

# Billinge Chapel End Parish Council

## Minutes of the Council Meeting held on

**16 September 2024**

Present: Cllr Fiona Gill (Chair) Cllr J Barnes (Vice Chair)

Councillors B Bates, B Bradbury, C Betts, Frank Gill, S Murphy, M Webster

### **Public Session**

*9 members of the public were present.*

*Merseyside Police were not present.*

*Borough Councillors C Betts and S Murphy were present and advised that St Helens Borough Council had allocated Ward Councillors a grant to be used to improve wellbeing in the Billinge and Seneley Green Ward. The grant was £2000 for each Ward Councillor. They advised that the three Borough Councillors had decided to pool the grant funding. They were also asking St Helens Borough Council for an extension to the original deadline of 30 September 24. Interested parties were asked to contact the Ward Borough Councillors – C Betts, S Murphy and P Peers.*

*The Ward Councillors also advised that they had made representations on behalf of residents to TORUS about the state of the exterior of The Stork building and had been assured that it would be tidied up. In response to a question, they advised they did not have a start date for the development works.*

*Members of the public asked about flooding and what was happening with the cameras on Nugent Care's land. They were advised that as far as the Parish Council knew the sale of the school and the land was completed. The Parish Council had already asked about what this meant for the cameras and other flood resistance*

measures but had not reply. The Clerk was asked to follow this up with another letter chasing a reply. Cllr B Bradbury advised that the Governors had also not been advised about what was happening.

Cllr B Bradbury asked the Borough Councillors about why there had been no progress with the installation of a curb on Carr Mill Road to deflect excess water. The Clerk was asked to write to St Helens Borough Council. Borough Councillor C Betts said he would also write to Nugent Care for a progress report.

Complaints were raised by residents about the rubbish (including old vehicles etc) being stored by the Billinge Arms on their car park.

Borough Cllr C Betts advised that he had written on two occasions on behalf of residents to St Helens Borough Council about this issue. The Parish Council would also write to the Borough Council who have the powers to act on these complaints of misuse of an area of land given permission to be a car park.

Residents advised the Parish Council that BRSK were not replying to concerns raised by the public nor were they undertaking robust consultations. The residents welcomed the support from David Baines MP and from Sir Chris Bryant MP. They also welcomed the fact that a meeting had been set up by St Helens Borough Council with BRSK and that the Ward Borough Councillors had attended to represent the views of the residents. However they were disappointed that the Parish Council had not been asked to send a representative.

Members of the public went on to talk about the legislative requirement for all households in the UK to have access to a minimum of download speed of 10Mbits/s and an upload speed of at least 1Mbits/s. They argued that this “decent connection” was already the case for households in Billinge. Therefore, they argued the works proposed by BRSK were not needed in Billinge.

They concluded that the outcomes from the intervention by Sir Chris Bryant MP were critical to next steps.

*The Public Session closed at 2030*

## **No 38**

### **Apologies for Absence**

**Noted** apologies for absence were received from Cllr S Gardner and the reasons for absence were approved.

## **No 39**

### **Declarations of Interest**

**Noted** that Cllr Frank Gill declared an interest as he owns property in the area to be affected by the proposals by BRSK for telegraph poles and overhead cabling.

## **No 40**

### **Minutes of Last Meeting**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the last meeting on 15 July 2024 were confirmed as a true record and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

**Noted** the update from the Clerk/RFO on the Action Log.

## **No 41**

**Resolved** that (in accordance with Section 100 (4) of the Local Government Act 1972) that members of the public and press would be excluded during discussion of Agenda Item 11 (likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Para 1 and 2 of Schedule 112A of the Act).

## **No 42**

### **BRSK Update**

**Noted** that BRSK advised on 28/8/24 that “in response to a post today we need to highlight the following as there seems to be the impression that we at BRSK have cancelled any polling works:

We met with Ward Councillors, David Baines MP and St Helens Council MBC representatives on 16th August and have returned answers to the Ward Councillors to questions that were submitted by

residents. We have discussed with Cllr Betts about organising a meeting with the Parish Council which we are in the process of making arrangements for.

After this we will advise on rolling out our plans. Our Regional Head has put the poling works on hold to allow these meetings to take place first. Please be aware that we have not cancelled any plans to provide service to the Billinge area, the plans are simply on hold for the time being and once all plans and meetings are finalised we will re-engage with any complaints.”

**Noted** that the Clerk/RFO had not (at the time of the meeting) received a request from Borough Councillor C Betts to set up a Parish Council Meeting.

**Resolved** that the Parish Council write to BRSK requesting that any consultation they do in the area should be done by a qualified third party with the aim to ensure the consultation is open; transparent; and produces evidence that is robust and inclusive of all streets included in the proposals for poling. The consultation should be done in sufficient detail that BRSK can identify those streets where there is a majority in favour and those where there is a majority against the proposals. In the areas where the majority are in favour it would be reasonable for BRSK to proceed. But it would not be reasonable if they proceed in a street where the majority of households are opposed to the proposals for poling.

**Noted** the work being done by Sir Chris Bryant MP and acknowledged that the pending outcomes from this would be critical.

## **No 43**

### **Key Aims and Objectives 2024/25**

**Noted** action taken to-date and planned.

## **No 44**

### **Events 2024/25**

**Noted** the notes of Events Coordinators Meeting 2 September 24.

#### **The Children's Remembrance Event 2024**

The item on the Children's Remembrance Event Friday 8 September 2024 generated significant debate. Cllr S Murphy advised that she had only organised the event last year because no-one else was doing so. She went on to advise that it was a Billinge Parish Council event and not a Borough Council event. She advised the meeting that she had been unaware of the breaches by vehicles of the temporary road closure at both ends. She had not seen the vehicle that drove through the closure refusing to stop when asked to do so by the voluntary Stewards. When the proposal to look for alternate venues (where the risks were more acceptable and manageable) was discussed Cllr S Murphy said she would resign as a Parish Councillor if the event was held for safety reasons at another venue other than the Remembrance Garden. Cllr S Murphy then went on to say that the concerns being raised were "political". She said that Borough Councillor P Peers had raised issues last year about the event and had tried to stop it happening because of alleged safety issues. The Chair concluded that a resolution would not be reached at this meeting. It was, therefore, agreed to hold an extraordinary meeting on this one issue on 1 October 24 – time and venue to be confirmed.

**Resolved** that Parish Cllr M Webster would do a risk assessment for the event being held at the Remembrance Garden and involving temporary road closures. He advised the meeting that he was qualified to do such risk assessments. He would report to the extraordinary meeting on 1 October 24.

**Noted** that Parish Cllr S Murphy said she would approach the police about providing an enforcement service at both ends of the road

closure and would also report to the extraordinary meeting on 1 October 24.

### **Remembrance Service at St Aidans Church**

**Noted** that the Clerk has ordered wreaths etc.

### **Poppies on Lampposts**

**Resolved** that the Parish Council would approach The Scouts to ask if they would do this for 2024.

**Noted** that there will be a Poppy Collection Box in The Public Hall.

### **Christmas Tree Lighting Friday 29 November 2034**

**Resolved** that the Clerk would liaise with Cllr C Betts about installation of lights and an electrical supply and would report back to the next meeting.

### **VE Anniversary Celebrations 8 May 2025**

#### **Resolved**

1. that the Parish Council representatives (Cllrs B Bates and M Webster) would ask Billinge Residents Association what they were planning and how the Parish Council could support them.
2. that the Parish Council would organise a celebration. The favoured venue was St Mary's Social Club on the evening of 9/5/25. The Clerk to investigate and report back to the next meeting.
3. The Clerk to check with St Helens Borough Council that they would not give permission (based on the fact they would not do so for the Queens Jubilee) for a public event on Billinge Hill and report back to next meeting.

### **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Establishment of Billinge Chapel End Parish Council**

**Resolved** that the Clerk source a banner to celebrate the anniversary that would be displayed in The Public Hall.

## **No 45**

### **Health and Safety Audit 2024/25**

**Noted** that the Clerk would bring a detailed report to the next meeting and that the headline was that 72 improvements/actions identified in the report (37% high, 42% medium and 21% low risk).

**Resolved** that the Clerk would act on the matters identified as “high risk” as far as possible within the budget allocated.

## **No 46**

### **Planning**

**Noted** the following applications were granted approval by the Planning Authority:

P/2024/0282/HHFP

P/2024/0370/PIP (South)

P/2024/0371/PIP (North)

## **No 47**

### **Financial Matters**

**Resolved** to authorise the payment listed on the Schedule of Payments for August and September 2024 VNs 37-58 totalling £11,002.51.

**Noted** that the current supplier of the website and email support was ceasing trading.

**Resolved** to appoint Netwise and to approve the one-off cost of rebuilding the website and setting up a new email account of £669.00 and the annual cost of £440.00 which will enable the continuation of all existing email addresses/accounts and the running/updating/legal requirements etc with the website along with day-to-day advice, servicing/ problem solving etc

## **No 48**

**Noted** that the Clerk/RFO had handed in her resignation and that her last working day would be 3 December 2024.

**Resolved** that the Personnel Committee would meet as soon as possible to put in action the process of recruiting a replacement.