

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GRAP\PENHALL AND THELWALL PARISH COUNCIL AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, BELLHOUSE LANE ON THURSDAY 21th SEPTEMBER 2017

Present: Councillors Mrs E Welborn (Chair), M Biggin, Mrs L K Fernyhough, R Fisher, I Fountain, Ms W Johnson, C Taylor, G Welborn, P Wenlock and C Worsley.

In Attendance: Susan Brooks, Clerk to the Council and Janet Richards, Responsible Financial Officer.

87. Apologies for Absence

It was **resolved that** apologies and reasons for absence from Councillors A Bennett, D Hockenhull, J McQuillan and P Warner would be accepted.

88. Dispensation Requests

A dispensation request had been received from Councillor P Wenlock in relation to GYCA but this was deferred until the October Parish Council meeting.

89. Disclosures of Pecuniary Interests

No disclosures were made.

90. Minutes

Action

Resolved that the minutes of the Parks and Open Spaces Committee on 20th June, Recess Committee on 17th August and Planning Committee on 7th September be approved as a correct record.

91. Update on Local Policing Issues by PCSO Jordan Calder

PCSO Jordan Calder presented an update on local issues and crime statistics and introduced our new PCSO, Sharon Perrie. Details were as follows:

- 9 Anti Social Behaviour incidents (2 at Grappenhall Hall School, 2 Jubilee Park)
- 2 Burglaries
- 2 Criminal Damage incidents
- 3 Road Traffic Collisions (no injuries)
- 1 Shoplifting incident (at the Co-op on Knutsford Road)
- 1 Theft
- 1 Theft of a Motor Vehicle

The priorities for the next month would be ASB in parks and local 'hot spots', Grappenhall Hall School, school parking and shoplifting.

92. Correspondence Warrington Borough Council (WBC)

The following correspondence has been received from Warrington Borough Council and copies are available from the Clerk:

- a) A letter to say that the request for a 20mph limit on Bradshaw Lane and Thelwall New Road cannot be granted as both are on primary bus routes and this would go against guidance from the Department for Transport.

93. Correspondence Miscellaneous

The following miscellaneous correspondence had been received and copies were available from the Clerk:

- a) An email to inform the Parish Council that the Post Office on Lindi Avenue had closed on Tuesday 12th September.

94. Information for Noting

- a) The Clerk had been unable to attend the Digital Engagement and Social Media seminar on 5th September as the course had been cancelled at short notice. A new date was awaited.

- b) The WREN grant for Diamond Park had been resubmitted in August for £48,131. In addition to this, the Parish Council had agreed to contribute £5000 plus a further £5174 for the third-party funding. A decision by WREN would be made on 15th November 2017.
- c) A WREN grant for Jubilee Park had been submitted in August for £49,710. In addition to this, the Parish Council had agreed to contribute £5000 plus a further £5343 for the third-party funding. A decision by WREN would be made on 15th November 2017.
- d) The South Neighbourhood Team had organised a Stay Safe and Well event at the Quays Community Centre on 11th September.
- e) A request from a resident had been received for allotments in the area.

95. Preferred Development Option Consultation (PDO)

On 10th July 2017 Warrington Borough Council's Executive Board approved the Local Plan Preferred Development Option Regulation 18 Consultation documents for public consultation. The original deadline of 12th September was subsequently changed to 29th September to allow residents and Parish Councils more time to respond. Since the consultation had not been well publicised by WBC, the Parish Council had sent out a letter to all residents at the end of July to inform them of the proposed plans and highlight the importance of responding to the consultation.

The PDO proposals included building over 6000 houses on green belt land to the west of the A50, between the M6 and Appleton. Plans also included a district centre, schools, a country park and an employment area. A strategic road had been marked along the old railway embankment and part of the Trans Pennine Trail then on to Weaste Lane and the A50 and connecting to Broad Lane.

There had been a great deal of objection to the PDO plans from local residents and Councillors had spent a great deal of time reviewing all the available information. Councillor C Taylor had prepared a draft response which had been circulated to all members. The Parish Council agreed with the objections expressed by residents and were united in opposition to the development proposals.

Councillor C Taylor presented information in relation to his approach to evaluating the PDO proposals and expressed that professional input had been sought from Kirkwells Planning Consultants, who had been assisting the Parish Council with the Neighbourhood Planning process. Kirkwells recommended that, at this early stage in the process, it was necessary to look for higher principles on which to fight the plans and that the test of soundness should be applied throughout the PDO as that is what an external assessor would apply when scrutinising the plans. The following 4 major weaknesses were identified:

- a) the 'exceptional circumstances' required to justify land being released from the green belt had not been demonstrated;
- b) the assumptions relating to housing need and economic activity were over optimistic and unrealistic;
- c) the preferred option had a number of detailed flaws in terms of impact on the environment, highways, and other matters; and
- d) alternative options were available to help future growth of Warrington in a sustainable way.

Faisal Rashid MP attended the Parish Council meeting and was aware that tension and emotions were running high and that the proposals affected 80% of his constituents. He assured residents that he would be objecting strongly to the PDO and would work together with them to oppose the plans. He pointed out that if WBC reduce the timeline of the plan from 20 years to 15 years then the resulting housing target of 15,000 homes could be accommodated without the use of green belt sites. A programme of Community Engagement would be launched in 2018 and Mr Rashid MP would be working together with all parishes to seek the views as to what was needed in our area so that a list of priorities could be formulated. The Clerk would seek further information.

SB

Representatives from local residents' groups, including Sustainable South Warrington, Springfield Avenue, WA4 Facebook Objection Group, Weaste Lane, Church Lane, Prestbury Drive and Stockton Lane attended to share their views and express objections.

