

# WINWICK

*Best Kept Village  
in Cheshire – 2000*

C/o Winwick Leisure Centre  
Myddleton Lane  
Winwick  
Warrington  
WA2 8LQ



# PARISH COUNCIL

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15 April 2019

**To: All Members of Winwick Parish Council**

Dear Councillor

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held at the Winwick Leisure Centre on Tuesday, 23 April 2019 at 7.30 pm.

Yours sincerely

Julian Joinson  
Clerk to the Parish Council

## AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Code of Conduct - Declarations of Interest**

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when the item is reached.

The Clerk is available prior to the meeting to give advice and/or to receive details of the interest and the item to which it relates.

Declarations are a personal matter for each Member to decide. The Clerk can advise on the Code and its interpretation, but the decision to declare, or not, is the responsibility of the individual Member based on the particular circumstances.

- 3. Minutes**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council held on 26 March 2019.

- 4. Updates on Issues from Previous Meeting(s)**
- 5. Question Time for Electors**
- 6. Written Motions Received**

**7. Police / Community Issues**

**8. Correspondence**

**9. Planning Matters**

Including Engagement of Consultant and Environmental Impact Assessment for Land at Peel Hall

**10. Finance Report**

**11. Reports from Parish Council Committees**

- Management Committee – 9 April 2019

**12. Recruitment of Footpath Wardens**

**13. Reports from Approved Outside Body Appointments**

- Rights of Way Forum (Councillor Matthews)

**14. Ward Reports / Updates**

- Houghton Green Ward  
(Councillors D Friend, G Friend, Matthews and Purnell)
- Peel Hall Ward  
(Councillors Emery, Gosney and Vobe)
- Winwick Ward  
(Councillors Gordon, Iddon and Mitchell)

**15. Date and Time of Next Meeting – Tuesday, 28 May 2019**

- Annual Parish Assembly - at 7.00pm
- Parish Council Annual Meeting 2019/20- at 7.30pm

**16. Chairman to move to Part 2**

**Part 2**

In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Council may, by resolution, exclude the public (and press) from the following part of the meeting on the basis that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution (including the need to receive or consider recommendations or advice from sources other than members, committees or sub-committees) and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings.

**17. Five Point Plan – Winwick Leisure Centre: Outline Business Case**

**18. Confidential Minute – 26 March 2019**

**Winwick Parish Council**  
**Minutes of a meeting held on 26 March 2019**

Present: Councillors Mitchell (Chair), D Friend, G Friend, S Gordon, P Gosney, A Iddon, M Matthews and C Vobe.

**WPC.149 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor S Emery.

**WPC.150 Code of Conduct – Declarations of Interest**

Councillor D Friend declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 13 – Sale/Lease of Land to Winwick CE Primary School, in the light of her membership of Warrington CE Educational Trust.

**WPC.151 Minutes**

Decision – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2019 be agreed and be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**WPC.152 Updates on Issues from Previous Meetings**

Members considered a schedule which outlined actions and referrals from previous meetings of the Council. A significant number of issues had been completed or were progressing well, although a number of items had not yet been commenced.

**WPC.153 Question Time for Electors**

Approximately nine residents were in attendance at the meeting and the following issues were raised:-

*Draft Local Plan 2017 – 2037*

A resident enquired why the Chair, who was also a Member of Warrington Borough Council, had voted in favour of the draft Local Plan at that Council's meeting on Monday 23 March 2019, as the Plan had included land at Peel Hall as developable land. A second resident enquired if the draft Local Plan would be available to the public – *Response:* The Chair indicated that she was not in favour of any development at Peel Hall. However, she had seen the legal advice provided to Warrington Borough Council on the matter from two barristers. Their conclusion was that the site was deliverable and that there were no barriers to its development. Following the recent appeal by Satnam to the Planning Inspectorate, the view of Mr Schofield, the Planning Inspector, was that the land was developable. Notwithstanding that comment, there remained significant issues for the developer to overcome. Accordingly, the Borough Council had classified the land as developable in its draft Local Plan. That Plan also included Green Belt land from across the Borough. Before any green belt land could be released for development, the Council was required to consider all other development land available, including brownfield and developable sites. To do otherwise would create an unsound Plan and a

consequence could be that the strategic planning function was removed from the Borough Council. Since Peel Hall was greenfield, not Green belt land, it was developable. The advantage of including Peel Hall in the Local Plan was that it allowed the Council a degree of control over the type of developments possible by attaching appropriate conditions to the site. If the site was not in the Plan any refusal of a planning application could be appealed against and the Council would potentially lose the appeal because of the lack of any conditions arising from the Local Plan. Tactically, including Peel Hall in the Local Plan was a more sensible position to adopt. For this reason, the Chair had agreed with the draft Local Plan as presented. It was noted that the draft Local Plan was now available on the Borough Council's website and had been approved to go out for consultation yesterday evening, although the formal consultation had not yet commenced.

### *Planning Conditions regarding Peel Hall*

A resident asked when the public could view the condition proposed to be attached to the development of the Peel Hall site – *Response:* The conditions had been published within the draft Local Plan (Policy MD4 - Land at Peel Hall – from page 200) and that document was available on Warrington Borough Council's website. For housing development to take place all of the infrastructure would need to be in place and any challenge to a refusal made on those grounds would be defensible. This linked back to Mr Schofield's finding that the land was developable.

### *Possible sale of Peel Hall to another Developer*

A resident suggested that Satnam might not wish to spend significant sums of money to meet stringent planning conditions and she enquired if Satnam could sell the site to another developer – *Response:* The owners of the site could sell it at any time if they so wished.

