



Signed as a true representation of the minutes taken at PC meeting

Chair: Marion Potts

Signed:

Date:

Minutes of Marston Parish Council meeting held on 12th March 2025

Meeting opened 19:00 pm

Present

Parish Councillors; Marion Potts (MP) (Chair), Amanda Nixon (AN), Helen Duncan (HD), Angela Johnson (AJ), Phil Carter (PhC), Dave Collier (DC)

Police: Diana Wiggins (PCSC)

Clerk: Gary Hedges (GH)

Apologies: Lynn Gibbon, Phil Marshall, Simon Tate

Declarations of interest: None

Dispensations: None

Public Forum: None

Approval of minutes from parish council meeting on 12th February 2025.

Approved and signed by MP.

Actions from meetings 12th February 2025 plus actions carried forward

Owner	Topic	Action	Date set	Status
AN	VE Day 80	Obtain price for VE day badges	12/02/2025	Complete
GH	Policies and procedures	Ask local parish councils and chalch if they have a Councillors induction pack	12/02/2025	Complete
GH	Policies and procedures	Circulate two to three draft policies to Councillors for comment and sign off at the next meeting	12/02/2025	Complete
GH	Community events	Sign up to Spring Clean 2025	12/02/2025	Complete
GH	Ollershaw Lane - weight limit reduction	Ask The Canal and Rivers Trust for a Ollershaw Lane bridge survey report	12/02/2025	Complete
GH	Ollershaw Lane - weight limit reduction	Ask LG to contact Jamie Barron (Highways) to organise a further meeting	12/02/2025	Complete
GH	Finances	Consider investing in Scribe software for 2025/26 financial year	12/02/2025	Complete
GH	Church Hall	Order 'the history of villages halls' book for church hall	12/02/2025	Complete
HD	VE Day 80	Ask 'The Misfits' if they are willing to give a performance at the MPC VE Day 80 event.	08/01/2025	Complete
MP	Murmurs	Complete article for Murmurs re. Spring clean	12/02/2025	Not done
MP	Higher Marston playground	Ask CWAC for playground risk assessment	12/02/2025	Complete
MP	Higher Marston play area	Letters from CWAC to residents about tree planting - chase up	12/02/2025	Complete
MP	Church Hall	Ceiling painting - appoint Kevin Gleave and book hall during works	12/02/2025	Complete
MP	Church Hall	TV installation - appoint Miles once delivery date of TV and bracket is known	12/02/2025	Complete
PM	Ward Cllr reports	Send Clerk Feb report and add clerk to Marbury circulation list	12/02/2025	Complete
ST	Church Hall	Circulate specification and obtain two further quotes for repair of the Church Hall storeroom	09/10/2024	C/F
ST	Policies and procedures	Reschedule policy subcommittee meeting and focus meeting on induction	12/02/2025	C/F

ST	Policies and procedures	Add 'procurement policy' to list of policies and procedures to be drafted	12/02/2025	C/F
ST	Community events	Offer three Tuesday dates for a 1–2-hour course for residents as part of coffee mornings - and article for murmurs	12/02/2025	C/F
ST	Policies and procedures	Update advertising policy to include community events	12/02/2025	C/F

- The Misfits are happy to give a performance at the MPC VE Day event although there may only be two of them due to demand at other events on the day.
- **AN** will purchase a bag of commemorative badges for VE day and donations from these will go directly to the Royal British Legion.

1. Parish Councillor Reports

None

2. Ward Councillor Reports

No Ward Cllrs present – a March update report was received on 6th March, and circulated to Cllrs. Topics included CWAC Budget 25/26, Farm inheritance tax, Min wage + Nat insurance changes, Devolution Cheshire and Warrington, Northwich flooding, Pride in our villages, Highways, Fire and Rescue, Policing, Planning, Members budgets, Spacehive and funding opportunities.

Action GH: remind Ward Cllrs of Spring litter pick on 16th March 2025

3. Ollershaw Lane – vehicle weight reduction update (AJ)

On 6th March, **GH** asked Lynn Gibbon (LG) if there has been any update from Jamie Barron (JB) (Highways) regarding organizing another meeting. LG responded, having spoken with JB, that he had no other proposals to put forward, he thought the weight restriction was not enforceable due to the current businesses in the village. Therefore, at a loss as to what else can be done.

LG stated that she'd checked the signage along on the A559 before turning right onto Ollershaw Lane, and it is clean and visible directing traffic to the industrial estate. Therefore, other than erecting larger signs as the current ones are quite small, she'd be interested to know what else could be considered. **AJ** believed larger signs would not make any different due to Sav Navs directing drivers down Ollershaw Lane, as it doesn't have any current vehicular restriction.

LG also mentioned the new proposal by the PCC of buying police time to address specific issues, where you buy a block of 4 hours (£200) of a police officer willing to undertake overtime. 'Their time could be used to stop traffic (HGVs) to ask where they are going e.g. Northwich or the industrial estate and why they are using Ollershaw Lane rather than the signed alternative route. This may be a deterrent'. **PCSO DW** didn't think it was a viable option to be stopping HGVs along Ollershaw Lane. **AJ** believes the only way to reduce the usage of Ollershaw lane by large HGVs is the introduction of an environment weight limit, which would then factor into satellite navigation and re-route the lorries. AJ also commented that all the businesses on Ollershaw Lane were in full support of the weight restriction (except for access).

GH asked the Canal and Rivers Trust (CRT) for copies of Ollershaw Lane bridge (bridge 193) condition reports. Alison Schwarz (CRT) reported back that three levels of inspection are carried out:

- Safety & Service Inspections - undertaken on a regular basis, typically bimonthly (by a trained and certificated asset inspector)
- General Inspections – undertaken on a cycle of 1 to 4 years (by an engineer)
- Principal Inspections – undertaken on a risk basis, typically 10-to-20-year cycle (by an engineer).

Alison added that the capacity of the bridge is stated as 40 Tonnes (full strength). From time to time, vehicles in exceedance of 40T using the bridge, but these do so under permission from the Trust, following our abnormal loads process. The last our records show of this nature was 57T in Oct 2021. Alison asked or CRT to be informed if we believe there are vehicles using this bridge that exceed the 40T limit, providing any evidence that can be gathered.

On 10th March, **GH** provided photos (from AJ and Tony Rugby) of 5 & 6 axel lorries (Max. capacity 44T) on Ollershaw Lane to CRT and stated that MPC have witnessed lorries of this size regularly using the bridge. In addition to this evidence, GH has asked Tony Rigby to complete a 2-hour survey, photographing all 5 & 6 axel lorries going over the bridge to evidence frequency. Tony Rigby has agreed to complete the survey. The next step is providing further evidence to CRT via the survey, and then to await a response from CRT to see if they are concerned by the regular use of the bridge by large HGVs (which are potentially over the weight limit). Based on the CRT response, a further meeting is to be requested with Lynn Gibbon, Highways and the police.

AJ has led on this issue for MPC but is stepping down as a Cllrs but would like issue to be pursued for the residents. **AJ** feels that the resident's safety concerns (walking along the path on Ollershaw Lane as the large HGVs pass) and disturbance (vibrations through homes) have not been listened to. Cllrs agreed to continue to take the issue forward following AJs departure.

4. Policies and Procedures

The following draft procedures / polices were circulated prior to the meeting:

- 3.001.1 Initial Action Procedure
- 3.001.2 Accident and Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedure
- 3.001.3 Accident and Incident Reporting and Investigation Guidance

3.001.1 and 3.001 were approved by Cllrs, and are now enacted. It was considered that some of the wording of 3.001.3 needed to be changed by the subcommittee before being approved.

Cllrs considered different ways to manage the numerous first drafts of policies and procedures, in order for them to be edited and approval by the full council. It was decided that no decision should be taken in the absence of ST, who has been leading the policy and procedures sub-committee, and the issue should be discussed at the April meeting.

Action ST, MP, HD: re-word 3.001.3 and bring back to the council at the April meeting for approval.

Action GH: Create spreadsheet index for Policies and Procedures, and their status, for use by the subcommittee.

