

WINWICK

*Best Kept Village
in Cheshire – 2000*

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



PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council:
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21 April 2021

To: All Members of Winwick Parish Council

Dear Councillor

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be a virtual meeting held on Tuesday, 27 April 2021 at 7.30 pm, or on the rising of the Annual Parish Assembly (whichever is the later). The meeting will be held using the Zoom meeting and conference platform and joining instructions will be sent to councillors under separate cover.

Members of the public may view the meeting on You Tube using the following link:-

<https://youtu.be/51QhqrDkPkQ>

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 23 March 2021.

- 4. Updates on Issues from Previous Meetings**

5. Question Time for Electors

Due to the limitations of the virtual meeting format, it will not be possible to raise a question orally at the meeting on this occasion.

Written questions from electors may be submitted to the Clerk using the following e-mail address jjoinson.winwickclerk@outlook.com, and must be received by no later than 5pm on Friday 23 April 2020. A maximum of 4 questions will be allowed at each meeting taken on a first come, first served basis, with excess questions carried forward to the next meeting. The questions will be put to the meeting at the discretion of the Chair, having regard to their relevance to the business of the Council. Questions put, but not answered at the meeting, will receive a written response within 10 working days.

6. Written Motions Received

7. Police / Community Issues

8. Correspondence

9. Planning Matters

10. Finance Officer's Report (*circulated under separate cover*)

11. The Person Centre – Request for Funding

12. Reports from Parish Council Committees

- Management Committee – 20 March 2021 (*to follow*)

13. Ward Reports / Updates

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

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting

- Parish Council Annual Meeting - Tuesday, 18 May 2021 at 7.30pm

15. 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.

16. Finance Officer's Report – Confidential Matters

Winwick Parish Council
Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 March 2021

(The meeting was held virtually on Zoom and streamed live via YouTube)

Present: Councillors G Friend (Acting Chair in the Chair), T Collins, D Friend, A Iddon, and C Vobe.

WPC.156 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors C Mitchell (Chair), and M Matthews (Deputy Chair).

Julian Joinson, Clerk to the Council, reported that Councillor Russ Purnell had resigned from the Council with effect from 23 March 2021.

WPC.157 Code of Conduct - Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

WPC.158 Minutes

Councillor Vobe referred to the Public Question submitted in relation to the litter picker service. Members had heard about which roads the litter picker could not pick. He asked if any conclusion had been reached in relation to those stretches of highway. The Clerk responded that no formal resolution had been made by the Council. However, Councillor Matthews had subsequently been in touch with the volunteers' Litter Network to understand their needs. There was some discussion around the Police being able to provide a rolling road block, when volunteers were picking the roads that were not suitable for the Council's litter picker to tidy. Councillor Iddon confirmed that Delph Lane by B&Q had recently been picked in this way.

Decision – That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 23 February 2021 be agreed and be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

WPC.159 Updates on Issues from Previous Meetings

Members considered a schedule which outlined actions and referrals from previous meetings of the Council. Most items were progressing to target and the list had been reduced somewhat.

Clare Jones, Operations and Finance Officer, reported that Actions 8 (Planting Contract), 12 (Amendments to Financial Regulations) and 13 (Resubmission of Financial Regulations) had now been completed. It was reported that some existing winter/spring colour was being maintained in the planters prior to the summer planting taking place.

Decision – To note the position regarding updates from previous meetings.

WPC.160 Question Time for Electors

A process for the submission of written questions had been established for use in conjunction with virtual Council meetings.

The Clerk reported that one resident had submitted a question for the last meeting which had, unfortunately, missed the deadline and not been picked up in time to be raised at the meeting. However, the question related to a matter which had appeared on the agenda for that meeting (Winwick School and Community Improvement Plan) and had been discussed fully in Part 2 of the meeting. The Clerk had subsequently written to the resident to summarise the Council's discussions, which had included similar concerns to those raised by the resident, and to outline the decision, which was to agree the proposals in principle, subject to further discussions with the school.