### *Upkeep of the Peel Hall Site*

A resident enquired if the Council had any enforcement powers to compel land owners to make a site respectable. Her concern was that a ranch-style fence had recently been erected by Satnam across the site where residents used to park their cars, but that fence had been constructed from wood which was part of the previous fence. Accordingly, the new fence was in a very poor condition and was unsightly. A second resident indicated that Councillor Vobe had agreed to look into the issue of possible adverse possession by the residents of Birch Avenue of this piece of land, but that no reply had yet been received. A highways officer had been out to the site and had made some comments about parking, but had not offered any constructive advice on the matter. Residents expressed concern that the fencing off of the site had been in response to their objections to the Peel Hall planning application and could be construed as bullying by the developer – *Response:* It was noted that there were some powers available to a planning authority regarding neglected land (under s.215 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990) and that there might be a requirement to seek planning consent for fencing, for example if the fence was over 1 metre high and next to a highway or its footpath. Councillor Vobe commented that he had referred the access issue to Warrington Borough Council and understood that someone from that authority would respond directly to residents. The Chair

added that the highways officer would only be concerned with whether the fence presented a danger to the highway, not the planning or access issues. Residents might benefit from some advice from Legal or Estates about the adverse possession issue. It was unfortunate that the highways officer's comments were not particularly helpful under the circumstances. Councillor Vobe acknowledged that there might have been a delay in the Borough Council responding to residents and that this was not limited to this particular enquiry. He accepted that residents might feel frustrated at the speed of response to Borough issues, but every effort was made to ensure that replies were made within a reasonable timeframe.

### *Adverse Possession of Land off Birch Avenue*

A resident acknowledged that Satnam could do as it pleased with its own land, but it was telling that restrictions on the use of their land by residents for car parking had only been imposed since residents had objected to the housing development. Residents had used the land for car parking since at least 1986 and had tended the site. Residents had previously submitted application forms to HM Land Registry, but those had been returned with instructions that the group should first seek appropriate legal advice. Residents were, therefore, seeking advice from the Parish Council – *Response:* It might be useful to provide evidence of the use of the land, such as photographic evidence. However, this Council could not intervene in, or use public funds for what was effectively a civil dispute between private land owners. It was suggested that residents try to use legal cover on their household insurance, make use of free community law services, such as those run by universities, approach the Citizens Advice Bureau, or even utilise crowd-funding. Manchester University was suggested as a possible source of community law assistance.

### *Advice from the Parish Council*

A resident enquired if the Parish Council could provide advice or funding in relation to a number of projects, as follows:-

- Could residents see the Counsels' advice provided to Warrington Borough Council about the Local Plan/Peel Hall issue, to ascertain the strength of that advice, or could residents engage an independent person to view the advice. – *Response:* The Chair indicated that the advice was privileged and could not be disclosed. However, she had read the advice and in her opinion it was very clear. Councillor Matthews indicated that notwithstanding the inclusion of Peel Hall in the draft Local Plan, the site remained difficult to build on. The Chair indicated that its inclusion in the Local Plan gave rise to a number of options. For example, Satnam had not yet carried out any significant work around the infrastructure measures that would be required to develop the site. It was possible that after such work had been carried out the site could be categorised as 'constrained' in the future, which might enable it to be removed from the Local Plan. Councillor Matthews added that if there had been no requirement in the Local Plan to use Green Belt land, an argument could have been made for the Peel Hall site to be categorised as Green Belt. However the level of housing need had not made that possible. The Chair indicated that strategic planners had built into the plan as much high density housing as practicable in the urban areas of town, thereby reducing the need for a

significant amount of Green Belt land. The housing densities were already higher than those suggested in the report commissioned by the Parish Council in conjunction with other northern parishes, produced by Blackfryers Planning Consultants. That said Peel Hall would remain at risk of development as long as there was a need for Green Belt land.

- Would the Parish Council be prepared to arrange a meeting between the Peel Hall Campaign Group and Peter Black (Blackfryers Planning Consultants) to discuss the future direction of the group – *Response:* Councillor Matthews indicated that he was due to meet with Mr Black tomorrow and would put the matter to him. The Planning Inspector's report had mentioned the need for developers to consult with residents. That process needed to be an open dialogue and Mr Black could assist in developing the community's response. Other councillors supported, in principle, the commissioning of further work by Mr Black and suggested that Croft, Culcheth, and Poulton-with Fearnhead be invited to participate and to contribute to the funding. The likely cost of using consultants was not yet known, but Ms Jones, Interim Finance Officer, indicated that she would check whether there was sufficient budget for the work upon receipt of a quote.
- Could the residents have assistance to look into the protection of the playing fields on Ballater Drive. It was understood that the land could not be sold unless provision was made to replace the playing fields on another site, as required by Sport England – *Response:* The land was currently owned by Homes England and leased to Warrington Borough Council. That lease would terminate upon any sale of the land. It would be a matter for Homes England as to whether they wished to sell the land. Councillor Vobe indicated that the issue of the playing field site had been raised at a recent meeting between parish councils and the Chief Executive and planning officers at Warrington Borough Council. Safeguarding the site would present a large obstacle to any development of Peel Hall. A response from the Borough Council on this matter was anticipated soon. Councillor Vobe undertook to chase up the reply if it was not received by the end of the week.

### *Delph Lane Traffic Management Scheme*

A resident asked about progress in relation to the Delph Lane traffic management scheme. It was understood that a local Farmer had objected to the proposed scheme – *Response:* Councillor Matthews indicated that he was due to visit the farmer shortly to discuss his concerns. Essentially he was concerned that he would be unable to pass the traffic build-outs in agricultural vehicles. It was anticipated that the road restrictions would still be wide enough to cater for farm vehicles, as a wagon and car could currently pass with care on that route.

### *Funding for Roads in respect of the Peel Hall Site*

A resident commented that Councillor Hans Mundry, Executive Member for Highways, Transportation and Public Realm, Warrington Borough Council, had indicated that the Council would not pay for the cost of highways infrastructure to support the development of the Peel Hall site – *Response:* It was noted that some criticism had been levelled from a number of borough councillors that the Peel Hall site was receiving preferential treatment to other potential development sites in the

south of the Borough and that not developing it would cause unnecessary loss of Green Belt land in south Warrington.

