

# Billinge Chapel End Parish Council

## DRAFT Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 21 October 2024

Present: Cllr Fiona Gill (Chair)

Councillors B Bates, B Bradbury, C Betts, S Gardner, Frank Gill, S Murphy

### Public Session

*Borough Cllrs C Betts, S Murphy and P Peers was present.*

*4 Members of the public were present.*

*Borough Cllr S Murphy reported that the Borough Cllrs had worked together to identify projects that could benefit from the Ward Funding they had been allocated for grants. She mentioned that amongst the beneficiaries were Billinge in Bloom, the Bowling Club and the Billinge Rugby League Club.*

*Borough Cllr P Peers advised that he had chased up St Helens Borough Council about the status of the sale of the old Library and how much the capital receipt would be. They had advised him that it would now be resolved by the end of October 2024. He would follow up again and report to the next Parish Council meeting. He and Borough Cllr C Betts agreed that any capital receipt should be available to enable Billinge to have a library especially as those communities (whose libraries were closed) had been offered the buildings by St Helens Borough Council as community assets free of*

charge. This was an offer that could not be made to Billinge as the old library building was condemned and closed in 2021. It was noted that the Borough Council is struggling with revenue expenditure. However, as a rule, Borough Councils are not allowed to use capital income to fund revenue expenditure. It is therefore highly unlikely that the sale of the library building in Billinge would help the Borough to deal with the problems it is facing regarding revenue expenditure.

The members of the public present raised two concerns.

Flooding – the future of Nugent House/School was still not resolved, and this uncertainty was a concern. However, the CCTV cameras were working, and the remedial/flood prevention works were being effective to-date. Borough Cllr C Betts agreed with this and quoted the fact that the region had just had the four wettest days in the last 20 years. The fact that properties affected in the past were safe was evidence that the interventions put in place last year were working. However, Borough Cllr P Peers advised that 6-7 properties where he lived had nearly flooded. It was important to keep vigilant in these challenging times of climate change.

Use of chemical weed killers - two members of the public attended to talk about their significant concerns relating to St Helens Borough Council's use of chemicals to kill weeds. This was a danger to wildlife, the environment, children and pets. They advised that 97 Councils had banned the use of these

*chemicals and that they thought St Helens Borough Council should adopt a similar policy.*

*The Public Session closed at 2000.*

## **No 53**

### **Apologies for Absence**

**Noted** apologies for absence from Cllrs J Barnes and M Webster and **approved** the reasons for absence.

## **No 54**

### **Declarations of Interests**

**Noted** Cllrs Fiona Gill, Frank Gill and S Gardner declared an interest in the agenda item relating to BRSK and proposals for poles to be installed.

**Noted** that Cllr C Betts would not participate in the decision-making for agenda item on works at The Public Hall.

## **No 55**

### **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

**Resolved** that the draft minutes of the meeting on 1 October 2024 were not a true record. Cllr S Murphy proposed an amendment which was approved by a majority of Councillors. Cllrs Fiona Gill, Frank Gill, and S Gardner asked that it was recorded that they had voted that the draft minutes were a correct record of the meeting on 1 October 2024. The Clerk was having difficulties hearing Cllr S Murphy so she asked Cllr S Murphy to read out the amendment again so that she could ensure the revised Minute was correct.

## **No 56**

**Resolved** that members of the public and press be excluded from Agenda Items 15 and 16 in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **No 57**

**Noted** that a pupil of Rainford High School (who lives in Billinge) had advised the Parish Council about the fact she is volunteering to go to Kenya to take part in community and environmental projects and her need to raise funds to cover the costs.

**Resolved** that she and any other pupils from Billinge who are volunteering to do this and are raising funds for that purpose be invited to attend the next Parish Council Meeting.

## **No 58**

**Noted** the complaints /concerns raised by residents regarding weed spraying done by St Helens Borough Council.

**Resolved** that the Chair of the Parish Council would write to St Helens Borough Council about the concerns raised and ask them to follow the example of other Councils and ban the use of such chemicals.

## **No 59**

**Noted** the update on BRSK's rollout of telegraph poles to host broadband. This is a permitted development. Engineers have been seen on site. The expectation is that any future proposals for stopping such developments would not benefit the residents affected in Billinge. It was reported that "Billinge Together" were very disappointed. They still felt strongly that residents affected by the proposals should have been consulted and that poles above ground should only be permitted where going underground was not possible.

## **No 60**

**Noted** the update from The Clerk on the Key Aims and Objectives for 2024/25.

## **No 61**

**Resolved** to not submit any observations on the following planning applications:

P/2024/0513/HHFP

22 Trent Road

P/2024/0523/FULL

Little Houghwood Farm

## **No 62**

**Noted** the Constitution supplied by the Chair of Billinge Residents Association.

## **No 63**

**Noted** that Cllr Frank Gill would not be involved in the Childrens Remembrance Service.

#### **No 64**

**Noted** the conclusions of the Health and Safety Audit 2024.

**Resolved** to set up a Health and Safety Advisory Group made up of Cllrs B Bradbury and M Webster.

#### **No 65**

**Resolved** to authorise the payments listed on the Schedule of Payments for October 2024 VN59-72 totalling £6570.97.

#### **No 66**

**Noted** the Budget Monitoring Report for the period April-September 2024.

**Members of the Public and Press were asked to leave the meeting for the following agenda items as agreed at Min 56.**

#### **No 67**

**Noted** the report on quotes for works at the Public Hall. Cllr C Betts did not participate in the discussion or decisions. He was thanked for the work he had put into getting the quotes.

**Resolved** to set up a Working Group made up of Cllrs C Betts, S Murphy and M Webster to examine the proposals in more detail and to report back to the Council with recommendations for next steps including implications for planning consent; finance; etc.

The meeting closed at 2120.