

FULL Council

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 27 January 2025 at 6:30pm
St David's Parish Rooms, Copperas Lane, Haigh**

PRESENT: Councillor Paul Kenyon (Chairman)
Councillor Catherine Croston
Councillor Jill Ingram
Councillor Marie-Clare Kenyon
Councillor Kerry Whittle
Councillor Andrew Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE: Dianne Scambler (Acting Clerk)

OBSERVERS: 3 Members of the Public

HPC 01 25 WELCOME AND OPENING COMMENTS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including those who were observing the meeting.

A minute's silence was observed in remembrance of Parish Clerk, Krystyna Pilkington, following her passing on 20 November 2025.

HPC 02 25 APOLOGIES OR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councilor Ian Parker (Vice Chairman)

The meeting was confirmed as quorate.

HPC 03 25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interests were made.

HPC 04 25 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Council noted that the last meeting that had been scheduled to take place on Monday 5 December has been cancelled.

It was proposed by Councillor Paul Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Andrew Wilson, and subsequently Resolved that the minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday, 28 October 2024 be approved as a correct record, for signing by the Chairman.

HPC 05 25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A resident informed the Council that he had written a formal complaint to Wigan Council regarding the lack of enforcement on land located to the rear of his property, which was commonly referred to as the Punjabi Arena. A recent decision at Wigan Magistrates Court, required Wigan Council to ensure a Planning Enforcement Notice, which had been served on the landowner, was complied with. However, to date, very little progress had been made.

The Chair advised that he had also recently written to the Enforcement Officer at Wigan Council to ask for an update on the situation and confirmed that the

Council were fully supportive of the actions being taken by the residents, in trying to conclude this matter.

Resolved:

- That the Chair would escalate the Councils concerns to the Enforcement Officer at Wigan Council in support of the resident, by chasing a reply to his recent communications.
- That the matter would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting with senior officers with Wigan Council

Financial Matters

HPC 07 25 2025/26 PARISH PRECEPT

The proposed precept for 2025/26 was discussed. The Council had agreed to increase the parish precept for 2024/25 by 100%, in recognition of its depleted reserves, following several years of only increasing the precept by significantly low amounts, or not at all. Whilst this generated a precept of £8,400, for the financial year ending 31 March 2025. This amount still fell significantly short of the budgeted expenditure of £13,929.

The annual parish precept should be sufficient to cover routine expenditure, and the Council thought that by mirroring last year's decision to increase the precept for 2025/26, by a further 100%, the amount generated would be enough to cover the expected increased expenditure for the 2025/26 budget, in line with level of activity planned by the Council, over the forthcoming months.

It is anticipated that in subsequent years, the annual precept will only increase at a rate of inflation.

The Council received a draft of the letter to be included in the Council Tax documentation for Haigh Residents for their consideration and approval.

It was proposed by Councillor Jill Higham, seconded by Councillor Paul Kenyon, and subsequently Resolved:

- That the Council approved the Precept Budget for 2025/26 as £57.72 per Band D property, £16,623, which is a 100% increase.
- That following a slight amendment, the wording of the Council Tax Letter for Haigh residents regarding the parish precept.

HPC 08 25 MOBILE, IT EQUIPMENT, EMAIL AND COMPLIANT WEBSITE.

The Council discussed what equipment was required to allow the Parish Clerk to be able to fulfil their statutory role on behalf of the Council, that included a contact telephone number, a suitable laptop provision, email address, and a website that was user friendly and compliant with accessibility requirements.

The Acting Clerk reported that a government compliant emails address had now been set up, and the Council discussed ways of communicating this change to the residents of Haigh Parish.

The previous Clerk had used a laptop that had been purchased by Shevington Parish Council, as part of a shared arrangement, with the lady supporting both

Parish Councils. However, both Councils are now looking to appoint their own Parish Clerk's, so there is an immediate need to purchase a replacement laptop.

There was also a shared view that the time was right for the Parish Council to have its own website, to allow for the timelier publication of documentation, and to engage with residents more effectively.

Resolved:

- That the Acting Clerk will purchase a Sim Card.
- That the Council will set up new social media accounts.
- That Councillor Andrew Wilson will explore options for suitable IT equipment, including laptop, printer, and associated software costs, which will be circulated and approved by members outside of the meeting, before purchased.
- That the setting up of a .gov domain email address be retrospectively approved.
- That the Acting Clerk will obtain two quotes for the establishment of a compliant website.

Other matters

HPC 09 25 APPOINTMENT OF PARISH CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

Following the passing of the Parish Clerk, the Council had sought the support of Lancashire Association of Local Councils, in a bid to secure a Locum Clerk to provide immediate support to the Council.

On Tuesday 7 January, the Council interviewed a potential Locum Clerk, Dianne Scambler, who agreed to provide temporary support for the next few months.

It was Unanimously Resolved:

- To appoint Dianne Scambler, as the Acting Clerk to Haigh Parish Council.
- It was agreed to pay an hourly rate of £20.00, for those hours worked, to be documented and submitted to a Council meeting for approval.
- It was agreed that the Locum Clerk would be able to claim for travel and other ad-hoc expenses incurred in relation to Council business.
- A letter of appointment would be drawn up by the Chairman.

HPC 10 25 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT DECISION – PUNJABI ARENA

As the matter had been discussed in detail on the public participation area of the agenda, it was agreed that this item had already been considered.

HPC 11 25 LEYLAND MILL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - LIGHTING

Following several complaints from both residents and visitors to Haigh, regarding the floodlighting at the Leyland Mill development, the Chairman advised that he had written to the Director of Environment at Wigan Council,

who had instructed for one of his officers to investigate the matter and undertake any relevant work to rectify.

It was agreed to monitor the situation closely.

HPC 12 25 BUBBLEFEST

The Council agreed to hold an Informal meeting of the Council on Tuesday 25 February 2025, at 7pm on Zoom, to discuss arrangements for the Bubblefest event, that is scheduled to take place on Sunday, 29 June 2025, in Haigh Country Park.

HPC 13 25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Council discussed matters relating to:

- St David's Church, whether it was to remain open, following a review undertaken by the Arch Diocese
- Balcarres Arms Public House, around new ownership and establishing relations.

HPC 14 25 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following item of business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information.

Resolved: That the public and press be excluded.

HPC 15 25 ACTING CLERKS REPORT

Members were updated on recent matters affecting the future running of the Parish Council and agreed next steps.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm