

WINDLE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting (or Assembly) of the Parish of Windle held on 15 March 2005

PRESENT: Councillor W Ashcroft (Chairman)
Councillor K D Roughley (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Mrs N J Ashcroft
Councillor Mrs K S Barton
Councillor R W Barton
Councillor Mrs M P Fraser
Councillor Mrs E Uren
Councillor A F Rigby
Councillor Mrs B Walsh

Also in Attendance: L J Kilshaw (Clerk to the Council)

110. Prayers

The Chairman opened the meeting with prayers for the work of the Council. He especially welcomed Richard Barton, who had been co-opted to the Parish Council to fill the vacancy created by the untimely demise of Councillor Mrs Joan Foster.

111. Apologies

There were no apologies received.

112. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 16 March 2004, which had been previously made available to Parish Councillors, were offered for confirmation and, on being accepted as a true and correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

113. Chairman's Report

Councillor W Ashcroft opened his report by commenting on the unexpected death of Councillor Mrs Joan Foster in late December 2004. She had proved to be a tireless worker and had just been getting to grips with her work at Age Concern.

He was delighted to welcome Richard Barton, whom he was confident would make an excellent contribution to the work of the Council.

His first official duty in the Council Year had been the School Awards Ceremony at Bleak Hill School, where he had been privileged to present the Windle Parish Awards to pupils for their excellent results. Of particular pleasure, on a personal note, he had been pleased and surprised that his own grand-daughter had won a prize in the poster design competition.

He paid thanks to Councillor Mrs M P Fraser and her team for their hard work in ensuring that the Garden Competition had once again proved to be a success.

Councillor Mrs B Walsh and her husband, Maurice, had made Trojan efforts to keep the Footpath Walks open. A combination of bad weather and the earlier printing of the Newsletter because of the change to June elections, had inevitably affected the numbers of walkers turning out. Especial thanks were due to St Helens Council (John Broomhead and his team) for ensuring the footpaths were cleared prior to the walks taking place.

Many residents had commented on how they looked forward to the publication of the Parish Newsletter and the Chairman congratulated Councillor K D Roughley on the excellent job he did in producing it twice a year.

In November the Chairman had attended the Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph in his capacity as a Ward Councillor and had laid a wreath in tribute to those who had given their lives for our freedom. Councillor Roughley had laid a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council.

The Christmas Tree Lighting in December at Bleak Hill School had again proved to be an outstanding success. Thanks to the foresight of Councillor Mrs P Fraser, it had proved possible at last to light up the tree she had planted all those years ago. Thankfully Noel Davies had decided to delay his retirement for one more year and had done his usual brilliant job as Master of Ceremonies. He was ably assisted by a much slimmer Father Christmas, in the shape of Lennie Lowe.

Due to other commitments the Chairman had been unable to officiate at the Tree Planting Ceremony at Bleak Hill School. This had been particularly disappointing because Peter Isaac, the Head Teacher, had chosen and planted the tree to mark his forthcoming retirement. However, the Chairman felt obliged to record his appreciation to Councillor K D Roughley for stepping into the breach so adequately, also adding that Councillor Roughley had informed him that he had "done a brilliant job".

There were increasing incidents of under-age drinking and yobbish behaviour across the Borough and, despite the fact that the Parish had not suffered to the same extent, it must not be tolerated in any shape or form.

Another cause for concern was the proposed redefining of the Parish Boundary, which would take place in readiness for the Parish Elections in 2007. It seemed

likely that the Parish would lose 59 houses to the north of the A580 at Windle. Unless some others could be added on as a replacement, it would place an increased financial burden on the rest of the Parish Community.

Councillor W Ashcroft took the opportunity to wish Peter Isaac a long and happy retirement. He also stated that Peter could be very proud of his achievements for Bleak Hill School after over 25 years there as Head Teacher.

It was also appropriate to offer the new Head, Ian Wellens, very best wishes for the future.

The Chairman concluded his report by thanking the Clerk for the help and guidance he had given during the year, Mr Brian Walsh for his help on the Parish website and also his fellow Parish Councillors for their tireless efforts for the Parish, and especially for their good humour and comradeship in supporting him in his year of office.

114. Financial Statement

The Clerk submitted a financial report, summarized as follows:

Balance at 1.4.04	8247.00
Plus projected income at 31.3.05	<u>11777.00</u>
	20024.00
Less projected expenditure to 31.3.05	<u>11923.00</u>
Projected balance at 31.3.05	<u>£8101.00</u>

115. Reports

(a) Charities

Parochial Charities – Nil report.

Windle United Charities – Councillor Mrs M P Fraser reported that the meeting was scheduled for next month.

(b) School Governors' Report 2004/05

The Governing Body is organised into committees, which meet every school term. Each committee has a chairman, who presents the committee's views to the full Governing Body Meeting.

The Governing Body has produced a balanced budget for 2003/04 which is in line with the Local Education Authority's Financial Regulations and has regularly monitored the school finances. The Governing Body has fully executed its target responsibilities under the School Improvement Plan.

Once again the Friends of Bleak Hill are thanked for both their valuable financial contribution towards school funds and for their help and support during the school year.

Literacy and numeracy continue to be closely monitored and by the use of ICT, guided reading provision and the analysis of targets with the aim of continual improvement, Bleak Hill School provides many extra curricular activities and continues to be well above the national average in all aspects of the curriculum, according to OFSTED reports.

