

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF ECCLESTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**held on TUESDAY 14 MAY 2024 at 7.30 pm**

**in ECCLESTON VILLAGE HALL, Kiln Lane, Ecclestone**

PRESENT: Cllr Sims (Chair)  
Cllrs Ashcroft, Johnson, C Pearl, G Pearl, Spencer, N Taylor, V Taylor and Williams  
2 members of the public  
J Anderson – Clerk

24.01 APOLOGIES

Cllr Cass

24.02 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Cllr G Pearl declared an interest in Item 24.20 – Planning Applications

24.03 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 9 APRIL 2024

**Resolved that the minutes be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.**

24.04 MATTERS ARISING

None.

24.05 ELECTION OF CHAIR

**It was proposed and seconded that Cllr Sims be elected as Parish Chair for the year 2024/2025.**

24.06 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

**It was proposed and seconded that Cllr Ashcroft be elected as Deputy Chair for the year 2024/2025.**

24.07 POLICE REPORT

PCSO Adam Jackson had been unable to attend. He had sent the latest crime figures.

24.08 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS/CODE OF CONDUCT

Councillors completed Declaration of Interests forms. Councillors were reminded that the Code of Conduct adopted by St Helens Council had been agreed and adopted by Ecclestone Parish Council in January 2022.

24.09 CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES

**Resolved that the committees be constituted as follows:**

Planning – Cllrs Ashcroft, Johnson, Sims, N Taylor and Williams

Finance – Cllrs Haw, G Pearl and Sims

Hall & Personnel – Cllrs Haw, C Pearl and Sims

Open Spaces – Cllrs Haw, C Pearl, G Pearl and Sims

Editorial – Cllrs Haw, G Pearl and Sims

Procedures – Cllrs Ashcroft, Haw, G Pearl and Sims

Smithy Working Party – all Councillors to attend. Held before each Parish Council meeting

Smithy Heritage – Cllrs Ashcroft, Sims and Williams

Ecclesfield Management – Cllrs Ashcroft, Cass, C Pearl, G Pearl, Sims and Spencer

War Memorial Working Party – Cllrs Cass and Haw

24.10 REPRESENTATION OF OUTSIDE BODIES

**Resolved that the following be noted:**

Lester Drive – Observers – Cllrs C and G Pearl

Merseyside Playing Fields – Cllr Haw

Merseytravel – Cllr Johnson

24.11 STANDING ORDERS, FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND QUORUM

**Resolved that Society of Local Council Clerks' model Standing Orders along with Financial Regulations continue to be used. Meetings would take place with a quorum of 4 councillors, as per Standing Orders.**

24.12 RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER AND INTERNAL AUDITOR

**Resolved that the Clerk continue to carry out the duties of Responsible Financial Officer and Ms A Roberts would carry out the role of Internal Auditor for 2024/2025.**

**Resolved that in order to comply with the current audit requirements, the Parish Council would request the Internal Auditor to undertake, on a regular basis, a review of the financial procedures adopted by the Council in connection with payments and receipts, insurance and other such matters as may be identified from time to time as part of ongoing assessment of the Council's activities.**

24.13 BANK MANDATE AND DIRECT DEBITS

**Resolved that the present mandate, specifying 2 Councillors and the Clerk sign cheques, would continue. Resolved also that the direct debits would continue for SSE Energy, Water Plus, CF Corporate (photocopier lease), BT (Smithy telephone) and GPS Telecoms (Clerk telephone). Bank transfer to be used for the following only: Merseyside Pension Fund and salaries for J Anderson, J Chamberlain, V Griffiths, R Kelsey and L Poole.**

24.14 APPROVAL OF ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

**The Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 was agreed by Councillors and signed by the Chair.**

**Internal Audit** – Ms Amanda Roberts had completed and signed the Annual Internal Audit Report for the External Audit when she carried out her final quarterly audit.

24.15 APPROVAL OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

**The Annual Accounting Statements 2023/24 were agreed and signed by the Chair.**

24.16 REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, EMERGENCY PLAN

**The following policies and procedures had been reviewed with no changes made:**

- Forward Plan
- Documentation Policy
- Documentation Plan
- Environmental Sustainability Statement
- Collections Development Policy
- Care and Conservation Policy
- Care and Conservation Plan
- Documentation Procedural manual
- Access Policy Statement
- Information and Data Protection Policy

- Privacy Notice
- Hall Terms and Conditions
- Emergency Plan

#### 24.17 RESIDENTS' ISSUES

A resident had emailed the Clerk raising the issue of parking around the Griffin Inn and on the grassed area. Cllr Sims reported that the situation was being monitored.

One resident attending the meeting explained that signs had been put on the grassed area near the Griffin pub to prevent parking. These were the same by-law as the ones on Broadway. He said that St Helens Council had told him that the same by-law could be applied to other areas in the Borough. He reported to St Helens Council that vehicles were still parking there and had pointed out the signs to drivers. St Helens Council said the police could intervene. Cllr Sims reported that the situation was still being monitored.

The resident told the meeting that the recently abandoned car had now been removed as it was registered with the DVLA. St Helens Council had contacted the DVLA and it had been removed.