5. Higher Marston Playground (MP)

- a) Vehicular access

It was clarified by CWAC have residential properties have a right to access Higher Marston

play area but no rights to park. Cllrs agreed that it need to be reinforced that there are no rights to park. MP has suggested to Mark Brazil that the entrance is resurfaced to include traffic calming humps to prevent cars speeding down that lane (currently happening). AN asked if we can get a 'no parking' sign erected. MP stated that a Silver Audi has been parked on the area for some time, and has no insurance or MOT.

Action DW: Ask CWAC about signage and have a look at the Audi car.

b) Playground fencing

Mark Brazil is now looking into fencing, and this issue has been chased by LG.

c) Property removal enforcement

On 20th February, MP provided an inventory of items and plantings of concern on the play area to CWAC. The council have since removed some green bins and brown bins but all other items remain.

Action MP: Chase up property removal enforcement with CWAC.

6. Planning issues

There have been no new applications or decisions since the last MPC meeting.

7. Marston Fingerpost

On 13th February, **GH** was notified by Historic England that Marston Fingerpost has been added to the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The asset is now listed at Grade II. **GH** was provided an associated advice report. **MP** stated that the council had for a long time, wanted to protect and celebrate the fingerpost, and asked Cllrs how they'd like to do this. It was decided that a planter would be an attractive option, and could also include a sign advocating safety at the junction. In the past, grants have been available for safety features, and as such might be might with this installation.

Action AN: Look at options for planters for the triangle and circulate to Cllrs.

8. Marston Church Hall

a) **Storeroom repair works**

Cllr Simon Tate was not present to provide an update, and no communications had been received prior to the meeting.

b) **Grant applications update (AN)**

There was no news on the Heritage Lottery application for new chairs. The members budget grant application of £785 for a smart monitor and two remembrance statues was received and the items purchased. The monitor has been now been installed and operational.

c) **Hall ceiling painting update (MP)**

Kevin Gleave to is starting the job on Thursday 13th March.

d) **Electrical condition report**

Cllrs agreed that an electrical condition report should be sought.

Action MP: ask Miles Hughes to put us in contact with an electrician who assessment electrical conditions.

e) **Screen glare prevention (MP)**

The new monitor is currently subject to significant glare from light coming in from both the side windows and entrance wall windows. Cllrs discussed different solutions. **MP** shared quotes obtained for the purchase of blackout curtains and blinds. It was established that curtains could not be installed on the entrance wall main windows due to their proximity to the ceiling. It was

decided that curtained should be purchased for each of the 6 side wall windows, blackout blinds for the entrance wall windows, and a small curtain for the window above the entrance door.

Action MP: Share quotes and colour options with Cllrs for 6 x blackout curtains for side wall windows, 2 x blackout blinds for entrance wall windows, and 1 x small curtain for the above the entrance door window.

f) Fire Risk Assessment

It was established that according to regulations, MPC can conduct their own FRA, and do not require a professional assessor for this type and size building. It was agreed that a new FRA of the church hall is due. MP also shared a HSE document; 'Health and safety checklist for village and community halls' prior to the meeting and it was agreed that this document would be very useful to run through and ensure the Church Hall has everything in place.

Action AN & MP: Complete a new Fire Risk Assessment of the hall according to current government guidelines, and at the same time go through the HSE Health and Safety Checklist for Villages Halls.

9. Marston Murmurs

MP advised that any articles should be received by 20th March.

Action DC: Write an article for MM on the mobile library

Action MP: Add our designated PCSO details in MM

10. Finance (GH)

a) Payments

Pre-authorized payments made (12th February to 11th March 2025)

