



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 February 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), Simon Tate (ST), Phil Marshall (PM), Dave Collier (DC)

Clerk: Gary Hedges (GH)

Apologies:

Declarations of interest: None

Dispensations: None

Public Forum: None

Approval of minutes from parish council meeting on 8th January 2025.

Approved and signed by MP.

Actions from meetings 8th January 2025 plus actions carried forward

Owner	Topic	Action	Date set	Status
ST	Church Hall	Write specification for Storeroom repair works, agree it with other MP Cllrs, and send out for quoting.	09/10/2024	Complete
ST	Policies and procedures	Research and highlight any policy gaps, and provide ideas for improving the set up.	09/10/2024	Complete
AJ	Murmurs	Write article about the MPC proposed 7.5t weight limit for Ollershaw Lane	13/11/2024	Complete
AN	Members Budgets	Apply for a member's budget grant for a new monitor and pair of statues by 31st January 2025.	08/01/2025	Complete
GH	Finances	Submit 25/26 Precept request of £14,500 to CWAC	08/01/2025	Complete
AJ	Ollershaw Lane - weight limit reduction	Ask Tony Rigby if his survey of HGV vehicles on Ollershaw Lane has taken place.	08/01/2025	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	C/F
MP	Higher Marston Play area	Report back to Cllrs following playground issues meeting on 9th January 2025	08/01/2025	Complete
MP	Church Hall	Reply to Tony Hayes, explaining the response of the council to his suggested considerations for Still-born burials in Marston churchyard.	08/01/2025	Complete
MP	Church Hall	Ask Kevin Gleave to proceed with the works to redecorate the hall toilets	08/01/2025	Complete
All	Marston Murmurs	Send articles for Marston Murmurs by 20th January.	08/01/2025	Complete
ST, HD, MP	Policies and procedures	Meet at ST office on 23rd January at 2pm for an initial meeting	08/01/2025	Complete
GH	Policies and procedures	Send data control example / guidance to ST for the sub-committee.	08/01/2025	Complete

1. Parish Councillor Reports

Great British Spring Clean

Councillors agreed to hold a litter picking event on Sunday 16th March 10:30 as part of the 'Great British Spring Clean' initiative by Keep Britain Tidy.

Action GH: Sign up to Spring Clean 2025

Action MP: Complete article for Murmurs re. Spring clean

2. Ward Councillor Reports (PM)

HyNet

- A presentation by Hynet has been shared as part of the February Ward Councillors update, which outlines the case for Hynet in the North West, and the infrastructure involved.

Members budget

- All three Cllr Member Budgets for 24/25 have been allocated to projects within Marbury Ward. The application by Marston Parish Council for a Smart TV Screen & a pair of remembrance statues has been successful.

National Issues impacting locally

- Winter Fuel Allowance - ongoing concern for this received from a number of residents.
- Farm Inheritance Tax – impacting many Families in our communities. Protest attended in Chester to support farmers across the Borough, concern also raised with Esther McVey MP.
- Min Wage + NI Changes – clear impact on SMEs / High Street and hospitality as well as larger businesses operating in the Borough. At a time when some businesses are still settling borrowing from during the pandemic, this is another blow to business and already impacting recruitment, growth and general confidence in the economy.
- VAT on Schools – concern for the impact not only on some of our independent schools but the knock-on impact for state school provision, particularly for SEND provision.
- Further 1 year settlement – Council still only awarded a one-year settlement and assuming a tax rise of 4.99% to have any hope of presenting a balanced budget. The authority has requested a multi-year settlement for a number of years, so it is disappointing that no longer term certainty has been provided.

Devolution Explained for Cheshire and Warrington

- The government has set out that devolution will be the 'natural default' and that there will be universal coverage across England.
- Failure to agree a devolution deal locally will allow government to impose one on Councils and residents from Westminster.
- Local Labour Council Leaders have written a letter expressing the desire to be on the priority list which would lead to an election for a Mayor in May 2026 (less than 17 months away).
- Devolution will establish a new Mayoral Strategic Authority with an elected Mayor and will likely include an office of top officials – S151 Officers etc. Key decisions taken by the **mayor** cannot be blocked by a single Council.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- Consultation feedback expected January/Feb 2024
- Housing numbers to be increased from current delivery of 1000 to 2100 per year in

CWaC

- Further clarification required on increased building in 'green' belt by naming areas 'grey' belt and rather ambiguous definitions.

Funding Opportunities

- PM & Lynn Gibbon (LG) have pulled together a list of potential funding opportunities, which are summarised in a circulated February update.

Northwich Regeneration Update

- Updates were provided on plans for Weaver Square, Northwich Market, Northwich Information Centre, Northwich Active travel routes, and Moss Farm.

Public space protection order

- The Chester City PSPO consultation closed on the 30th January 2025, with Marbury Cllr's requesting that consistent powers be applied across the Borough.

Action PM: Send GH Feb report and add GH to Marbury circulation list

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

Tony Rigby has been asked to wait by AJ before completing his survey of HGV vehicles on Ollershaw Lane to see if it was absolutely necessary. A further meeting with Highways and Police has not yet been scheduled. AJ explained to Cllrs that due to moving away from the area, she'll be resigning soon and asked if any other Cllrs were willing to take the issue forward. None came forward during the meeting.

Action GH: Ask LG to contact Jamie Barron (Highways) to organise a further meeting

Action GH: Ask The Canal and Rivers Trust for a Ollershaw Lane bridge survey report

4. Northwich North Connections Locality March 2025 meeting – Marston priorities (All)

Aleta Steele (CWAC) has asked PCs to provide a list of their local priorities prior to the meeting. The three priority issues put forward by Cllrs are:

- Speed reduction on A559 – as requested by residents
- An environmental weight limit places on vehicles travelling on Ollershaw Lane
- Making Marston Play Area safer for children – e.g. by fencing it off.

Action GH: Pass on the MPC priorities to Aleta Steeles prior to Northwich North Connections Locality meeting.

5. VE Day 80 – 8th May 2025

The Misfits have not yet been approved for a performance at the MPC event. **MP** has registered the MPC event with the official VE Day 80 website.

Action AN: Obtain price for VE day badges

C/F Action HD: Ask 'The Misfits' if they are willing to give a performance at the MPC VE Day 80 event.

6. Policy and procedures (ST)

ST, **MP**, and **HD** held a policy and procedures sub-committee meeting on 23rd January 2025. A folder of draft policies, filling gaps have now been prepared. **ST** brought to the meeting a hard copy folder of draft policies, which may be passed around between Cllrs. All Cllrs were pleased with the progress made by the sub-committee in a short space of time. The sub-committee will aim to meet regularly and **GH** will circulate 2 to 3 draft policies in advance of each MPC meeting for comments prior to voting on approval at the meeting.

HD highlighted that an expanded induction pack for new Councillors would be very useful.

Action GH: Ask local parish councils and chalc if they have a Councillors induction pack

Action GH: Circulate two to three draft policies to Councillors for comment and sign off at the next meeting

Action ST: Reschedule policy subcommittee meeting and focus meeting on induction

7. Higher Marston Playground (MP)

An article was published in the February 2025 edition of Murmurs by **MP**, which asked residents to refrain from parking vehicles on the Playground and not to allow dogs to foul the area. Also, residents with unauthorised items beyond their property boundary were asked to remove them or the Council may take steps to enforce removal. However, no improvement in the situation has been witnessed since the article was published.

Action MP: Chase up letters from CWAC to residents about tree planting

Action MP: Ask CWAC for playground risk assessment

8. Planning issues

There have been no new applications submitted since the last meeting.

There was 1 approved application:

Reference: 24/02902/LDC

Address: Iona 10 Manor Avenue Marston Northwich CW9 6DS

Proposal: Proposed change of use of a residential property to a children's home for two children and one overnight carer

9. Marston Church Hall

a) Grant applications update (AN)

There is no news on the Heritage Lottery application for new chairs (see Jan 25 minutes for details). The members budget grant application of £785 for a smart TV and two remembrance statues has been approved. **GH** asked if installation costs can be proceeded without approval of the council. The council resolved to proceed with approved suppliers on agreed jobs where the cost is under £500. A procurement policy could be introduced to make this clear or a change made to MPC standing orders.

Action MP: TV installation - appoint Miles Hughes for installation once delivery date of TV and bracket is known

Action ST: Add 'procurement policy' to the list of policies and procedures to be drafted.

b) Hall ceiling painting (MP)

Cllrs unanimously agreed to accept a quote of £550 for Kevin Gleave to paint the hall ceiling.
Action MP: appoint Kevin Gleave and book hall during works

c) Toilets re-decorating (MP)

Now completed, and the works have been paid for.

d) Storeroom repair works (ST)

Action ST: Circulate specification to Cllrs, ask John to requote and obtain two further quotes for repair of the Church Hall storeroom

10. Marston Murmurs

The current advertising policy is to be updated to include 'community events. **MP** reminded Cllrs to submit articles for the March edition. **ST** offered to give a basic 1–2-hour first aid course as part of an extended coffee mornings.

