

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 May 2023

To all Members of Winwick Parish Council and Local Electors

Dear Councillor/Elector

The **Annual Parish Assembly** (meeting of Electors) will be held on **Tuesday 23 May 2023 at 7.00 pm at Winwick Leisure Centre.**

The next Parish Council meeting will commence on the rising of the Annual Parish Assembly, but not before 7.30pm.

Julian Joinson
Clerk to the Parish Council

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Code of Conduct - Declarations of Interest
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare and 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 advise 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. Whilst the Clerk will advise on the Code and its interpretation, the decision to declare, or not, is the responsibility of the Member based on the particular circumstances.

3. Minutes

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 24 May 2022.

4. Chairman's Report
5. Questions / Comments from the Public

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Winwick Parish Council

Annual Parish Assembly held on 24 May 2022

Present: Councillors D Friend (Chair), A Abbey, E Abdey, G Friend, Herron, Iddon, McGinn and Warnock-Smith

Residents: There were two residents of Winwick Parish present.

Also in Attendance: Ms C Jones, Operations and Finance Officer and Mr J Joinson, Clerk, Winwick Parish Council

WPCPA.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mitchell and Pitt.

WPCPA.2 Code of Conduct – Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

WPCPA.3 Minutes

Decision – That the minutes of the meeting of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 27 April 2021 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

WPCPA.4 Chair's Report

Councillor D Friend reported the following matters:

In 2021/22, there had been some challenges both for residents and the Leisure Centre, as the country slowly emerged from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, overall things were going well within the Parish.

There remained some concerns about the aspirations expressed by Winwick CE Primary School to improve the school, due to the possible implications for Myddleton Lane Playing Fields. However, Councillor Herron and others were liaising closely with the school's representatives to come up with a common-sense solution. The Parish Council would continue to monitor developments closely.

The Parish Council would shortly bring the litter picker in-house, which would give the Council greater control over his activities and would provide employment security for the worker.

The Council had purchased two Royal British Legion Tommys in 2021 to commemorate the sacrifice of servicemen and women. The smaller, temporary Tommy at Hermitage Green would be relocated to the Leisure Centre this year. Discussions would be held about Remembrance Sunday 2022. The Council intended to provide wreaths at St Oswald's CE Church and at the Cenotaph in Warrington.

A successful event had been held on Friday 29th April 2022, to celebrate the Leisure Centre's 50th Anniversary. It had been fascinating to listen to the people who had been directly involved on the Centre's development, which had been a significant undertaking.

Overall, the mood was positive and things were progressing in the right direction. The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their hard work. She also paid special tribute to her husband Councillor Graham Friend and wished him well for his year as Deputy Mayor of Warrington Borough.

Decision – To note the Chair's annual report.

WPCPA.5 Questions / Comments from the Public

Members of the public raised the following matters:

Proposed Bench at Hermitage Green

A resident of Hermitage Green asked about proposals to provide a public bench at that location. His understanding was that the land was maintained by Warrington Borough Council, and that it might not be within the Parish Council's power to install a bench.

Response: Ms Jones indicated that an agreement was in place with the Borough Council to mow the grass at Hermitage Green, but the land was in fact owned by the Parish Council. The Council was aware that there were three houses which faced the Green and it was understood that none of the residents in those properties wanted a bench on the site. Two main reasons had been cited, comprising the likelihood of increased litter and the potential for crime/anti-social behaviour.

Members debated the issue fully and included the two residents present in the discussions. The second resident present was a member of the group who had developed the bench project across the Parish. The following points were raised:

- It was questioned whether the concerns about litter related to the whole of the Green or just the areas immediately in front of the houses, as the location of the bench could potentially be adjusted to minimise any adverse impacts. The Hermitage Green resident also expressed concern that the bench might attract youths on bicycles who could create a disturbance.
- It was noted that most people who had responded to the informal consultation had been in favour of a bench on the Green. A possible location was the former site of the telephone box slightly to the right of No 43 Golborne Road. However, Councillor Herron reminded all that the original intention had been to locate the bench in a position so that it was not immediately in front of any of the houses, possibly close to the trees at the southern end of the Green.
- The second resident commented that the group had also been considering a location on the Green for the bench closer to Winwick. He and other group members were due to meet with Borough Council officers tomorrow regarding the location of the benches planned for Winwick Park.