Payee	Description	Amount	Statement date
Angela Johnson	Coffee morning refreshments	10.06	14/02/2025
Angela Johnson	Coffee morning refreshments	48	14/02/2025
Gary Hedges	Clerk salary 8th Jan to 11th Feb 2025	310.48	17/02/2025
Royal British Legion	Tommy and Women statue pair for Church Hall	350	17/02/2025
Gary Hedges	Reimbursement for purchase of TV for Church Hall	488.99	17/02/2025
NEPACS	Hall hire - 18th Feb 13:00 - 15:00	20	19/02/2025
EE	EE Feb 2025	32.4	20/02/2025
It'seeze	Spot on - Website - Feb 25	71.4	21/02/2025
Josh Merson	60 minutes chair exercise classes Feb 2025	160	26/02/2025
Williams D&P	Murmurs print Mar 25 issue	224.4	26/02/2025
Miles Hughes	Monitor installation at church hall	130	27/02/2025
WaterPlus	15 January 2025 - 14 February 2025	8.86	03/03/2025
Extra Gas	Annual standing charge	78.75	07/03/2025
Angela Kemmett	Ange - Feb25 Pay- 4 x cleaning and 4 x hall admin @10p/h	80	10/03/2025

Payments agreed

Clerks Salary 20.75 hrs @ £15.84 = **£328.68** (gross)

Angela Johnson expenses (coffee morning refreshments) - **£24.32** – covering period 12th Feb – 11th Mar

INCOME

Rent and Chair exercise admissions

Payor	Description	Income (£)	Statement date
Matt Reeves	Hall hire - 2hrs 16 th February	20	17/02/2025
NEPACS	Hall hire - 18th Feb 13:00 - 15:00	20	26/02/2025
Noodle Performance Arts	Noodle performance - Ballet 5 weeks @1 hour per week hall hires 3-31st March 2025	50	04/03/2025
NEPACS	Hall hire - 4th March 13:00 - 15:00	20	05/03/2025
Lynda Birtles	3 hours per week for the period Tuesday 11th February 2025 to 6th March 2025	120	07/03/2025
NEPACS	Hall hire - 10th Mar 13:00 - 15:00	20	11/03/2025
Anthill Mob	Hall hire – 24 th Feb, 3 rd 10 th , 17 th Mar – 2 hours per session (£5 owed from 3 rd March)	75	Cash
	TOTAL	£325	

Coffee mornings donations = £110.30

Chair exercise admissions = £130

GH explained there is currently £14k in the MPC current account, most of which will not be spent before the 2025/26 precept is paid at the start of April. **GH** suggested Cllrs consider moving a further sum to the 30-day liquidity account in order to earn more interest on their balance. Cllrs agreed to move £7k from the current account to the liquidity account.

Action GH: Transfer £7,000 from the MPC current account to the MPC liquidity account.

GH proposed to Cllrs that we proceed with the applying for a 'Scribe' accounting subscription to manage finance in 2025/26. The software was considered by **GH** likely to be cost effective due to efficiency savings of the Clerk's time, especially with recent increase in popularity with hall hire, and also the familiarity for potential future clerks with the system. A subscription will be made for a year in the first instance to see if it works for, and is most cost effective for MPC. The cost will be £300-400.

Action GH: Subscribe to Scribe accounting software.

b) Bank reconciliation

The current account bank statements (6th Feb to 5th Mar 25), and MPC account statements were checked and signed by **MP**.

11. Correspondence (GH)

GH proposed that the info@marstonparishcouncil.gov.uk email account be removed due to lack of use and need. The proposal was agreed by Cllrs.

Action MP: remove mention of the info email account from Murmurs and the MPC Facebook page

Action GH: contact the web host and request shutdown of the info email account and remove mention of the info account from the MPC website

Action PC: remove mention of the info email account from the church hall banner.

