



Appleton Parish Council

Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road, Appleton, WA4 5EQ

Telephone 01925 268153 Email clerk@appletonparish.gov.uk

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Appleton Parish Council held on Tuesday 15th April 2025 at 7pm at Appleton Parish Hall

Present: - Councillor R Bett, Councillor L Booth, Councillor G Chapman, Councillor L Chapman, Councillor K Critchley, Councillor P Lewenz, Councillor E Manson-Sawko, and Councillor H Speed, present from 7.40pm onwards.

Mrs J Monks, Clerk and one member of the public.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair of the Parish Council, Councillor L Chapman welcomed everyone to the Parish Council meeting. Councillor J Wheeler and Councillor P Walker sent their apologies for the meeting.

Councillor K Critchley and Councillor G Chapman stated that they were making a sound recording of the meeting.

2. Chair's report on the past year

Councillor L Chapman made the following report for the Annual Parish Meeting which was as follows;

I am very pleased to give this report for the financial year 2024/2025

Highlights

- The Parish purchased an electric Van in late 2024 underlining our commitment to cleaner, greener transport.
- The Parish became a member of CHALC (Cheshire Association of Local Councils) in late March 2025.
- The South Warrington Parish Group work associated with the proposed Six/56 development has now concluded, and the development will not go ahead.
- The Parish has joined the South Warrington Parishes urban extension working group (SWP SEWUE) with the intention of participating and influencing the development work in the SEWUE locations and the Appleton Cross Local centre (See below)

South East Warrington Urban Extension (SEWUE)

In the course of the year the development process for the Local Plan project in South Warrington (SEWUE) began with a series of engagement events in September and

has recently been followed by further on-line consultation in March/April 2025. This most recent engagement has been with a view to writing a Development Framework which will be prepared by Homes England to be presented to the Borough Council for approval in Summer/Autumn 2025.

The parish councils in South Warrington have set up a Joint Working Group for SEWUE to liaise with Homes England and Warrington Borough Council and to influence plans and monitor progress. A key issue in the discussions to date has been infrastructure, particularly roads and transport, community facilities eg health and retail, plans for which need to precede housing rather than follow it.

Closely linked to the overall development is the local centre at Appleton Cross, adjacent to the Orchard Meadows housing estate. The local centre will include a health centre, local shops and a community facility. Homes England has now appointed a developer for the site. The health centre is an early priority.

The Council has agreed to consider a Neighbourhood Development Plan which fits within the Local Plan but has a more specific impact on development within the Parish. Other parishes are pursuing a similar route.

Grants

For the Financial year 2024/2025 Council grant expenditure is £16,633 against the £10,000 budget. Whilst always conscious of cost, the Council has carefully considered overall merits of grant applications benefiting the Parish and community, including grants for Broomfields Youth Project, Lumb Brook Millenium green, Dingle work with Warrington Borough Council and a grant of £6,000 to 1st Appleton Scouts.

It was an honour to represent the Parish at the Appleton Thorn St Cross Church Remembrance Service delivering a reading, and for Councillor Laura Booth and I to lay wreaths.

Events Working Party

A Christmas Event was held at Parish Hall with Carol Singing and switching on of the Parish christmas lights. This was a well-attended event, and many thanks to the Events Working Party for organising and our staff for making it happen.

Parish Hall

2024/2025 Yearly Parish Hall booking income for the first nine months to end December 2024 is at highest recorded levels. The Parish continues to provide competitive hall hire rates to encourage community use. Hall charge fees for 2025/2026 are increased by 2.38%.

Overall, Income from Parish Hall hire for the first nine months to end December is approx. 79% of corresponding total Parish Hall expenditure. This compares to around 72% for the previous year's corresponding period. Expenditure covering items

including maintenance, utilities and caretaker costs. Delta costs between Income and expenditure are financed from the precept.

Overall Expenditure

Expenditure over the financial year was in line with expectations.

The Band D precept for 2025/2026 will increase by 3% from £35.09 to +/- £36.14 the first increase in three years. This reflecting Parish policy to continue to manage operations to keep community charges to a minimum. The overall precept amount will increase from £178,957 to approx. £186,400 also to account for the increase in the numbers of dwellings from 5100 to 5157.

Yearly Parish cash balance maximizes after receipt of the precept and reduces after this. For this Financial year Appleton Parish's total cash balance has not fallen below £265,000. As an absolute minimum the cash balance must cover the amount of our Contingency/General reserves which is currently £50,000. plus, the amount of our earmarked reserves currently around £200,000. During this financial year we utilised approximately £24,000 of reserves, the bulk of which, around £19,000 was for the purchase of the Electric vehicle. Annual expenditure against earmarked reserves continues to be low.

