

Willaston Parish Council

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MINUTES

of a meeting of the Council held at
St Luke's Church, Coppice Road, Willaston, CW5 6QA
on

Thursday 24th June 2025 at 7.00pm

Present:

Councillors: Angier, Bailey, Cutts, Kirby, Newton, and Salisbury (Chairman)

In attendance:

M Clay - Acting Clerk to the Council and 1 member of the public.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Brazier, Morris and Morton.

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensation Considerations

- a. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests - Cllr Angier declared that she was a payee on the schedule of payments (Item 12).
- b. Cllr Angier declared an interest in Item 18, Allotments.
- c. Cllr Angier was granted a dispensation to participate in discussions about the allotments, while being an allotment holder, on the basis that this was in the best interests of expediting Council business and that the Interest itself was negligible.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The Council resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on the 24th May 2025 were a true record and that the Chair be authorised to sign them as such.

4. Police

a. Report from the Council's Police Liaison Representatives.

The Council received a written report from Cllr Morris and a verbal report from Cllr Kirby. In discussion it was noted that the Police Liaison Officer had previously requested the ability to discuss matters less formally and, with the creation and appointment the Council's own Liaison Representatives (CPLRs), this was now possible. It was also noted that complaints about behaviour at the playing field had been received from a significant number of people, rather than just one resident. The Council welcomed community policing.

Following discussion it was resolved that:

- ◆ the CPLR's Terms of Reference should be provided to Sgt Stonier;
- ◆ the question of whether the security company are able to enforce the right by by-law to eject a banned individual would be investigated;
- ◆ it would be pointed out to Sgt Stonier that the ban arose from a long sequence of events, rather than just recent events and that it was not intended as a punishment but rather as a last resort intended to put an end to the anti-social behaviour that had been dogging the community;
- ◆ the banned individual's father would be sent a copy of the banning letter as

it was not clear whether he was aware of the full circumstances;

- ◆ based on information provided by Sgt Stonier, that the banned individual's father would like to discuss matters, he would be invited to get in touch to arrange this and that, if this were to be taken up, the meeting would be with the CPLRs.

Cllr Kirby also reported that he was keen to revivify the Speedwatch Scheme. It was noted that it was essential, for legal reasons associated with the GDPR rules, that old records are securely destroyed promptly and that the registration numbers of speeders (or anyone else) must not be retained once they have been submitted to the police.

b. Report from the Liaison Officer from the Police.

The Liaison Officer from the police had met with Cllr Morris and his comments had been reflected in her report.

c. Police Investigation into Damage to Council Assets.

In discussion it was noted that the damage had been caused on the 12th April and had been reported on the 14th but that it had taken 30 days for the police to respond. The cost of the damage had been c.£150. The police had suggested that Community Resolution Orders (CRO) could be issued to the three individuals involved. These are semi-formal, can have conditions attached and they remain on record. It was agreed that CROs would be sufficient warning and were preferable to more formal action as they would avoid the perpetrators of the damage getting criminal records. It was resolved to seek a CRO with a condition that the three individuals contribute £50 each in compensation and adhere to the by-laws and that the banned individual respects the ban until such time as it is lifted. It was further resolved that the ban itself be reviewed in 12 months.

5. Public Forum

No matters were raised.

6. Borough Councillors' Reports

No reports had been received from Cheshire East Councillors. It was noted that no Cheshire East Councillors had attended for over a year (and considerably longer in some cases).

7. Planning Application Consultations

There were no planning applications to consider.

8. Police Liaison Reports

This matter had been dealt with under item 4a, above.

9. Playing Field and Open Spaces

Lettie Spencer Playing Field - It was noted that the gates had been opened late on the 17th June due to an error on the part of the contractor - this will be taken up with the contractor.

The Spinney - The contractor had reported that the works had been done.

Mike Heywood Green - The flower beds had been cleared and new planting completed.

War Memorial - The flower beds had also been cleared and re-planting completed at the war memorial.

10. Birthday Honours

It was noted that Mr Ian Potts had been awarded the MBE for services to young people and it was resolved that the Chairman would write to Mr Potts offering congratulations.

11. Clerk's Report

The Acting Clerk reported that:

- ◆ he had received a complaint from a resident about noise being generated by parked-up taxis at the end of Coppice Road; he had advised the resident as to whom this should be reported to;
- ◆ a resident had complained about the fence that had been erected at the White Star ground and he had explained the planning process.
- ◆ the Mayor of Nantwich had issued an invitation to the Council to attend the VJ anniversary service on the evening of Friday 15th August.
- ◆ The Council's solicitors, Hibberts, had written to ask whether the papers relating to the now resolved land dispute were to be kept by them. The Acting Clerk recommended that these should be retained by the Council and this was agreed. It was also agreed that
- ◆ following further discussion at the next meeting, on the agenda of which this item will be placed, Hibberts would be asked to review the rental agreement as it had been agreed that it was out of date and needed revision.
- ◆ The press release about the non-attendance of Cheshire East councillors would be sent out in the next couple of weeks (the text had been agreed at the previous meeting).

12. Payments

Cllr Angier, having previously declared an Interest in the item, did not participate in this item.

The schedule of payments, totalling £3,670.65 (details annexed to these minutes) had been circulated to the Council and certified by Cllrs Bailey and Cutts. The Council resolved to approve the schedule.

13. Annual Accounts

Following discussion and questions, the Council resolved to approve the full 2024/25 Accounts and end of year bank reconciliation. The latter had been certified at the April meeting.

14. Internal Auditor's Report

In discussion it was noted that the Risk Assessment requires review and that un-presented cheques from previous years should be written back into the accounts and this had been done by the out-going Clerk. The Council resolved to receive the report.

15. Blank Item

16. Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

The Council received the Return and, following questions and brief discussion, resolved:

- i. to approve the Statement at Part 2, Section 1 and to authorise the Chair to sign it on behalf of the Council;
- ii. to approve the information provided at Part 2, Section 2 and to authorise the Chair to countersign it on the behalf of the Council.

17. Notice of Public Rights of Inspection of the Accounts

The Council noted that the Inspection period would run from 26th June to 7th August.

18. Allotments

Cllr Angier circulated a report for discussion. The Chair highlighted the fact that 21 plots had been let over the past few weeks and thanked Cllr Angier for this considerable achievement. Allotment application forms are now available on line, making access much easier. The following recommendations were proposed by Cllr Angier and the Council resolved to:

- a. Increase the gate key deposit to £15;

- b. Agree a residency criterion for out-of-parish applications of 2 miles - applications outside this radius will not be considered.
- c. Flexibility around the allocation of difficult to let plots (for example because of long term neglect) to allow someone willing to take on such a plot to do so ahead of someone further up the waiting list who is not willing to do so.
- d. To allocate a fund of £1,000 from the allotments maintenance budget line to pay for skips to support new holders clearing overgrown plots.
- e. Approve up to £1,000 for the professional clearance of severely overgrown plots, prior to letting.
- f. Re-send the updated tenancy agreement to all holders and get signed copies back.
- g. In the course of the coming months to conduct a full review of charges for allotments to consider:
 - ♦ Pricing and plot sizes, including a gradual increase in all rents to bring them in line with comparable allotment sites and to reflect all costs, including administration time.
 - ♦ Two-tier pricing for residents and non-residents;
 - ♦ Consider the provision and potential charges for additional services such as skips and lavatories.

19. Next Meeting

Following a brief discussion concerning the arrangements for the clerking of the next meeting it was agreed to go ahead with the scheduled date of 29th July 2025.

20. Exclusion of Public and Press

The Chairman moved exclude the public and press from the remainder of the meeting, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and this was resolved.

21. Appointment of New Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer

The staffing committee had previously circulated a report following the recruitment process and the Council resolved to:

- a. Approve the appointment of Claire Coventry with effect from 1st July 2025 for 12 hours per week, with a 6 month probationary period;
- b. Approve the Terms of Appointment, at SCP 18 of the pay scale and based on the SLCC standard national contract;
- c. To add the new Clerk to the Unity Trust Bank account mandate as account administrator after the 1st July.

The meeting closed at 9.41pm

Signed as a true record by authority of the Council:

Chair:

Date: 29th July 2025