



# Appleton Parish Council

Appleton Parish Hall, Dudlow Green Road, Appleton, Warrington, Cheshire  
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## Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Working Party on Thursday 2nd April 2026 at 12.15pm

**Present: -**

**Committee Members** Cllr R Bett, Cllr G Chapman, Cllr Helen Speed.

**Clerk:** Karen Newton

**Public:** None Present

### **1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

The Substitute Chair of the environmental Working Group, Cllr R. Bett, welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received and noted as follows:

**Cllr J Wheeler** – Work Commitments

**Cllr K Critchley** – Family Commitments

**Cllr P Lewenz** - Holiday

**Resolved:** The apologies for absence were **accepted**.

### **2. Members Code of Conduct**

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests they may have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when the item is reached.

Declarations are a personal matter for each Member, and the decision to declare, or not, rests with the individual Member based on the circumstances.

Any requests for dispensations in respect of declared pecuniary interests, whether made before or during the meeting, will be considered by the Parish Council and, if granted, will be formally recorded.

### **3. Bulb Planting 2026**

Members discussed proposals for bulb planting across the parish and the importance of identifying and prioritising suitable locations. It was noted that previous planting areas should be mapped and reviewed to inform this year's programme. Historical records may be held by Laurence Chapman and should be obtained.

Suggested locations included:

- Cobbs Estate (near the shops)
- Bridge Lane planters
- Green Lane walkway (between houses)

Members agreed that further guidance could be sought from the Assistant Clerk at Grappenhall Parish Council.

#### ***Planters & Contracts***

Members considered the maintenance and planting of existing planters.

- Bridge Lane planters:
  - To check the involvement of Primrose Nurseries.
  - To confirm whether a contract exists and review its terms.
  - To assess whether David can undertake planting and maintenance in these areas.

#### ***Signage Maintenance***

Members noted that road signage across the parish requires cleaning and general upkeep.

- To explore whether David can undertake this work.
- Proposal to purchase a flash mop for cleaning, limited to areas that can be safely reached.

#### ***Tree Planting & Maintenance***

Members noted the findings of a recent tree survey undertaken by Warrington Borough Council, which concluded that there is currently no requirement for additional tree planting.

#### **Existing issues identified:**

- Commemoration trees to commemorate 80 years since WW2
  - Three trees have been planted for this purpose.
- Chestnut tree (off Dale Lane):
  - The planting status of the proposed chestnut tree remains unclear and requires further investigation. This tree is intended to serve as a memorial for those lost during the COVID-19 pandemic, acknowledging the pain and suffering experienced within the community.  
The Parish Council agreed that this matter should be treated with appropriate sensitivity and respect. Further enquiries will be made to confirm the status and to progress arrangements for planting. An update will be provided at a future meeting.
- Tree damage:
  - One tree has been lost due to weather damage.
  - A second tree has been damaged.
  - No remedial action has been undertaken to date.

#### **Further considerations:**

- A commemorative plaque is required for the relevant area.

- Although the main tree planting season has passed, container-grown trees may still be planted.
- Cllr Lewenz may be able to provide a suitable contact for Chesnutt tree procurement.

### ***Community Engagement***

Members discussed concerns regarding a perceived “learned helplessness” within the community, with increasing expectation that maintenance is solely the responsibility of the Council.

It was **noted** that:

- There is a need to rebuild community spirit and encourage local pride.
- Historically, residents took greater responsibility for maintaining their own frontages.

### **Suggestions included:**

- Encouraging local participation in planting and maintenance activities.
- Promoting seasonal wildflower planting initiatives.

### ***Resolved:***

- That previous bulb planting locations be identified and mapped.
- That priority planting areas be agreed for 2026.
- That planters, signage, and tree maintenance requirements be reviewed.
- That opportunities to increase community involvement be supported.

### ***Actions:***

- Contact Laurence Chapman regarding bulb planting records.
- Confirm Primrose Nurseries contract arrangements.
- Liaise with the Assistant Clerk at Grappenhall Parish Council.
- Review whether David can undertake planter and signage maintenance.
- Investigate the status of the Chestnut tree and damaged trees.
- Arrange installation of a commemorative plaque.
- Explore opportunities to engage the community in environmental initiatives.

## **4. Wildflower Planting 2026**

Members discussed opportunities to expand wildflower planting across the parish to enhance biodiversity and improve visual amenity. It was noted that seasonal wildflower areas could be introduced in suitable open spaces and alongside existing planting schemes.

