

Minutes of WALTON PARISH COUNCIL meeting held TUESDAY, 14th November, 2023

Present: Councillors: - Armstrong, Hodgson, Matthews, Shaw, Wilkinson and Weaver.

In attendance: - Clerk

044/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – RESOLVED Unitary Authority Cllr Mallinson apologised for absence.

045/23 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS – RESOLVED No requests were received since the previous meeting for dispensations to speak and/or vote on any matter where a member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

046/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – RESOLVED No declarations by elected members of interests in respect of items on this agenda were received.

047/23 MINUTES

047/23.1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH SEPTEMBER 2023 – RESOLVED
To authorise the Chairman sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2023.

048/23 MATTERS ARISING

048/23.1 Finger Post update – RESOLVED CCC confirmed that the Finger Post is their property but would wait until the end of the nesting season before a site inspection and actions. Clerk to ask for a further update on Highways reference EI/165221. **RESOLVED** Clerk to invite Cllr Mallinson and Cumberland Highways to a site meeting to discuss.

037/23.2 Village Green Grass Cutting Contract – RESOLVED after tender to award a 3 year contract to GREEN TEAM GARDEN SERVICES.

037/23.3 Signage and Planters – Cllr Weaver reported that the further planters are now in place and then discussion took place with regard to the issue of vehicles now being – “moved” further down beyond the Reading Rooms.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would investigate the procurement of a “Swinging Sign” that would make it more obvious where the “Reading Rooms” were situated. The Chair would seek agreement from the Chair of the Village Hall committee in this regard.

It was further **RESOLVED** after much discussion that the Clerk would attempt to establish a legal view with regard to the strip of Village Green is now in danger of deterioration due to vehicles parking there. The Parish Council is concerned to protect the Village Green in the long term but balanced against the safety of residents and visitors with the increased incidence of parked vehicles.

037/23.4 Leaps Rigg Solar Farm – the Clerk reported that the application for planning with regard to the above had now been approved and that this signals the very real prospect of substantial community funding (Capital investment) for Walton parish from the developer once the development is completed (expected 2026).

Cllr Shaw reported on the confidential minute meeting with Cllr Weaver and the position that the Parish Council will be the only body that the developer will contract with. During the period 2024 – 2026, this will mean an additional burden of responsibility on the Parish Council that cannot be ignored.

After much discussion it was concluded that in the next year or so, the Parish Council will have to seek views and volunteer engagement within the Parish to bring forward the construction of specific community- based projects that can be presented to the Developer to unlock community capital funding. In this context, there may also be opportunities to draw in other grant funding in support of these projects.

The Council agreed, unanimously, that in the new circumstances, there will be extra responsibilities for the Clerk and some changes to the post are now required and were **RESOLVED** as follows:

- For the next 3 years from May 2024, the Clerk will have an additional 120 hours per annum to support the development and presentation of community-based projects
- The additional time spent by the Clerk against the 120 hour per annum will need to be reported to Parish Council meetings
- The Clerk will develop a form of template for community projects so that on completion, the project proposals can be considered fairly against agreed criteria by the Parish Council, by the developer and, potentially, other grant awarding bodies
- A new budget line will be added to the Budget year 2024/25 for £1200 reflecting the additional time for the Clerk.

049/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – None

UNITARY AUTHORITY REPORT - None

050/23 FINANCIAL MATTERS - Expenditure on the schedule was approved, Budget v Actual reports were distributed together with an up-to-date Bank Reconciliation, a general discussion took place accepting the reports and council **RESOLVED** to request a precept amount of £9,550

051/23 REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORTS – both Cllr Hodgson indicated that he had not received an update on the Village Hall activities as no meeting (to his knowledge) had been held. Concern was raised as to the length of time the hall roof had been awaiting attention. Cllr Hogg to report further on his investigation with the Village Hall chair.

052/23 CORRESPONDENCE AND LITERATURE RECEIVED BY THE CLERK –

Newsletter – Now available for distribution. Clerk to deliver to Cllr Hogg Thanks from the Parish Council to Ivan Whetton for all his work on the newsletter

053/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 9th January 2024 Village Hall, Walton, 7.30pm