

PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting Monday 20th July 2020 at 8 pm.

Present	Councillor	Mr M Burleigh Mrs J Clark Mr J Healey Miss A Marshall Mrs S Palmer Mrs P Stark Mrs M Trinder (Chairman)
In Attendance		Mrs L Lathane (Clerk & Treasurer)

The meeting was held by Zoom video conferencing.

1) Apologies

Councillor David Barnard and Councillor Faye Frost

2) Declaration of Interests

None

3) Minutes of Previous Meeting

These were agreed as a true record. They will be signed by the Chairman at the next physical meeting we are able to hold.

4) Matters Arising

4.1: Swing Seats: The swing seats on the recreation ground were replaced by Andrew Bunker of CPM Playgrounds. The holes on the chains were checked with Councillor Clark at the same time, and it was agreed that they were safe.

4.2: Gate at Church Meadow: Malcolm Lowle expressed concern that the delay in replacing the gate into Church Meadow might mean that people may think it is a Right of Way, which it is not. The Chairman has explained that leaving the gate off was to help to reduce possible infection with Covid 19 and that this was in line with most of the gates in the parish which are being left open if it is safe to do so.

4.3: Newsletter costs: The easiest way to split the newsletter costs is for Preston Trust to send a statement of newsletter costs from their bank account every 6 months and we then pay our share into their account. This reduces the number of transactions and therefore bank charges and accountant's time. This will work for the Parish Council but not for the Church committee as, being a charity, they must have an invoice for all their payments. We have agreed that the Parish Council will pay two thirds of the newsletter costs to Preston Trust. When the Church Committee invoices the Parish Council for its annual contribution to the church yard's grass cutting, they will deduct £30 which will be their contribution to the newsletter costs. This system will work for the three organisations and will be acceptable to the Parish Council auditor.

4.4: Boundary House: Louis Harrington Smith quoted £100 for this work which was accepted. This work will be done on Tuesday 28 July subject to the agreement of the residents.

4.5: The Green: It was agreed that The Green does need cutting so The Clerk will ask Mr Dawes to do this on a high cut next time he is in Preston, including the area beside the well.

4.6: Audit forms: The Chairman reported that she and the Clerk signed the audit forms on Friday 5 June. The Clerk submitted them the same day and also posted them on the village website with the required document on expenditure over £100. These are required for Transparency. The Chairman has written to Nick Broughton to thank him for his time and work on auditing the Parish Council accounts.

4.7: Outstanding cheques: The Chairman reported that the outstanding cheque to SJS Plumbing Services for £62.50 was a 50% share with the Cricket Club for the cost of a new immersion heater for the pavilion in April 2016. It was agreed that this would be written off.

The Treasurer is looking in to the uncashed cheque for £100 to Preston Trust.

4.8: E.on: The bills will now come monthly for the Pavilion as agreed at the last meeting, and this has been confirmed with E.on.

4.9: Parking at Spindle Cottage: Councillor Stark informed the meeting that the area to the side of the road, used by the residents at Spindle Cottage to park, is now larger. Two cars are now often parked there and the verge has further eroded away. As the residents have taken no notice of the letter sent earlier in the year asking them not to park there, the Chairman will speak to Heather Burrows to see if there is anything further we can do. In the meantime, we will continue to monitor the situation.

Action: The Clerk to ask RJ Dawes to cut the Green on their next visit to Preston.

Action: The Treasurer to write off the cheque for £62.50.

Action: The Chairman to liaise with Heather Burrows regarding the parking at Spindle Cottage.

5) Comments from the public

5.1: Church Lane: A member of the public has asked about a speed reduction on Church Lane because they thought that the recent works at the crossroads had led to an increase in speed. The Chairman informed the Parish Council that in June 2017, we started enquiries on speed reduction in the village but in September we were told that Church Lane doesn't meet the criteria and has had the white lines painted in and the SID installed. In addition, there is no recorded accident data over a five-year period at this location.

It was agreed that it is unlikely that Church Lane would meet the criteria now, only three years later, so the Clerk was asked to inform the resident that there was nothing further the Parish Council can do at the present time.

The member of the public also asked about vegetation on Church Lane which is reducing visibility for traffic. The Parish Council agreed that they would confirm which properties had trees encroaching on the highway, then the Clerk would write to residents to ask if they would prune their trees.

5.2: Chequers Lane Tree Pruning: The Chairman reported that, as previously communicated by email, she had been contacted by a resident about the trees on the section of land which is now definitely confirmed as Village Green which need to be cut back and pruned as they are starting to overhang the road and reduce visibility. Louis Harrington Smith's quote of £200 has been agreed and the work will be undertaken on Tuesday 28 July.

5.3: No Through Road Sign: A member of the public has asked the Chairman if the Parish Council would consider a No Through Road Sign on The Green. She said that recently there have been some near misses between children riding bikes ahead of their parents on their way to the primary school and other vehicles. She has written to the Primary School and they said they would write to parents about this.

There is a very old No Through Road sign in Malcolm Lowle's garden but it can't be seen until right up to it. A tree prevents it being seen from where the road turns round the Green. The benefit of a sign would only be for vehicles which turn into The Green by accident. Vehicles going to one of the properties would continue to do so.

It was agreed that the Parish Council would contact Highways and ask about the possibility of installing a new No Through Road sign and their suggested location for it.

Action: The Clerk to reply to the member of the public who asked about speeding and vegetation on Church Lane.

Action: The Clerk to write to residents to request the pruning of their trees.

Action: Councillor Marshall to contact Highways requesting a No Through Road Sign.

6) County and District Update

Councillor Barnard sent the following information to be shared at the meeting:

6.1: Playground Opening: The District Council is not opening the playgrounds yet. Pirton and a couple of other Parishes are also holding back for further guidance.

6.2: Southern Rural: Claire Strong is the continuing Chair of Southern Rural, with Faye Frost as the Vice Chair. There is a pot of grant money in the NHDC Southern Rural committee. Councillor Barnard believes that the ruling has now changed and Parish Councils can apply for support.

6.3: County Locality Budget: Councillor Barnard has got limited funds in his County Locality budget, but will help wherever he can.

6.4: Roadworks: Current roadworks along our lanes are progressing through the summer.

6.5: Fly Tipping: Fly tipping is on the increase, but in some cases personal details have been left which helps in prosecution.

6.6: Public Meetings: Government guidance still prevents public meetings being held indoors.

6.7: Hitchin: North Herts Museum is open for guided tours and is worth the visit. Hitchin Market is up and running again, with a couple of new stalls, and still good value all round.

6.8: Brown Bins: The "Brown Bin" period has been extended by a couple of months, to compensate for NHDC suspending collection.

6.9: Luton Airport: Luton Council has dropped its intention to apply for expansion up to 32million passengers per annum, stating that they have listened to comments, and will act on them, producing a new application next year.

7) Planning Applications

7.1: Land off Castlefield: A drainage and soil investigation was undertaken at the end of last month. NHDC are now awaiting the reports prior to marketing.

7.2: Glebe House Access: As agreed at the last meeting, the Chairman has spoken to Steven Haynes at Foreman Laws about Mr Cherry's suggestion that the Parish Council grant him a right of way over this particular piece of land. Steven Haynes' advice to the Parish Council is not to do it because even though they might be paid for it, they would be responsible for its maintenance. If Mr Cherry went down the right of way route, the land would have to be valued again and it is likely to be a similar price to the sale price. The Parish Council would still have to get best value for money.