### *Timing of Future Planning Applications regarding Peel Hall*

A resident asked if the building of more properties in the south of the Borough would prevent Satnam from lodging a further application regarding Peel Hall – *Response:* The site was not included in the five year housing supply requirement. However, a developer could submit an application at any time.

### *Flooding on Hermitage Green Lane*

A resident commented that that Hermitage Brook frequently flooded across Hermitage Green Lane and that this situation might be worsened by the development of Phases 1 and 2 of the Parkside development and the construction of a new link road. It was envisaged that the surface drainage from those developments would all flow into Hermitage Brook, which was already under pressure. The land on both sides of the brook regularly flooded and had been made worse since the construction of a new culvert. The flooding frequently covered the main site of the Battle of Winwick Pass was killing the trees in that location – *Response:* The Chair provided an update on the Parkside development, as follows:- A decision on the planning application submitted regarding the development of Phase 1 at Parkside, which related to the industrial sheds to the south of the proposed link road, remained outstanding. A revised transport assessment had been submitted in December 2018, but this still did not meet all the necessary requirements. An objection from Warrington Borough Council was still being maintained. It was envisaged that Highways England, St Helens highways authority and Warrington highways authority would meet shortly with other interested parties to discuss the matter. Following the initial objection about the highways mitigation works on the A49, the developers were now using the Warrington traffic flow model and were discussing the proposals. It was understood that the culvert was the responsibility of the highways authority. The resident was advised to keep photographic evidence of any flooding incidents and to write to St Helens and Warrington Borough Councils. The performance of the culvert would need to be identified in any drainage modelling. The Chair undertook to raise the issue of the culvert with officers at Warrington Borough Council and Councillor Matthews undertook to visit the site.

### *Battle of Winwick Pass*

Local historian, Mr Richard Ward, reported that he had recently posted a video book of the Battle of Winwick pass on YouTube – *Response:* The Chair asked permission to post a link to the video page from the Council's website, which was granted by Mr Ward.

### *Lockerbie Close*

Ms Jones, Interim Finance Officer, reported that she had been approached by a resident of Lockerbie Close who was unable to attend the meeting. She wished to advise the Council about overgrown trees and damaged fencing on the footbridge in

Peel Hall Park – *Response*: Councillor Vobe indicated that he had previously been in touch with this resident and that he would take the matter on board.

Decision –

- (1) To note the questions and issues raised by residents.
- (2) To delegate to the Management Committee the power to approve the commissioning of consultants to carry out further work with the community in relation to the development of land at Peel Hall.

**WPC.154 Written Motions Received**

There were no written motions received on this occasion.

**WPC.155 Police / Community Issues**

Councillor G Friend indicated that he had received a verbal update from PCSO Jordan Burke, who was unable to attend this evening. Overall, the Peel Hall and Houghton Green Wards had been relatively quiet. Due to the introduction of a new combined records system across a number of police authorities, it was not currently possible to obtain figures on a ward level. It was also reported that PCSO Burke was due to take part in the 'Clean 19' event in the Radley Common area, which was reported elsewhere on the Agenda. The event was due to start at 9.15am on 11 April 2019 and refreshments would be provided. Councillor Vobe noted that the tidy up activities were not entirely within the boundary of Winwick Parish. Councillor D Friend reported that PCSO Burke was patrolling in the Orford Park area this evening.

**WPC.156 Summer Planting Scheme Request – Hermitage Green**

The Chair indicated that a written request had been received from a resident of Hermitage Green for a summer planting scheme at that location. The request had followed on from the debate at the last meeting about the potential siting of a notice board at Hermitage Green. The land was understood to be owned by the highways authority, Warrington Borough Council. Any use of the land would, therefore, require permission of the land owner. It would be possible for the Parish Council to agree, in principle, to the planting request. Councillor Iddon enquired whether the request related to flowers in the ground or in a raised planter. She concurred that the Borough's permission would be required and that there might be issues relating to insurance.

A member of the public was given permission to speak on this item and he recalled that at the meeting on 24 April 2018 it had been confirmed that the Borough Council would not allow construction on the highway. Even if flowers were planted in a flowerbed the raised height of the vegetation could cause visibility issues for traffic. The Chair suggested that daffodils in the ground might be an acceptable solution. However, the resident pointed out that that would have implications for cutting the grass on the Green. Councillor Matthews suggested that residents should contact the Borough Council to enquire if permission might be granted for planting on the

Green and then come back to the Parish with a viable proposal, which the Council could potentially fund. It was not known whether the request related to summer 2019 or to future years.

A resident queried the legality of the Council's decision at its last meeting in relation to the possible siting of a notice board at Hermitage Green, as no dedicated item regarding this had appeared on the agenda. The Chair responded that the decision taken had been 'in principle' only. The matter had been left with residents to come back to the Council with a workable proposal. A comment was made that it was hard to keep notice boards up to date. A second resident added that the information currently displayed in the Council's various notice boards was out of date and that the board in Winwick Park had been vandalised. It was suggested that the funding of additional notice boards was not logical, given that the Council would not fund the maintenance of an adopted phone box. The fact that the provisional decision on the notice board had been taken under 'Question Time for Electors' was challenged.

The Chair responded that no final decision had been taken as to providing a notice board at Hermitage Green and that it was for the residents to take away the matter and bring back a proposal to the Council. Councillor Matthews suggested that the Finance and Booking Officer be allocated the task of updating the Council's notice boards. It was noted that the relevant keys would need to be recovered and that these were currently held by Councillor Gordon and Iddon. It was believed that the key for the Houghton Green notice board had not yet been returned by former Councillor Williams following his resignation. Councillor G Friend undertook to seek the return of the key from Mr Williams.