12th February – 11th March 2025

1. Email 13.02 – Verity Goodyear (Listing Co-ordinator, Heritage England) – Guidepost (Fingerpost), Higher Marston: Notification of Designation Decision. Awarded Listed Building Status. List Entry Number: 1484632
2. Email 13.02 – Janet Hare (Head of Communications and Engagement | Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner) - Residents survey on council tax policing precept
3. Email 13.02 – Phil Marshall (Marbury Ward Cllr) – Ward Cllr update Feb 2025
4. Email 19.02 – Highways-temporary Road closure notice for Ollershaw Lane, Marston which is due to commence on 24th February 2025 - TRO19031
5. Email 19.02 – Highways-temporary Road closure notice for Dark Lane, Marston which is due to commence on 24th February 2025 - TRO19032
6. Email 20.02 – Marion Potts to Lynn Gibbon, Jason Lambert, Christine Telford, Mark Brazil - Higher Marston Playground – Report back following check of the area – fly tipping reported TR689229236 & TR689237104, areas / items of concern associated with properties listed for CWAC to write to residents - request for traffic calming measures on the access road.
7. Emails 20.02 & 21.02 – Report from resident of sinkhole on drive at 18 Ollershaw Lane and beginning to damage the pavement. Reported by resident to Highways. Case reference HW676686120. A visit from Highways took place on 21st Feb and suggested the issue lies with United Utilities and was the result of a leak with no chance it could be historical Salt Mine Works.
8. Email 25.02 – Alison Schwarz (Customer Service Administrator, Canal and Rivers Trust) - [CASE:1427810] FW: Marston canal bridge – Bridge 193 the capacity of the bridge is stated as 40 Tonne (full strength). From time to time of vehicles in exceedance of 40Tonne using the bridge, but these do so under permission from the Trust, following our abnormal loads process. The last our records show of this nature was 57T in Oct 2021. A description of 3 levels of inspection is given, and a request for evidence of any >40T vehicles using the bridge.
9. Emails 25.02 – Mark Brazil (CWAC) – High Marston Playground – asking if any of the addresses listed in email 6 above have been notified by the Parish Council and /or have any service requests been raised with CWAC. A further email asking if MPC have considered taking on the playground as an asset by transfer from CWAC.
10. Phone call – 06.03 – Higher Marston Playground – Lynn Gibbon (Marbury Ward Cllr) reported her site visit and has spoken to Mark Brazil who is taking onboard issues raised. MP has asked LG to put forward traffic calming on the approach road/entrance, dog proof fencing around the play area and enforcement of property removal not permitted with follow up checks. Estates have confirmed the houses were sold with vehicular access to the rear.
11. Email 06.03 – Lynn Gibbon (Marbury Ward Cllr) – Ward Cllr update March 2025
12. Email 06.03 – Lynn Gibbon – Ollershaw Lane Weight Restriction request – LG has spoken with Jamie Barron he thought the weight restriction was not enforceable due to the current businesses in the village. LG suggested larger signs for directing traffic to the industrial estate, and the possibility of buying PCC time to stop HGVs and act as a deterrent.
13. Email 12.03 – Resident – Higher Marston Playground - request to share via Facebook a successful removal of fly tipping items by CWAC, and an idea of starting a wildlife area.
14. Email 11.03 – PCSO Diana Wiggins – Monthly update for February including police surgeries in March.

Cheshire / national

1. Email 18.02 – Lynn Gibbon – release of Government Devolution Consultation Paper
2. Email 06.03 – Chalc - West Cheshire Town and Parish Conference 2025 – invitation
3. Email 07.03 – Chalc – Benefits of Chalc membership
4. Email 13.03 – Licencing Team (CWAC) - Council's Charitable Street Collection Policy Consultation

12. Any other business

Action GH: Add 'new MPC banner' to agenda of the April MPC meeting

AJ, at her last MPC meeting as Cllr, explained her responsibilities that will need taking on by

the rest of the council:

- Supplying coffee morning refreshments – **MP** to take over
- Representative for Pickmere Lake issues, including attending meetings.
- Representative for the Ollershaw Lane HGV weight reduction request.
- Putting notices, including MPC meeting agendas into the notice boards – **PC** to take over
- Keeping at eye on the footpath

AJ has sent her notice of resignation to **MP**, and will stay in post until 31st March 2025.

MP expressed her gratitude on behalf of the council for the great work **AJ** has done as Cllr and how she'll be missed. **MP** presented a gift – a painting of Marbury Park and a card to **AJ**.

Date of the next meeting: 09/04/2025

Close of meeting: 21:15

Abbreviations: pc (parish council), cllr (Councillor), cllrs (Councillors), cllrs' (councillors'), cllr's (councillor's), CW&C (Cheshire West and Chester), MM (Marston Murmurs), MPC (Marston Parish Council)