

# Walton on Trent Parish Council

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## MINUTES OF WALTON ON TRENT ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON 9 MAY 2022 AT 6.45PM AT THE VILLAGE HALL

**PRESENT** Councillors A Barnes (Chair) P Byron (Vice Chair), C Mousley, N Forrest, H Hearn, M Rafferty, Parish Clerk and Councillor S Swann (DDC).

No members of the public were in attendance.

Cllr A Barnes welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish meeting

### **22/16 To receive apologies for absence**

Cllr A Wheelton (SDDC), Cllr S Ackroyd (SDDC) and Cllr R Mizuro.

### **22/17 Variation of Order of Business (if any)**

None.

### **22/18 Declaration of Members Interests**

None disclosed.

### **22/19 Public Speaking**

Cllr S Swann report – “As many of you will be aware, over the last twelve months I have regularly attended meetings of Walton on Trent Parish Council and always updated Members on an array of local issues as well as numerous wider Derbyshire County Council matters.

When I was first elected last May, the Parish Council made it clear that it was very keen to be fully updated with information about the new bypass and bridge, and I have ensured that this has happened.

When required, I liaise with the Parish Clerk and actively address any issues as soon as they are brought to my attention, reporting back as appropriate. As you might expect, I have also taken up numerous issues for local residents.

During the year since my election, I have also attended every meeting of the County Council, and many more besides, representing local residents and communities.

Walton on Trent has a very effective Parish Council, with its Members and Clerk working hard on behalf of the village and its community, and I will continue to work in partnership with the Parish Council for the benefit of local people”

### **22/20 Chairman’s Report and Action Plan**

Cllr A Barnes stated – “Tonight’s meeting is the first Parish Meeting to be held in person during the period of the current council – last year’s Parish Meeting having been held virtually due to Covid restrictions. The meeting also marks the start of the final 12 months of the current Parish Council’s period of office – with elections due to take place in May 2023. I’d like to use this opportunity to update the Parish on the activities of the council in the last 12 months and provide some information as to the council’s priorities for the year ahead.

I’d like to begin firstly with a note of thanks to all my fellow councillors, Helen Hearn, Neill Forrest, Mark Rafferty, Richard Mizuro, Carl Mousley, and both Vice-Chairs during this period, Adam Lloyd and Phil Byron. We are all volunteers with a desire to make Walton on Trent a better place for everyone to live and while it can be easy to criticise local government, if councillors did not step up and take action to represent small communities like Walton, I think it is fair to say that we would be overlooked by the larger authorities. I’d also note that there are currently 2 vacancies for Parish Councillors so if anyone would like to join us to improve this small village on the border of Staffs and Derbyshire then please let one of the councillors or the clerk know – we are a friendly bunch!

I would also like to thank our Clerk, Ian Bentley, who joined us at the start of the financial year. Many of the village will know Ian from the cricket club; he has been a brilliant clerk, keeping the Council's administration and finances in accordance with all the regulations and providing great support and knowledge to the Council. I would also like to thank our lengthsman, Bill Newman, who keeps the village tidy with his regular litter picking.

During the year the Parish Council has worked with Grupo Antolin to successfully renovate and re-site the dilapidated phone box from the village hall garden to its new position on the corner of Station Lane and Main Street. The phone box now contains a defibrillator – so there are 2 defibs now in the village with access 24/7 (the phone box and near the school), with a further one in the Swan during pub opening hours. The Parish Council would like to say Muchas Gracias to Grupo Antolin (especially Graeme Abbott and the maintenance team) and thank you also to Matt Dunn for the electrics.

