



Appleton Parish Council

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

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Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Working Party on Thursday 2nd July 2026 at 11.15 am

Present: -

Committee Members Cllr H Speed, Cllr G Chapman, Cllr P Lewenz.

Clerk: Karen Newton

Public: None Present

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Substitute Chair of the Environmental Working Group, Cllr H Speed, welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received and noted as follows:

Cllr K Critchley – Holiday

Cllr R Bett - 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. Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

4. Pond Access Steps and Feeding Platform – Lyons Lane / Dudlow Green Play Area

Following meetings and discussions with Warrington Borough Council (WBC), proposals have been developed for the replacement of the pond access steps and feeding platform adjacent to Lyons Lane and Dudlow Green Play Area.

A contractor with previous experience of undertaking works for WBC is currently preparing a quotation. The estimated cost of the works is currently between £15,000 and £20,000.

Subject to approval and funding, it is anticipated that the works could be completed before the end of 2026.

Discussion and Comments

Members noted the update and raised concerns regarding the level of cost given that the land is owned by Warrington Borough Council and not the Parish Council. Members queried whether costs could be reduced or whether alternative funding or delivery options should be explored. Members recognised the value of the green and open space and discussed whether in future it might be appropriate for the Parish Council to assume responsibility for the site in order to better protect it.

It was also queried whether the Parish Council could contribute financially via a grant or other funding arrangement to WBC. The Clerk advised that further clarification is required on the appropriate mechanism for any financial contribution.

Members further requested that alternative options be explored, that three quotes be obtained and that a risk assessment of the area be undertaken.

5. Dudlow Green Play Area

It was noted that Councillor Manson-Sawko had contacted an award-winning play area designer, who grew up locally and now lives in London. He has kindly offered to review the play area and provide ideas for improvements and potential extensions to the existing facilities at no cost to the Parish Council.

The review may provide valuable guidance for future development opportunities at the site.

Recommendation

The Committee noted the update. Cllr Manson-Sawko will liaise with the designer and provide updates to the Committee and Council as appropriate. No further action is required at this stage.

6. Verge at Green Lane / Cann Lane North Junction

Following a recent site visit with a representative of Warrington Borough Council (WBC), it has been agreed that the verge will be cut and mulched to restore it to a manageable grass verge.

Once the area has sufficiently recovered, opportunities for introducing wildflower planting in suitable sections may be considered.

Members noted that correspondence and photographs had been received from Cllr G Chapman highlighting concerns regarding the condition of the area, including overgrown grass and dog fouling. It was also noted that action is currently pending by WBC in relation to grass cutting.

Members further noted that the Parish Council previously undertook maintenance of this area and discussed whether grass cutting and general upkeep could be reinstated, including the potential use of the Parish Ranger. The Ranger has previously suggested that a ride-on

mower and trailer would improve his ability to maintain this and other areas across Appleton more effectively.

It was also noted that the Parish Council may be expected to take on further delegated responsibilities from WBC in future. Consideration was given to possible improvements including re-establishing grassed areas, regular mowing, and bulb planting (including daffodils) to enhance the appearance of the verge.

Recommendation

The Committee noted the planned cutting and mulching works and agreed to await the outcome before considering future planting proposals. It was further agreed that this matter be included on the September agenda for further consideration, including future maintenance arrangements, potential improvements, and discussion of delegated responsibilities.

7. Tree Planting on Roundabout

The roundabout at the junction of Barley Castle Lane, Grappenhall Lane and Broad Lane currently contains a frost-damaged Cordyline approximately 1 metre in height, which has limited visual appeal. Members also noted that nearby road signs and posts are damaged and require cleaning or replacement.

It is proposed that consideration be given to replacing the existing planting with a more appropriate tree or planting scheme to enhance the appearance of this busy junction.

Warrington Borough Council (WBC) has indicated that it has no objection in principle, subject to the works being undertaken safely and with appropriate traffic management arrangements.

As planting would not take place before November, there is no immediate requirement for a decision. Matters relating to damaged signage and posts will also be raised with Highways Officers.

