

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GRAPPENHALL AND THELWALL PARISH COUNCIL AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, BELLHOUSE LANE ON THURSDAY 20th JUNE 2019

Present: Councillors P Wenlock (Chair), R Bate, M Biggin, Ms S Chisholm, R Fisher, H Kazi, C Taylor, P Warner and Mrs E Welborn

In Attendance: Janet Richards, Clerk to the Council/RFO

Action

22. Apologies for Absence

It was **resolved that** apologies and reasons for absence from Councillors Mrs L Fernyhough, D Hockenhull, Ms W Johnson, J McQuillan, G Welborn and C Worsley be accepted.

23. Disclosure of Pecuniary & Personal Interests

No disclosures were made.

24. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 16th May and Planning Committee meeting on 6th June be approved as a true record.

25. Dispensation Requests

No dispensation requests were received.

26. Update on Local Policing

PCSO Sharon Perrie was in attendance to present the most recent crime statistics:

Anti Social Behaviour Incidents	= 7
Suspicious Activity	= 5
Burglary	= 17
Criminal Damage	= 2
Road Traffic Collisions	= 4
Shoplifting	= 1
Theft	= 4

Discussion also took place over the anti-social behaviour issues at Grappenhall Hall School. Councillors Bate and Biggin would speak with Warrington Borough Council regarding stepping up the security.

27. Correspondence Warrington Borough Council/Miscellaneous

- a) Notification of Highway Works to Church Lane (Heritage Scheme Phase 5) during Whit School Holidays.
- b) Email of thanks from Thelwall Rose Queen for the Parish Council donation of £250.

28. Information for Noting

- a) The Visitor Warden for the Walled Garden had given in his notice and his last day would be 30th June. A replacement was being recruited. Vacancy notices had been posted on the Parish Council noticeboards and on the Warrington Borough Council jobs website.
- b) The Horticultural Apprentice – 10 applications had been received to date, but only a couple were deemed suitable. The Assistant Clerk was liaising with Reaseheath College and an advert had been put on the Warrington Borough Council jobs website.
- c) The rotting play logs had been removed from Jubilee Park during early June, which necessitated closing the park for a week, on health and safety grounds, until the contractor could fill the deep holes that had been left.
- d) The Parish Council would have stands at both Thelwall Rose Queen and Grappenhall Walking Day. The Assistant Clerk and the Chair had prepared some display boards, showcasing recent initiatives.
- e) The Spring hanging baskets and planting on Broad Lane/Church Lane had been completed.

f) The bi-annual Arboricultural Inspection would be carried out during early July.

29. Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

It was reported that this work had been 'on hold' until after the Local Plan PSV consultation deadline (17th June). Thereafter work would commence, starting with a residents volunteer meeting in early July. (to be arranged by the Clerk).

JR

30. Local Plan (Proposed Submitted Version – PSV)

John Groves (GT Planning) had prepared the G&TPC response to the Local Plan PSV consultation (in connection with Councillors Taylor, Warner, Bate and Ms S Chisholm), which was submitted before the 17th June deadline.

The South Warrington Parishes (Chaired by Councillor Taylor) had also commissioned John Groves to prepare a response for this group. The Clerk has emailed out both responses to all members and both responses would be put onto the Parish Council website.

Following the submission of Planning Applications from both Stobart and Six56, the South Warrington Parishes had requested that both applications be 'Called In' by the Secretary of the State. John Groves also completed objection consultation responses for both of the applications on behalf of the South Warrington Parishes.

31. Internal Audit 2018/19

The Internal Audit for 2018/19 had been completed by JDH Business Services and they had concluded that 'On the basis of the internal audit work carried out, which was limited, in our view, the Council's system of internal controls is in place, adequate for the purpose intended and effective, subject to the recommendations reported in the action plan' (see attached). The Clerk would implement the recommendations. The External Audit work was also underway with auditors PKF Littlejohn.

32. Chairman's Idea 2019/20

The Chair (Councillor Wenlock) outlined some potential projects for 2019/20, which would be discussed in more detail at future meetings. The ideas centred around improving the parish parks and also improving parish website/social media/communications and events/newsletters.

