DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH HELD AT STOCKTON HEATH LIBRARY ON TUESDAY 9 April 2024 at 7.00pm.

Electors Present - H. Dutton (Chair), K Gillibrand, L. Harrison, P. Todd, P. Walker.

Attending: L Jacob (took minutes); 3 members of the public

1. Apologies

One elector sent formal apologies for non-attendance.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of 11 April 2023 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

No updates on matters arising from the previous minutes were raised.

4. Annual Report from the Chair of the Parish Council

The Chair of Stockton Heath Parish Council delivered a report detailing the activities of the parish council for the civic April 2023 to March 2024 (appended).

5. General Discussion

No matters were raised by electors.

Meeting closed at 7.23pm.

Welcome to the Annual Meeting of Stockton Heath Parish – 9 April 2024

It has been a pleasure and an honour to be elected Chair of Stockton Heath Parish Council for the past year.

I would like to thank Deputy, Judith Wheeler, Christine Jones, Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, and Sue Barlow, Chair of the Village Committee. Thanks also to our Clerk, Lara Jacob, whose support has been outstanding and Tori Aldred, Assistant Clerk. Thanks to all the Parish Councillors for everything they do and for what has been achieved over the past year.

I would also like to thank Helen Curwen for her unstinting enthusiasm for Stockton Heath and Anita Young for her continued support at Ackers Pit.

Thanks to our Parish Rangers, Russell Thomas, David Allen, and Mark Charlesworth, for their hard work and care of our village. And to the residents of Stockton Heath who make the village the vibrant and lovely place it is.

Thank you, also to our PCSOs, Jordan and Colin for their regular reports.

I also wish to extend appreciation to the hard-working community led groups, SWISH South Warrington Libraries in Stockton Heath, Alexandra Park, WASH (Wild about Stockton Heath) Climate Control Cafe, Red Lane Allotments, the Litter Pickers, and all the residents who litter pick and plant flowers in the passageways and ginnels of Stockton Heath.

We continue to provide a warm welcome to refugees who have come to live in Stockton Heath and hope that their life here is happy and rewarding.

Parish Report

Events

On Saturday, 6 May 2023 we celebrated the Coronation of King Charles III and his wife, Camilla, as King and Queen of the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth realms. The village was festooned with Union Jack flags and bunting and many events were organised by the village residents.

In July, Stockton Heath Festival took place and was a success. The Parish Council had a table in the Marquee, giving out information and gathering thoughts and comments from residents.

Also in July was Stockton Heath Walking Day. It was a very happy occasion, blessed with fine weather. It was good to welcome past members of the Parish Council and recipients of the Freedom of the Village to the festivities.

We were invited to our annual visit to Red Lane Allotments, which is always enjoyed, and which gave us a chance to see the fruits of all the hard work of the allotment holders. Councillors expressed their thanks and appreciation for the work put in and look forward to their annual visit again this Summer.

Our annual bat walk and talk was held in September and was very well attended by bats and humans.

In November Remembrance Sunday was officiated by Rev. Michael Ridley at the cenotaph and wreaths were placed on the War Memorial and names of residents who died during the wars were read out. Two minutes silence were held, and the bugler played the Last Post. This was followed by a Service of Thanksgiving in St. Thomas' Church.

In December Cllr Sharon Harris, with the support of the Parish Clerks, organised a Climate event, called "our bit for the planet", held at Stockton Heath Library. There were several stalls from local climate support groups as well as speakers covering topics ranging from No dig planting to the Climate Plan for Warrington and Eco home advice. We would like to say thank you to all the local groups who supported us with this event and made it the success that it was.

The Grand Light Switch-On – new Christmas lights were switched on with a large gathering at Victoria Square. Everyone joined in the countdown and the Festive spirit got everyone in the mood for Christmas.

In February, what has become our annual bird and bat box building event was sold out within the hour, and was a noisy but very productive affair, enjoyed by children and adults alike. The event was supported by Councillors and resident volunteers, who ensured the boxes were successfully made and fun was had. Boxes not taken home were installed in trees at Acker's Pit and Mill Lane.

Planning, Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Committee meets monthly to consider applications for Planning Permission and oversee the Budget. This year we received 62 Planning Applications, supported two,

raised an objection to three and guidance comments on seven. We also made comments on two pavement café applications.

We also supported several organisations. We gave monies in support of WODAC - £600. Stockton Heath Allotments - £1,000. The Bugler on Remembrance Sunday - £100. Funding was also granted to St. Thomas' School - £1000. Stockton Heath Primary School - £1000 for their eco projects. Broomfield Youth Project - £800. Wild about Stockton Heath (WASH) £400. Stockton Heath Festival - £2,200, The Litter team £275 and Warrington Foodbank - £3,000.

The Flagstones at the War Memorial were re pointed in October. A set of new Christmas Lights were purchased and there will be another set added this year. 2 more trees were wrapped, one on Whitefield Road and one on Piling Gardens.

We spent a total of £32,644.13 on the Village, Ackers Pit and Mill Lane.

Air Monitor

The Parish Council continues to maintain the air quality monitor which is located on London Road. This measures pollution and particulant levels which are harmful to health if allowed to get too high. Thanks to Councillor Peter Walker who manages the monitor information. Emissions from vehicles passing through the village are one of the reasons that the air we breathe becomes polluted.

The information gathered from the monitor formed evidence which the Parish Council presented to the public enquiry regarding the proposed number of houses to the South of Stockton Heath which will cause extra traffic to travel through the village to get to the facilities in Warrington.

Village

Throughout the year the planters, troughs and verges are maintained to provide year-round colour. The troughs on Victoria Square and by the swing bridge continue to provide perennial pollen rich flowers for wildlife. The planters by the Cenotaph were also filled with flowers and are regularly maintained by our Rangers.

WASH have helped plant bulbs again this year to attract bees and other pollenating insects. They continue to encourage neighbours to plant flowers in the passageways at the back of their houses as well as many other community led initiatives.

Stockton Heath Parish Council have financed and supported in partnership with Warrington Borough Council the planting of 13 new street trees this year, and this has been done along Grappenhall Road and other places in the village.

The Parish Rangers have delivered a clean and tidy village, servicing the whole from north to south, east to west on a weekly basis. They also maintain ivy on London Road and the planting area at Arley Avenue. They clear excessive leaves during the Autumn fall. A litter picking group representing Stockton Heath also help to keep the village clean.

The Parish Council continue to contribute to funding the PCSO team who contribute to the security and reassurance of our residents, also visiting schools to give messages about keeping safe on the internet. We also support Broomfields Youth Project, who attend Alexander Park and offer help and guidance to the young people who gather there.

Land Assets

Ackers Pit

Once again, the bluebells are going to be magnificent this year. The summer bee friendly planting is set to flourish for a second year. Many of the Parish nest boxes are in use. We have a kingfisher pair, and our resident heron. Wrens are nesting in the Ivy on trees in the woodland mound, ducks are settled in the vegetation. By the water's edge, sparrows, robins, blackbirds, chaffinches are in residence. In the safety of the trees and hedgerows, there are moorhens; and coots in the reed-beds. We are very fortunate to maintain such a treasure-trove of nature on our doorstep.

The largest piece of work that was undertaken was the installation of a new 500m footpath around the pit at a cost of £33,000. The existing wooden battening was stripped out and replaced on both sides to provide a strong frame for the new path as well as additional drainage added to help with the inevitable inclement weather. This has been met with positive feedback from residents and visitors alike, and the Parish Council will ensure the upkeep of this pathway for all to enjoy.

The trees are regularly inspected with recommended works undertaken. In February a Survey was commissioned to review the future sustainability and planting schedules for all our trees to ensure that there is an agreed near, mid-, and long-term management scheme. I would like to thank Mike Monks, Warrington Angler’s Water Bailiff, for his continued help and support at the Pit.

Mill Lane

A river of wildflowers was planted at the start of the season and flourished throughout the Summer. It has provided a wonderful habitat for all manner of bugs and beasties. We are also re sowing wildflowers on lower Mill Lane Field, as this was very successful last year, flowering well into October and received lots of compliments from residents.

Finally, thank you again Judith for being my Deputy Chair, and the support you have given me over the last year, and the help and support of all the Parish Councillors of Stockton Heath.