The village hall remains the Parish Council's largest asset. As Covid restrictions have eased, the hall has been used more, with the Community Club returning, regular table tennis and badminton bookings and Yoga sessions. Please contact the Parish Clerk if you would like to book the village hall – there is lots of availability. The Parish Council have also successfully agreed a new license agreement with Cosmic recruitment for use of the village hall cottage – we are grateful for their support. During the year, the Parish Council started discussions with the District Council (who own the hall) regarding significant renovations to the hall – we await their reply. The Council also had a working day in the village hall to tidy up the garden, with a new border being planted and a clear out of surplus kitchen items. In the meantime, it has become increasingly apparent that the hall kitchen needs replacing in a short timeframe. This will be one of the key priorities for the coming year.

The Parish Council notes that the Women's Institute celebrated their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year (an occasion marked with tea, cake and rose planting in the village hall garden), but also sadly closed. It is community groups, such as the WI, Community Club and the Cricket Club, together with institutions such as the Church and School which help bind small village communities like Walton together. The Parish Council has grant funding available to support community groups and activities in the area – during the year the Council has provided funds to support the enlarged nets at the cricket club and has approved a grant to the community club for a bus outing, together with funding towards the Jubilee Celebrations. If any local community groups wish to apply for grant funding, a form is available on the Parish Council's website or from the clerk.

Parish Councillors and the Clerk have also been active in discussions with other local authorities and third parties regarding local issues, including traffic concerns (particularly relating to new developments both in the village and at Drakelow and festivals at Catton Hall) and road safety and speeding. The Council has also pushed for improvements at the park including repairs of the existing equipment and the installation of the new trim trail. The Parish Council wishes to investigate further improvements to the park in the future. The Parish Council has held discussions with other parish councils regarding purchase and installation of mobile speed monitoring devices to provide data on vehicle speeds in and out of the village to provide evidence of the needs for some traffic calming measures at key points in Walton. The Parish Council has also provided input into the scoping document for the consultation on Oaklands Solar Farm and will provide comments into the planning process of this development in due course.

A key development that will impact the village in the near and long term is the construction of the Walton Bypass. The Council is part of the Drakelow Steering Group, chaired by Cllr Wheelton, along with Barton Parish Council, Staffordshire County Council, Drakelow Parish Meeting, Walton Cricket Club and Countryside Developers which meets regularly to discuss the progress of both the Drakelow Development and the Bypass. It is hoped that technical approval for the bypass will be completed by both highways authorities shortly so that construction can commence in the summer. While I note that not all villagers welcome the bypass (or at least it's location next to the cricket club), it is clear there is a need for a new road as Station Lane and the Bailey Bridge cannot cope with existing volumes. I also hope that by changing Station Lane to a pedestrian/cycleway there will be more encouragement for people to walk/cycle shorter distances rather than jumping straight in the car.

The Parish Council's key priorities for the coming year are:

1. Maintain and improve the village hall – at a minimum to replace the existing kitchen and to work with SDDC to agree further improvements, especially to the toilets;
2. Continue to engage with the developers at Drakelow to ensure that Walton is kept informed of the development of the bypass and that the planning conditions particularly with regard to impact on the cricket club/walking and cycling routes in and around Walton are adhered to;

3. To work with other parish councils and Derbyshire County Councillor to purchase speed monitoring equipment to obtain data on speeds into and out of the village; and
4. To investigate the opportunities for further improvements at the Park

In summary, I would like to thank all those people who give up their time to support community activities in and around Walton, the Sports, Scout and Guide leaders, the Advent Windows at Christmas, the organisers of the Community Club, the Parochial Church Council and Church Wardens, the Cricket Club and last but not least those supporting Teresa Franklin in organising the Queen's Jubilee Celebrations which promises to be great fun (hopefully the weather will be kind). Thanks for your time this evening. Any questions to the council?"

No questions were raised.

***Resolved: The members of the Walton on Trent Parish Council thanked the Chair for all the work that she has done through the year and compiling a comprehensive report and agreed with the outlined key priorities.***

#### **22/21 Date of the next Meeting**

***Resolved: Walton on Trent Parish Council approved that the next Annual Parish Meeting to be confirmed***

**There being no other business to be transacted the meeting closed at 6.55pm.**