

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GRAPPENHALL AND THELWALL PARISH COUNCIL VIA ZOOM ON THURSDAY 17<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020

**Present:** Councillors D Hockenhull (Chair), R Bate, M Biggin, Ms S Chisholm, Mrs L Fernyhough, J McQuillian, P Warner and C Worsley

**In attendance:** Janet Richards, Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer  
Colette Fellows, Assistant Clerk to the Council

**Action**

### 64. Apologies for Absence

It was **resolved that** apologies and reasons for absence from Councillors Ms W Johnson, C Taylor, Mrs E Welborn and G Welborn would be accepted.

### 65. Disclosure of Pecuniary & Personal Interests

No disclosures were made.

### 66. Minutes

**Resolved that** the minutes of the Recess Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> August and Planning Committee meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> September be approved as a true record.

### 67. Dispensation Requests

No dispensation requests were received.

### 68. Information for Noting

- a) The Parish Council Office had received a lot of complaints about overhanging/overgrown trees and also overflowing dog bins.
- b) All those members of staff on NJC pay scales had been awarded a 2.75% pay increase. This would be paid in the October payroll and backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April.
- c) The Internal Audit had been completed by the Clerk and is she was now working on the External Audit (revised deadline 30<sup>th</sup> September).
- d) Further complaints had been received over the deteriorating state of Morris Brook Park. WBC had not taken any action to date, despite pressure from the Parish Council. The park continues to be a health and safety risk.

### 69. Update on Purchase of Vehicle for Parish Warden

The Assistant Clerk reported that the Fiat Doblo van had been ordered and that it would be ten weeks before we could take delivery of the vehicle. The Assistant Clerk would also arrange for the Parish Council logo to be printed on the side of the van. Until we take receipt of the van, the Parish Warden would continue to be helped by the Parish Warden from Lymm Parish Council (who had the WBC van) for collecting/emptying bin bags/rubbish.

### 70. St Wilfrid's School Parking

Councillors Bate, McQuillian and Worsley provided members with an update. In brief, two meetings had taken place at the school to discuss various initiatives to reduce hazardous parking at school opening and closing times. The latest meeting was also attended by Mark Tune and other Officers from Warrington Borough Council. An option was discussed as part of the 'School Street Initiative Programme' whereby Church Lane would potentially close via the use of bollards and two Wardens at school opening and closing times. The school could financially contribute towards the staff costs. It was **resolved that** Councillor McQuillian would arrange a further meeting with the school to discuss clarification. A possible pilot would take place later on in the year once consultation with residents/business owners had been carried out.

**JM**

**71. Volunteer Speedwatch Group**

A report outlining possible traffic calming proposals (produced by the Volunteer Speedwatch Group) was discussed. The group would be seeking 50% of the costs of the project from the Parish Council over a 5 year period. This would equate to between £8,542 and £13,050 per year for 5 years (depending on whether humps/tables or cushions were used). It was **resolved that** the Parish Council broadly support this initiative, but before a final decision is made, members would like to find out more about the consultation (in particular, whether the consultation would be done as a whole or by individual roads). The Clerk would ask Mark Tune for clarification and report back to members. **JR**

**72. Covid-19 Update**

A Brief discussion took place around current Covid-19 restrictions. Due to Covid-19 cases rising in Warrington and due to the local Covid-19 restrictions, Parish Council meetings would take place remotely for the foreseeable future and PPE would be ramped up in the Parish Council Office.

**73. South Warrington Parish Council Local Plan Working Group**

Councillors Bate and Taylor provided an update to members. In brief, the SWP Group are working on a case for seeking an 'alternative Local Plan' i.e. stop and rethink. A meeting would take place on 1<sup>st</sup> October between WBC and Parish Councillors.

**74. Internal Audit**

The Internal Audit had been completed remotely/electronically. The conclusion was 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 below. As part of the internal audit work for the next financial year we will follow up all recommendations included in the action plan'. The issues/actions required were are follows:

- a) The increase in the base cost of investments had not been disclosed in the investments figure for fixed assets. The income included in the accounts for investments was net of purchases of investments. (action – make adjustments as necessary)
- b) The council uses model Financial Regulations which refer to a Purchase Order (PO) system – however no PO system is in place. (action – amend the Financial Regulations to remove reference to a PO system). Also, to amend the Financial Regulations to include a reasonable transaction limit for the Debit Card.
- c) The council should consider periodically testing contracts in accordance with the Financial Regulations, to ensure value for money is being delivered.
- d) Out of date unrepresented items in the end of year bank reconciliation should be written off.

**75. Accounts for Payment**

It was **resolved** that accounts for payment totalling £19,608.85 be approved.

**76. Expenditure to date**

An 'on target expenditure' for September (month 6) would be 50%. Parish Council expenditure was 39%, Walled Garden was 51% and overall was 42%. There are no issues other than the Walled Garden income will be less than we thought due to Covid-19 (cafe closed for over 4 months and very little outreach activity taking place).

**77. Consideration of Planning Applications**

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