



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 June 2024

Meeting opened 19:00 pm

Attendees:

Parish Councillors; Marion Potts (MP), Phil Carter (PhC), Dave Collier (DC), Amanda Nixon (AN)

Clerk: Gary Hedges (GH)

Apologies:

Angela Johnson (AJ), Ward Cllr Norman Wright, Ward Cllr Phil Marshall

Declarations of interest:

None

Dispensations:

None

Public Forum:

No public present

Approval of minutes from parish council meeting on 8th May 2024

Approved and signed by MP.

Actions from meeting 8th May 2024

Owner	Topic	Action	Status	Origin May 24 minutes
AJ	Hall Toaster	Obtain prices for a new toaster	Complete	1
GH	Wi-Fi billing	Change to paperless bills, pay first bill at post office and then set up direct debit for payments.	Complete	1
MP	Fingerpost Farm building work	Submit a complaint to enforcement	Complete	1
AJ	Hall storeroom wall re-build	Obtain another quote for the storeroom wall re-build	Complete	3a
MP	Hall heating	Prepare and display a 'have you turned off the heating' sign.	Complete	3a
GH	Hall Green Wheelie Bin	Apply for Wheelie bin sticker for 2024/25	Complete	3a
MP	D-day	Create planning group to make D-day arrangements	Complete	3b
GH	Neighbourhood Plan	Carry forward: Digitalise and collate Neighbourhood plan suggestions	Carry Forward	3b
MP	Defibrillator for the Salt Barge	Apply for a grant for match funding for an additional defib to be installed at The Salt Barge.	Complete	3d
GH	Planning issues	Carry forward: keep a list of active planning applications within the parish	Carry Forward	3e
AJ	Sewerage issues at the flashes	Ongoing: Reapply to United Utilities for information on when sewerage is pumped in.	Ongoing	3f
GH	Online banking	Consider options for online banking and present them at the June PC meeting.	Complete	4b

1. Parish Councillor Reports

Fernlea Road Steps (MP): Overgrown vegetation reported by MP and supported by Jayne Turner (Tenancy Enforcement Officer, Weaver Vale Housing Trust) has led to CWAC council clearing the vegetation and trimming back the hedge. The uneven steps that present a trip hazard was also reported by MP (TR615275514) and to date, CWAC have been out to mark 3 steps for making safe. At the bottom of the steps, overgrown vegetation has also been reported (TR617432341) but the ownership of this patch is unclear.

Fly tipping on Higher Marston playground (MP): A further complaint has been submitted by MP (TR614834825) but no response received.

Parking on Higher Marston playground (MP): No further responses received from CWAC.

Overgrown vegetation Ollershaw Lane (AN): Vegetation growing across pavement in sections from Canal Bridge up to Harris Gas. This section is owned by Twenty Club. **Action:** AN to email Twenty Club secretary asking vegetation to be cut back.

Fingerpost Farm Building Work (MP): Complaint submitted to enforcement by MP. Case number 24/00209/EOPDEV.

2. Ward Councillor Reports (PM)

No Ward Councillors present.

3. Pickmere Lake

There has been correspondence between Wincham and Pickmere PCs, seeking support for a joint letter from the three PCs affected by the lake issues (e.g. unsocial behaviour) asking the new Police and Crime Commissioner Dan Price to make Pickmere Lake a priority. MP Cllrs would fully support a joint letter to support the resolution of the Pickmere Lake issues.

4. Marston Footpath 7

A complaint about the overgrown state of the footpath was received by a resident on 28th May 2024. AJ has sent two emails, including photos, asking to meet the Footpath Officer again to get the issue resolved.

5. Higher Marston Playground Parking (MP)

A complaint has been received by a resident about parking on the green. MP has been trying to find out who, if anyone, has a license to drive onto and park on the playground. Minutes from a 2008 MPC meeting allude to the possibility of a gate going up to prevent unauthorized driving on to the playground, and that only two residents paid for a license to cross the field at that time. No further details have been found so far documenting access rights. Some residents claim it's written on the deeds of their property that they have rights to vehicle access through the playground. The land is owned by CWAC but Cllrs would like to establish what the access rights are and who has them. Some residents have also been given keys to drop barriers in order to move vehicles through the play equipment area, which is a safety concern, given the barriers are there to protect children using the facility. **Action:** MP to raise a safety concern with CWAC about resident vehicle access through the barriers adjacent to play equipment area.

The encroachment on to the playground by fencing put around a camper van, and also on-going fly tipping was supposed to have led to a visit by CWAC enforcement on 16th April 2024 but no update has been received. It was also noted by Cllrs the health and safety concerns that could be brought about by

fly tipping such as encouraging Brown Rats and potential disease brought with them e.g. leptospirosis. **Action:** MP to ask for update from CWAC enforcement on playground land encroachment and fly tipping.

6. Marston Church Hall

- a) **Storeroom repairs:** A £9k quote was originally obtained to rebuild the hall and make it head height. AJ has since obtained a £6.1k quote from a different company for a different specification: to remove the existing corner wall as its too damaged to be saved, to where it is cracked, including removing roof and skip for the rubbish. This would include building the wall back up and repointing the rest of the wall, including new fibre glass roof. **Action:** AJ to ask John and Builder Girl for quotes on the repair specification detailed above.

The damage may have been caused by subsidence. **Action:** GH to fill out brine compensation board form for grant funding to cover the repair costs.

- b) **Toilet drainage update:** Following repeated blockages, the toilets were declared out of order and Cllrs approved Techflow drainage company attending on 4th June to clear the blockage (£290+VAT). They were unable to clear the pipes from the toilet end. On 5th June Techflow returned and used the rodding eye between the building and graveyard to access the pipes at a different point but were still unable to clear the blockage. Cllrs approved the hire of a portable toilet (£100 delivery + £25 per week), which was installed in the carpark on 7th June. Techflow advised on further investigation works, involving some excavation work and this took place on 12th June (£875 + VAT). A buried catch pit manhole was discovered, which was full of mud and silt. A camera inspection indicated extensive tree root ingress, displacements and fractures in the soil pipe. In addition, Techflow suggested that foul water may have been flowing directly into the surface water drain as an initial enquiry with United Utilities indicated there are no sewers in proximity to the hall. Techflow will be sending out a report on their findings and recommendations. The hall toilets remain out of order and the portable toilet will be staying in place until the blocked drain issue is resolved. **Action:** AN to request attendance of United Utilities to confirm whether or not the hall is connected to a main sewer.

- c) **Hall Hire – cash payments and booking receipts:** Internal auditor Chris Swallow has recommended minimising cash transactions. A suggestion by GH that regular hirers are asked to if they are willing and able pay via bank transfer was approved by Cllrs. However, Cllrs would like to continue to make the hall as accessible as possible and cash payment will remain an option for all renters. **Action:** GH to approach all regular hirers to ask if they're willing to pay for hall hire via BACS.

The MPC chair exercise group currently use a cash float for running the sessions. Chris Swallow has recommended that there should be no cash float in place, and this is reflected in the National Association of Local Councils guidance. All cash receipts should be paid directly into the MPC bank account. **Action:** MP to ask if payments to the class trainer Josh can be made via BACS / cheque going forward.

A further recommendation from the internal audit was issuing of receipts for all payments to MPC. It was suggested that a subscription Scribe Accounting Software might be considered as an option to address the issue. **Action:** GH to consider how receipts could be issued for hall hire payments. **Action:** All to consider how a receipt/s may be issued for chair exercise group session payments.

7. Planning Applications

No new planning applications.

The previous owner of Four Lanes Farm has moved out having sold the estate to developers. It was suggested that Cllrs keep on eye on any potential plans to develop or change the land use of the

farm.

8. Neighbourhood Plan

No progress made. Action for GH to type up and summarise questionnaire responses is to be carried forward.

9. Defibrillator for The Salt Barge

MP applied to London Hearts for a grant to cover 50% of the costs of an external defibrillator. MP was advised the applications had closed for the scheme. Cllrs will now wait for a new scheme to be launched before trying again for granting funding.

10. Sewage at the flashes (AJ)

AJ absent from meeting. Item to be carried forward to next meeting.