Amongst the concerns raised were the following:

- Exceptional circumstances to justify the release of green belt had not been demonstrated.
- Need to look at what sites should be built on, not what could be built on (call for sites).
- Fiddlers Ferry likely to become available in the future but had not been taken into account.
- Housing figures are over inflated and unreasonable.
- Proposal would have a detrimental effect on already congested and gridlocked roads.
- Required highways assessments had not been carried out.
- New toll bridge would result in increase in traffic through Warrington.
- Proposed new strategic road would have a detrimental impact on the amenity of residents.
- Loss of part of the TPT which is well used for exercise, walking and cycling.
- Plan would fail to result in regeneration of the town centre.
- Poor understanding of future employment needs and economic activity.
- Use of pre-Brexit figures.
- Increased pollution and reduction in air quality (which is already poor in Warrington).
- Ecological concerns, loss of valuable agricultural land and detrimental effect on wildlife.
- Detrimental effect on water levels and drainage in areas already prone to flooding.
- Housing density – more affordable homes required.
- Equality of the plan – other areas will have little or no development.
- Health care provision and infrastructure.
- Deliverability issues relating to financial models and assumptions.
- Plan, in its present form, is not sustainable or deliverable and will have to change.
- Plan should be for a shorter period - 10 year projection not 20 years.
- Effect of plans on Grappenhall Hall School.
- Consultation process was unacceptable in terms of poor timing, poor quality maps, lack of information.

Councillors thanked all the speakers for sharing views. It was suggested that the wide knowledge and experience of members within the groups would be extremely valuable going forward. A Liaison Group had been set up and would meet on Tuesday 26th September at 7.30 p.m. at Appleton Parish Hall. Councillor Ryan Bate would be attending.

After a unanimous vote by Councillors it was **resolved that** Kirkwells would be employed to write a formal Parish Council objection response to the PDO consultation. A draft copy would be circulated to all Councillors on 27th September and any concerns would have to be emailed to the Clerk on the morning of the 28th. A meeting would take place on the afternoon of 28th September so that the report could be discussed and amended as necessary in time for submission to WBC by Kirkwells before 5.00 p.m. on 29th September. All Councillors were welcome to attend the meeting. The final objection response would then be published on the Parish Council website and Facebook page. **CT/EW/PW/IF/SB**

It was also **resolved that** a letter of complaint would be sent to Professor Steven Broomhead to object regarding unacceptable manner in which the consultation was conducted. Councillor C Taylor agreed to prepare draft a letter in conjunction with the work already submitted by Councillor J McQuillan. **CT/SB**

96. Neighbourhood Plan

Councillor P Wenlock presented an update regarding progress in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan. The last scheduled meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had been postponed due to the PDO consultation but Councillor Wenlock now wanted to continue to progress this with a view to putting a

Neighbourhood Plan in place before the revised PDO were presented for consultation in spring 2018. A meeting would be taking place on 3rd October. Councillor Wenlock appealed for members of the residents' groups to get involved with the process of formulating the Neighbourhood Plan with a view to taking more control over how the area is developed in the future. **PW**

97. Stockton Heath Library

Stockton Heath South District Library Committee had asked Councillors to consider making a financial contribution towards maintaining the current library service in Stockton Heath. Documentation had been received and circulated to all Councillors and a contribution of £2659.00 was suggested. After a discussion it was **resolved that** a contribution would not be made as Grappenhall Library was already providing an efficient library service.

98. Grappenhall Hall School Site

A meeting regarding security issues at Grappenhall Hall School had taken place on 14th September and had been attended by Councillors J Mc Quillian, C Worsley, A Pritchard from WBC and PCSO Jordan Calder. Youths had been congregating there and residents were encouraged to ring 101 straight away to report any problems. Installation of a security system had been discussed and a list of action points had been circulated. There was concern that the school now looked dilapidated.

99. Committee Chairmen

The Chairmen of both the GYCA Liaison Committee, Councillor G Welborn, and the Grappenhall Heys Estate Committee, Councillor I Fountain, had both resigned and replacements were sought. Councillors thanked the outgoing Chairmen for the work they had done. It was **resolved that** Councillor L K Fernyhough would act as Chairman of the Grappenhall Heys Estate Committee on an interim basis and that the position would be formally agreed at the next Committee meeting. There was now a vacancy on the GYCA Liaison Committee as the Chairman had also resigned from the Committee and Councillor Chris Worsley agreed to become a member of the Committee.

100. Request for Financial Assistance

The following requests for financial assistance were considered:

- a) Grappenhall Library –had requested a donation towards the cost of a small orchard with a quiet area and a bench as a memorial to John Ashby. The orchard would be designed by a local organisation called Patch of the Planet. A planting ceremony would be organised in November and the estimated cost was £400.00. Fundraising events would be organised and the Library Board had agreed to make a contribution. It was **resolved that** a contribution of £400.00 would be made and that the library should contact the Parish Council if there was a shortfall.
- b) Grappenhall and Thelwall Royal British Legion – a request had been received for a contribution towards the cost of the Remembrance Sunday event. Councillors H Kazi and Mrs E Welborn had attended the branch meeting on 12th September 2017 to discuss plans for the event and it was **resolved that** a contribution of £300.00 would be made. It was also **resolved that** a wreath would be laid on behalf of the Parish Council

JR/SB

101. Accounts for Payment

It was **resolved that** accounts for payment totalling £18,915.73 be approved.

102. Expenditure to date

The RFO, Janet Richards, presented an up to date analysis of 'expenditure to date'. No issues were reported.

103. Consideration of Planning Applications

The recent planning applications were considered (see attached report).