Discussion and Comments

Members expressed concern regarding the current appearance of the roundabout, noting that it is a busy junction affected by heavy goods vehicle traffic and is not visually appealing in its current condition. Members were supportive of improving the site and felt that a more attractive planting scheme, including shrubs, flowers, or other appropriate landscaping, should be explored.

It was also requested that Warrington Borough Council be encouraged to consider a fuller renovation of the roundabout planting to improve the visual amenity of the area.

Recommendation

The Committee noted the update and agreed that further detailed proposals for improvements, including potential planting schemes, be brought forward later in the year.

8. Wildflower Planting Programme – Spring 2027

To assist with future planning and contractor engagement, the Environment Committee was invited to consider a programme of wildflower planting with a provisional budget allocation of up to £5,000 plus VAT. Any wildflower planting would be scheduled for Spring 2027.

The Environment Committee would be required undertake to identify potential locations and bring forward detailed proposals to the Parish Council during September or October 2026.

Discussion and Comments

Members discussed the proposal and noted that wildflower planting can require ongoing maintenance and does not always establish successfully. It was therefore felt that a structured planting and maintenance programme would be required. Members indicated a preference for increased use of bulb planting in suitable areas, alongside or instead of wildflower schemes.

Members confirmed support in principle for environmental improvement planting but emphasised the need for a clear strategy developed in collaboration with the Parish Ranger and Warrington Borough Council. It was further noted that any budget commitment should be considered and approved by Full Council rather than confirmed by the Committee.

Recommendation

The Committee agreed in principle to support the development of a planting programme for Spring 2027. It was further agreed that a detailed strategy, including planting proposals and maintenance arrangements, be developed in consultation with the Parish Ranger and Warrington Borough Council and brought forward to Full Council for consideration and approval. An overall budget recommendation for bulbs and wild flower planting is noted below.

9. Bulb Planting Programme – Spring 2027

Warrington Borough Council (WBC) has advised that, should the Parish Council wish to undertake bulb planting for flowering in Spring 2027, **notification must be provided by the end of July 2026** to enable the planting contractor to include Appleton Parish within its programme of works.

As no bulb planting was undertaken during Autumn 2025, Members may wish to consider an enhanced planting programme this year. An indicative area of approximately 250 square metres is estimated to cost around £15,000 plus VAT.

The Environment Committee would be required to identify suitable planting locations and prepare detailed proposals for consideration at the October 2026 Parish Council meeting.

Discussion and Comments

Members noted that there is currently no specific budget allocation for the full cost of the proposal, with approximately £10,000 in earmarked reserves for environmental projects and a further £12,000 within the Environment Committee budget. Recurrent budget commitments for planters in Bridge Lane and costs to support the work of the Ranger were also noted.

It was noted that previous works (including Planters Lane) have been undertaken and that potential contractors such as Primrose Nurseries may be considered.

Members agreed that further work is required to identify suitable planting locations before final implementation, but that it was essential that the July deadline to notify WBC was met or it would result in another year without planting occurring. A suggestion was made that a phased approach could be considered, including an allocation of £7,500 for bulb planting and £2,500 for wildflower planting in 26/27 subject to further detailed planning.

Members also discussed the importance of ensuring reserves are clearly aligned to defined projects and noted the need for a wider environmental strategy. It was further suggested that consideration be given to re-allocating alternative funding priorities, including potential reallocation of any available Community Safety (PCSO-related) funding towards other projects, including works referenced under Item 4 (Pond Access Steps and Feeding Platform).

Recommendation

The Committee agreed to recommend to Full Council in July:

- a) A provisional budget allocation of £7,500 for bulb planting and £2,500 for associated planting works for the Spring 2027 programme, in principle.
- b) That notification be made to Warrington Borough Council by the end of July 2026 that the Parish Council would like to participate in the 2026/27 bulb planting programme.
- c) That the Environment Committee be requested to develop detailed proposals, including planting locations and maintenance arrangements, for consideration at the October 2026 Parish Council meeting.

It was further agreed that a wider environmental planting strategy be developed for future consideration alongside the Parish Council's wider service and maintenance responsibilities.

9. Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 1st October 2026 at 11.15 am

Meeting Closed at 12:15 pm

Signed Cllr Laura Booth

Date 21.7.2026.