Minutes of Walton (Wakefield) Annual Parish Meeting held at 7:30pm on Tuesday 18 April 2023 in Walton Village Hall

Present: Councillor John Carlon, Chairman of Walton Parish Council
7 members of the public

1. Councillor Carlon reported on the activities of the Parish Council:
    a. He thanked the councillors for their hard work over the year, with particular reference to Councillor Sue Birkby who resigned during the year and Councillors Sheila Leith and Wendy Parker who are retiring this May.
    b. There are 3 councillor vacancies on the new Parish Council from May.
    c. The previous Clerk resigned in September 2022, with the new Clerk, Peter Walsh, being appointed in December. Councillors stepped into the breach in the intervening period, which has given them a much better understanding of the mechanics of the council.
    d. The Council has plans for maintenance of its assets, including the block paving outside the village hall, repairing the rendering on the village hall, and rebuilding the boundary wall in front of Coronation Cottage.
    e. Regular assessments are made of other council assets, the seats and stone signs around the village, the bus shelter, war memorial, park and Jubilee field.
    f. A consultation was conducted on use of the old tennis courts site. The response rate was 15% with a garden being the most popular option. A local architect has volunteered to assist with the project and has facilitated a contact with Leeds Beckett University. The intention is for landscape architecture students to undertake further consultation and come up with designs as part of their final year course work. This will take place during this autumn and winter, with the intention of starting physical works on site in the spring of 2024. The Council has budgeted seed funding for the project but will need to secure other funding.
        i. In answer to a question from the floor, the expectation is to complete the ground works by the end of 2024, the subsequent timetable for planting will be determined by the seasons.
        ii. In answer to a question from the floor, it is intended to include a sensory aspect to the garden.
    g. As subsequent stages to the project it is also intended to install leisure and exercise equipment for teenagers and adults on part of the tennis courts site.
    h. The Council is pursuing bringing Jubilee field, which was donated to the Council by Yorkshire Water, up to playing field standard. Test excavations have already been conducted. The Council is in negotiation with Walton Juniors football club as to how this can be taken forward.
    i. The Council is pursuing refurbishment of the fingerpost sign at the junction of The Balk and Shay Lane.
    j. Flower baskets have been ordered for 49 lamp posts in the village (the 50th post having been deemed not fit for purpose) along with planters to go in front of the stone signs on Common Lane, Oakenshaw Lane and Shay Lane. A potential problem with the brackets for Christmas trees was successfully resolved through the effort of councillors in time for Christmas 2022.
    k. The Parish Council is in a sound financial position. There has been no increase in the precept for the second year running. The Council also benefits from income from village

hall hirings. The village hall is a well-used facility and the clerks, caretaker and those councillors who bridged the gap between clerks were thanked for their hard work in managing the hall.

l. The Council has resolved to continue supporting the SAFE scheme for another year. This pays for extra police patrols in the Parish (c18 hours per month), over and above the Police's statutory duties. The Council believes this helps contribute to the low crime rate in the Parish.
    i. A member of the public observed that there have been some recent break-ins to sheds on Brooklands and a motorbike had been stolen.

m. The Council monitors and responds to planning applications. Most applications are for domestic extensions, etc., but the Council had recently made a robust objection to the proposed development on The Grove/Waterton Park and had also resolved to object to development on Chevet Lane on the site of cottages built for the Cold Hiendley canal reservoir and the Hare Park pit shaft which has subsequently been assimilated back into woodland.

n. Councillor Carlon drew attention to the need for the Walton Neighbourhood Plan to be reviewed as it expires in 2026.

o. The Council continues to monitor the position at Brook Farm. The plan to build on the site of the West Yorkshire Sports Club ground and relocate the sports facilities to Brook Farm is no longer happening. Brook Farm remains in the ownership of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, and we await their plans for its future.

2. A member of the public asked about the tipping in the field entrance along Oakenshaw Lane. Councillor Carlon explained that this had been raised with the Ward Councillors. However, it was the responsibility of the landowner (believed to be Wakefield Metropolitan District Council) and its tenants to remove the offending material.

3. A member of the public sought clarity on the purpose of the Annual Parish Meeting. It was confirmed that the purpose of the meeting was for discussing parish affairs, with any person on the electoral register entitled to speak on any matter pertinent to the Parish. It was observed that attendance at the meeting was disappointing, and it was suggested that it should receive more publicity in future.

4. A member of the public commented on the infrequent cutting of grass on areas maintained by Wakefield Metropolitan District Council. Councillor Carlon explained that it was common policy to leave grass uncut to encourage wildflower growth. It was confirmed that the Parish Council would raise concerns with the Ward Councillors if verges and hedgerows became too overgrown.

5. It was observed that work had been done on the verge and drainage ditch along Common Lane. Nobody new why.

6. It was observed that the Millenium entrance to the park had been jet washed in anticipation of the Coronation party.

7. There being no further matters raised, the meeting closed at 8:22pm.

Signed by: Date: