MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GRAPPENHALL AND THELWALL PARISH COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES BELLHOUSE LANE, GRAPPENHALL ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2026.

Present: Councillors Speed (Chair), Davies, Dolan, and Furnell

In Attendance: Beverley Doward, Assistant Clerk to the Council

ACTION

4. Apologies for Absence

It was **resolved that** apologies and the reason for absence for Cllr Worsley be accepted. No apologies were received from Cllrs Browne and Fisher.

5. Disclosures of Pecuniary Interests

No disclosures were made.

6. Update on Actions from Previous Meetings

Parks and Open Spaces

Action	Description	Lead	Update	Progress
1	Tree planting	ALL	Details of the potential locations have been forwarded to WBC Street Services, Highways and Landscape teams. A response from WBC's Environment Services team has been received suggesting only 3 of the potential locations may be suitable from their perspective. A response from WBC Highways/Road Safety/Street Services is still awaited.	Ongoing
2	Bulb Planting	BD	The contractor has confirmed that the quote of £4550 + vat provided in April 2025 remains valid for bulb planting at Chester Road/York Road (Site 4). Arrangements for the planting are being made with the contractor. The Assistant Clerk will write to residents fronting onto the site to notify them of the planned work.	Ongoing
3	Design and Management Strategy	HS	The Consultants are currently revising the report to address the issues previously raised by the Committee (Min 2026/3). Arrangements will be made for the consultants to present the final report to a future meeting of the Committee.	Ongoing
4	Planters	MD	Arrangements will be made to replace the summer planting in the planters on the forecourt of the shops at Barley Road, Thelwall in October. The Assistant Clerk reported that is a lot of existing street furniture on the	Ongoing

			forecourt of the Co-op/Chemist on Knutsford Road which would make it difficult to site planters in this location. The Assistant Clerk is investigating the possibility of other locations in the Parish to site planters.	
5	Book Swap	MD	At the meeting of the Committee held on 3 March 2026 (Min 2025/3.6) it was agreed that further consideration of this be put on hold until further details of the design and management strategy for the park is available.	Ongoing
6	Environmental Improvements	ALL	Future environmental improvements to improve the environment of the villages. See agenda item 8	Ongoing

Climate and Ecological Emergency

Action	Description	Lead	Update	Progress
7	Electric vehicle chargers	BD/LW/RF	EV chargers on the Stansfield Drive car park. See agenda item 11 Potential Parish Council EV vehicle and installation of an EV charger on the Bellhouse Car Park. See agenda item 12	Ongoing
8	Grappenhall Heys Working party	PW	Cllrs J McQuillian and P Warner are leading on progressing a joint Working Party to review the 2023 energy survey (Min 2024/29). No progress. Cllr Worsley to discuss with Cllrs McQuillian and Warner. Members requested that the energy implications of any work to repair/replace the glasshouses be take into account.	Ongoing
9	Air quality	BD	See agenda item 10	Ongoing
10	Community Events	ALL	The Outreach Officer has confirmed that she will be organising a Winter Fair at the Walled Garden on 8 November 2026. Given this date is Remembrance Sunday members will be attending other events in the Parish. Therefore, the Committee will not have a stall at the Winter Fair. The Assistant Clerk will ask the Outreach Officer if she intends to organise a Spring Fair. In addition, the Assistant Clerk will investigate the possibility of the Parish Council hosting a screening of the People's Emergency Briefing for the community.	Ongoing

7. Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the Committee were reviewed. Amendments relating to the composition of the Committee and to avoid duplication in its stated purposes were identified. The revised Terms of Reference will be presented to the next meeting of the Committee for discussion and resolution. **BD**

8. Knutsford Road Verges

Members have requested that the potential to improve the appearance of the verges along Knutsford Road running from Cross Lane to Mayfield Road (approximately 182 metres in length) be referred to the Environment Committee for further exploration before any commitment is made to explore what utilities may lay underneath (Council Min 2026/36 and 2026/61).

Based upon recent schemes WBC Officers have provided indicative costings for two options - constructing laybys or removing the verge and replacing it with a hard surface (see table below). However, they have also indicated that for all types of construction the underlying ground conditions and the need to remove and replace existing street furniture can significantly influence the cost of a project.

The exact lengths of any laybys or hard surfacing can only be established once detailed engineering drawings are produced. Furthermore, from a visual inspection of the stretch of verge in question there are two lamp columns, the boundary sign, a large BT chamber at the junction corner with a telegraph pole and another chamber at the other end of the stretch, a drainage chamber and a number of trees.