During the last year the perimeter fence has been completed and outdoor seating and various items of play equipment installed. Five hundred bulbs have been planted by the children at the front of the school, which made for a very pleasant start to the Spring. The 700 trees planted at the rear of the school complete the planting of the "Woodland Walk".

The "Walk to School Wednesday" has taken place on a regular basis in an effort to promote the Healthy Lifestyle Initiative, whilst also trying to reduce serious traffic congestion around the school, which is now at breaking point. Money obtained from the "Safer Routes to School Fund" will be spent on improving safe access to the school.

It is hoped to provide a second ICT suite by early April, which will thus double the time available for access to the computers.

The Governors monitor Health and Safety on the whole site by regularly walking round it with the Head Teacher. Future plans include a cover for the courtyard, security shutters at the rear, drainage of the field and additional sinks and telephone lines.

The Chairman's Report earlier covered the Prize Giving, Tree Lighting Ceremony and Tree Planting, which were all successful. Suffice to say that Windle Parish Council actively supports the school, which continues to be one of the best primary schools within the borough.

This is due, in no small part, to the involved role which many parents play in the day-to-day running of the school and also the support of the Friends of Bleak Hill and the Theatre/Travel Club, which organises many trips, both to theatres to see shows, etc and holidays in such places as Barcelona and Honfleur!

Sporting achievements have been numerous and included the Award of the National Quality Marks, the Achievement for Sport, the Artsmark and the FA's Charter Standard. The Tag Rugby Team won both the St Helens School Rugby League and the St Helens School Rugby Union Tournaments. The School Cross Country Teams (boys and girls) both won the St Helens Cross Country Race. In athletics the Boys' Team won the St Helens Indoor Athletics and the Girls' Team was runner-up in the St Helens Indoor Athletics.

In summary, Bleak Hill School remains a vibrant, quality school with outstanding achievements in many different spheres of activity.

(c) District Councillor's Report

Councillor W Ashcroft again highlighted the issue facing the Parish Council over the proposed review of the parish boundary to come into line with the recently adjusted ward boundary. A total of 59 properties north of the East Lancs Road (A580) would be "lost" to Rainford, bringing about a reduction in income of approximately £600. Peter Blackburn, St Helens Council Chief Legal Officer, had been consulted as to the possibility of an equivalent number of houses being added on to the parish. He had confirmed that this might be possible and a request for this to happen was to be sent to Martin Hughes, Head of Admin Services, St Helens Council.

Councillor Roughley had now relinquished his place on the St Helens Planning Committee and, as a result, would be able to take a much fuller part in the work of the Parish Council and also remain in meetings.

There was currently some concern about the state of the land and fencing around the former French's Farm site on Bleak Hill Road. The owners, Henderson Homes, had been contacted by St Helens Council Planning Department and Windle Parish Council, but only minor, essential repairs had been carried out, with no real improvement made to the overall appearance.

Residents in Queens Drive and St Georges Avenue were complaining about the increase in motorists making "rat runs" to avoid the speed humps introduced into Coronation Road and Hamilton Road.

Inconsiderate parking still caused concern around Bleak Hill School and there were still complaints about dog fouling, particularly in Fairway and Regal Drive. In efforts to combat this, extra signs had been placed across the parish.

The local elections were held in June 2004, instead of the usual May, to coincide with the European Elections. All three ward seats were vacant and all three candidates retained their seats.

A further delivery of green wheelie bins was made and an extension of the black boxes was planned to be made.

New perimeter fencing erected around Bleak Hill School had helped bring about a marked decrease in vandalism there.

The Scout Hut at Dartmouth Drive had now been refurbished following the earlier vandalism attack.

There had been trouble with gangs of youths congregating around the sun-bed shop at Kiln Lane/Coronation Road shops, including harassment of an elderly resident by them. The wooden garage at the back of the newsagent's had been burnt to the ground.

Area Forums had now been replaced by Community Forums. A panel selected from various sections of the community meets every three months. Issues for discussion must be sent, in writing, twelve days before the meeting. Residents are allowed to attend the meetings, but are not allowed to ask any questions.

Councillor W Ashcroft concluded his report by thanking colleagues on the Parish Council for keeping the three Ward Councillors informed of any problems as they arise.

(d) LAPTC

Councillor Ken Cleary, a Parish Councillor in the St Helens Area, had assumed office as the National Chairman of NALC. The Clerk stressed the importance of NALC and LAPTC in providing assistance and training on the many important current issues, eg "Quality Parish Councils".

(e) Voluntary Organisations

CVS – The St Helens & District Council for Voluntary Service is still located at 4th Floor, Tontine House, 24 Church Street, St Helens WA10 1BD.

There are impending changes to the St Helens & District CVS. The Trustees consider that the present charity, which has the legal status of an unincorporated charity, should go through the process of incorporation and become a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The legal status would then be more appropriate to the identified and managed

risks associated with running an expanding organisation. It will also serve to provide greater protection from contract liabilities for the individual trustees (excluding misconduct or mismanagement).

During the past five years the number of projects and services offered, the number of staff employed and the amount and sources of income, have all increased. In addition, the CVS now offers office and meeting space to member organisations from its base in Tontine House.

The process of incorporation involves the dissolution of the original charity and the transfer of all assets to a new charitable company with identical aims and objectives.

Members should expect a “new look” CVS from April 2005. They should also feel reassured that this change is primarily legal and constitutional and will not affect the delivery of services that are currently offered to members.

116. Public Comment

There was no public comment made.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm.

Signed _____
Chairman

Date _____

LJK/SAH