

WALTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) held on Monday 15 May 2023 at 7.00pm in the Village Hall,
Walton

Present - Councillors David Aspland (Chair), Richard Prudhoe, Ed Simpson, Mark Wake
Also in Attendance Ward Cllr Norma Harrington
David Taylor
The Clerk
9 Residents

Apologies from Cllr Stephen Sharp.

1. Welcome – Cllr Aspland

Cllr Aspland welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the APM held 9 May 2022

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9 May 2022 be accepted and approved as a true record, agreed by all.

3. Chairman's Annual Report

Cllr Aspland presented the Annual Report (Appendix 1). The report focused on another year of progress and achievements.

4. Summary of Finances 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023

David Taylor (retired as Parish Councillor following 4 May 2023 elections) presented the financial overview for the year 2022-23 (Appendix 2), including a review of receipts and payments, opening & closing cash reserves and outstanding commitments.

5. Open Forum

a. Traffic

Main concerns from residents were traffic-related resulting from:

- Traffic issues associated with planned developments affecting speed, volume and type of traffic (incl. HGVs) passing through the village.
- Critical areas of health & safety - notably cycle track entry & exit points.
- Ensuring appropriate traffic calming measures were adopted.

It was noted that that village had agreed a traffic calming 'plan' following a series of meetings and workshops in consultation with LCC Highways, who had also carried out a comprehensive road traffic survey. LCC had agreed that this would be delivered by September 2022. The work was passed from LCC to contractors and had subsequently stalled. The Parish Council is aware that in the LCC priority listing Walton comes very low down but continues to press Highways for action.

Some preliminary work on 'Village Gateways' has progressed but there is a case for an overall review of traffic calming measures to include the potential cost/benefit of road closures and re-routed traffic.

LCC has indicated that there will be funding available from a major new development at TATE in support of traffic mitigation and that Walton will be considered for some of that allocation.

Ward Cllr Harrington commented that a backlog of HGV and learner driver tests at the DVSA Walton Vehicle Testing Centre may be temporarily affecting traffic volumes in the vicinity.

b. Cycle Track: H&S issues

The Chair agreed to contact Thorp Arch Parish Council regarding ongoing H&S issues at the cycle track exit onto Wighill Lane (the position determined by LCC Planners) and involve Ward Councillors and LCC Highways to formally bring this to their attention.

A proposal to form a PC Working Group to address ongoing traffic concerns will be included as an agenda item at the next Parish Council meeting. The village would be consulted in order to determine the most appropriate and effective traffic calming measures.

6. Close

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Signed.....Chairman

Date.....

Contact the Clerk at secretary@walton-pc.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Walton Parish Council Chairman's Report 2023

I feel we have had another positive year as Parish Council. Compared to many, our community is thriving, crime is negligible and our finances despite the limited size of the precept are in good order. The additional injection of c £10,000 of CIL contribution into the coffers, reinforces this position and will hopefully allow us to deliver some additional positive projects over the coming years.

One of the ongoing success stories we should all celebrate is the Village Hall. As part of an ongoing process which started in 2021, the Hall is now a charitable incorporated organisation, a defined legal entity, able to stand alone, raise money and apply for grant funding for improvement projects. As a result a refurbishment is planned to include for the replacement of the wooden floor and the installation of a new infra-red heating system that will bring the Hall up to modern standards. The positive effect is now that regular bookings are in place from Scape School the Walton Group of Artists, WISE and a dance and Pilates class, all activities that as a village we can get involved with. The Hall also hosted the superb Queens Platinum Jubilee lunch, created the Jubilee Garden and was the base for the now 'legendary' Walton Bonfire Night which was attended by Over 500 people. It is the base for the Christmas light display which again was fantastic, seeing, almost without exception, every house in the village, lit up and engaged in the project which I feel really brings the village together as a community.

So thanks to Brian, Mark and the committee for making the Hall such a central and important hub for the village.

As a Parish Council, we have also made significant progress, although it has been and continues to be a significant battle, to address traffic and drainage two of the main concerns for the village considering the continued developments in the surrounding area. My thanks go to in particular, Brodie and Councillor Harrington, along with the Hall Park Residents who have all engaged tirelessly with Yorkshire water and Leeds City Council to formulate solutions to the numerous ongoing and totally unacceptable conditions that we are faced with. The year ahead will I trust see solutions put in place and we will ensure that everything is done to achieve results rather than simply promises of more investigations and analysis.

Action in relation to the Village Plan has continued during the year. I believe the development along Springs Lane is progressing well through the planning system and it was fantastic to see over 40 people turn up to the presentation in relation to the proposed scheme at Walnut Farm, the former Coal Yard on the main Street. As a Parish council we are sanctioned to represent the views of the village so such a level of input and feedback was encouraging and has enabled us to respond accordingly and I trust work with the Planning authority and the developer to ensure we have a scheme in line with the agreed plan which will have a positive effect on the village moving forward.

Whilst Walton remains only a small village, due to the input and efforts of the individual councillors we really have achieved great things and for their continued commitment I do thank the team and especially Helena who as clerk has done an exceptional job in ensuring that all administration and compliance is in good order. It is therefore with great regret that for a myriad of very justifiable reasons, I have recently had to accept the resignations of Helena, David Taylor and Brodie Clark, who have all decided to step down from the Parish Council. I would just like to formally thank all of you for your support and dedication over the past years and wish you all the best for the future.

I don't like to dwell on the negative, but clearly with less councillors we have less capacity to work and deliver for the village, so if anyone has any desire or motivation to help out or join the Parish Council, please do let me know. The positive is that we have been able to recruit a new Clerk, Deborah Marshall, who comes highly recommended, and I am sure her experience, expertise and enthusiasm will serve us very well.

Finally, thanks again to the Parish Council team but also all others who continue to engage in Village life and look to influence matters that affect the village. From my point of view being involved in the last village work day that saw over 35 residents planting over 600 whips on the cycle path, was perhaps my highlight of the year. It made me very proud to be part of this fabulous village we all call home.

David Aspland
Chair
Walton Parish Council

Appendix 2

Walton Parish Council **Annual Review of the Financial Year** **1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023**

Please find attached the annual income and expenditure statement for the above period.

Receipts

For the 2022-23 financial year the Council received a total of £6,995 in receipts. Receipts included £6,655 of Precept Income and £316 in VAT reclaims.

Payments

Expenditure for the year totalled £7,162 including VAT which has been reclaimed. There were no major one off expenses during the year. Significant expenses were £2,619 for the clerk remuneration, £1,543 ongoing loan repayment for the cycle path, £600 for the rent of the cycle path and playground land and £420 for maintaining and repairing the church clock.

The remaining balance from the 2018 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is £515 which should be used by October this year. Since the financial year end the Council has received a further £10,756 in CIL monies.

Opening and Closing Cash Reserves.

The opening cash reserves on 1st April 2022 were £7,956 and the closing cash reserves on 31st March 2023 were £7,989 made up of £7,274 in general reserves and £515 of CIL monies. The general reserve equates to 12 months of the Council's precept income which is within local government financial guidelines.

Outstanding Commitments

As at 31st March 2022 there were no outstanding commitments save for the usual ongoing operating expenses of the Council.

2023-24 Precept.

In January 2023 the Council approved an increase of 5.6% in the annual precept for the 2023-24 financial year to take account of the expected increased costs of running the Council over the coming year. This increase is significantly lower than other neighbouring Parish Councils increases which have been set around 10% and reflect the ongoing good financial management of the Council.

Next Steps

The Council's books have now been reviewed by the independent auditor. Following approval of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), these will be submitted to the external auditors.

Finally

On behalf of the Council, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Helena Buck for her professionalism in managing the Council's books to such a high standard and for ensuring that the Council's internal financial controls have been adhered over the past few years. I quote from the independent auditor's report which said **"Your Audit was a pleasure. All the data was in the file, there were no differences and your governance is on point"** as testimony to Helena's efforts. Helena will be much missed by all of us on the Council and we would like to wish her every success with her relocation to the South to be near her family. I would also like to welcome Deborah Marshall who will be succeeding Helena as Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for Walton Parish Council.

Councillor David Taylor

11th May 2023