Decision – To request the Clerk to write to the resident concerned regarding the planting proposal to suggest that this matter also be discussed by the Hermitage Green residents group which was looking at the notice board proposal, and that information should be provided to them about possible visibility issues and the need to obtain the consent of the Borough Council to any work carried out or structures sited on their land.

### **WPC.157 Correspondence**

The following items were reported:-

1. E-mails from Warrington Voluntary Action (WVA) about the availability of grants to community groups and other news, training and local events – 28/02/19, 07/03/19, 08/03/19, 13/03/19, 18/03/19 and 21/03/19
2. E-mail from Hermitage Green resident, CR, requesting that the Green be included in the summer planting scheme that the rest of the village benefited from – 05/03/19
3. E-mail from Hazel Catt, Branch Secretary, Cheshire Branch, Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), reminding members of the date of the next SLCC Cheshire Branch meeting on Wednesday 13 March at Lymm Village Hall starting at 11am – 07/03/19

4. E-mails from West Warrington Highways Team, about Traffic Management proposals in connection with the Burtonwood Road widening scheme, having effect between 11 and 22 March 2019 – 08/03/19, 19/03/19 and 21/03/19
5. E-mail from Kathleen Johnson, Chairwoman, Lane Head South Residents Group, inviting the Council to send a representative to a meeting of neighbouring residents groups and parish councils in order to liaise with each other and establish where there may be common ground in dealing with any development plans which may threaten the local area. The meeting would probably be on either the evening of 26 March, or morning of Saturday 30 March 2019, at 390 Newton Road, Lowton – 15/03/19
6. E-mail from Adam Graham, Principal Transport Planner, Warrington Borough Council, in connection with a consultation on the Draft Fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4), available to view at the following webpage:-  
<https://www.warrington.gov.uk/info/201080/streets-and-transport/2383/local-transport-plan> – 20/03/19
7. E-mails from Ruth Whitworth, CNRA Manager, Warrington Borough Council, inviting parish councillors to participate in a ‘Clean19’ event in the Radley area on 11 April 2019, in conjunction with local councillors, police, fire, Torus, and WBC departments. The project would be looking particularly at Radley Common and Grasmere Avenue and the streets to the left of the avenue. A planning meeting was due to be held on Friday 29 March 2019 at 10am at Warrington Fire Station on Winwick Road, at which participants were welcome to attend – 22/03/19

In connection with Item 5 - Lane Head South Residents Group, it was not known which of the two proposed dates the meeting was due to be held on. The first date clashed with this evening’s Council meeting. There was no Member available to attend on 30 March 2019.

In respect of Item 7 - ‘Clean 19’ Event, Members considered a detailed project plan for the day.

Decision – To note the correspondence submitted to the Parish Council.

## **WPC. 158 Planning Matters**

### *General Correspondence*

Nil

### *Domestic Planning Applications*

1. Application reference: 2019/34513  
Location: 7, Winwick Park Avenue, Winwick, Warrington, WA2 8XB  
Description of development: Householder. Proposed conversion of already converted double garage into habitable accommodation and store.

2. Application reference: 2019/34504  
Location: 380, Greenwood Crescent, Winwick, Warrington, WA2 0EF  
Description of development: Discharge of Condition - Application to discharge conditions 6 (Method Statement) on previously approved plan 2017/30890.
3. Application reference: 2019/34509  
Location: 7, Chesterton Drive, Winwick, Warrington, WA2 8XF  
Description of development: Lawful development certificate - Proposed demolition of existing conservatory and single storey rear extension.

*Non-Domestic Planning Applications*

4. Application reference: 2019/34605  
Location: Midhops Farm, Delph Lane, Winwick, Warrington, WA2 0TD  
Description of development: Agricultural - Steel framed agricultural building to be used as a produce and machinery store.
5. Application Reference: 2019/34624  
Location: 703 Winwick Road, Warrington, WA2 8QS  
Description of Development: Advertisement – retrospective application for signs.

Decision – To note the planning matters submitted to the Parish Council.

**WPC. 159 Finance Report**

Members considered a report of the Interim Finance Officer, on a number of financial issues. The report set out the financial position for February 2019 and the latest payments information. Ms Jones was in attendance to highlight key elements of the report.

Budget Review 2018/19

Members considered a detailed breakdown of profit and loss against the Council's Budget for the year to date. Overall the Leisure Centre had run at a loss of -£3.2k in February 2019 and was running at an overall loss of -£32k on the year to date. There had been £12.8k of other expenditure against the Parish Precept monies in February 2019. The sharp increase in Parish expenditure was caused by a number of invoices arriving at the same time, including elections work, grass cutting for two quarters and insurance payments.

In respect of the Leisure Centre, there had been a further dip in the bar takings in February, a loss of -£1.2k, and takings were projected to be slightly low in March 2019. The Centre continued to take a steady stream of bookings for parties that would help to bring levels back up for the new financial year.

The Centre Manager and Interim Finance Officer had been meeting to review cost saving ideas and options and the Management Committee had requested a full business plan. Alongside this there would be a comprehensive breakdown of expenditure and income for the Leisure Centre starting 1 April 2019 which would link

up, to ensure that all expenditure was shown. Its purpose was to provide assurance to councillors that all expenditure was being covered rather than being grouped into the room lettings. Staff costs had been reduced thanks to the Manager's new staffing policy, and options to reduce costs on the trade waste disposal and the cleaning contracts were being looked into.

With regards to the lettings side of the business, room bookings looked to be on the increase, despite a brief lull. A new rugby team would start to use the Centre on up to two nights per week, with matches being played on Saturdays. Members of the staff team were continuing their efforts to make improvements to the booking process and to increase lettings.

Councillor Iddon asked if the daytime lettings had dropped slightly. Ms Jones responded that there had been a drop early in February which had coincided with the school half term.

Councillor Matthews highlighted that expenditure on Entertainment (£6,285 year to date) was over budget by £2,948 year to date and that expenditure on Food and Buffets (£4,009 year to date) was over budget by £2,404 year to date. He indicated that attention needed to be paid to the cost of functions to ensure that the true costs, including cleaning up and buffet costs were covered. It was suggested that the Management Committee look into this further.

Issues of Note

The roof of the Centre would need to be repaired soon and quotes were being obtained and should be with the Finance Officer by Wednesday 27 March 2019. It was proposed to remove the tower and replace the flat roof. Councillor Iddon suggested that some refurbishment was also required to the doors and fire doors at the Centre.

Payments made since Management Committee Report presented on 12 March 2019

A list of payments since 12 March 2019 was presented, as follows:-

<b>Payee</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Sum</b>
<b>Direct Debits</b>		
B&M	-	£206.69
Payzone	-	£21.60
Lloyds	-	£64.19
<b>Bank Payments</b>		
PKF Littlejohn	-	£816.00
Bliss	-	£443.34
B Muflihi	-	£90.00
Concept Hygiene	-	£198.00
Drum BSS	-	£26.40
Service Care	-	£288.16
Wigan Beer	-	£1,189.77
Cheshire Pension	-	£970.24

Decision – To note the update report.

**WPC. 160 External Auditor’s Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2018**

Members considered the external auditor’s report and certificate attached detailing those matters from the limited assurance review for the year ended 31 March 2018. A number of issues had been identified by the external auditors in their report. The Clerk indicated that 2017/18 had been a challenging year for the Council in producing its draft statement of accounts, due to the departure of a long-serving Responsible Finance Officer on 10 February 2018 and the appointment of an Interim replacement. The Council had no in-house accountancy system and relied on the software used by the individual undertaking the RFO role. Accordingly, it had proved difficult to integrate figures from the accounts prior to and after the changeover date, which occurred at a critical time in the timetable for the closure of accounts. In addition, a priority for the incoming RFO had been to oversee the introduction of the Xero financial system within the Leisure Centre, to provide improved financial management and accounting facilities. Other financial procedures within the Leisure Centre had also been strengthened at that time.

Those factors had led to the formal draft statement of accounts being finalised in October 2018, after the normal statutory period for inspection of the accounts and other documents. Subsequently, the unaudited accounts were submitted for external audit. However the target date for publication of the final audited accounts on 30 September 2018 could not be met. A public notice to this effect was published on 25 October 2018. The final audited accounts were now presented for approval.

Decision –

- (1) To agreed the final statement of accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018.
- (2) To note the external auditor’s report and certificate attached detailing those matters from the limited assurance review for the year.
- (3) To request the Clerk to publish the Annual Governance Statement, Statement of Accounts and External Auditor’s Report and Certificate on the Council’s website, as soon as possible.
- (4) To refer the comments of the external auditors to the Management Committee for detailed consideration.

**WPC. 161 Sale/Lease of Land to Winwick CE Primary School**

The matter was deferred to Part 2 of the Agenda.

**WPC. 162 Reports from Parish Council Committees**

The Minutes of the Management Committee of 12 March 2019 were presented. Councillor Matthews commented that the Committee was working to compile a business plan for the Centre.

Decision – that the Minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee of 12 March 2019 be noted.

**WPC. 163 Reports from Approved Outside Body Appointments**

Rights of Way Forum

Councillor Matthews indicated that the next meeting of the Rights of Way Forum would be held on 7 April 2019. It might be useful for the Council to consider again the idea of Parish Wardens. Work was due to be undertaken on the Definitive Map for 2022. Wardens could help to identify what paths were in use, where paths had been deliberately blocked and the actual routes of some paths, where this was not in accordance with the map. A number of parishes already had wardens and it might be useful for Winwick also to recruit volunteers to this role.

Decision - To note the work to be undertaken on the Definitive Map and to request the Clerk place an item on the agenda for the next meeting of the Council about the possible recruitment of footpath wardens.

**WPC. 164 Ward Reports / Updates**

Houghton Green Ward

Councillor Matthews reported that the bus stop on Enfield Park Road had been vandalised and red tape had been applied to the structure. The Chair indicated that ordinarily vandalism to bus stops should be reported to Warrington Borough Council who would notify Clear Channel. However, the tape meant that it had already been reported.

Peel Hall Ward

Councillor Vobe indicated that he was continuing to liaise with residents about Peel Hall, liaison was on-going about youths on motorbikes on Grasmere Avenue involving PCSO Burke and a fly-tipping incident on Tyne Close had been reported to Warrington Borough Council who had quickly responded.

Winwick Ward

Councillor Iddon reported that the Myddleton Lane directional sign at the end of Delph Lane had disappeared. Councillor Matthews believed that the sign had been damaged during some recent road works.

**WPC. 165 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Decision – To note that the next meeting of the Council will take place on Tuesday 23 April 2019 at 7.30pm.

**WPC. 166 Exclusion of the Public (including the Press)**

Decision – That members of the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting by reasons of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the public interest in disclosing the information is outweighed by the need to keep the information confidential.

Councillor D Friend, having declared an interest in the following item, took no part in the debate or decision.

**WPC. 167 Sale/Lease of Land to Winwick CE Primary School**

The Committee considered a letter dated 12 March 2019 by surveyors acting on behalf of Winwick CE Primary School regarding the possible lease or purchase of an area of land on Myddleton Lane playing fields for use as a replacement car park to enable the existing car park to be transformed into an outdoor play area for the school.

Decision –

- (1) To agree, in principle, to the sale of land to Winwick CE Primary School, subject to the conditions set out confidential minute to this section and the agreement of terms.
- (2) To request the Clerk to carry out the actions set out in the confidential minute to this section.

(Further information is included in a confidential minute to this section)

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## **Winwick Parish - Management Committee 9 April 2019**

**Present:** Councillors Matthews (Chair) and Iddon

### **WPMC 57 Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence received.

### **WPMC 58 Code of Conduct - Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

### **WPMC 59 Minutes**

In respect of Minute WPMC52 – Action List, Clare Jones, Interim Finance Officer, reported that she was attempting to contact a contractor to attend to the central heating flue issue. On the matter of the playground equipment she had received a quote for the repairs from one playground contractor. However, she might be able to obtain a lower quote from a general maintenance company to carry out some of the non-specialist repairs, which could reduce the overall costs. The Chair reminded officers that the work needed to be completed before the Easter holidays when the playground equipment was more likely to be in use.

In connection with Minute WPMC53(A) – Quotes, further information on the roofing quotes would be provided at Agenda Item 5(1)(a). One quotes had been received for the flooring issue, but given the urgency of the roofing matter, priority was being given to that project.

Decision – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2019 be agreed as a correct record.

### **WPMC 60 Action List**

Members considered a schedule, which outlined actions and referrals from previous meetings.

Actions 1 and 2 – The playground equipment repairs were in hand, as reported above.

Action 3 – The Leisure Centre Manager had now produced some discount vouchers for coffee purchases.

Action 4 – The Playing Field boundary vegetation inspection should be deferred until the Committee meeting in May and be included as a formal Agenda Item.

Action 5 – Three draft logos were circulated for initial comments. Members

were not particularly impressed with any of the designs, although some preferences were expressed for designs 1 and 2.

Councillor Iddon suggested that work need to be undertaken to give the Centre a face-lift before its rebranding. The Chair indicated that a number of Members of the Council were concerned about the financial position of the Leisure Centre and its long term future. He indicated a strong desire to enhance the Committee's control over the operation of the Leisure Centre. In particular, it was felt that the decisions of the Committee were not being implemented at a sufficiently fast pace and that, as a result, the same issues were being reported time and time again. That assertion was supported by Councillor Iddon also. However, it was noted that the Leisure Centre Manager was performing well, given that it was not a full time post. Members remained concerned that the financial situation was not sustainable in the long term and the solution might be 'to think outside of the box'. If some tangible progress could be demonstrated, that would be a step in the right direction. The Chair commented that the Committee needed to harness some of the energy from the staff engagement day and also let the Manager manage, while the Committee kept a firm eye on the potential risks. Overall, it would be useful to:-

- Ensure that staff understood that the Committee was the de facto management body and that they worked for the Committee.
- Include some user representation on the management body, although care would need to be taken around the timing of this extension and the individual memberships.
- Ensure that the people who used the Centre fully paid for its services, such that it was not a burden on the Council Tax payer.

Councillor Iddon reiterated her point about the overall appearance of the Centre, which might be a hindrance when trying to compete with other similar community venues. It was noted that the Alder Root Golf Club was doing well with events and that younger people often attended. Members speculated as to whether the threat of closure of the Centre would rally more people to use the facilities. The Chair reiterated that new customers were required, existing customers might need to pay more and that overheads needed to be more rigorously controlled. There was a feeling that the Leisure Centre had lost its connection to the local community and that a user group, or co-optees serving on the Management Committee could help to re-establish that link. Councillor Iddon commented that local people who could promote the Centre to other residents would be invaluable.

A lack of ideas and innovation was holding back the Centre from achieving its maximum potential. For example, a small investment in tables and table cloths could provide an attractive space for coffee drinkers - a 'coffee corner'. However, there was a sense that staff did not always use their initiative and act. Councillor Iddon pointed out that there had been no notices in the notice board since Christmas.

It was suggested that some colour versions of the logo designs be developed

and submitted to the Council for further consideration.

Action 6 – It was agreed that no further action be taken in relation to the Council Tax Support Allowance.

*(Action to be deleted from log)*

Action 7 – The system of regular reporting of stocktake reports had not yet been introduced. Ms Jones would discuss this matter shortly with the Leisure Centre Manager. The Chair indicated that there might still be stock issues to resolve. He commented that stocktake reports should be fairly static. A good stocktake report should provide the baseline for the normal position, whereas a poor stocktake report might indicate some unauthorised loss of stock.

Action 8 – The confidential annex to the minutes of 8 January 2019 had been completed and approved by the Committee at its last meeting.

*(Action to be deleted from log)*

Action 9 – Reporting systems had been put in place for DWP Fraud and Error Service enquiries.

*(Action to be deleted from log)*

Action 10 – The back of the Leisure Centre had been cleaned with a hose pipe, but the front patio had not yet been jet washed. Ms Jones agreed to remind the Deputy Centre Manager. Councillor Iddon reported that the outdoor furniture also needed restoration. Re-varnishing was suggested. Some planters and weed killing were also recommended, as well as low maintenance border plants facing the playing fields. Members queried to what extent the gardener was given specific tasks to complete. Ms Jones responded that she had carried out a walk-around with him last summer. It was suggested that the gardener should be given some instruction upon each visit. The Chair reiterated the point that the Centre needed to look more welcoming.

Generally, it was noted that people had different visions for how the Leisure Centre could be improved. The current bar clientele were predominantly 'men drinking'. A broader appeal would be an advantage. However, that would be difficult to achieve in the light of cheap off-sales from supermarkets. Traditional pubs, like the Swan, could provide an improved offer because of their character. However, the Leisure Centre would never have the appearance of the Swan and must secure a different market. The site, overlooking the playing fields, was a distinct asset and parents watching their children play, or others watching outdoor activities, could be targeted.

Overall the Committee wished to exercise greater control over the operation of the Centre. In particular, Members would find it useful to receive financial projections for future events, such as the quiz nights and Easter Egg event.

Decision –

- (1) To note the schedule of actions and referrals from previous meetings and the verbal updates provided.
- (2) To request the Finance Officer/ Leisure Centre Manger to provide some colour versions of the logo designs for submission to the Council further consideration.
- (3) To request the Finance Officer to instruct the gardener to speak to Councillor Iddon prior to carrying out his work on each visit, to enable key tasks to be identified and discussed.

**WPMC 61 Non-Confidential Matters Raised in line with the Committee's Terms of Reference**

**(A) Community and Leisure Centre Performance Reports**

The Interim Finance Officer provided a report which showed the financial position at the Leisure Centre for March 2019, which represented the full year position subject to any adjustments required. Ms Jones, Interim Finance Officer, and Mr Morley, Leisure Centre Manager were in attendance to highlight key elements of the report.

Income Information

*Bar Takings Cumulative*

A graph was provided showing budgeted and actual bar takings as at March 2019. Based on a budget of £10k income expected each month, the bar takings for March ran at £1.2k under target (£3.4k under breakeven). The bar was £5.8k over target for the year to date, compared to £7k in February 2019. The Leisure Centre Manager had been looking into why certain days/evenings were low on income and was revising rotas and looking to fill gaps.

Events and room bookings for parties continued to be promoted to improve bar sales.

Analysis was ongoing for the percentage breakdown of bar sales by month and reports on figures from April 2019 onwards would have individual monthly targets for bar sales.

The Chair asked about the overall losses for the Leisure Centre for the year. Ms Jones did not have exact figures to hand, as those needed to be calculated manually. The Chair indicated that it would be difficult for him to continue to serve as Chair of the Committee without the Centre showing some sort of improvement. Mr Joinson, Clerk, reported that the figure for losses reported to Council on 26 March 2019 was £32k. However, the financial position had been stabilised, as the overall figure was similar to last year. Councillor Iddon suggested that the final outturn figure for the year would be

closer to £35k. Ms Jones commented that the Leisure Centre Manager was looking at cost savings and the fact that staff were currently opting out of the pension scheme would help the financial position. She reminded members that she was due to present the accounts in a revised format at the next meeting.

The Chairman outlined a five point plan for improvements at the Leisure Centre, as follows:-

- Charge existing users more;
- Attract new business inwards;
- Control costs;
- The Committee to have proper management control over the operation of the Centre (the Chair, Finance Officer and Leisure Centre Manager to meet the day after Committee meetings, if the Leisure Centre Manager was unable to attend the formal meeting);
- Establish a users group, with a carefully selected membership.

Mr Morley indicated that some of the above suggestions were already being implemented, including bringing in the rugby club to increase revenue for the hire of pitches and improve bar sales; new business could be secured by knocking on doors; a plan had been developed which could potentially make savings in the region of 20k, but some difficult decisions need to be taken; and regular meetings with the Committee and Finance Officer would be welcomed. It was noted that one long serving member of bar staff might be in the process of leaving shortly.

The Chair indicated that councillors representing those wards south of the M62 were growing increasingly reluctant to subsidise the Centre, which was predominantly used by those in the Winwick ward. Mr Morley asked if the Committee would be satisfied with a programme to reduce the deficit by around £5k each year until the Centre returned to profit. Members agreed that £5k was a realistic target.

Members asked if existing users were unhappy with the service offered by the Leisure Centre. Mr Morley indicated that users were happy, but that it would be useful to engage further with them. Ms Jones reminded members that prices had been raised last year and that care would need to be taken if increasing prices further. The Chair indicated that his main concern was that the price of buffets and room dressing needed to fully reflect the time and cost of set up, cleaning and waste disposal. There should be a sufficient mark up on those services to make them profitable. Mr Morley reminded Members that some venues did not charge at all for room hire in order to secure bookings and that the Centre would need to be competitive so as not to lose trade. Ms Jones commented that it should be possible to mark up the cost of buffets and the hire of a DJ without significant loss of trade. The Chair reminded Members that losses of £35k per annum were not sustainable. The sale of the Leisure Centre and Playing Fields land, for example, to a developer for community housing could eliminate any current and future liabilities. Councillor Iddon suggested that it would be very difficult for the

Centre to break even, although its financial health could be improved gradually.

### *Repairs and Maintenance*

Mr Morley reported that a jet wash machine had now been obtained and that the patio area could be cleaned. Of greater concern was the fact that the roof of the Leisure Centre continually leaked. The situation was very demoralising. It was noted that there was a repairs and maintenance budget and that this had not been fully spent in 2018/19. As at 26 March 2019 £3,652 had been spent from the budget of £6,000. However, there might be additional allocations to that heading since that date. Notwithstanding the above, a quote received for the roof replacement was significantly greater than that amount (over £80k). Mr Joinson indicated that the expenditure could be capitalised, so that it was paid over a period of say 10 years, which should be the lifespan of the asset. However, the Chair indicated that it would be difficult to justify extensive capital investment in a facility that was losing a significant amount of revenue each year.

Ms Jones indicated that alternative quotes had been received for repair of 44m<sup>2</sup> over the kitchen and recladding the tower, or slightly more for the same roof repairs but with removal of the tower (both quotes under £10k). It was noted that use of the 2019/20 repairs and maintenance budget for the roof repairs would leave nothing else for any further issues that arose during the year, such as toilets and till repairs. The Chair indicated that it would be important to communicate with users why money was being spent. The alternative, to close the Centre, would be a difficult decision politically. Councillor Iddon suggested that other Council priorities also need to be reviewed, such as the litter picker service. The Chair indicated that there were some improvements that could be made to that service, but essentially it was a parish-wide service from which all Council Tax payers benefited. The number of complaints about street tidiness had fallen significantly since the introduction of the service.

### *Cash Takings*

A table of cash takings for bar sales for the weeks commencing 25 February 2019 to 25 March 2019 was presented, together with a list of events which had taken place throughout the period. The table showed that bar sales were strong at weekends and for birthday parties, funerals, etc. Tea/coffee sales were not included in those figures. The green boxes highlighted where takings had been over the breakeven point for the day. A more detailed schedule, which included tea/coffee sales, room hire and ticket sales was also provided.

Members considered whether or not there was a case for closing the bar on Monday evenings. Mr Morley commented that that would be a difficult decision to take. Other clubs such as Newton Sports Club were closed on Monday to Wednesday. The Chair suggested a community focus for Monday evenings. Mr Morley suggested that a discount of the first four weeks at half

price could be employed to attract potential new users. Councillor Iddon commented that groups who were likely to utilise the bar should be targeted, as a number of existing groups hired rooms but did not make use of the bar after their sessions. The Chair suggested a 'Real Ale Mondays' theme. Mr Morley added that realistically Monday would be a slow day.

*Coffee Sales*

Regarding the coffee sales, as previously reported, to break even the Centre needed to sell 6 cups per day. A monthly breakdown of tea/coffee sales was provided, which showed consistent sales following initial growth. In March 2019, 11 cups per day had been sold, compared to 10.5 cups in February 2019.

*Room Lettings Cumulative*

A graph was provided showing budgeted and actual lettings income as at March 2019. Room lettings ran £0.4k under budget for March 2019 (£0.3k over breakeven). The year to date figure was running under budget by approximately £2k in total (£1.5k under in the previous month). However, the current year to date figure was £7.5k above the breakeven point. As reported under the Bar Takings sub-heading, work was on-going to promote the use of the Centre and if the website content was optimised and the marketing system began to deliver results, there should be an improvement in room hires. Ms Jones noted that a cheque had just been received today which would improve the current lettings financial position.

Payments Made

A list of payments made to 9 April 2019 was presented, as follows:-

<b>Payee</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Sum</b>
<b>Electronic Payments authorised on 1 April 2019</b>		
Bliss	-	£914.12
Maxigiene		£72.00
Styles		£192.00
P Healey		£471.00
Wigan Beer		£422.78
<b>Direct Debits paid on 1 April 2019</b>		
BT Group	-	£233.59
BNP Paribas	-	£266.84
WBC	Rates	£770.00
British Gas		£2,001.67

Weekly Room Information

The electronic booking system was now being utilised by all staff to enable room bookings to be taken over the bar.

Quotes

Quotes had been obtained or were being sought for the following projects:-

- Roof repair (as discussed under Repairs and Maintenance above);
- Playground equipment (as discussed under Minutes above); and
- Planning consultancy (see WMPC 62 below).

In respect of the planning consultancy quote, Peter Black (Blackfryers Consultants) had been approached directly, since he had already carried out work for the Council previously on this matter which was effectively being extended.

Items from Previous Agendas and Progress

As discussed earlier in the meeting, the new logo remained outstanding, but a number of draft designs had been provided.

Issues of Note

There were a number of staffing related items due to be discussed, which might need to be taken in Part 2 of the meeting.

Outline Business Plan for the Leisure Centre

Mr Morley provided a document which outlined some thoughts on the future of the Centre. The document included information on the staffing establishment, rotas, hours worked, sickness and the Council's duty of care. The proposals could potentially result in the Centre operating in the black by 2021. The core document was confidential and not in the public domain.

Mr Joinson confirmed that staff were not on contracted sick pay and would only be entitled to statutory sick pay.

Ms Jones commented that the advert for the Finance and Bookings Administrator post was now in the public domain. It was understood that the post might appeal to an existing member of staff. Accordingly, it might not be necessary to go through a full recruitment exercise. The Chair advised caution in that there was a risk of losing focus on lettings administration if the role was undertaken by an individual who also had responsibilities for the bar. However, there were some potential opportunities to utilise the administrator post to serve coffees before the bar staff came on shift.

Decision –

- (1) To note the update report.
- (2) To authorise the Leisure Centre Manager to experiment with the Centre's offer on Monday evenings to attempt to increase trade at that time.

- (3) To support, in principle, the outline business case provided and to request the officers to refine the document, to enable staff to be consulted on its content, subject to (4) below.
- (4) That a formal business case be provided to the Council for approval, prior to commencement of any consultation process and that the report be provided in Part 2 of the meeting, as necessary.

**WPMC 62 Possible engagement of Planning Consultants to advise the Council on the draft Local Plan**

Members were reminded that the Council, on 26 March 2019, had delegated to the Committee the power to determine whether to engage existing planning consultants to carry out further work on the draft Local Plan. Ms Jones commented that quotes had been received from Blackfryers Consultants, as follows:-

- Meeting with residents (1 day) £500 + VAT
- Produce report (1 day) £500 + VAT
- Meet Warrington Borough Council planners ( $\frac{1}{2}$  day) £250 + VAT

The Chair indicated that it was anticipated that Poulton-with-Fearnhead would contribute 50% of the costs. Councilor Gosney should be in a position to confirm that council's offer.

Decision – To agree to commission the first day of work from Blackfryers Consultants, i.e. meeting with residents, subject to ratification by full Council and to Poulton-with-Fearnhead agreeing to pay half of the costs.

**WPMC 63 Review of Issues Arising from the External Auditors report for the Year Ended 31 March 2018**

Ms Jones commented that she was in the process of typing up some notes regarding the external audit.

Decision – To authorise Ms Jones and Mr Joinson to liaise to provide a response to the auditors' observations on the final annual accounts 2017/18.

**WPMC 64 Exclusion of the Public (including the Press)**

Decision – That members of the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting by reasons of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the public interest in disclosing the information is outweighed by the need to keep the information confidential.

**WPMC 65 Minutes - Confidential Annex**

The Committee considered a Confidential Annex to the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2019.

Decision – To approve the Confidential Annex to the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2019, as now presented.

**WPMC 66 Confidential Matters in line with the Committee's Terms of Reference**

**(A) Community and Leisure Centre Performance Reports**

There were no matters raised under this heading.

**(B) Employee Matters**

Members reviewed the issues identified in the confidential minute above to assess whether the Manager's and Committee's actions had been appropriate and proportionate under the circumstances.

Decision – To note the staffing matters reported as set out in the confidential Annex to this Minute.

(Further information is included in a confidential minute to this section.)