The Parish continues to recognise cash balance and cash flow and to assure that amounts of available cash are correctly invested, always safely, and in high interest building society accounts where possible to do so.

Planning

During the Financial year 2024/2025 the Planning committee met on 24 occasions, 150+ applications were reviewed, and of these just over half (53 %) were Full Planning Applications with TPO's (16%) and Section 192 Certificates (9%) accounting for another quarter of the total. The remaining applications (22%) were for misc. categories such as Discharge of Conditions, Permitted Developments, Householder Prior approval, Non-Material Amendments, Variation of Conditions and Listed Building Consent.

Finally, Our assistant Clerk Irene Derbyshire will be leaving us in May after seven years of dedicated Service. We shall all miss her and give her very best wishes in retirement.

I would also like to thank all Parish Council staff for their support, dedication and hard work throughout the year.

3. Open discussion on Parish matters

Councillor P Lewenz reported that the issue with regards to local infrastructure will be an important issue in the development of additional housing.



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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Appleton Parish Council held on Tuesday 15th April 2025 at 7pm at Appleton Parish Hall

Part One – This part of the meeting was open to the press and members of the public

Present: - Councillor R Bett, Councillor L Booth, Councillor G Chapman, Councillor L Chapman, Councillor K Critchley, Councillor P Lewenz, Councillor E Manson-Sawko, and Councillor H Speed, present from 7.40pm onwards.

Mrs J Monks, Clerk and one member of the public for public participation agenda item.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair of the Parish Council, Councillor L Chapman welcomed everyone to the Parish Council meeting. Councillor J Wheeler and Councillor P Walker sent their apologies for the meeting.

Councillor K Critchley and Councillor G Chapman stated that they were making a sound recording of the meeting.

2. Members Code of Conduct

Councillor K Critchley stated that the employment working party had a conflict of interest in relation to staffing issues. Councillor Chapman stated he strongly disagreed with Councillor Critchley's comment. This would be discussed under part two of the meeting.

3. Public Participation

A member of the public reported an issue with a sensor light which was permanently on outside the Parish Hall. The clerk confirmed that this issue was on the agenda for consideration by the Parish Council.

The member of the public asked if the lights at the rear of the car park could be disconnected or removed as they are currently not in use. The clerk will obtain a quote for this for the Parish Council to consider.

4. Minutes of last Parish Council meeting

RESOLVED that;

The minutes of the Parish Council's monthly meeting on Tuesday 18th March 2025. (Copies of which had been circulated to each Member) were approved and signed by the Chair.

5. Planning

RESOLVED that;

The minutes of the Planning Committee on Tuesday 18th March 2025 and Thursday 3rd April 2025. (Copies of which had been circulated to each Member) were approved and signed by the Chair.

6. Accounts for 2024/2025 and Payments Schedules

The March 2025 statement of Receipts and Payments for the Financial Year 2024/2025 was noted, and the Members noted the bank reconciliation as at 31st March 2025.

RESOLVED that;

Payments were to be made in accordance with the payment schedules for April 2025.

7. Quarterly Banking Reconciliation and banking checks

RESOLVED that;

Councillor R Bett was appointed to undertake verification of the bank reconciliation for all bank accounts as of 31st March 2025.

8. Environmental improvements Appleton Thorn

RESOLVED that;

The amount of up to £500 plus VAT was approved for village improvements/planting in Appleton Thorn volunteers to purchase items as and when required from the Environmental Improvement budget for 2025/2026.

9. Society of Local Council Clerks Membership for Clerk

RESOLVED that;

The annual membership fee of £300 was approved for the Society of Local Council Clerks membership for the clerk.

10. Banking

RESOLVED that;

Mrs I Derbyshire, the assistant clerk will be removed from the following bank accounts from immediate effect following her resignation.

Nationwide account
Manfield Building Society
Hanley Building Society
Skipton Building Society
Buckinghamshire Building Society

Mrs I Derbyshire will be removed from the NatWest current account from the date of her leaving, 31st May 2025.

11. Retirement gift for Assistant Clerk

RESOLVED that;

The chair's allowance would not be used, and individual Parish Councillors were asked to donate towards a retirement gift.

Councillor H Speed arrived at the meeting at 7.40pm.

12. Contract for Planters at Bridge Lane

RESOLVED that;

Primrose Nurseries would be appointed as contractors to undertake the summer and winter bedding at Bridge Lane shops and for watering the planters twice a week over the summer period at the cost of £1426.00 plus VAT.