The Chairman informed the meeting that she had received an email from Morag Norgan. Mark Cherry has provided her with a copy of the valuer's report and she has a number of queries about the assumptions made in it and would appreciate the opportunity to talk this through with Mr Greenhouse. The Parish Council would have to let Mr Greenhouse know that they agree to Mrs Norgan talking to him. The Parish Council agreed to this request so the Chairman will speak to Mr Greenhouse, then reply to Mrs Norgan.

7.3: Barn adjacent to Dower House: Planning consent has not been given. The application was withdrawn in February 2020.

7.4: Hill Cottage: A letter of support was submitted for this application following the last meeting.

Action: The Chairman to inform Hugh Greenhouse that they have agreed that Morag Norgan can speak to him on behalf of Mr Cherry about his report.

Action: The Chairman to inform Morag Norgan of the Parish Council's decision.

8) Cricket Club Representation

8.1: Emergency Lighting: The emergency lighting upgrade was done on Thursday 16 July.

8.2: Fire Risk Assessment: The fire risk assessment for the pavilion has been completed and signed off and the file including the logbook and policies is in the pavilion. The Cricket Club will be responsible for undertaking the required regular checks. Four key holders are registered with the fire service.

8.3: Shutters: The Pavilion shutters were serviced on 22 June. One shutter needs a new motor because it doesn't shut properly. It is fully closed and the switch blocked off so it can't be opened and a new motor will be fitted before the start of the season next year in order to spread out the costs. The quote is for £565 but this will be out of date so a new one will be requested in March 2021

8.4: Parish Council Risk Assessments: The Parish Council Risk Assessments have been updated to include the septic tank emptying and the emergency lighting check. Another addition is that the heating and water system has to be flushed through by a qualified plumber to ensure there is no Legionnaires Disease present at the start of each season.

8.5: Cricket Season: Councillor Burleigh informed the meeting that Preston Cricket Club has started playing again. All players are enthusiastic and ready to get on with the season. Strict procedures have been put in place to ensure the Club is Covid-19 compliant including the following:

- Play is stopped every 6-overs and players sanitise their hands, and the ball.
- The Pavilion is shut apart from access to the toilets.
- Players bring their own teas, crockery etc and take all rubbish home with them.
- The Pavilion has been deep cleaned, and a cleaner has been hired to come in every Tuesday. They will take particular care in cleaning the toilets.

- All players and spectators are required to complete a form when they attend a match. This forms the Club's track and trace system should a case of Covid-19 be reported.

8.6: Broken Window: The broken window at the Pavilion has now been replaced.

8.7: Cyclists: Cyclists are still continuing to cycle on the Recreation Ground. Any seen doing so by members of the Cricket Club have politely been asked to turn around.

8.8: Dog Mess: Unfortunately there has been a lot of dog mess found on the Recreation Ground, particularly by the nets.

9) Hertfordshire Highways Update

9.1: Closure of Church Lane: There was a brief closure of Church Lane due to an issue with electricity.

9.2: 3 Crunnells Green: The verges are being damaged by the vehicles involved in the building work at 3 Crunnells Green. It was agreed we will monitor the situation. It was noted that once the building work is completed, the contractor has a responsibility to make good any damage caused to the verges.

9.3: School Sign: The signpost for the school located at the Green has been turned towards the pond. Frank Gormill amended the sign and tightened the fixings; however it was soon turned back again. This is not the wind turning the sign, it is deliberately being turned that way. It was agreed to ask Frank to fix the sign again, and a note will be put in the Village Newsletter.

Action: The Chairman to ask Frank Gormill to fix the school sign.

Action: The Chairman to put a note in the August newsletter about sign posts.

10) Parish Paths Partnership

10.1: Wain Wood: We are still awaiting a response from Andrew Burton at Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way with regard to installing gates in Wain Wood. As Councillor Clark has been waiting for several weeks for a response, the Chairman suggested, and it was agreed, that she would contact County Councillor David Barnard to see if he could help us resolve this issue.

10.2: Footpath next to the Primary School: The footpath running alongside the Primary school from Back Lane to The Green is getting quite overgrown on the school side. The Primary School are responsible for both sides. Helen Groves the secretary has confirmed that the council contractors are to trim the hedge on both sides in the next 2 weeks.

Action: The Chairman to contact County Councillor David Barnard to ask if he can help to resolve the situation of gates in Wain Wood.

11) Chairman's Report

11.1 Bim Afolami Meeting: The Chairman reported on the meeting she and the Clerk had attended with our MP, Bim Afolami which was successful. Another meeting is due to be held.

11.2: Web Content Accessibility Guidelines: The WCAG 2.1 guidelines became law on June 5 2018 and have to be in place by 22 September 2020. Parish Councils have to be compliant. They define how to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities. Accessibility involves a wide range of disabilities, including visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, language, learning, and neurological disabilities.

It was agreed that the Chairman will liaise with the Chairman of Preston Trust because the whole website will have to be compliant, not just the Parish Council section.

Action: The Chairman to liaise with the Chairman of Preston Trust about the WCAG 2.1 guidelines.

12) Clerk's Report

None

13) Treasurer's Report

Preston Parish Council - Summary Financial Report as at 20th July 2020

Community Account

		£	£
Balance as at:	3rd June 2020		<u>£ 627.23</u>

Payments authorised at meeting:

Date	Recipient		
11th June 2020	R J Dawes - Grass Cutting	£	384.00
15th June 2020	CPM Playground Ltd	£	216.00
25th June 2020	Stevenage Glass	£	8.00
25th June 2020	Royal Industrial doors	£	270.00
26th June 2020	Clerks wages	£	305.69
29th June 2020	E.on	£	25.31
		£	<u>1,209.00</u>

Monies received:

Date	From		
4th June 2020	Money moved from Business Premium Account #1	£	2,000.00
8th June 2020	Money moved from Business Premium Account #2	£	6.02
		£	<u>2,006.02</u>

Balance as at:	20th July 2020		<u>£ 1,424.25</u>
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Business Premium Account

Balance as at:	3rd June 2020		<u>£ 13,180.21</u>
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Payments authorised at meeting:

Date	Recipient		
4th June 2020	Preston Parish Council Community Account	£	2,000.00
		£	<u>2,000.00</u>

Monies Received

8th June 2020	Interest Received	£	3.53
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Balance as at:	20th July 2020		<u>£ 11,183.74</u>
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Business Premium Account No.2

Balance as at:	3rd June 2020		<u>£ 6.02</u>
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Payments authorised at meeting:

8th June 2020	Preston Parish Council Community Account	£	6.02
Balance as at:	20th July 2020		<u>£ -</u>

Total bank balances £ 12,607.99

13.1: Budget: The Clerk had circulated the current budget for 2020/2021 to the Parish Council ahead of the meeting. The Chairman noted that we have recently had additional unexpected expenditure.

Councillor Marshall noted that the Parish Council spend £450 per year on emptying the dog bins. It was agreed that Councillor Marshall will write a note for the village newsletter pointing out that the bins are available, and that dog mess should be cleared up.

Action: Councillor Marshall to write a note for the newsletter regarding dog mess.

14) Playground Report

Nothing to report.

15) Corona Virus Update

15.1: Helpline: The Preston helpline continues and will do so for as long as it is required. It is reviewed monthly.

15.2: Gates: It was agreed that the gates in the Parish should remain open for the time being to try to prevent possible infection with Covid 19 and this will be reviewed at each meeting.

15.3: Next meeting: It was agreed that the next Parish Council meeting in September would be held via Zoom video conferencing and that we would review the situation for each meeting if circumstances change.

16) Any Other Business

16.1: Pond Railing: Councillor Clark informed the meeting that one of the railings by the pond has snapped. It was agreed that Councillor Clark will fix the railing.

17) Date and Time of next Meeting: Wednesday 9th September 2020 at 8 pm.

The meeting closed at 9.07pm.