The resident explained that he felt he had moved things on for himself and felt there was no enthusiasm to push matters. Cllr Spencer disagreed and enquired what evidence the resident had that Councillors were not pursuing issues raised. The resident explained that a bus stop had been promptly installed at Bleak Hill Road. Cllr Spencer explained that Merseytravel would have dealt with the bus stop.

Cllr G Pearl explained to the resident that he, along with Cllr Sims, had met several times with police and Highways regarding the parking at the Griffin. The police did not want the parked vehicles to park on the busy road causing more problems. He added that a trip rail around the area had been considered but this had been too costly.

Cllr Sims explained that Councillors attended to issues immediately and asked the resident not to infer that they were not enthusiastic.

Cllr Williams explained that as Councillors, they were not professionals on issues and had to rely on advice from expert staff. Unfortunately, with staff cut backs some staff were having to cover areas that they may not be expert in therefore issues could take time to resolve. He added that it was a sad reflection of local authorities not just in the local area.

Cllr Johnson added that it was as frustrating for Parish Councillors that what may seem like a simple issue could be a complex problem after speaking to expert staff. Sometimes the problems were that there was a lack of staff dealing with issues but certainly no lack of interest on behalf of Parish Councillors.

The resident thanked Councillors for their time.

#### 24.18 REPORTS

##### **Resolved to note the following:**

Smithy Working Party – all Councillors were given a copy of the Curators' Report for May. The following points were discussed:

- The new exhibition 'Keeping up Appearances' had been well received.
- Blacksmith's Day – 18 May 2024, 12pm-6pm. The Curators would gratefully accept any help on the day and contributions of cake to be sold in the tea rooms.

- The Curators had asked why the recycling containers were not used. The clerk replied that the Parish Council paid for trade waste which did not include collection of recycling or green waste. Cllr Sims would ask St Helens Council if it would be possible to have the recycling collected.

#### 24.19 NORTHERN FOREST TREE PLANTING FUND

An email had been received explaining that St Helens Council would be applying for tree planting funding and if successful would like to plant trees on land leased to Parish Council ie Ecclesfield, Saleswood Avenue, Millwood Avenue and Kiln Lane open spaces. **Agreed as long as they were positioned appropriately.**

#### 24.20 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

**Resolved to note the following:**

##### **Delegated**

##### **Applications**

50 Fairholme Avenue

Two storey side extension, alterations to existing driveway and raised patio to the rear  
N/O

68 Old Lane

Single storey side extension

N/O

2 Pike House Road

Part two storey, part single storey side extension along with front porch extension

N/O

533 Burrows Lane

Single storey side extension, garage conversion and replacement of existing timber cladding

N/O

##### **Decisions**

44 The Avenue

Single storey rear extension and front porch along with first floor side extension

Granted 22/4/24

3 Nichol Road

Single storey lean-to side extension and front porch

29/4/24

31 Howards Lane

Part single storey, part two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, alterations to the garage and reconfiguration of windows, replacement porch, creation of basement, removal of a chimney flue, application of external render and associated works

Granted 8/5/24

53A Broadway

Two storey side extension

Granted 9/5/24

#### 24.21 ACCOUNTS

**Received:** Village Hall £412, 1<sup>st</sup> half precept £39,082.40, RK Salary + PAYE £455.83, Windle phone £12.24, HMRC Jan-Mar £3,078.27, interest 0.62 and £86.49

Total Receipts

£43,127.85

##### **Payments:**

Water Plus

33.22

GPS Telecom – Clerk’s phone March

44.06

BT – Smithy phone

208.91

C F Corporate – copier lease

76.80

Water Plus

33.22

M Waring – party refund

26.00

Norwyn Ltd – artwork for totem advertising – Smithy	92.40
Best Security – Smithy alarm annual monitoring and service	457.39
J Chamberlain – May	197.52
V Griffiths – May	197.52
L Poole – May	518.36
J Anderson – May	1537.17
R Kelsey – Ecclesfield May	364.63
Merseyside Pension Fund – employer and employee contributions May	586.22
GPS Telecom – Clerk’s phone	48.08
Red Bank Cider – cider for Smithy IBD event	160.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4581.50</b>

**RECONCILIATION** – The Clerk reported that as at 30 April 2024 the balance in the Current Account was £6,500.00, Reserve Account £80,280.11 and Capital Deposit Account £476.00.

**PETTY CASH** – Expenditure for the month of April 2024 £7.40  
balance at the end of April 2024 £25.83

**INTERNAL AUDIT** – Amanda Roberts had carried out the quarterly audit with nothing to report. She completed and signed the Annual Internal Audit Report for the External Audit.

24.22 CORRESPONDENCE

None.

24.23 DATES OF MEETINGS

**Resolved to note the following:**

Tuesday 4 June 2024	7.00 pm	Ecclesfield	Village Hall
Tuesday 11 June 2024	7.00 pm	Smithy Meeting	Village Hall
	7.30 pm	Parish Council	Village Hall

24.24 COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION

It was unanimously agreed to co-opt John Hemus as Parish Councillor in West Ward.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.

SIGNED ..... DATED .....