11. Front Gardens Competition (MP)

Judging will take place by Cllrs and the Clerk on 17th July at 6.30pm with shortlisting of gardens made the week before. Judges are looking for gardens that are well maintained, tidy, wildlife friendly and considering a question, 'would I like to sit the garden and have a cup of tea'. There will be a trophy for the winning garden and certificates for those commended by the council.

Action: AN to contact Ian Stanley for certificate template, collect trophy and get it engraved.

12. Marston Murmurs (MP)

Any articles for the July issue should be submitted to MP by 22nd June.

13. Finance (GH)

a) To consider payments to be made as per attached list

EXPENDITURE

Payments made 8th May to 11th June 2024

Description	Cost (£)	Inv. No.	Date issued	Cheque No.	Budget category
Clerk Salary (net) – 10Apr-7May24 (411.68 gross - 82.40 tax)	329.28		13/05/2024	1462	Salaries
Website - It'seeze Apr24	57	011	21/05/2024		Bills
WaterPlus	10.71	010	30/05/2024		Bills
Zurich Hall Insurance	647.48		31/05/2024		Bills

Payments issued / approved 12th June 2024

Description	Cost (£)	Inv. No.	Cheque No.	Budget
Williams Design and Print June 24 newsletter	217.75	12	1467	Newsletter
Clerk reimbursements - various	205.51		1464	Expenses
Techflow drainage (4&5 th June visits)	348	15	1465	Bills
Chris Swallow – internal audit	300	13	1466	Audit
Angie hall hire admin (4 x 1 hr) and cleaning (4 x 1 hr) @	100		1468	Salaries

£10ph				
Clerk salary 45.5hrs @13.28 = £604.24 (gross) – cheque to be issued following receipt of pay slip from Shire Accountants.	-		-	Salaries

- Clerk time sheet for 8th May to 11th June was approved and signed by AN.

INCOME

Rent (£10 per hour)

Hirer	Hire dates	Amount (£)	Payment type
Together Theatre (2.5 hr sessions)	3/5, 10/5, 17/5, 24/5	100	BACS (13/5/24)
Together Theatre (2.5 hr sessions)	31/5, 7/6, 14/6, 21/6, 28/6	125	BACS (30/5/24)
Feathers – Jackie (5 hr sessions)	11/5, 1/6	100	Cash
Band practice - Jamie	16/5 (3 hrs)	30	Cash
Band practice - Rich	26/5 (3 hrs)	30	Cash
Ant Hill Mob – Richard	13/5, 20/5, 22/5, 27/5, 29/5, 10/6	120	Cash
Lynda – keep fit	9/5, 14/5, 16/5, 21/5, 23/5, 28/5, 30/5, 4/6, 6/6, 11/6	150	Cash
	TOTAL	655	

Donations

Description	Amount (£)
Coffee mornings	81.11
Marston Festival – book and plant stall	24.50
TOTAL	105.61

b) Online banking

GH proposed to draft an internet banking policy using Comberbach PCs (shared with Cllrs 12/6) as a template. GH also proposed to stay with NatWest and apply for online banking, with all signatories having online access. This should meet NALC model financial regulations (shared with Cllrs 12/6), without the need for a bank that offers 'dual authorisation'. These proposed were approved by Cllrs. **Action:** GH to draft internet banking policy and apply for online banking with NatWest.

c) Bank reconciliation

5th May to 4th June 2024 bank reconciliation for current account signed by MP.

14. Internal audit for AGAR (GH)

The report from the internal audit was discussed in relation to where auditor Chris Swallow had judged that MPC were not achieving four of the internal control objectives. These included where not every payment / receipt had supporting documentation, a VAT refund had not been applied for and the lack of an external payroll to properly apply PAYE and NI. Supported by Cllrs, GH

resolved to put in place all necessary measures to ensure full compliance with AGAR internal control objectives going forward. The AGAR forms were signed off by MP and will now be submitted to external auditors PKF Littlejohns. The dates for the period of the exercise of public rights will be 13th June 2024 to 22nd July 2024. A notice to this effect has been placed on the MPC website and will be going up on the noticeboards. **Action:** GH to submit completed AGAR forms to external auditor.

