

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ECCLESTON PARISH COUNCIL held on
TUESDAY 14 JANUARY 2025 at 7.30pm in ECCLESTON VILLAGE HALL, KILN LANE, ECCLESTON**

PRESENT: Cllr Sims (Chair)
Cllrs Ashcroft, Cass, Hemus, Johnson, C Pearl, G Pearl and Williams
J Anderson – Clerk

Cllr Sims opened the meeting with the sad news of the death of Cllr Brian Spencer who had been a Parish Councillor on Eccleston Parish Council since 2022 and had been a Councillor with St Helens Council since 1990s. He had also been the Leader of St Helens Council. She paid tribute to Cllr Spencer by saying that he had given a lot of time and hard work.

A moment's silence was held for Councillors to remember Cllr Spencer in their own private way. Cllr Hemus kindly said a prayer and Cllr Sims thanked Councillors for their respect on this sad occasion.

24.114 APOLOGIES

Cllr Haw

24.115 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Cllr G Pearl declared an interest in Item 24.127 – Planning Applications.

24.116 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 10 DECEMBER 2024

Resolved that the minutes be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

24.117 MATTERS ARISING

None.

24.118 RESIDENTS' ISSUES

None.

24.119 POLICE REPORT

Crime figures had been received for November and December. Most compared favourably except anti-social behaviour in November this year which had increased by 8 incidents.

24.120 REPORTS

Resolved to note the following:

Finance Sub Cttee, 10 January 2025 Cllrs Sims, Ashcroft and G Pearl along with the Clerk met to discuss the budget and the proposed precept (See Item 24.123).

Smithy Working Party – all Councillors were given a copy of the Curators' Report for January. The report included the following points:

- Following last month's alarm activations and the names on the call-out list, Councillors discussed the situation. It was agreed that the Curators remain on the call-out list as it was detailed in their job descriptions. It was also agreed that the monitoring company only make a

call-out if the alarm is activated by 2 sensors or movement of a person in the Smithy. As the recent activations had been due to low batteries in sensors, the Clerk was asked to contact the alarm company to arrange for the batteries to be checked every 6 months and replaced as necessary possibly before they register low.

The Contact Details in the Emergency Plan would be updated and distributed.

- 2025 – the Curators were planning the next exhibition – Lost Businesses of St Helens which would focus on local shops and businesses. Curators asked if Parish Councillors had any memories or information to please contact the Smithy.
- Blacksmith's Day, Saturday 17 May 2025 – craft demonstrations would take place from 12 noon-5pm with the tea room and bar remaining open until 6pm.

24.121 COUNCILLOR VACANCIES

Notices for 2 vacancies, one in West Ward and one in East Ward, had been published. Vacancies could be filled by co-option after 14 working days.

24.122 WINDLE BROOK DRAINAGE

Windle Parish Council had asked for financial assistance towards the cost of farmers, whose land had flooded, applying to the Environment Agency to carry out an environmental survey on them dredging Windle Brook. Windle Parish Council felt this might help with the drainage of Ecclesfield playing field/pitches. The full cost would be approximately £315 for each Parish Council. Parish Councillors would like to know whose land the section of the brook is on and would it be a one-off or would regular payments be requested. The Clerk would report back to Windle Parish Council.

24.123 BUDGET FOR 2025/2026

There would be 3929 band D equivalent properties this year (up 9 on last year). It was proposed by Cllrs Cass and Johnson to raise the precept by £1. A vote was taken. The result was, with one abstention, 4 to 3 in favour of raising the precept. The proposal was accepted. The precept per property would be £20.94 meaning a precept request of £82,273.26 for 2025/26 would be made. Payment dates of 10 April and 12 June 2025 were agreed.

24.124 ANNUAL MAGAZINE

It was agreed that the magazine would not be delivered to every house in the Parish but would be published on the website and possibly on a newly created Facebook page. A quote for 500 to be printed would be obtained. Copies of the magazine would be left in shops, dentist, library and businesses in the Parish.

24.125 RISK ASSESSMENT

The annual risk assessment was carried out. A security review had taken place on 4 February 2022 with no issues raised. **It was agreed to sign the risk assessment.**

24.126 COMMUNITY PROJECTS FUNDING REQUESTS

Criteria would be set at the next meeting to determine successful requests for funding for community projects for the next financial year starting April 2025.

24.127 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Resolved to note the following:

Applications

9 Forest Grove

Proposed front porch, alterations to existing rear extension roof, proposed decking at the rear and external alterations to dwelling

N/O

Decisions

37 Park Avenue

Conversion of a detached garage/workshop into an annexe for living accommodation

Granted 11/12/24

Cllr Ashcroft asked whether there had been any decision made on the planning application for a dwelling in Park Avenue. Cllr Sims explained that no decision had been made by St Helens Council. Cllr Ashcroft would contact St Helens Council to find out why a decision had not been made.

24.128 ACCOUNTS

Received: Village Hall Hire £262; RK Salary + PAYE £555.83; WPC phone £12.00; interest Dec 0.57 and £79.88;

Total Receipts **£826.28**

Payments:

SSE – gas	265.88
GPS Telecoms – clerk phone Nov	43.22
TLEK Ltd – new lights in Village Hall	1185.36
SSE – gas	338.79
HMRC – PAYE & NI Nov and Dec	1123.76
Water Plus	32.53
C Barber – VH grounds maintenance	160.00
SSE – gas	658.59
SSE – electricity	676.59
St Helens Council – VH cleaning £1281.60	821.14
GPS Telecom – phone	44.74
R Kelsey – January	364.63
J Anderson – January	1543.96
L Poole – January	498.36
V Griffiths – January	197.52
J Chamberlain – January	197.52
Merseyside Pension Fund – employer and employee contributions	604.88
Total Payments	£8757.47

RECONCILIATION - The Clerk reported that as at 31 December 2024 the balance in the Current Account was £6,500.00, Reserve Account £61,871.36 and Capital Deposit Account £480.56

PETTY CASH - Expenditure for the month of December 2024 £6.80

Approximate balance at the end of December 2024 £23.33

24.129 CORRESPONDENCE

- **Letter from St Helens Council** – calculation of tax base, 3929 band D equivalent properties with proposed payment dates of 10 April 2025 and 12 June 2025.
- **An email from St Helens Council** – 2 trees on Ecclesfield had been damaged in recent storms. St Helens Council would cover the cost of the work on this occasion.

24.130 DATES OF MEETINGS

Resolved to note the following:

Tuesday 11 February 2025 7.30 pm Parish Council Portico Vine Rugby Club

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

SIGNED DATED