The Question was provided to councillors and is reproduced below:

1) Question by resident JH

"Apologies for the lateness of this question, if there are no others I hope you will still consider it for this month's meeting.

Could the council advise if they have had any discussions with the school regarding their new planning application?

While I accept this is an application that in no way involves the council the gates that will block the entrance at certain times of the day will directly affect the leisure centre and the businesses using it, the nursery for example.

Will the leisure have any control over the gates? If not how are they to be opened in the case of an emergency, ambulance or fire for instance? If they are accidentally locked at night or on weekends how are they to be opened?

I have already commented to the borough on the planning page with my concerns, but it would be good to know what the councils thought are on this matter and how it will affect the Parish."

Response: Ms Jones reported that the Community and Leisure Centre Manager had made further enquiries about the issue of the barrier and had been informed by the school caretaker that the Centre would be provided with a key.

Councillors reiterated some of their concerns made at the last meeting, including:-

- The need to be clear on the details with the school;
- Possible disruption to business, if the barrier was closed in the afternoon;
- Greater concerns around disruption to business in the morning;
- A query about any police objections due to possible traffic congestion – However, it was more likely that any such objection would be lodged by the highway authority (Warrington Borough Council) during the planning process.

- Closure by barrier versus the Council's right of access via its wayleave agreement.
- Proposed increased charges for the right of way. This proposal would, however, release the Council from its obligations to pay half of the maintenance cost of the access road.
- Concerns about the Council's proposal to dispose of the land at less than the full market value. The Council needed to carefully balance its own interests with the objective of collaborating with other public bodies for the greater good of the area. However, there was a view expressed that even if the land had little value, it should not be given away without the necessary cost benefit analysis being undertaken.
- Potential threats to the Council's business model for the Centre caused by Phase 3 of the School's proposal.
- On-going concerns about the operation of the proposed barrier.
- Discussions would be needed between the Operations and Finance Officer and the school's architects to ensure that the proposed car park was not too close to the children's play areas or pitches.

No meeting had taken place with the School's representatives since the Council meeting in February 2021. However, the Council had placed on record its significant concerns about the barrier system. Further discussions with the School would need to be held going forward.

Decision – To note the question submitted by resident JH and the points raised during the above debate and that a written response had already been provided.

WPC.161 Written Motions Received

There were no written motions received on this occasion.

WPC.162 Police / Community Issues

An update had been circulated by e-mail from PCSO Neil Brown (Winwick Ward) for February/March 2021 and a report was provided from Anna-Maria McGreal (Peel Hall/Houghton Green Wards) for February 2021.

Winwick Ward

- There had been an increase of suspicious activity in the Rectory Lane area, PCSO Brown and PC Dadswell had been making enquiries.
- Reports had been received of suspicious activity around Winwick Primary School, but upon further investigation it was found to be nothing too untoward.
- PC Dadswell had helped with traffic management during the litter pick on Delph Lane.
- One vehicle had been given an advisory notice due to blocking a footpath.
- PCSO Brown had sent e-mails to the School to keep in contact over the month.
- PCSO Brown had submitted intelligence about off- road bikes in the Winwick area especially around the Myddleton Lane area,

- PCSO Brown had been involved in numerous missing people enquiries around the Sankey valley area.
- There had been nothing significant of note this month, but things were slowly returning to normal. PCSO Brown had been deployed by the relevant sergeants to carry out numerous tasks around the Bewsey and Dallam areas this month, due to on-going issues there which needed to be resolved.

The report also contained information specific to Burtonwood and Westbrook Parish which is not recorded in these minutes.

Peel Hall/Houghton Green Wards

In total, there had been 240 incidents recorded across the Borough Council's Poplars and Hulme Ward, which included the Parish's Peel Hall Ward. Incident and repeat locations included the following:-

Crime

- Neighbour Disputes
- Covid Breaches
- Traffic Offences – Winwick Road
- Reports of online fraud/scams

ASB/Incidents of note

- Reports of ASB involving scrambler bikes in the area.

Other Matters

February 2021 had been considered to be a busy month:-

- A new beat manager for the area had been appointed, PC Sophie Berry.
- TruCAM had been done on both Poplars Avenue and Blackbrook Avenue; Officers had caught several motorists exceeding the speed limit.
- Officers had been tackling the on-going parking issues on the junction of Statham Avenue/Poplars Avenue. The issue related to causing an unnecessary obstruction by parking within 10 meters of a junction. Several advisory notices had been issued. The next step was to issue fixed penalty notices to any vehicles parking on this junction.
- PCSO McGreal and PCSO Paulo had been out on Mill Lane delivering letters to residents regarding joining a neighbourhood watch. A response from the parish council was sought.
- Officers had been in contact with local primary schools St Stephens and St Andrews (close to the periphery of the Parish) to deliver the 'Whilst you are at home' PowerPoint presentation.

A pie-chart was included in the report, which showed the percentages of each type of crime recorded. The report also contained some information specific to areas of Poplars and Hulme Ward outside of Winwick, which is not recorded in these minutes.

Decision – To note the reports on police and community issues submitted.

WPC.163 Correspondence

General 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 – 24/02/21, 04/03/21, 09/03/21, 15/03/21 and 18/03/21
2. E-mails and reminders from Sharon Angus-Crawshaw, Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC), about various training events; and enclosing bulletins highlighting relevant parish news for the weeks ending 26 February and 5 and 12 March 2021 – 26/02/21 (x2), 01/03/21, 02/03/21, 04/03/21, 05/03/21 and 12/03/21 (x2)
3. Electronic enquiry form submission by Warrington resident, GH, asking about the possibility of metal detecting on Council land – 24/02/21
4. E-mail from Theresa Whitfield, Head of Strategic Support & Coordination, Warrington Borough Council, about a consultation with the public and stakeholders on a proposal to re-introduce a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for Warrington. This, if made, would allow the Council to continue a range of measures to address anti-social behaviour issues (which could be linked to the use of alcohol) and help maintain public spaces in this area. The consultation had commenced and would run for 4 weeks, closing at 5pm on Wednesday, 24th March 2021 – 26/02/21
5. E-mail from Peter Hanlon, Census Engagement Manager (Warrington & St Helens), Office for National Statistics, reminding the Council of the date of the Census (21 March 2021) and offering support and informational materials – 01/03/21
6. E-mails from Rebecca Lee, Legal Support Officer, Warrington Borough Council, about various Traffic Regulation Notices (along with any statements of reasons and plans, as necessary), due to be advertised in the Warrington Guardian on Thursday 4 and 11 March 2021 – 02/03/21 (x2) and 10/03/21
7. E-mail from Katie Halliwell, Democratic Services Officer, Warrington Borough Council, providing access to purdah guidance applicable during the pre-election period – 09/03/21
8. Electronic enquiry form submission by Winwick resident, SA, enquiring about the reasons for the Parish Precept increase and complaining about the condition of Peel Hall Park – 11/03/21

9. E-mail from Lisa Farmer, Royal British Legion Industries, about support for the VE Day Remembrance on 8 May 2021 and promoting the purchase and display of the RBL's Tommys – 15/03/21
10. E-mail from Mike Pope, Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer, Croft Parish Council, enquiring if any parish councils are aware of permanent signs erected adjacent to the highway to deter fly tipping and under what arrangements – 18/03/21
11. Various promotional e-mails and mailshots for goods or services linked to typical parish activities or community services from the following organisations:-
 - GoCompare – website links regarding winter preparedness of householders
 - Healthmatic – automatic footfall, vehicle and bicycle counters
 - Kompan – outdoor play and fitness equipment and inspection and repairs.
 - myparishcouncil.co.uk – website design
 - Playsource - outdoor play and fitness equipment and repairs
 - Snow innovations – business and finance software supplier
12. E-mail on behalf of David Keane, Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire and Darren Martland, Chief Constable, Cheshire Constabulary, enclosing the latest stakeholder update – 16/03/21
13. E-mail from a resident, AO, in connection with a lack of 20mph speed limit signage on Waterworks Lane – 21/03/21

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

WPC.164 Planning Matters

The following planning applications and correspondence had been received:

General Correspondence

1. Update dated 21 February 2021 from Peter Black, Blackfryers Consultants, on the Peel Hall Inquiry:-
 - Because the appellant (Satnam) had not prepared their traffic evidence properly, Satnam had been given a significant amount of extra time to run additional traffic models and as a result the Public Inquiry had been adjourned after hearing the majority of the evidence.
 - The Inquiry was still on course to resume on Tuesday 9 March 2021 and would hear transport and planning evidence.
 - Save Peel Hall were also intending to raise flooding and drainage again given the recent flooding events in Warrington.
 - Warrington Borough Council was maintaining its objection on highway grounds, at least for the time being.

- Save Peel Hall had put a huge amount of time and effort into preparing and presenting their case, which they had done in a professional and persuasive fashion despite the difficulties of doing this on-line.

Domestic Planning Applications

2. Application reference: 2021/38779
Location: 38, Myddleton Lane, Winwick, Warrington, WA2 8NJ
Description of development: Lawful Development Certificate - Proposed Dormer
3. Application reference: 2021/38862
Location: 1, Waterworks House, Delph Lane, Warrington, WA2 0RF
Description of development: Householder - Proposed two storey rear extension
4. Application reference: 2021/38861
Location: 8, Spires Gardens, Winwick, Warrington, WA2 8WB
Description of development: Householder-Proposed single storey to side and new drive and off-road parking, reinstating a previous garage conversion from habitable back to garage.
5. Application reference: 2021/38989
Location: Rock Cottage, Newton Road, Winwick, Warrington, WA2 8SA
Description of development : TPO - T1 Oak situated to the rear of the property, crown reduce height and spread by 1-2 metres providing clearance from Rock Cottage, Leaving a balanced crown and to allow more light to Rock Cottage and Oak House.

Non-Domestic Planning Applications

6. Application reference: 2021/38708
Location: Carshop, Calver Park Road, Winwick, Warrington, WA2 8JH
Description of development: Full Planning (Major) - Proposed portal framed building for vehicle preparation, finishing and photozone building
7. Application reference: 2020/37672
Location: 4, Birch Avenue, Winwick, Warrington, WA2 9TN
Description of development: Full Planning - Part retrospective garage conversion into Hair Salon with associated works
8. Application reference: 2021/38791
Location: Land Adjacent To Winwick Road, Warrington
Description of development: Agricultural Prior Approval - Proposed Grain Store

In respect of Item 1, Peel Hall Inquiry, Councillor Vobe reported that Peter Black's comments on the progress made at the latest planning inquiry had been extremely well put. Attendees had come away for the inquiry feeling more confident about the evidence put forward and it was felt that the Borough Council's barrister had done a better job on this occasion. An argument had been raised that the site was both undevelopable and undeliverable. Councillor Vobe felt this argument should have

been raised much sooner in the planning process, but had now been put effectively. The concerns that residents had brought to this Council appeared now to have been appropriately aired and registered at the inquiry.

The Acting Chair added that he and Councillor Diana Friend, between them, had attended the whole inquiry. It was reported that the input from Poulton with Fearnhead Parish Council had also been supportive of residents' views.

In connection with application 7 above, Birch Avenue, Councillor Iddon reported that this site had been the subject of complaint about parking activity. She enquired if the highways authority had lodged any comments. This was not currently known, but should be ascertainable from the planning portal on the Borough Council's website.

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

WPC.165 Finance Officer's Report

Members considered a report of Clare Jones, Operations and Finance Officer, on a number of financial issues as at February 2021, details of which are set out below. The report included a detailed profit and loss statement for the Leisure Centre, an income and expenditure statement for the Parish Council as a whole and the updated Financial Regulations.

Budget Review 2020/21

In February 2021, the Council had received £8.7k of income through the Community and Leisure Centre, including £5.1k of furlough monies. This put the Centre at a profit of £3k for February, with the year to date showing a £30.2k loss.

Further furlough claims were being processed weekly.

The Council had been approved for the Community Centre Closures Grant for November (£2k received on 5 March) and this qualified the Council for the follow-on grants for the December restrictions and January-March closure, totalling £12,500.14, due for receipt around 18 March 2021. This had not been confirmed at the time of setting the precept and initially it was looking like £2k of grants only would be available. It was due to the additional closures that the amount now anticipated was much larger.

Ms Jones commented that the additional grant income would help to further ease the current cashflow difficulties being experienced. Outstanding payments to a number of suppliers had already been cleared as a consequence. The additional grant income would help to reduce the year end deficit for the Centre to around £18k-£19k, which was a significant improvement on the £30.2k loss reported in the Budget Review papers for February 2021.

The authority had incurred £5.6k of precept expenditure in February with £89.7k of expenditure on the year to date.

Work was on-going to bring in outstanding credit accounts for room hire and to clear

outstanding suppliers. Further details of both debtors and suppliers due were available in the Agenda papers for Part 2 of the meeting, due to data protection and commercial sensitivity issues.

Review of Financial Regulations

Members considered a revised version of the Council's Financial Regulations, which incorporated the amendment made at the last meeting.

Councillor Iddon asked whether officers would be allowed to sign cheques and make electronic payments without Member involvement. Ms Jones reported that this had been included as a backstop measure for emergency use. The Operations and Finance Officer could sign as a matter of routine, but a third staff member could only sign if no elected Member was available and the prior approval of the Chair or Deputy Chair had been obtained. Councillor Iddon expressed some remaining reservations about this change, but accepted that the facility would only be used in limited circumstances.

Decision –

- (1) To note the Finance Officer's update report, including the Budget Review 2020/21 and revised Financial Regulations.
- (2) To approve the revised Financial Regulations as now presented, incorporating the amendments agreed at the meeting held on 23 February 2021.

WPC.166 Litter Service

The Clerk reported that there were three elements to consider under this Agenda heading :-

- Report of the Winwick Litter Network (first month's activities);
- Five questions arising from Councillor Matthews' recent engagement with the Network;
- A request submitted [by GM] for a bag-drop area to be created at the Community and Leisure Centre, to support individuals picking with 2 or 3 bags returned.

In respect of Bullet 2 above, Mr Joinson provided a summary of the requests/issues raised, as follows:-

- Permission to hold a community meeting at the Centre in June to facilitate a meeting of the Network;
- How to further develop a closer working relationship with the Council's paid-for litter service;
- Assistance with identifying the land owners in the area subject to fly tipping at Hermitage Green.
- Assistance from the Council's litter picker in disposing of some of the heavier items (tyres, etc) from Hermitage Green, if volunteers could retrieve them.

- Funding received for infra-red wildlife cameras to install at fly-tipping hot spots. The Network had been advised to work closely with the Borough Council, as there would be implications around signage and use of evidence collected.

Members discussed the following matters:-

- Advice to the public not to post CCTV footage of fly tipping on Facebook, as this could taint any future criminal prosecution;
- A query as to whether there was a need at all for a paid litter picker service;
- A hope that the Network's enthusiasm would continue after lockdown had ended;
- The need to revise the litter picker's schedule to delete those roads which he could not pick for safety reasons; and
- A query about whether informal road closures using Police resources would be sustainable in the longer term.

The Operations and Finance Officer indicated that she was looking into an appropriate location for casual litter bag drops and would contact the enquirer [GM]. A cage receptacle might be suitable, but the facility would need to be such that it did not attract cats, vermin or other wildlife.

Decision – To note the litter issues reported.

WPC.167 Reports from Outside Bodies

Members considered a report of the Clerk regarding the Parish Council Liaison Meeting held on 11 February 2021 hosted by Warrington Borough Council. The report provided an outline of the main discussion points, which were as follows:-

- Introduction by the Solicitor to the Council;
- Minutes of 12 November 2020;
- Comments from the Chief Executive, Warrington Borough Council;
- Update from the Electoral Services Manager;
- Local Plan Update from the Planning Policy and Programme Manager;
- Update from the Development Manager;
- Update from the Director of Public Health;
- Budget and Precept Setting Update from the Senior Accountant (Closure); and
- Update from the Executive Director of Environment and Transport

Decision – To note the update on outside bodies.

WPC.168 Reports from Parish Council Committees

The minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee of 9 February and the Management Committee's informal meeting of 9 March 2021 were provided. The meeting on 9 February had been adjourned part way through due to loss of connection by the Clerk and had been reconvened on 23 February. An informal

meeting had been held in March, due to the failure of the livestream facility. Accordingly, any urgent actions from that meeting would require ratification tonight.

Ms Jones reported that the approval had been granted at the meeting on 9 March to the advertisement of cover for her post on a temporary basis due to maternity leave. Several responses had been received across a spectrum of suitability. A request was made for councillor to serve on the interview committee.

Councillor Vobe asked if the interviews could be conducted virtually. Councillor Collins suggested that shortlisting need not involve face to face meetings. Ms Jones responded that shortlisting had been undertaken from the cvs only using a matrix approach, with 5 candidates selected and a back-up list of 6 applicants. The interviews would need to be undertaken quickly to allow sufficient time for any induction to take place.

Decision –

- (1) To note minutes of the Management Committee of 9 February 2021 and the minutes of the informal meeting held on 9 March 2021.
- (2) To note the actions carried out by the Operations and Finance Officer to advertise for maternity cover for her post and to shortlist applicants.

WPC.169 Ward Reports / Updates

Houghton Green Ward

There were no issues reported on this occasion.

Peel Hall Ward

Councillor Collins noted the comment in the report from PSCO Anna-Maria McGreal about traffic calming on Blackbrook Avenue. He expressed a desire to be involved in any future such exercises after the elections. The behaviour of certain motorists presented a danger to cyclists and children attending the nearby school. The Council should keep a close eye on developments on this matter.

Winwick Ward

Councillor Iddon reported that United Utilities were currently dealing with a significant leak from the water main onto the footpath close to Rectory Lane. The main had now been tapped off. Any complaints were likely to be directed towards Warrington Borough Council, as the highways authority. Ms Jones commented that the works were intended to be completed by 6 April 2021.

Decision – To note the ward reports and updates provided.

WPC.170 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Decision – To note that the next meeting of the Council will take place on Tuesday

27 April 2021 at 7.30pm and would be preceded by the Annual Parish Assembly for 2021 at 7.00pm.

WPC.171 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.

The Clerk declared a personal interest in the following item, which included a discussion on his salary.

WPC.172 Finance Officer's Report – Confidential Items

Finance Report

Members considered a confidential report of Clare Jones, Operations and Finance Officer, on the following:-

- Pay rise;
- Casflow statement;
- Debtors (outstanding room hire income).
- Creditors (at Feb 2021);
- Leisure Centre reopening report
- Litter Picker Service reorganisation – Progress report

Pay Rise

Members were informed that from 1 April 2021 minimum wage staff would see a 2% increase. (The hourly rates as at present and with the Government's uplift were set out in the confidential report). Budgets for the year had been set at 3% increase.

With this in mind the Manager's salary should also be increased, with the principal options being to award an increase of:-

- the same monetary value;
- the same percentage (2%), or
- 3%, as per the budget.

The hourly rates as at present and for each option were set out in the confidential report.

The Clerk was also due a pay rise (as he abstained from requesting one in 2020/21 due to COVID restraints). Budgets had been set with a standard 3% increase allocated. (Hourly rates as at present and with a 2%, or 3% rise, were set out in the confidential report).

Due to maternity leave and the need to employ a temp for a handover period, Ms

Jones had offered to sacrifice the budgeted 3% increase for the RFO's salary to fund an additional 1.5/2 month period of handover prior to her maternity leave. The 3% plus the 10% additional maternity pay recoupment on PAYE (110% of RFO salary) should cover the handover period pay.

Mr Joinson reported that traditionally the Council had tracked the NJC local government pay award percentage increase. In addition, his contract of employment linked his salary to the NJC local government pay scales, but that his pay had not, in fact, been increased from 2019/20 onwards and was now, therefore, out of step with the nationally agreed awards made during that period. However, it was acknowledged that the Government had recently announced a freeze on public sector pay increases in 2021/22, with only NHS workers receiving a 1% rise. The joint trades unions were seeking a 10% pay award for local government sector, but it now seemed highly unlikely that any substantial award would be made.

Members discussed the difficulty of making any awards at the higher percentage, given the current financial climate, but this was weighted against the fact that the Council had already fallen behind previous awards and that a 3% rise had been budgeted for.

Cashflow Statement

Ms Jones reported that the cashflow situation had eased considerably. There remained a number of outstanding debtors to clear, but any income recovered would only serve to improve the cashflow position. The additional Community Centre Closures Grant income of £12.5k, which had not been anticipated, could potentially be used to fund additional community-based projects.

Debtors

Ms Jones highlighted good progress against recovery of income from some of the largest debtors. She would continue to chase up other organisations and individuals. Councillor Iddon expressed some concern that the number of longer term debts was roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total debts listed. Ms Jones responded that these were not all from the original list of long term debtors, as the information provided was a rolling list, which included more recent transactions, such as the hire of the football pitches. Ms Jones was planning to meet representatives of both football clubs, which used Myddleton Lane Playing Fields, to discuss the charges for use of the pitches during lockdown. Future lettings to existing debtors were being carefully managed and paying on the night for certain lettings had been introduced.

The Clerk commented that Ms Jones had put an enormous amount of effort into these issues and the time spent had started to reap rewards.

Creditors

A number of outstanding creditors had now been paid and others were scheduled for payment shortly. A small working balance would need to be retained in case the precept did not arrive on the expected date.

Leisure Centre Reopening

Members were reminded that the current phased reopening for the Centre / room hire was as follows:-

- 29 March 2021 – Football field usage could restart, without internal Centre usage.
- 12 April 2021 – Potential for outdoor bar service (at least restricted opening) if financially viable to do so. Increased community usage meaning, as long as COVID restrictions remained in place at the Centre, holiday clubs (largely external use with room for lunch break socially distanced) would be allowed, plus meeting hire for a maximum of 6 people.
- 17 May 2021– Indoor bar service with rule of 6 restrictions. Indoor exercise classes and meeting hire of no more than 30 people socially distanced, seated in maximum groups of 6, would be allowed.
- 21 June 2021– Centre operations allowed to operate at pre-COVID levels.

The bar reopening would need to be reviewed in the light of the following factors:-

- Initial opening expenditure;
- Potential income;
- Staff costs and furlough reductions;
- Health and safety; and
- Weather.

The recommendation of the Operations and Finance Officer and the Centre Manager was that the Council should await the May gateway, at which time the Centre could allow users to sit inside the bar area. Although this might seem to be an over-cautious approach, due to losses made in the 2020/21 year and the potential for unreliable weather, this would appear to be the better option for the Centre at this time.

Members acknowledged the risks to reopening too early as identified in the report and the need to balance the income available from reopening with the associated staffing costs.

Litter Picker Service Reorganisation

Information was provided following the decision to bring the Litter Picker Service in-house. The following actions had already been undertaken:-

- Councillor Mitchell had discussed proposed in-house move with the Litter Picker, who had expressed his interest in moving across;
- The Clerk had issued letters to the Litter Picker, Warrington Borough Council, and the Clerk to Burtonwood and Westbrook Parish Council;
- Follow up e-mail to Councillor Mitchell's e-mail regarding salary, risk

- assessments, etc issued to WBC (no response received, as at 17 March)
- Further review of Councillor Matthew's figures for litter picker costs had been undertaken (figures were set out in the report, but it was estimated that the salary costs would be greater than originally anticipated and closer to £12k with NI and PAYE. There would also be a one-off cost of 17% to terminate the agency contract);
 - Options for rental / purchase of vehicle looked at – Management Committee meeting had confirmed a preferred option of purchase, which needed to be looked into further.

The report included a programme of the next actions required and later stages/ actions required. It was assumed that all further stages would be carried out by the Operations and Finance Officer.

Councillor Iddon enquired about whether the cost of the vehicle had been considered, including fuel, MOT, road tax and repairs. She also enquired about overnight storage of the vehicle. Ms Jones responded that the detail had not yet been looked at, but was included in the programme of future actions. The Litter Picker would not transfer to the Parish until all costs had been considered and agreed. It was likely that the vehicle would be parked overnight on the Centre's car park, but there was no garage or electrical charging point. The risk of accidental damage, vandalism or theft was raised.

Councillor Vobe commented that the termination clause within the agency contract was quite expensive. Ms Jones agreed, but this was standard practice within the sector.

Councillor Vobe also enquired about whether the Litter Picker would continue to operate in Burtonwood with Wesbrook. Ms Jones reported that it was anticipated, at this stage, that he would still work there under a contractual agreement, but would be employed wholly by Winwick Parish Council, with line management provided by the Operations and Finance Officer. The detailed arrangements had yet to be worked out, but a formal contract would need to be drawn up.

Councillor Iddon suggested a system of the Litter Picker leaving bagged waste at a pick-up point for collection by the Borough Council. A number of other parishes had this type of arrangement. Ms Jones noted that this might be possible, but the Litter Picker still required access to a vehicle to cover the whole footprint of the Parish.

Councillor Collins acknowledged that further work needed to be done to investigate all of the cost implications of reorganisation of the service. However, overall he believed that this was a good service provided across the whole Parish.

The Acting Chair reminded Members that one aim of the reorganisation was to implement savings across the service. Councillor D Friend queried whether the Litter Network volunteers would also operate in the south of the Parish, or whether they were focused on Winwick Ward only.

Decision –

- (1) To note the report of the Operations and Finance Officer, including the information on pay, cashflow, creditors, debt, reopening of the Leisure Centre and reorganisation of the Litter Picking Service.
- (2) To note the increase in the national minimum wage with effect from 1 April 2021 and to approve its application to the relevant Leisure Centre staff.
- (3) To agree to a pay award of 3% for the Community and Leisure Centre Manager and Clerk for 2021/22.
- (4) To approve the proposals to use the budgeted increase for the RFO's salary and the maternity pay recoupment to fund a period of induction for the maternity cover appointee.
- (5) To place on record the thanks of the Council to the Operations and Finance Officer for her efforts to stabilise the cashflow position, proactively manage the long term debts and to introduce measures to carefully monitor current debts and limit the Council's exposure to bad debts.
- (6) To approve the wider reopening of the Community and Leisure Centre with effect from 17 May 2021, subject to the Government's anticipated lifting of certain restrictions on that date as set out in its Roadmap.
- (7) To note the progress made in relation to the reorganisation of the Litter Picker Service and the programme of future actions required.