13. Outside sensor light at the Parish Hall

RESOLVED that;

the quote received for £331.34 plus VAT from KDE for the replacement sensor light outside the Parish Hall was approved.

14. Overpayment of Hall hire fees

The clerk confirmed that she had contacted the Parish Hall hirers and offered to refund the 0.3p overpayment however they had stated that a refund was not necessary.

RESOLVED that;

The amount of 0.3p was to be written off on the Hallmaster booking system.

15. Quote for Trade Waste collection for 2025/2026

RESOLVED that;

The corrected amount of £932.88 (previously £923.88) was approved for Warrington Borough Council to undertake the trade waste collection for 2025/2026.

16. Grant budget for 2025/2026

RESOLVED that;

The grant budget for the financial year 2025/2026 was as follows;

Grant Budget for the financial year 2025/2026 is £15,000.

Expenditure to date is the following;

Broomfields Youth Project	£3,100
Tuesday Litter picking Team	£270
Lumb Brook Green	£2,000
Stockton Heath Festival	£1,150
Total expenditure to date	£6,520.

Remaining budget for the financial year 2025/2026 is £8480.00

17. Grant application for £1,588.86 towards Bawming the Thorn 2025

RESOLVED that;

A grant of £1,588.86 was awarded to Appleton Thorn Primary school towards the running costs of Bawming the Thorn 2025. The clerk was asked if they could confirm what the additional cost of paying for the road closure as this was no longer going to be funded from Warrington Borough Council.

18. Kitchen door at Parish Hall

RESOLVED that;

The amount of £100 plus VAT was approved for the repair to the kitchen door.

19. Mid-Cheshire Bridleway Society

RESOLVED that;

The Parish Council renewed the membership of the Mid-Cheshire Bridleway Society for 2025/2026 at the cost of £8.

20. Task and Finish group

RESOLVED that;

The Environmental Working party will investigate working with Homes England and Warrington Borough Council and residents to address remedial work and to set up a volunteer group to maintain the area.

21. Installation of double bins

RESOLVED that;

The amount of up to £2,500 plus VAT was approved for the purchase and installation of three replacement double bins at Green Lane in Appleton Thorn and Blackcap Road in Appleton Thorn. The Gemini double litter bin from Glasdon was the preferred model. The expenditure will be taken from the Environmental budget.

The clerk will liaise with Warrington Borough Council regarding any public consultation and installation and the decision is subject to the agreement of Warrington Borough Council.

22. PCSO / Police report

The clerk had circulated the PCSO reports to all the Parish Councillors for their attention. There were no PCSOs in attendance.

Councillor P Lewenz reported that there was still no replacement for the PCSO for Appleton that had retired.

23. Parish Councillor reports and feedback from other meetings

Councillor L Booth reported that the front doorbell of the Parish Hall was not working and asked if this could be looked at.

Councillor E Manson-Sawko reported that she will contact Councillor P Lewenz regarding a task and finish group to work with Lumb Brook Millenium Green.

Councillor H Speed reported that she was in continued discussions with the different organisations with regards to the playground at Orchard Meadows.

Councillor H Speed reported that the blocked drains on Blackcap Road had now been cleared and that she had no further updates regarding the antisocial behaviour on Blackcap Road.

A tender has been successful for the Appleton Cross development and Councillor H Speed will circulate the details for the attention of all the Parish Councillors.

Councillor H Speed reported that she had attended a recent meeting with the South Warrington Parishes regarding the proposals for additional housing and was disappointed with the lack of detail with regards to infrastructure.

Councillor R Bett reported that there was work due to commence on the footpaths in Appleton.

Councillor P Lewenz reported that footpath number 20 was now open following completion of the work.

Councillor G Chapman asked if the clerk could chase up an update with regards to the planting of wildflowers on Green Lane.

24. Dates and time of next meetings

Thursday 1st May 2025, 9.15am Planning Committee meeting.

Thursday 1st May 2025, 9.45am Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

Tuesday 20th May 2025, 6.30pm Planning Committee meeting.

Tuesday 20th May 2025, 7pm Annual meeting followed by Parish Council meeting.

Part Two – This contains confidential information and only Parish Councillors and the clerk were present

25. Appointment of Assistant Clerk

This item was confidential and as such the contents have been removed.

26. Minutes of Extra-Ordinary meeting on Thursday 27th February 2025

RESOLVED that;

The minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of 27th February 2025 were approved. Five Councillors voted for approval, one Councillor voted against, and two Councillors abstained.

Proposed amendments to the minutes proposed by Councillor Critchley were not approved.

27. Staffing issues

This item was confidential and as such the contents have been removed.