

Windle Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of the Parish of Windle
held on Tuesday 21 March 2017 at 7pm at Eccleston Village Hall, Kiln Lane

Present Councillor N Ashcroft (Chairman)
Councillor R Barton (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor W Ashcroft
Councillor A Bate
Councillor J Cunliffe
Councillor A Dockerty
Councillor K D Roughley
Councillor E Uren

Also in Attendance J Anderson (Clerk to the Council)
4 residents
Cllr Gill Neal – Windle Ward Councillor

190 Opening of the Meeting – Cllr N Ashcroft welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a prayer.

191 Apologies for Absence: None

192 Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 15 March 2016 were accepted as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

193 Chairman's Report: The Chairman, Cllr Nancy Ashcroft, thanked all the Councillors for their support during her year in office and she thanked the Clerk for the administrative support during the year. She read her Chairman's Report:
It was with total pleasure that I was voted in by the members of Windle Parish Council to wear the Chain of Office for the fourth time in my 22 years as a Parish Councillor.

Before I hand over the Chain of Office to Cllr Richard Barton could I take this opportunity to thank my friends, fellow colleagues and all the Parish residents who have supported me so well during the past twelve months. Could I also give a big thank you to our Clerk Janet for helping me numerous times during my term of office.

It is with mixed emotions that I have to do this report to you. We have sadly lost another of my dear friends – last year's Chairman Cllr Sheila Barton. She will be sorely missed by all of us as she was a tireless worker for Windle, both as a Parish Councillor and a Bleak Hill School Governor. She was a personal friend of mine and a great help to me on numerous occasions over the years. And I know all of us on the Parish Council send our sincere condolences to Cllr Richard Barton and his family.

Also, my dear friend Cllr Marie McNulty passed away last year. She and I had been friends since 1958.

However, on a much lighter and happier note I have to report to you that once again my first engagement was to present the Bleak Hill Primary School awards. I always love doing this as the children themselves don't know that they have won an award until their names are called out, and to see the disbelief and then delight on their faces is lovely! (Their parents are in on the secret so they can attend the ceremony). Every time I present these awards I say the same thing to the children that they are ALL winners because they are pupils at Bleak Hill Primary.

Another of my favourite events is to judge one of the other awards, the Garden Competition along with Cllr Ann Bate and Cllr Edna Uren. Ann took over from Marie when Marie became ill and I would like to personally thank her on behalf of us all for the excellent job

she does to organise the competition. The Garden Awards were presented in September and as usual it was a pleasant and convivial evening. It was decided that there should be a cup presented for the Chairman's choice in Cllr Marie McNulty's name. Next year also one of the other Garden Awards will be presented in Cllr Sheila Barton's name. This is because both of them sadly died whilst still active Councillors serving the community of Windle.

In November I laid Windle Parish Council's poppy wreath at the Cenotaph. Over the years the attendance at this ceremony has grown and it is very heartening to see so many St Helens residents coming to honour the memory of all the men and women who have fought and died for our freedom.

At the beginning of December we had our tree lighting event at Bleak Hill School. Again this is always a happy and pleasant event and is attended by the Mayor and Mayoress. Once again the weather was kind to us and we were able to have the ceremony outside. There was carol singing, a visit from Father Christmas (or Santa to give the more modern name!) along with the Master of Ceremonies, who engages with the children on the microphone and makes them all laugh and lustily sing the carols. The Chair of the Parish is obliged to say a few words, again something I enjoy doing as it is always my ambition to get the children to shout loudly for Father Christmas, and to tell me whose special birthday it is on Christmas Day. I would also like to take this opportunity again for the hospitality given to us by the school, particularly for all the parents afterwards to go into the main hall to enjoy socialising with one another and to partake of refreshments. The Councillors and teachers go into the Staff Room for hot mince pies and beverages – including gluhwein and wine!

This always marks the start of Windle Parish's Christmas season. We then have our pre-Christmas party always on the Tuesday before Christmas. This is held for the many Windle Parishioners who have made a difference to the lives of the residents of the Parish of Windle. It is held in the Village Hall at the bottom of Kiln Lane and marks the end of the Parish ceremonies for the municipal year.

It is with regret that I have to tell you that this will be my last year as Parish Councillor, as unfortunately due to present and ongoing health problems I feel that I cannot do the office of Parish Councillor justice so unfortunately I will be resigning at the end of this municipal year. I would like to thank each and every one of you for your friendship, helpfulness and humour. I have enjoyed my 22 years immensely and hope that I can be included as an invited guest to the ceremonies mentioned above.

Yours in friendship and a little sadness
CLLR NANCY ASHCROFT

Councillors and residents applauded Cllr Ashcroft.

194 Financial Statement: The Clerk submitted a financial report, summarised as follows:

	£
Balance at 1 April 2016	8162.00
Plus projected receipts to 31 March 2017	12135.00
	<hr/>
	20297.00
Less payments to 31 March 2017	12072.00
Projected Balance at 31 March 2017	<hr/> <hr/> 8225.00

195 Reports

(a) Parochial Charities – none

(b) School Governors – Cllr Ashcroft had requested minutes of Governors' meetings

(c) District Councillors – Cllr Gill Neal, District Councillor for Windle Ward attended the meeting and reported as follows:

(i) regarding the resident's email about parking on the grass verges on Bleak Hill Road, Cllr Neal had been in touch with Highways at St Helens Council to request they take legal advice and ascertain the cost of implementing a bye law to prevent parking on the grass
(ii) the path across Lynton Way play area had been resurfaced and she had asked for the edges of the grass to be reseeded

(iii) a letter had been sent by St Helens Council to the land owner to cut back the overgrown shrubbery at Kiln Lane. Once this had been done the stone work on the bridge would be examined

(iv) St Helens Local Plan – the consultation period ended in January. St Helens Council officers would be considering all sites. In a few weeks there would be a draft plan proposed which would be for further consultation. The Local Plan would be finalised over the summer and put to the Government in 2018. Residents asked why St Council wanted to use greenbelt land. Cllr Neal replied to say that the plan was to use brownfield sites first. Brownfield sites to be considered are in Parr, Eccleston, Newton and Thatto Heath. Cllr Neal stressed that the Windle Ward Councillors were not happy with the proposed release of the land at Windle/Eccleston. She informed residents that the Ward Councillors' submissions regarding the release of the land raised concerns regarding the lack of doctors, dentists, schools and also the flood risk. She stressed they would argue against it. Cllr Neal did state that if there was no choice and the land had to be released it must be put back to residents for consultation and consideration must be given to amenities including a new school rather than extending schools and increasing numbers in local schools. Also there must not be access onto Bleak Hill Road making an already congested junction worse.

Cllr Cunliffe stressed that if the development was to go ahead someone must be responsible after completion to fulfil all the promises that were made to address any problems such as flooding and access to the development along with any promises for amenities.

Cllr Roughley asked Cllr Neal to question where the vast amount of building materials such as bricks would come from. Cllr Neal would ask St Helens Council officers.

Cllr Dockerty stressed that any development would not only have an impact on primary schools but on secondary schools also.

Cllr W Ashcroft raised concerns over the current situation at the congested junction of Bleak Hill Road and Rainford Road. Cllr Neal was aware of the concerns and responded that unfortunately it was not to be included in the Windle Island improvement works. She reported that a traffic survey had been carried out in the past and it raised no problems.

Cllr Roughley suggested that money should be spent on regenerating the town instead of producing literature for the local plan. Cllr Neal replied that she did not think much had been spent on the local plan literature as not many paper copies had been produced.

The Chairman and Councillors thanked Cllr Neal for attending and updating the Parish Council and residents.

(d) SLCC – The Clerk informed that the body provide useful guidance and information on the current changes occurring in Local Government as well as training courses for Parish Clerks and Councillors.

(e) Voluntary Organisations – No report.

196 Public Comment: No further comments were made other than issues that were addressed under District Councillors report.

The meeting closed at 7.50pm

Signed:
Chairman

Date: