

Parish of Preston
PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 9th September 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 sent their apologies. Brian Waters also sent his apologies as he had planned to attend.

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: Church Lane: A note has been put into the newsletter reminding residents that they are responsible for making sure that vegetation from their gardens doesn't encroach on to the road and reduce visibility for drivers and pedestrians. This is the first step and, if necessary, letters to individual residents will be the next step.

The Chairman noted that the criteria used by Highways is that vegetation should not encroach over 450mm on to a pavement and that if vehicles have to cross the centre of a road to pass an obstruction, action should be taken.

4:2 Footpath by the school: The hedge along the school footpath has been cut back and Councillor Clark has tidied up the overhanging bits from opposite the side gate

4:3 The village pond rail: Councillor Clark has mended the broken rail.

4:4: Glebe House Access: The Chairman reported that she had contacted Hugh Greenhouse to ask if Morag Norgan could speak to him about his report on access for the new dwelling at Glebe House. He agreed to this request and Mrs Norgan was informed.

4.5: WCAG 2.1: As agreed at the last meeting, the Chairman has liaised with Wally Steele, Chairman of Preston Trust, who manages the village website regarding the WCAG 2.1 guidelines. These guidelines are for all websites world-wide. They agreed that the Preston village website is designed to be accessible to its users, the residents of Preston, but as a volunteer-maintained initiative there are limitations in increasing accessibility due to time and cost. Amendments will be made in future if deemed appropriate and are cost effective.

4.6: Dog Bins: As suggested at the last meeting, Councillor Marshall put a note in the August newsletter asking people to clear up their dog mess and pointing out that the Parish Council pay for the provision of dog bins. Another reminder was in the September newsletter.

The Chairman arranged for messages to be sent to PNS and the Parish Council Database following a report of dog poo being left on the road at Castlefield a few days ago. This would seem to be a dog belonging to someone in the village rather than a visitor.

Some residents had suggested some options to address this issue. It was agreed that, as it is only Preston residents who see messages about this issue, Councillor Clark would put some notices on gates which are used by visitors asking them to pick up after their dogs.

4.7: Preston Trust Cheque: Councillor Stark informed the meeting that the cheque had been found but was now out of date. It was agreed to pay the Preston Trust via internet banking.

Action: Councillor Clark to put up notices on gates asking dog owners to pick up after their dogs.

Action: The Clerk to pay Preston Trust via internet banking.

5) Comments from the public

Mark Waters has sent a message regarding mountain biking and Wain Wood. (item 11.1)

6) County and District Update

Faye Frost sent the following information to be shared at the meeting:

- The Council recently held an extraordinary meeting to discuss whether NHDC are in favour of exploring the option of a unitary authority across all of Hertfordshire. This would mean all County and District services would be run by one authority. There are

pros and cons. Obviously there is a huge financial saving if this were to happen, and any confusion as to who is in charge of what would be ruled out. However, to have just one authority in charge of everything across such a vast diverse county has its problems.

- Our enforcement team are working hard to keeping fly tipping down after a recent increase across the Ward. There has even been an entire skip fly tipped along Lilley Bottom a few weeks ago. There have been a number of successful prosecutions recently.
- The Planning Inspector has diarised the last week in September to meet and evaluate the changes and comments made on NHDC Local Plan. Cllr Barnard will make representations as the District and County councillor, particularly against East Of Luton.
- Southern Rural grant applications are still open. The pre application stage closes in a few days, with the official closing date for applications at the end of October for the December meeting. At present it is still only non-precept raising organisations that can apply, but this is due to change. I will update you once I know more!

7) Planning Applications

7.1: Barn adjacent to the Dower House: The Parish Council supported this application subject to conditions being imposed on any planning consent: an electric charging point, a programme of archaeological works prior to and during development to mitigate against the impact of the development on any archaeological remains, no removal of hedgerows between 1st March and 31st August, appropriate measures to protect badgers and updated bat and newt surveys to be undertaken before work begins.

7.2: Land Adjacent to Dungarvan: one 4 bed and two 5 bed detached houses: The Parish Council objected to this application because it did not refer to the Neighbourhood Plan or address the housing needs of Preston. Wildlife surveys and traffic and construction management plans were not included. The Parish Council suggested some conditions which would make the application more acceptable.

7.3: Preston Hills Barns: The Chairman has been informed that this development will not be going ahead at the moment.

7.4: Land off Castlefield: The Chairman has been in contact with the Interim Property Consultant and has been informed that this site is about to go to market on a Subject to Planning basis with offers being invited for mid-October. NHDC will select one developer from the offers received and exchange contracts. This stage is expected to take 3 – 4 months.

The developer will apply for planning permission following the usual procedure. If planning consent is granted, the sale will go through. If the developer didn't get planning permission NHDC expects that they would appeal. Although the emerging Local Plan is not yet made, it carries an increasing amount of weight the nearer it gets to adoption and NHDC have not got a 5 year housing supply, so the Interim Property Consultant is of the view that the principle of development on this site is quite secure. He expects that the issues will be density, design and managing the access.

7.5: Government Consultation on Planning: It was agreed that the Parish Council would submit a response to the Government Consultation on Planning. The Chairman will draft and circulate a response so that Parish Councillors can add further comments. The final response will be agreed at the next meeting on 22 October.

7.6: Hill Cottage: Awaiting a decision.

Action: The Chairman to draft a response to the Government Consultation on Planning.

8) Cricket Club Representation

8.1: Leaking Tap: It has been agreed that the leaking tap needs replacing. A quote is being obtained by the Cricket Club.

8.2: Cricket Season: The Cricket Club has had a reasonable season, which ends this weekend. They have received a lot of support from the village and everyone has obeyed their Covid-19 procedures.

8.3: Water Bill: The Parish Council has had a water bill from Castle Water who have taken over from Affinity Water. It covers the period from August to December and has been estimated. It was agreed that we won't pay this bill until we find out more about how they have calculated the costs. The Clerk and Chairman will draft a letter to Castle Water asking for more information, and informing them that the Pavilion won't be in use in that time period as the Cricket Season will have finished.

Action: The Clerk and Chairman to look into the water bill at the Pavilion.

9) Parking on Wastes of the Manor

The Chairman noted that since the last meeting, it had been established that parking on Wastes of the Manor is unlawful under Section 130 of the 1980 Highways Act. A lot of information had been circulated prior to the meeting for consideration, which included possible options for resolving the situation as well emails and notes from a meeting with Brian Waters. The Chairman read out another email from Mr Waters which had been received just before the start of the meeting as he was unexpectedly unable to join the Zoom meeting.

The Parish Council were of the view that they did not wish to provide parking for Openreach on Wastes of the Manor land and were not obliged to do so. It was agreed that Openreach would be encouraged to park in front of the Recreation Ground gate and the no parking notice would be changed to indicate this. A note would be put on the front of the green box advising Openreach personnel where to park.

It was agreed that in order to prevent parking 7 recycled posts to blend in with the surroundings, 500mm high, at 2.5 m intervals along the length of the area, set back 2 feet from the road would be installed. Reflectors will be attached so that they are visible in the

dark. Frank Gormill will undertake this work on Saturday 19 September. The area behind the posts will be planted within the next few weeks and when the foliage is fully established to become part of the verge, the posts will be removed and the holes filled in, although this will take considerable time.

It was also agreed that the Chairman would inform the owner of Spindle Cottage of these decisions and ask if consideration could be given to inserting a clause in the tenancy agreement which makes it clear that this land is not available for use by future tenants.

It was agreed that the Chairman would meet Brian Waters to personally tell him the decisions made by the Parish Council.

Action: The Chairman to instruct Frank Gormill to install the posts

Action: the Chairman to arrange for signs to be placed on the Recreation Ground gate and the green box.

Action: The Chairman to write to the owner of Spindle Cottage

Action: the Chairman to meet Brian Waters to explain the Parish Council's decision

10) Hertfordshire Highways Update

Graham Bury of Highways has been approached regarding the possibility of erecting a sign near the telephone box to indicate that the road is 'Access Only' to deter drivers using sat nav from turning into the Green rather than School Lane. A reminder was sent last week. Derek Jerrard of Ringway made a further suggestion that the stack of signs on the Green be moved across the road and placed adjacent to the pond. It was agreed that we should request that the signs be moved and that an Access Only sign be installed.

Action: Councillor Marshall to continue to liaise with Graham Bury and Derek Jerrard on this issue.

11) Parish Paths Partnership

11.1: Wain Wood Gates: After the last meeting, as agreed, the Chairman asked County Councillor David Barnard if he could help to get a response for the Rights of Way officer. The answer came the following day to say that we could have gates on the permissive path. County Councillor Barnard then asked if there were any gates in the store we could have. It took a month but we have got some free gates which Councillor Clark very kindly collected from County Hall. Tom Duffin has said that he has a team at Pilkington Farms Partnership who can install the gates. Councillor Clark is looking into what fixings are required, and the costs. There is a metal hoop required for the kissing gate which would be £200 in total.

An email from Mark Waters, which was circulated to Parish Councillors, indicated that there had been a misunderstanding about the free gates but this has now been clarified and Mr Waters is happy with the decision, previously agreed, to install a metal kissing gate between the recreation ground and Wain Wood.

11.2: Cyclists: There has been a report of 2 men on scramble bikes with 2 small children and 2 dogs heading towards Wain wood from Tatmore Hills on the 22nd August. It is hoped that the new gates will deter this in the future.

11.3: Graffiti: Graffiti was back on trees along the inner edge of Wain wood on Monday 3rd and Wednesday 5th August. It was only chalk and has been easily washed off.

Action: Councillor Clark to investigate fixings for the gates, and liaise with Tom Duffin in regards to fitting the gates.

12) Local Plan Update

In July the Inspector wrote to NHDC asking them to re-assess the need to release Green Belt land for Luton's unmet housing need. This was following the release of the 2018 housing figures. (They always come out two years after assessment.) NHDC replied to say that as Luton's Local Plan was made in 2017, they have to continue with their plans to allocate land for Luton's housing.

The Local Plan Hearings, which were postponed in March because of Covid 19, will now take place virtually between Monday 28 September and Friday 23 October.

After the hearings, there will be one final consultation and the Inspector will take all representations received into account when coming to his final conclusions about the Local Plan. The Inspector will then write a report to the Council setting out his conclusions about the legal compliance and soundness of the Local Plan. This will include his recommendations concerning the main modifications he considers necessary to make the submitted plan sound.

13) Neighbourhood Plan Project List: Parish Council Items for 2020.

These two items from the Neighbourhood Plan need action by the Parish Council:

13.1: HGV Ban: The Parish Council last investigated this in November 2015. They were told that Preston wasn't covered by the Hitchin Urban Transport Plan under which weight limits are covered. The Clerk was informed that it would be difficult to justify the implementation of a weight restriction in Preston because the majority of the HGVs have genuine business and would not be prosecuted under a weight limit prohibition. During the previous 12 years the police had not received any HGV related complaints at Preston. Preston Parish Council to review this every 5 years and decide whether it is appropriate to further investigate this issue. Next review: 2020

The Parish Council agreed that HGVs in Preston were on genuine business and they would not pursue this issue at the present time. It will be reviewed again in 2025.

13.2: Conservation Area Appraisal: The production of a Conservation Area Appraisal document sets out what it is in the Conservation Area which should be preserved or

enhanced to maintain the character and appearance of the area. Work previously completed may be used as a starting point into this investigation. By 2020

Councillor Stark has agreed to do this on behalf of the Parish Council. There is no timescale.

14) Chairman's Report

14.1: Trees on School Lane: Following a conversation with a resident, the Chairman reported that, as the branches which recently fell on School Lane belonged to PHC, she had telephoned the Bursar to ask if the trees which border School Lane could be checked and appropriate action taken to avoid any further branches or trees falling on to the road. The Bursar agreed to this request.

14.2: PFP Muck Heap: The Chairman reported that she is liaising with Tom Duffin, CEO at Pilkington Farms Partnership about a burning muck heap at Offley Hoo which was set alight by arsonists at about the end of June. PFP are following the guidance provided by the Fire Brigade, the Environment Agency and NHDC and the muck heap is under control. The recent heavy rain has had an impact on it and at present there is very little smoke issuing from the heap and it dissipates quickly. Two Preston residents have been affected by the smell associated with this incident.

14.3: Parish Council Notices on village website notice board: This is being trialled at the moment and it was agreed the Parish Council would continue using this resource.

15) Clerk's Report

15.1: Speed Limits in villages: David Barnard has emailed County Councillor Derrick Ashley regarding speed limits in the villages. He has asked that a 20mph limit be considered for safety reasons. It has been suggested that there be a Zoom meeting with the local Parish Councils to discuss this further and provide a united response. It was agreed that Preston Parish Council would want to be a part of this. The Clerk will respond to the email.

Action: The Clerk to respond to David Barnard's email and ask that Preston be included in the list of villages and that a representative from Preston will take part in the Zoom meeting.

16) Treasurer's Report

Preston Parish Council - Summary Financial Report as at 9th September 2020

Community Account

Balance as at: 20th July 2020 £ 1,424.25

Payments authorised at meeting:

Date	Recipient		
28th July 2020	E.on	£	28.43
29th July 2020	NHDC - Church Meadow Rent	£	100.00
29th July 2020	Clerk Wages	£	235.40
3rd August 2020	Lisa Lathane Wages (test internet banking payment)	£	10.00
3rd August 2020	Margaret Trinder - FastHosts Website	£	25.18
3rd August 2020	Margaret Trinder - Fire Guard Services	£	222.00
13th August 2020	Oliver Russell Electrical Ltd	£	354.00
18th August 2020	Louis Harrington-Smith	£	300.00
24th August 2020	Clerk Wages	£	164.40
28th August 2020	E.on	£	28.21
		<u>£</u>	<u>1,467.62</u>

Monies received:

Date	From		
21st August 2020	Money moved from Business Premium Account #1	£	1,000.00
		<u>£</u>	<u>1,000.00</u>

Balance as at: 9th September 2020 £ 956.63

Business Premium Account

Balance as at: 20th July 2020 £ 11,183.74

Payments authorised at meeting:

Date	Recipient		
21st August 2020	Preston Parish Council Community Account	£	1,000.00
		<u>£</u>	<u>1,000.00</u>

Monies Received

7th September 2020 Interest Received £ 1.55

Balance as at: 9th September 2020 £ 10,185.29

Total bank balances £ 11,141.92

PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL - BUDGET 2020/21			
	2020/21	2020/2021	
	£	Actual Spent	Variance
Precept	£7,300.00	£7,300.00	
Recreation Ground			
Insurance	£1,300.00	£877.28	£422.72
Other costs (electricity, water etc)	£1,080.00	£438.92	£641.08
Repairs Provision	£700.00	£874.40	-£174.40
Playground Inspections	£120.00		
Tree Maintenance	£1,000.00	£990.00	£10.00
Dog Waste Collection	£450.00		£450.00
Grass Cutting			
The Green	£750.00	£255.00	£495.00
Church Meadow	£450.00	£128.00	£322.00
Churchyard	£450.00		£450.00
Church Meadow Rent	£100.00	£100.00	£0.00
General Expenses			
Subscriptions	£100.00		£100.00
Clerk's Expenses	£150.00		£150.00
Clerk's Wages	£3,750.00	£1,305.24	£2,444.76
Bank Charges	£1.00		£1.00
ICO Data Licence	£40.00		£40.00
Other			
Village Green Pond & Surrounding Area	£750.00	£120.00	£630.00
Street Cleaning	£200.00		£200.00
Defibrillator Equipment Stock Update	£70.00		£70.00
Virus Protection for Parish Council Laptop	£50.00	£44.99	£5.01
Shutter Door Service at the Pavilion	£0.00	£270.00	-£270.00
Well Repointing	£0.00	£125.00	-£125.00
Valuation of access land (covered by Mark Cherry contribution)	£0.00	£500.00	-£500.00
Swing Seat Replacement (Recreation Ground)	£0.00	£216.00	-£216.00
Fire Guard Services	£0.00	£222.00	-£222.00
FastHosts Website	£0.00	£25.18	-£25.18
Total Spend	£11,511.00	£6,492.01	£5,018.99
Contingency			
Other Income			
HMRC (VAT Refund)		£661.62	-£661.62
Preston Cricket Club - Utilities Share			
Bank Interest			
Mark Cherry Payment re Village Green Access		£500.00	-£500.00
Total Other Income	£ -	£1,161.62	
Precept and Other Income	£ 7,300.00	£8,461.62	
Overspend	-£ 4,211.00	£ 1,969.61	