Potential locations for wildflower planting were considered, including verges, open green spaces, and areas currently underutilised. Members highlighted the importance of selecting appropriate sites to ensure successful establishment and ongoing maintenance.

The role of community involvement was emphasised, with Members noting that local participation would be key to the success and sustainability of wildflower initiatives.

**Resolved:**

- That suitable locations for wildflower planting be identified and assessed.
- That a seasonal wildflower planting programme be developed for 2026.
- That opportunities for community involvement be incorporated into the scheme.

**Action:**

- Prepare a list of potential sites for consideration.
- Develop a proposed wildflower planting plan, including seed selection and timing.
- Explore opportunities to engage residents and community groups in planting and maintenance.

**5. Warrington Borough Council Environmental Initiatives & Park Infrastructure**

To receive a report on discussions with Warrington Borough Council regarding environmental initiatives for the current and forthcoming years, to consider opportunities for collaborative working, and to note infrastructure issues within parish parks.

Members received an update on ongoing discussions with Warrington Borough Council regarding environmental initiatives. It was noted that **Cllr Richard Bett** is working with **Angus** from Warrington Borough Council to explore and develop joint environmental projects for both the current year and future planning. Members welcomed the opportunity for coordinated initiatives across the borough.

Members were also advised of a safety issue at the park near Limes Lane, where a staging area includes a set of steps considered to be dangerous. Warrington Borough Council indicated that it would welcome Parish Council involvement in addressing the issue, with estimated costs of approximately £15,000.

**Resolved:**

- That the update on environmental initiatives be noted.
- That opportunities for collaborative environmental initiatives with Warrington Borough Council continue to be explored.
- That the Limes Lane park infrastructure issue be noted and further information be obtained before deciding on Parish Council involvement.

**Actions:**

- **Cllr Richard Bett** to provide further updates on environmental initiatives.
- Obtain full details from Warrington Borough Council regarding the scope and cost of works at the Lyons Lane park steps.
- Report back to Council with recommendations regarding potential Parish Council involvement in the park project
- To consider parking in this area

#### **6. Green Lane Footpath Verges (Cann Lane North Junction)**

Members considered planting and ongoing maintenance of the verges of the Green Lane footpath where it branches off from Cann Lane North.

##### **Discussion:**

- **Cllr Helen Speed** reported that at one end of Green Lane, the Thorn Inn had new owners who initially prevented nursery parents from using the car park, resulting in the grass verges becoming heavily muddied. The pub has since allowed parents to use the car park, but the issue of the muddied verge remains.
- The nursery has offered to fund planters to improve the area, providing an opportunity to reseed the verges.
- **Cllr Speed** has provided the nursery manager with contact details for the **Rights of Way Officer at Warrington Borough Council** and will maintain contact with the nursery manager regarding progress.
- At the other end of Green Lane, a footpath has geotextile mesh covered with soil. Suggestions included:
  - Planting wildflowers (not bulbs)
  - Considering shrubs by digging through the geotextile and covering with stone
  - Implementing in phases, rather than all at once, to manage cost and logistics

##### **Resolved:**

- That the report be noted.
- That phased planting options and potential costs be explored.
- That a plan for improving the verges be developed, considering the geotextile areas, wildflower planting, and shrub options.

##### **Action:**

- Cllr Bett to prepare a phased planting plan and cost estimate.
- Maintain liaison with the nursery manager and Warrington Borough Council Rights of Way Officer.

#### **7. Chiswick Gardens Playground Area & Dudlow's Green Playground**

Members noted that **Chiswick Gardens Playground** and **Dudlow's Green Playground** (including adjacent waste land on Broomfield's Road, Appleton) are connected areas.

##### **Resolved:**

- That the connection between the two areas be noted.

#### ***Dog Fouling – Bridge Lane Sports Field***

Members noted reports of dog fouling on the sports field. It was considered acceptable to install signage to remind dog owners of their responsibilities, while ensuring that local authorities are kept informed.

It was reported that **Linda Smallthwaite** has previously assisted in resolving similar issues. **Cllr Bett** will contact her to discuss potential measures and coordinate any necessary action.

**Resolved:**

- That the installation of appropriate signage be considered.
- That ongoing liaison with relevant personnel continue to ensure the issue is managed effectively.

**Action:**

- **Cllr Bett** to contact Linda Smallthwaite regarding coordination and advice on addressing the dog fouling issue.

**8. Dudlow's Green Playground & Adjacent Waste Land (Broomfield's Road, Appleton)**  
**See Item 7**

**9. Date and time of next meeting**

To be arranged, subject to hall availability.

Signed

*Laura Booth*

Date

*21.4.26.*