

Billinge Chapel End Parish Council

DRAFT Minutes of Council Meeting held on

15 January 2024

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)

PUBLIC SESSION

Five Members of the Public were present.

Merseyside Police were not present.

Borough Councillor P Peers advised that he was going to chase up Connor McGinn MP to meet with him and others and amongst other matters he would talk with him about the closure of the library.

Borough Councillor C Betts shared an update he had had on S19 Report undertaken by St Helens Borough Council (LLFA). He also advised that the proposal for raised kerb as part of flood mitigation had been passed to the Highways Department at St Helens Borough Council. He agreed to come back to the Parish Councillors with more details as soon as possible.

Members of the public expressed their continued frustration at the lack of communication between landowners, St Helens BC (LLFA), etc. They appreciated this was a matter for the Borough Councillors and asked those present to please progress their concerns as much as possible. The idea of setting up a community resilience working group was supported but would be much more effective if the 21 houses identified in the S19 report as being at risk could be identified. Borough Cllr Betts said he would try to get this information as far as possible within the constraints of GDPR.

The Public Session closed at 7.55pm

No 82

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr S Murphy and the reasons for absence were approved.

No 83

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

No 84

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 DECEMBER 2023

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2023 were approved.
Noted the verbal report on progress on the Action Log from the Clerk.

No 85

FOOTPATH ISSUES

Resolved to progress chase with St Helens Council.

Noted that the Clerk is going to renew her efforts to set up a meeting (in line with St Helens Council's latest strategy) between the Highways Authority, local residents and the Parish Council about various road safety issues in the Parish and would include footpath issues.

No 86

FLOODING

Noted the report from the Councillors who had attended the meeting with the local members of the community who had been affected by flooding. The representatives of the flood victims thought that setting up a community flood resilience group made sense. However, it would be more effective if it included the 21 homes identified as being at risk in Billinge by St Helens Council (LLFA).

Resolved

Borough Councillor Bett be asked to try to resolve the issues around GDPR which meant that St Helens Council would not supply the addresses and that he would chase up progress with installing kerbs.

No 86

BILLINGE MEDICAL PRACTICE

Noted that the latest inspection report had been published and that the Practice had been found to still be failing.

Noted that the Chair had attended a meeting at The Practice which had been called by the Practice Manager. The Practice advised that it had new owners; new doctors; and all non-clinical staff were now in post. The priority throughout this change had been to ensure patient safety. The goal was that in twelve months' time The Practice would be assessed as being "good".

Resolved to invite the Practice Manager to attend a Parish Council Meeting.

No 87

Community Improvements

Resolved that the Chair would write to the Billinge Arms to thank them for installing the defibrillator on an exterior wall and for supporting the community to raise the funds to match the grant and to pay for installation.

Noted that the Food Pantry at St Aidans Church was proving to be a valued and popular facility.

Noted that the Chair of Billinge Residents Association had advised that the proposal to develop a Wildflower Garden at the bottom of Dam Slacks Play Area would not pass a health and safety inspection. He had withdrawn his advice about it having a planning restriction. The Clerk would get an independent health and safety assessment and report back.

Noted work ongoing by the Parish Council's Events Coordinators on the "Best in Billinge" events with an emphasis on recognising good citizenship.

Noted that the Eddleston Trust had still not been in touch with Book Cycle. A report would be brought to next meeting.

Noted that the Parish Council would be 50years old in May 2024 and that a report would be brought to the next meeting on how this could be celebrated.

No 88

Planning

Noted that the application P/2023/0498/FUL for 50 Garswood Road for a change of use of property from residential dwelling (Class C3) to a Childrens Home (Class C2) for care of up to 4 children had been approved by St Helens

Borough Council (The Planning Authority).

No 89

Financial Matters

Budget and Precept 2024/25

Noted the recommendations from the Estimates Committee Meeting on 8 January 2024. The recommended budget for 2024/25 was prepared against the background of inflation increasing year on year whilst the Parish Council had not increased The Precept since 2019. The financial pressure has also been significantly compounded by the unforeseen withdrawal in 2023 by St Helens Borough Council of the CIF funding. For a number of years CIF funding had paid (for amongst other things) road closure for Childrens Remembrance Service and Millennium Garden Christmas Tree. One off grants and goodwill from residents had enabled the Parish Council to continue with these events as normal in 2023 but they needed to be budgeted for in 2024/25.

Resolved that the Budget for 2024/25 recommended by the Estimates Committee Meeting which included an increase to cover inflation at 4% was approved.

Resolved that the Precept for 2024/25 would increase to £54,665.00.

Resolved that the hall hire charges would be increased for 2024/25 by 4%.

Schedule of Payments

Resolved to authorise the payments listed on Schedule of Payments (VN102-113 totalling £4901.49) for January 2024.

Stone Wall Damage

Resolved that the Clerk /RFO (in consultation with Chair) order repairs to stone wall and concrete fence at Public Hall and stone wall at Dam Slacks. The Clerk would also submit an insurance claim for damage to wall at the Public Hall. The person driving the car that knocked down the wall had driven off without reporting it.

Resolved that the Clerk investigate the installation of video cameras (including costs) which would record damage as it occurred and would improve safety of hall users and employees.

The meeting closed at 8.47pm.