17) Playground Report

Nothing to report.

18) Corona Virus Update

18.1: Preston Helpline: Although there haven't been many calls for help, the Preston Helpline continues to be available in case anyone has to go into quarantine on return from a listed country, has to self-isolate as a result of being contacted by Test and Trace, or there is an Autumn / Winter spike in the virus.

18.2: Gates: It was agreed that the gates in the Parish would remain open and we would not replace the gate between the Church yard and Church Meadow for the time being.

18.3: Parish Council Meetings: The Chairman reported that she has liaised with the Village Hall Committee and has agreed that Parish Council meetings will be held online until at least the end of the year. This allows the Village Hall to be used only by the Nursery. The situation will be reviewed before the January meeting.

19) Any Other Business

19.1: Church Meadow Hedge: It was agreed to ask RJ Dawes to now cut the hedge in Church Meadow as agreed earlier in the year. It had been postponed due to nesting birds in the hedge. The Clerk will do this and also ask him to strim around the fruit trees and remove the grass afterwards.

19.2: Bench round tree on The Green: The bench around the tree on The Green has broken. One part has broken but has been taken into the pub. The Chairman will speak to Val Rivenell who installed the bench about fixing it.

19.3: Church Lane: Building work at Church: The building works at the Church have begun. Unfortunately a delivery recently blocked the road for an hour and a half. It was agreed that the Chairman will speak to Malcolm Lowle to request that construction vehicles are parked in the layby when it is possible, particularly the Equibuild van which is likely to be there every day.

19.4: Holly Trees: Councillor Stark informed the meeting that some small holly trees at the end of the footpath on Butchers Lane are dead and unstable in any winds. It was agreed to ask Louis Harrington-Smith to quote to remove them.

19.5: Neighbourhood Plan Books: Councillor Stark informed the meeting that a number of people have asked her when they would get the Neighbourhood Plan books which they had ordered and paid for some time ago. The Chairman had contacted Wally Steele today for an update and his reply was that he had been struggling with time to resolve a technical issue with converting the photos to the correct format for high quality colour printing. The printers had advised that the conversion was necessary to avoid the photos looking a little

dull and flat. He believes he has now worked out what the problem is and how to resolve it. He will let the Chairman know how this goes and the likely timescales. It was agreed that the Chairman would discuss this further with Wally Steele tomorrow to try to get an indication of the timescales and that she would then email everyone who had ordered a book.

Action: The Clerk to ask RJ Dawes to trim the hedge and strim the grass in Church Meadow.

Action: The Chairman to speak to Val Rivenell regarding fixing the bench.

Action: The Chairman to speak to Malcolm Lowle about construction vehicles parking by the Church.

Action: The Chairman to ask Louis Harrington Smith to quote for removing the dead holly trees.

Action: The Chairman will speak to Wally Steele regarding the Neighbourhood Plan books.

20) Date and Time of next Meeting: Thursday 22nd October 2020 at 8 pm.

The meeting closed at 10.15pm.