15. Correspondence (GH)

a) Councillor email addresses

As stated in the May 2024 minutes, NALC guidance was received recommending Cllrs do not use personal email addresses for council business and adopt a .gov.uk top level domain mailbox. Clerk and Cllr email addresses with a.gov.uk top level domain can be set with current provider (It'seeze) at a cost of approx. £10 per month depending on the mailbox size, number of addresses needed, and transition time when the .co.uk addresses for clerk and info are still needed. There is no upfront cost but an application is required for .gov.uk top level domains to be used. The format of the new email address would include the Cllr's name, for example marion.potts@marstonparishcouncil.gov.uk. Cllrs approved the use of the current email / website provider to add the new email addresses. The address of the MPC website would also change to www.marstonparishcouncil.gov.uk to match the top-level domain of the email addresses. **Action:** GH to apply for new email addresses for clerk and info mailboxes as well an email address for each Cllr.

b) To note correspondence received as per attached list

1. Email 09.05 - ChALC – Cost of living newsletter
2. Email 10.05 - ChALC – NALC Sector snapshot survey
3. Email 10.05 - DHSC Community Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Fund – application submission by MP.
4. Email 10.05 – Water leak outside the Saltworks reported to AN, who reported to UU. Ref. 05714423
5. Email 13.05 - Tony Hayes to MP. Tony has been working with PC help to transfer information on the graves to 'Find a Grave' website and to produce a short video of Marston Village Hall from the air. Links to and website and YouTube video provided.
6. Email 14.05 – ChALC - Model Financial Regulations 2024
7. Email 14.05 – CWAC – General election polling station booking letter
8. Email 15.05 – Highways - Temporary Road closure TTRO17121 Ollershaw Lane, Marston – 17th May
9. Email 15.05 – Higher Marston Playground – MP reported to CWAC Campervan and car driving onto and parking on playground area
10. Email 16.05 – CWAC – Invitation to local plan drop-in events
11. Email 16.05 – Mark Brazil (CWAC) to LG – re. grassing cutting and parking licence agreements for Higher Marston playground.
12. Email 16.05 – MP to Mark Brazil (CWAC) – Request for more details regarding the agreement from 2008.
13. Email 17.05 – Highways - Temporary Road closure TTRO17159 Marston Lane, Marston – 21st May.
14. Email 17.05 – Jayne Turner (Tenancy Enforcement Officer, Weaver Vale Housing Trust) – reported to CWAC faults on Higher Marston steps as unsafe and hedges overhanging.
15. Email 20.05 – Ron Bailey - Safety of Lithium-ion Batteries and e-bikes and scooters – request for council to support campaign.
16. Emails 17th – 20th May - Pickmere Lake land North of Earles Lane - The Gatley Field – proposal of joint letter from Wincham, Pickmere and Marston PCs to new CWAC Police and Crime Commissioner.
17. Letter 15.05 – Ron Bailey - Development consent for the Keuper Gas Storage Project

18. Emails 20.05 and 23.05 – Jayne Turner (Tenancy Enforcement Officer, Weaver Vale Housing Trust) to MP – legal team requested advice on licence agreements to park on Higher Marston playground. Advice given by legal team.
19. Email 21.05 – ChalC – Crowd funding round 5.
20. Email 28.05 – Complaint by resident regarding footpath 7 being overgrown and only able to walk halfway along.
21. Email 30.05 – ChALC - Pre-election period - guidance information from NALC
22. Email 04.06 - PCSO Diana Wiggins PCSO REPORT MAY / JUNE 24
23. Email 07.06 – CWAC - Requests for extra time to comment on Planning Applications - new arrangements
24. Email 07.06 – Jayne Turner to MP – CWAC Transport and Highways Team have scheduled work to make Pathway between 11 and 13 Mere Road leading up to Fernlea Road safe.

16. Any other business

- Fire extinguishers are due to be serviced. **Action:** PC to call in Fire Queen for extinguisher servicing.
- Request from CHALC to send any photos from D-day
- Member of the public Simon Tait attended the meeting and expressed his interest in becoming a Parish Councillor. Action: GH to prepare notice of vacancy, giving parish electors 14 working days to request an election to fill the vacancy. Where 10-day electors come forward, an election will be triggered. Where the threshold is not met, the vacancy may be filled by Cllrs co-opting in a new Cllr at the next meeting.

Meeting ended 21:47

Next meeting 10th July 2024

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)