens Remembrance Service and the Christmas Tree at the Millennium Garden were not lost due the financial support provided historically by the St Helens Council Community Improvement Fund being withdrawn. The Clerk was asked to bring a report (having reviewed the Parish Council's Budget

2023/24) on options for a way forward that would ensure these valued community events could continue in 2023.

### **No 37**

#### **Parish Council Surgeries**

**Noted** that these were not being well attended.

**Resolved** to undertake a review of how and where these were being provided and report back to the Parish Council Meeting in September and in the meantime to cancel the Surgeries planned for July, August and September 2023.

### **No 38**

#### **Planning**

**38.1 Noted** that Parish Cllr M Webster had attended the recent briefing on Neighbourhood Planning but had had to give his apologies. The slides from the briefing he attended had been circulated to all Members. This matter would be on agenda for September Parish Council Meeting.

**38.2 Resolved** to not submit any observations on planning application:

P/2023/0402/FUL            Land at Sefton Fold Gardens, Billinge

Erection of 1No Bedroom Bungalow with associated garden, parking, means of enclosure and landscaping.

**38.3 Noted** that planning application P/2023/0291/HHFP - 62 Royden Road - had been granted approval.

### **No 39**

#### **Financial Matters**

**39.1 Resolved** to authorise the payments listed on the Schedule of Payments VN35-45 totalling £4,927.26 for July 23 and VN46-48 totalling £1944.68 for payment on 21 August 23.

**Noted** that salary payments for August 2023 are included in Schedule of Payments because the Parish Council does not meet in August.

**39.2 Noted** the budget monitoring report for the first quarter (April-June 2023).

**39.3 Noted** that Waterplus have advised why the payment (that was authorised by the Parish Council as VN3 for £234.40 on 17 April 2023) has not been taken by Direct Debit. As of 27/6/23 Waterplus advise that the account is in credit and therefore the invoice dated 29/3/23 was issued in error. The Clerk/RFO will record this on the Accounts for 2023/24.

#### **No 40**

##### **Health and Safety**

**Noted** the Clerk is still trying to get definitive expert guidance on the best route (for those evacuating the building in the event of a fire) to get to the assembly point in the Millennium Garden. In the meantime, she has been assured by the Parish Council's Health and Safety Advisor, that the existing route is satisfactory

**Resolved** that the Chair sign the attached Statement of Intent as advised in the Health and Safety Report 2022/23 and **noted** that the majority of the actions following the Workplace Safety Inspection have now been completed. The Clerk will bring a further report as soon as possible on the remaining actions.

The meeting closed at 9.26pm.