Action ST: Offer three Tuesday dates for a 1–2-hour course for residents as part of coffee mornings - and write article for murmurs

11. Finance (GH)

a) Payments

Pre-authorised payments made (8th January to 11th February 2025)

Payee	Description	Amount	Statement date
Angela Kemmett	Ange - Jan24 Pay- 4 x cleaning and 4 x hall admin @10p/h	80	08/01/2025
Miles Hughes	Filling hand dryers at church hall	148	09/01/2025
It'seeze	Spot on - Website - Jan 25	71.40	12/01/2025
Gary Hedges	Clerk salary 21.5 hours @ £15.84 = Gross £340.56 Net = 272.56	272.56	13/01/2025
Gary Hedges	Reimbursement for Church Hall Green bin subscription 2025	52.20	15/01/2025
EE	EE Limited - Jan 2025	32.40	20/01/2025
Gary Hedges	Reimbursement for Church Hall Green bin subscription 2025 (correction)	0.30	28/01/2025
Williams D&P	Murmurs print Feb 25 issue	224.40	28/01/2025
Kevin Gleave	Hall toilets decorating	200	29/01/2025
WaterPlus	15 December 2024 - 14 January 2025	8.86	29/01/2025
Josh Merson	60 minutes chair exercise classes 8th January through to 29th January	160	30/01/2025
Extra Gas	LPG fill up for Church Hall	434.70	04/02/2025
Angela Kemmett	Ange - Feb25 Pay- 4 x cleaning and 4 x hall admin @10p/h	80	10/02/2025

Payments agreed

Clerks Salary 24.5 hrs @ £15.84 = **£388.08** (gross)

Angela Johnson expenses (coffee morning refreshments) - **£50.06** – covering period 8th Nov – 10th Feb

INCOME

Rent and Chair exercise admissions

Payor	Description	Income (£)	Statement date
C Soanes	Hall hire 16th Jan 8-10pm	20	14/01/2025

NEPACS	Hall Hire 9th Jan 2hrs & 16th Jan 2hrs	40	14/01/2025
Various	Hall Hire Cash - Anthill Mob 23/12 2hrs) & Finn Band practise 30/12 (3hrs)	50	14/01/2025
NEPACS	Hire hall 4th Feb 13:00- 15:00 2hrs @ £10 p/h	20	24/01/2025
Matt Reeves	Hall Hire 2nd Feb - 2 hrs	20	03/02/2025
Liz Rosenfield	Hall hire for 15th March 18:00 - 23:00	50	05/02/2025
Lynda Birtles	4 weeks hire at 3 hours per week for the period Tuesday 14th January 2025 to 6th February 2025	120	07/02/2025
NEPACS	Hire hall 11th Feb 13:00- 15:00 2hrs @ £10 p/h	20	10/02/2025
Various	Anthill Mob 13/1, 20/1, 27/1, 29/1, 10.2 (10hrs total)	90 (£10 owed from 27 th Jan)	Cash
	TOTAL	£430	

Coffee mornings donations = £108.21

Chair exercise admissions = £205

b) Bank reconciliation

The current account bank statements (4th Jan to 5th Feb 25), and MPC account statements were checked and signed by **ST**.

GH proposed that he should take some time before the next meeting to do a cost-benefit analysis on whether to recommend MPC pays for a subscription to Scribe accounting software for keeping financial records going forward. **GH** suggested it could bring efficiency savings on reporting and issuing receipts for hall hire, including introducing issuing of invoices for hall hire. Cllrs agreed that this was worth looking into.

Action GH: Consider investing in Scribe software for 2025/26 financial year

12. Correspondence (GH)

8th January – 11th February 2025

1. Email 08.01 – Carole Twigg (Enforcement Officer, CWAC) – Land adjacent to fingerpost cottage: requested a retrospective application for the works (steel frame building, canopy to barn, single storey building and area of hardstanding), use to be ceased on the caravan for residential and for it to be removed. Timeframes given is 4 months for the use to cease and 5 months for its removal.
2. Email 08.01 – Janet Hare (Head of Communications and Engagement | Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner) - Residents survey on council tax policing precept
3. Email 09.01 – NALC - open letter to parish and town councils
4. Email 09.01 – Marion Potts – Update on Higher Marston Playground following on-site meeting with Phil Carter, Christine Telford, Jason Lambert and Lynn Gibbon on 9th January.
5. Email 10.01 – Lyn Brown (Democracy and Elections Officer, CWAC) – briefing - Cheshire East, Cheshire West, and Warrington Councils ask Government to be considered for devolution priority programme.
6. Email 13.01 – Christine Telford – Map (plan) of the area – iWest Public Map viewer suggested by Christine.
7. Email 14.01 – Lynn Gibbon (Marbury Ward Cllr) - Members Budget Application Form and Guidance Notes
8. Email 14.01 – Liz Corfield (Personal Assistant | Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner) - PCC Dan Price invitation to meet with CWaC Borough, Town and Parish Councils 22.01.25
9. Email 14.01 – Jamie Barron (Team Leader Highways – Area Team, CWAC) – Ollershaw Lane Weight Restriction request update.
10. Email 15.01 - Charlotte Smith (Finance Officer, CWAC) – confirmation of £14,500 precept request.

11. Email 15.01 – Marion Potts – Response to Tony Hayes re. stillborn burials
12. Email 15.01 – Highways – Temporary Road closure, Dark Lane, Marston TRO18710
13. Email 17.01 – Chalc - NALC - MHCLG CPO Consultation
14. Email 17.01 – Chalc - Wanted! Examples of parish and town councils work in Cheshire
15. Email 21.01 – Nalc - NALC Strengthening the standards and conduct framework consultation - Sector survey
16. Email 23.01 - Lyn Brown (Democracy and Elections Officer, CWAC) – GP survey - a survey Healthwatch Cheshire has launched to gather feedback from Cheshire West residents about their experiences with GP services.
17. Email 23.01 – Cllr Angela Johnson - Ollershaw Lane Weight Restriction request – response to Jamie Barron update.
18. Email 23.01 – Chalc - FW: Changes to the kerbside recycling service
19. Email 23.01 – Chalc – Nalc - Chief executive's bulletin - 23 January 2025
20. Email 24.01 – Chalc - ChALC Chair: Notes from PCC Meeting 22.01.25
21. Facebook message 23.01 – Resident – Complain about trucks passed by at night causing noise and vibrations. Proposal to decrease speed limit on Marston Lane. – response by **MP** on 25th Feb explaining the criteria required to get a speed reduction and how we have looked into the possibility, and invited to the public forum at the next meeting.
22. Email 24.01 – Chalc - FW: Recycling Resources for local councils
23. Email 24.01 - Lynn Gibbon (Marbury Ward Cllr) - Marbury PC Update Jan 2025
24. Email 25.01 – Resident – request to trim the hedge adjoining the SW perimeter of higher marston. Response: **GH** posted a letter to Marston Hall Farm on 29th Jan 2025 requesting the trimming of the hedges.
25. Email 29.01 – Andrea Thwaite (Scrutiny and Civic Manager, CWAC) - Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 10 February. Responses on Community Pharmacy and General Practice welcome please.
26. Email 29.01 - Aleta Steele (Senior Manager, Communities and Engagement, CWAC) - Invitation to: Connections Locality Meeting - Northwich North
27. Email 31.01 – Chalc – CWAC launches survey asking for feedback on its customer service
28. Email 03.02 – Chalc - Royal Garden Party 2025 - Buckingham Palace
29. Email 03.02 - Aleta Steele (Senior Manager, Communities and Engagement, CWAC) - Postponement: Connections Locality Meeting - Northwich North
30. Email 04.02 – Chalc - Cheshire West and Chester Town and Parish Connections Online Event - Local Nature Recovery Strategy Consultation 6th March at 6pm
31. Email 05.02 - Lyn Brown (Democracy and Elections Officer, CWAC) - Devolution Member Briefing for CWAC Town and Parish Councils
32. Email 05.02 – Cllr Marion Potts – Response to request to Marston family history information, providing a contact for the enquirer to pursue their interest.
33. Email 06.02 – Chalc - CW&C Climate Update for Parish Councils
34. Email 07.02 - Lynn Gibbon (Marbury Ward Cllr) on behalf of resident – request for information on walking groups in the area.
35. Email 10.02 – Planning Policy Team (CWAC) – Parish Survey 2025

13. Any other business

MP explained to Cllrs that MPC has inputted into a soon to be published book on the History of Village Halls and it's possible Marston Church Hall could feature. Cllrs agreed that a copy should be pre-ordered and kept in the hall.

Action GH: Order 'the history of villages halls' book for church hall

AN received a phone from a resident on Ollershaw lane complaining that the hedge at the top of Ollershaw Lane, possibly at Willow Pool Farm, was overgrown and hadn't been cut. **MP** explained that hedges on agricultural land only have to be cut every 3 years under current guidelines.

Date of the next meeting: 12/03/2025

Close of meeting: 20:58

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)