- Ownership of Hermitage Green was again questioned with a suggestion that it was part Parish Council owned and part common land. The Clerk confirmed that the land was indeed registered as common land, but written evidence was also available to show that the land was owned by the Parish Council (the two designations were not mutually exclusive). Councillor Iddon recalled that ownership was considered at public hearing held by the Office of the Commons Commissioners in 1972. The Council had asserted ownership of the land and this was not contested by any other party at the hearing. *(Note: A letter dated 16 June 1972 from the Commons Commissioner confirmed the decision to register Winwick Parish Council as the owner of the land).* Councillor Iddon commented that residents who witnessed Borough Council operatives cutting the grass often wrongly assumed that Warrington BC was the landowner.
- The original questioner confirmed that his view was that he did not want a bench sited anywhere on the Green. The second member of the public present asked if this was a stance that was open for negotiation. The Hermitage Green resident added that he had not yet been consulted formally about the proposal, nor yet had an opportunity to discuss the matter.
- The Chair confirmed that a bench would not be installed if the majority of residents did not want it.
- The Chair asked if any consultations had taken place via social media. The bench project group member indicated that his colleague had posted information on the Hermitage Green and Winwick Facebook site. A further resident had also shared information on that platform.
- Councillor Herron noted that no agreement had yet been reached as to a preferred location for the bench.
- The original questioner reiterated that there had been no formal consultation undertaken, but accepted that information had been available on Facebook. However, he made the point that from his perspective he had only recently found out that the project group wanted to site a bench on the Green. The group's representative understood the point being made and reiterated that the purpose of the on-going discussions was to ascertain people's views. The exact location proposed for any bench had not yet been determined.
- The bench group's aim had been to provide benches as a community asset, as there was currently nowhere for the public to sit in the various locations identified around Winwick. The benches were intended to be located at suitable sites for the benefit of the walking public. The group certainly did not wish to upset any residents in the pursuit of its aims and was keen to work with the relevant organisations, including the Borough and Parish Councils, to obtain the necessary permissions. It was also committed to listening to residents' views and, as an example, had adjusted the location of one bench on Winwick Park.
- Councillor Iddon noted that benches on Golborne Road and by St Oswald's CE Church were well used. She accepted that it might not be appropriate to site a bench directly in front of a residential property and it was unlikely that the Council would give permission for such.
- The original questioner conceded that a bench under the trees, or by the woods on the Green might be more acceptable. The bench group's representative added that a site further south, in the vicinity of the site of the former Hermit pub and away from residential property, might be preferred. A

balance would need to be found with the hope of reaching an understanding with all concerned.

- Arrangements could be made for a representative of the bench project group to visit the Hermitage Green resident to discuss the matter in more detail. However, the resident confirmed that he was happy to be included in the formal consultation.
- It was suggested that a new bench would require a litter bin sited next to it.
- The original questioner reiterated his concerns that youths might congregate around any bench during the months of extended daylight.
- The project group's representative added that there would need to be a hard-standing area and base for any bench to cater for wheelchairs or prams. He would raise the matter of a possible litter bin with Ian Brackenbury, Operations and Commercial Services Manager, Warrington Borough Council.
- It was reported that the benches by St Oswalds CE Church were now complete and it was hoped that residents were pleased with the result. Cyclists had already commented that they used the facility regularly. Parish representatives confirmed that they were happy with the work undertaken and thanked the project group for their efforts.

The Chair summed up by indicating that the Council would take into account the views expressed during the formal consultation and would need to carefully balance the views of the majority against the possible impacts on particular individuals.

Tommy at Hermitage Green

In view of the above debate the Chair enquired if residents of Hermitage Green had a view on the Tommy deployed at that location. The Hermitage Green resident present indicated that this had been a good addition to the area in November, but he queried why it had remained in situ beyond Remembrance Sunday.

Response: The Chair confirmed that the Tommy would be relocated shortly. Councillor G Friend observed that the Tommy looked rusty. The resident commented that he believed that the weathered look was intentional and was part of the character of the figure. Similar figures seen elsewhere also had the same rusty appearance.

Decision – To note the questions and comments raised by members of the public and the responses given.