33. Accounts for Payment

It was **resolved that** accounts for payment totalling £40,423.78 be approved.

34. Consideration of Planning Applications

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

Internal Audit Report

The internal audit of Grappenhall and Thelwall Parish Council was carried out by undertaking the following tests as specified on the Annual Return for Local Councils:

- Checking that books of account have been properly kept throughout the year
- Checking a sample of payments to ensure that the Council's financial regulations have been met, payments are supported by invoices, expenditure is approved, and VAT is correctly accounted for
- Reviewing the Council's risk assessment and ensuring that adequate arrangements are in place to manage all identified risks
- Verifying that the annual precept request is the result of a proper budgetary process; that budget progress has been regularly monitored and that the council's reserves are appropriate
- Checking income records to ensure that the correct price has been charged, income has been received, recorded and promptly banked and VAT is correctly accounted for
- Reviewing petty cash records to ensure payments are supported by receipts, expenditure is approved, and VAT is correctly accounted for
- Checking that salaries to employees have been paid in accordance with Council approvals and that PAYE and NI requirements have been properly applied
- Checking the accuracy of the asset and investments registers
- Testing the accuracy and timeliness of periodic and year-end bank account reconciliation(s)
- Year end testing on the accuracy and completeness of the financial statements

Conclusion

On the basis of the internal audit work carried out, which was limited to the tests indicated above, in our view the council's system of internal controls is in place, adequate for the purpose intended and effective, subject to the recommendations reported in the action plan overleaf. As part of the internal audit work for the next financial year we will follow up all recommendations included in the action plan.

JDH Business Services Ltd

	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION	FOLLOW UP
1	<p>Investments</p> <p>The base cost of investments has increased but this has not been disclosed in the investments figure for fixed assets.</p> <p>The income included in the accounts for investments is net of sales and purchases of investments.</p>	<p><i>The year end fixed asset register should show the base cost of investments as at the end of the financial year.</i></p> <p><i>The council should ensure investment purchases are included in expenditure and sale proceeds of investments are included in income.</i></p> <p><i>The adjustments required have been provided to the clerk</i></p>	
2	<p>The external auditor had requested in 2017/18 that the disclosure of precept and other income in the AGAR annual return is adjusted for council tax support grant. The 2018/19 draft AGAR annual return did not include these adjustments.</p>	<p><i>The adjustments required by external audit should be implemented</i></p>	

	ISSUE	RECOMMENDATION	FOLLOW UP
3	Currently only one member signs BACS and Debit Card payments (the clerk is the other signatory).	<i>Authorisation of BACS and Debit Card payments should show equivalence with the authorisation procedures for cheques, so two members should certify these payments.</i>	
4	Petty cash expenditure is not reviewed and approved by the chair as complete and accurate.	<i>The chair should review petty cash quarterly and approve the expenditure by signing the petty cash analysis</i>	

IMPORTANT GUIDANCE NOTE

INTERNAL AUDIT CERTIFICATE in the AGAR

There is a new internal control objective (Objective L) in the 2018/19 internal audit certificate that requires internal audit to conclude on whether the Public Rights Notice during the **previous Summer** was compliant with the Regulations. This is pre-filled for 2018/19 but in order to test this and conclude YES or NO for the 2019/20 internal audit we would need to receive with the 2019/20 books and records:

- A copy of the completed 2018/19 Notice of Public Rights and Publication of the Unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Review
- A dated photograph showing the first day of the Notice of Public Rights on the noticeboard and/or a dated computer screenshot showing the first date of the Notice of Public Rights on the website for 2018/19

Our approach to this new requirement will be to conclude NO if we have not received the above evidence and explain on the AGAR that we received insufficient evidence to be able to conclude YES; we would also conclude NO if the dates advertised were not compliant with the Regulations.

This will be a new ongoing requirement for internal audit, as well as verifying whether certain smaller councils meet the exemption criteria from an external audit. Therefore, for the 2019/20 internal audits there will be additional time charged at a fixed fee of £9 + VAT per local council to complete the new requirements.