	Option A: Construct laybys	**Option B: Remove verge and replace with hard surfacing**
Base cost	£1000-£1500 per metre	£750 per metre
Potential extra costs	Relocation of lampposts x 2. Up to £1500 each = £3000 Relocation of boundary sign = £350 Tree removal = £600 per tree Replacement trees – not quantified Utility diversions ((Virgin cable, United Utilities, BT chamber + telegraph pole, HV electric, gas, drainage chamber) – unknown until searches done	Relocation of lampposts x 2. Up to £1500 each = £3000 Relocation of boundary sign = £350 Tree removal = £600 per tree Replacement trees – not quantified Utility diversions ((Virgin cable, United Utilities, BT chamber + telegraph pole, HV electric, gas, drainage chamber) – unknown until searches done
Legal status	Clear – provides proper off road parking provision	Grey – as residents would still technically be parking on the footway
Ground Conditions	Complex due to underground utilities	Complex due to underground utilities

It **was resolved to recommend** to Council that the indicative costings indicated above for either Option A or Option B were such that it was recommended that at this point in time the Council does not fund the trial pit work necessary to explore what utilities lie underneath at a cost of £723.87+vat. Cllr Speed and the Assistant Clerk will investigate whether there are any ring-fenced funding opportunities for such schemes from WBC and/or grant funding. **HS/BD**

9. Parks

Sweeping Seesaw – Diamond Park

The Sweeping Seesaw at Diamond Park has been making a strange noise and after sending a video to the manufacturer they have confirmed that the tilting mechanism is showing considerable wear. The

manufacturer agreed to replace the hub as a gesture of good will with the only cost to the Council being £375 + vat for installation. Members noted that the works were authorised by the Chair of the Council given that they were a safety issue and the work has now been completed.

Gym equipment signage – Jubilee Park

The sign providing instructions for the use of the gym equipment at Jubilee Park has been vandalised. The cost of a replacement sign and fittings only without the podium is £518.04 + vat. Members requested the Assistant Clerk investigate the cost of replacing the existing sign with an alternative vertical sign mounted on taller posts rather than just a replacement of the vandalised sign in the hope that this would reduce the risk of it being vandalised again. **BD**

10. Air Quality

At the meeting of the Committee held on 7 May 2026 it was resolved to suggest to WBC that signs requesting drivers to switch off their engines be installed at Bradshaw Lane, Thelwall New Road, Knutsford Road and outside all primary schools within the Parish (Min 2026/3.12).

WBC Officers have responded stating that leaving a car engine idling is an offence in all locations barring certain exemptions mentioned in the Highway Code (Rule 123). It is advised that signs should only be used where there is deemed to be an exceptional problem e.g at the swing bridges due to the potential unexpected waiting times when they are blocked. WBC states that any change to its policy would set a precedent and be beyond its very limited budgets. The signs cost approximately £50 and the cost and installation of posts is approximately £400.

WBC Officers suggest that given the areas suggested enforcement and education would be more effective than static signs. Members considered that signage would serve to educate residents and requested the Assistant Clerk to contact WBC to explore whether WBC would be willing to fund the posts and their installation if the Parish Council funded the signs. **BD**

11. EV Chargers – Stansfield Drive, Grappenhall Heys

Council authorised the Clerk/Assistant Clerk to seek quotes for legal assistance on preparing Heads of Terms (HoTs) to propose to WBC in relation to granting a lease on part of the Stansfield Drive car park to install EV chargers and following that to negotiate and prepare a lease and to seek confirmation from WBC that it will pay all Parish Council's legal fees (Council Min 2026/62).

The Assistant Clerk sought quotes for the preparation of the HoTs from four local solicitors (see attached). Of the four one replied stating that their property team is at full capacity and that they are unable to take on new cases and another stating that they do not take on commercial work of this kind. Submissions and quotes have been received from the remaining two companies (see attached).

Members considered the submissions and **resolved to** recommend to Council that the quotes should now be forwarded to WBC along with its recommendation on the preferred quote (Quotation 2) and to seek confirmation that WBC will pay all Parish Council's legal fees. **BD**

12. PC EV and charger

The Council has indicated that it supports a switch to a nearly new/second-hand electric tipper van for the Parish Wardens (lease only) if feasible when the current lease runs out in December 2026. The Environment Committee has been requested to progress with the project to obtain costings to replace the current vehicle with an electric one, including the installation of an EV charger and to report back to Council for approval. Cllr Furnell provided an update at the meeting and explained that further work is required on the cost/benefits in advance of a recommendation for Council being considered at the next meeting of the Committee. **BDa/CW**

13. Thermal Imaging Camera

A local resident has requested whether the Council would consider initiating a thermal imaging camera loan service similar to that provided in Lymm. The loan service in Lymm is administered by Lymm

Environmental Action Forum (LEAF), a local community group which was granted monies from Lymm Parish Council to obtain the camera which allows residents to identify where they are losing heat within their homes. The camera is loaned to residents free of charge but with a £40 refundable deposit.

The cost of a thermal imaging camera, similar to that used by LEAF (FLIR ONE Edge Pro), is approximately £350. There is currently no evidence as to how much interest there would be from residents to borrow it. There would also be logistical and administrative implications for the Council in charging and loaning the equipment out to residents. It **was resolved** to recommend to Council that it does not pursue a Council run loan service but that it be suggested to the resident that if they were aware of any community group(s) willing to administer such a scheme they could apply to the Council for a grant for the purchase of the necessary equipment.

14. Parish Warden update

An update of recent/forthcoming activities was provided at the meeting.

15. Budget Review

The Assistant Clerk presented the 2026/27 expenditure to date.

16. Budget 2026/27

The Committee's budget for 2027/28 will be discussed at a future meeting of the Committee.

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