

Windle Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting (or Assembly) of the Parish of Windle, held on 20th March 2012, at the Eccleston Village Hall, Kin Lane

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs. K. S. Barton (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs. N. J. Ashcroft (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor W. Ashcroft
Councillor R. W. Barton
Councillor Mrs. A. Bate
Councillor S. A. Bligh
Councillor K. D. Roughley
Councillor Mrs. E. Uren

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

156. Prayers

Councillor Sheila Barton chaired the meeting and, after welcoming everyone, she opened the meeting with prayers.

157. Apologies had been received from Councillor Mrs. M. McNulty.

158. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Assembly, held on 15th March 2011, which had previously been made available to Parish Councillors, were offered for confirmation and, on being accepted as a true and correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

159. Chairman's Report

Councillor Sheila Barton opened her report by saying how much she was enjoying her second time as Chairman, especially as this year her health was more stable, and she had been able to fulfil all the required engagements. She wished to thank the Deputy Chairman, Councillor Nancy Ashcroft for her help and encouragement.

As usual it had been a pleasure to present the Windle Parish Council School Awards and she had enjoyed seeing the children receive their awards with their families there in attendance. Mr. Wellens and his Staff work tirelessly to maintain the very high standards at Bleak Hill School.

Due to the lack of entrants the Garden Competition had not been held, but it is hoped to revive interest with a new format this year.

It had proved to be an emotional and privileged occasion when laying the wreath at the Cenotaph in Victoria Square on Remembrance Sunday and also on the Friday 11th November for the One Minutes Silence, especially remembering those past and present who have suffered or perished in the service of our country. Both occasions were well attended.

The Christmas Tree Lighting at Bleak Hill School is always a lovely event. Our M.C. Alan Hull did a magnificent job, and the choir sang beautifully. Father Christmas duly arrived to great cheers from the children. The Tree was lit up after a slight hiccup and I even wore a Christmas hat complete with flashing lights. A great afternoon was had by all.

Richard and I attended the Eccleston P.C. Tree Lighting in the Eccleston Library and were made very welcome, and enjoyed delicious mince pies and coffee and were entertained by a visiting School Choir.

Once again the Pre-Christmas Reception was a great success and a "Very Big Thank You" is due to all the ladies who made such a splendid buffet.

It has been an eventful year with problems with the Lynton Way Play Area –hopefully now resolved.

The Parish Council joined with Rainford Parish Council, in opposing both the planned overhead electricity line through Rainford farms, in an effort to have it placed underground, and also the planned recycling centre just off the A570 Rainford By-Pass.

Recently we opposed the planning application for the Starbucks Drive – thru Coffee Bar at the Tesco Petrol Station at Windle Island, on the grounds of safety, but were unsuccessful in this.

In conclusion I would like to thank;

- Ken Roughley for the hard work he always does on producing such a good Newsletter.
- Marie McNulty and friends for the work on the Jim Maione Memorial Garden .
- Ann Bate and Richard Barton for attending the Ecclesfield Management Committee Meetings and for their input there.
- Nancy and Wally Ashcroft as always for their tireless work for the community.
- all my fellow councillors for all their help and support
- and finally Len, as Clerk , for all his help and good advice.

Thank you all very much.

160. Financial Statement

The Clerk submitted a financial report, summarized as follows:

		£
	Balance at 1.04.11	7802
PLUS	projected receipts 31.03.12	12981
		<u>20783</u>
	LESS projected payments to 31.03.12	14552
	<u>Projected Balance at 31.03.12</u>	<u>£6231</u>

161. Reports

a) Windle United Charities No Report

b) School Governors Report 2011/12 -The School continues to produce excellent results both, academically, and in sporting achievements.

c) District Councillor's Report

Councillor W. Ashcroft reported that the Lynton Way Play Area continues to be a major strain on the Parish finances. Meetings were organised with local residents to explain the problems, and to look together for a solution. To this end I arranged for Paul Sanderson (Director of Environmental Protection) to attend one of these meetings. It was agreed that the park inspector responsible for daily checks on the park would open the gates each morning free of charge. This would not apply to weekends and holiday periods. Whilst not solving our problems completely, it would enable us to carry on locking the gates in the evenings, but it has been a major factor in forcing the council tax to rise by 6.2%.

The corner of Coronation Road and Kiln Lane continues to be a major traffic problem, and, despite several appeals to the Highways Department, no solutions have been suggested.

It has proved a very difficult year for me following Nancy's defeat at the May 2011 local elections. I would like to express my thanks to her for all the support she has given me during this year.

Labour's position on St Helens Council has strengthened considerably, and it now stands at Labour 35- Lib/Dem 9 and Conservatives 4.

It is disappointing to note that the very successful ward committees have been replaced by a Councillor's Fund. Applications for funding will now have to be made by ward councillors, and it only needs two to submit an application. The bi-monthly ward committee meetings, which included representatives from Helena Housing- the Police - the Churches- the Parish Council- the voluntary sector and most importantly, the general public, have been abandoned and I feel the system has now lost much of its transparency.

By far the biggest cause for concern in the Parish has been the application to build a Starbuck's Drive -Thru coffee bar at the busy Windle Island junction. Despite an overwhelming number of letters objecting to the proposal, including one from the Parish Council, received by the Planning Department the application was passed by the Planning Committee.

May I this opportunity to thank all the members of the Parish Council, and of course, our Clerk, Len, for all the support given to me over the last twelve years.

This will be my last Ward Councillor's Report, as I will not be seeking re-election in May. Old age, along with the Computer Age, has finally taken its toll!

Cllr. Nancy Ashcroft re-iterated the point that the abolition of the Ward Committees had been a detrimental step regarding consultation with residents, and in the exercise of desirable democracy and transparency in decision making.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. W. Ashcroft for his outstanding efforts over the years as a Ward Councillor.

d) LALC/NALC/MAPTC/SLCC The Clerk re-iterated the value of these organisations as sources of reference and advice, especially with new practices and changes in

administration still being introduced. He also recommended the usefulness of the Training Courses they conduct and available for both Clerks and Councillors.

e.) Voluntary Organisations

Halton & St Helens - has now settled into its new expanded identity and appears to be functioning well.

f) St Helens Sports Council

Cllr. W. Ashcroft reported that very little had changed in the last year- The District Sports Council continues in much the same way- they are still offering CRB checks at a much reduced rate for member clubs. The volunteering scheme is proving very popular to young aspiring coaches, and goes from strength to strength.

An open meeting was held in the Town Hall on Wednesday 21st March 2012. A presentation was given by David Boocock (the Council's Chief Sports Officer) in which he outlined Sport England's Funding Strategy for 2012 -2017. Other matters, such as bursaries and sports awards, were also discussed.

The next meeting will be the AGM on 18TH July 2012

Public Comment

No public comment made.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.

Signed _____

(Date) _____

Chairman