

Parish of Preston
PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Monday 7th December 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) Mr and Mrs Kellard

The meeting was held by Zoom video conferencing.

1) Apologies

None

2) Declaration of Interests

Councillor Clark declared an interest in item 7.4.

Councillor Healey declared in interest in item 7.5.

3) Minutes of Previous Meeting

The date was incorrect on the minutes of the last meeting.

4) Matters Arising

4.1: Bench Round tree on The Green: The owner didn't like the suggestion from the Parish Council for replacing the bench round the tree and asked if the Parish Council would consider an ordinary bench. She would like it near the same tree facing the pub. The Parish Council decided they would think about this suggestion until the next meeting. In the meantime, Councillor Clark will look into securing the bench in a way which will protect the ground and make mowing easy.

4.2: Holly Trees: The holly trees have been removed but we haven't received the bill yet.

4.3: Neighbourhood Plan Books: The book went to the printers, on the 7th December. Proofs will be ready later this week and Wally Steele will collect them to save time.

4.4: Butchers Lane Openreach Response: Openreach informed the Chairman that they would only arrange tree cutting in specific circumstances which were confirmed as essential by an engineer. Faults should always be reported to the Service Provider first so that Openreach can investigate. The residents of Butchers Lane have been provided with this information.

4.5: Signing of Minutes: The Chairman and Clerk met on Tuesday 3 November and the recent minutes were signed.

Action: Councillor Clark to investigate ways to secure a bench and protect the ground.

5) Comments from the public

5.1: Templars Lane Potholes: A resident of Castlefield contacted the Chairman about potholes on Templars Lane. The Chairman emailed the person who undertook the work last April and he agreed immediately to assess and repair the damage. Councillor Palmer reported that repairs hadn't been carried out so the Chairman will follow up the matter.

5.2: Church Lane: The Parish Council received a complaint from a resident on Church Lane about the lane being closed without notice due to the works at the Church. The Church Warden was contacted and he immediately asked Equibuild not to do this in future.

Action: The Chairman to further investigate the pothole repairs at Templars Lane.

6) County and District Update

None

7) Planning Applications

7.1: Dower House: The Parish Council supported this application which related to work already undertaken.

7.2: Land Adjacent to Dungarvan: Amended Plan: The Parish Council found the amended plan and the energy statement unsatisfactory and has asked for the decision to be deferred again so that Neighbourhood Plan Policy HD5 can be properly met.

This application will be an item at the Planning Control meeting on 17th December. The Chairman has registered to speak at the meeting, objecting to the latest proposals and that the Neighbourhood Plan hasn't been adhered to. She will circulate her 5-minute speech to the Parish Council for comment prior to the meeting.

Councillor Burleigh suggested, and it was agreed, that the Parish Council would write to the District Councillors on the Planning Control Committee prior to the meeting, registering concerns that the Neighbourhood Plan is not being taken into account and requesting that they do this at the forthcoming meeting. The Chairman will circulate the letter prior to sending it individually to the committee members and reserve members.

7.3: Tree Preservation Order: The Chairman has submitted an application to NHDC for a TPO to be put on the oak tree. The Local Planning Authority has to assess the amenity value of the tree and decide whether it warrants a TPO which would be temporary for the first 6 months.

Councillor Healey has provided information from the Woodland Trust. They support situations where woodland and ancient trees are at risk. It was agreed that the Parish Council would submit a request for help with the preservation of this tree.

It was agreed that, in the Spring, the Parish Council would assess whether any other trees require TPOs and apply for them rather than wait until they are at risk.

7.4: Castle Farm Application for Dog Boarding Kennels: Councillor Clark answered questions from the Parish Council regarding the application, then left the meeting. The Parish Council discussed the application and the concerns expressed by neighbouring residents and decided that it would object for the following reasons:

- The noise from the dogs would have an adverse impact on neighbouring residents
- There was an issue with extra traffic leaving Castle Farm on to a blind corner and difficult junction
- The application does not meet the criteria of Policy E5 of the Preston Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

It was noted that the Parish Council would support an application which located the kennels on a different part of the farm.

The residents who contacted the Parish Council with their concerns will be informed of the outcome by the Chairman.

Councillor Clark returned to the meeting.

7.5: Kiln Wood Cottage: Mr and Mrs Kellard attended the meeting to answer any questions the Parish Council might have on their application to build a detached two bedroom dwelling following the relocation of the existing garage. Members of the public had contacted the Parish Council in support of the application.

Mr and Mrs Kellard left the meeting and following discussion, the Parish Council agreed to support the application.

7.6: 3 Castlefield: Conditional permission has been granted.

7.7: NATS Consultation: This will be discussed at the next meeting and a response agreed.

7.8: Land Off Castlefield: The Chairman has received an update from NHDC to say that they are progressing with a preferred bidder.

Action: The Chairman to write and circulate her 5-minute speech to the Parish Council for comment prior to the planning meeting when Land Adjacent to Dungarvan will be an agenda item.

Action: The Chairman to write to District Councillors prior to the planning meeting.

Action: The Chairman to find out if the Woodland Trust can support the TPO application.

Action: The Chairman will draft a response to the Castle Farm Dog Kennel application, and inform the nearby residents.

Action: The Clerk to submit a letter of support for the Kiln Wood Cottage planning application.

8) Cricket Club Representation

None

9) Hertfordshire Highways Update

9.1: School Sign: Whilst the 'School' sign for Crunnells Green has been added to the budget for next year there is no guarantee that it will be supplied as other items may be given priority.

9.2: Access Only Sign: There has been no response with regard to the provision of an 'ACCESS ONLY' sign for the village green. There has not been a response to our query as to whether we could put up our own sign.

9.3: Stack Signpost: Having looked at the stack signpost on the village green there is insufficient space to re-site this to the verge by the pond.

9.4: Potential Road Closures: Two potential road closures for January have been notified by Highways. These were notified in the December newsletter and a reminder sent via PNS and the Parish Council database nearer the time. We have had notification that Church Lane will be closed from the 18th January.

9.5: Car parked on village green: A car was seen parked fully on the Village Green. The issue of parking in the village, particularly around the Green, will be added to a future agenda.

10) Parish Paths Partnership

10.1: Wain Wood Gates: The kissing gate hoops for the recreation ground have been ordered from Centrewire. The Preston Trust has agreed to a third of the cost. Wally Steele would like to be present on 'installation day' to ensure it is set up correctly for a wheelchair.

It has been pointed out by village residents to Councillor Clark that the pathway into the wood behind the recreation ground is very muddy. It was agreed that as a woodland path this was to be expected. There will be some gravel or woodchip in the immediate area of the gate.

Pilkington Farms Partnership is taking responsibility for the other two gates at Bunyan's Cottage and the chalk pit. It is hoped that the gate at the recreation ground will be delivered and installed by Christmas.

10.1: Tatmore Loop Walk Leaflets: Councillor Stark printed some more Tatmore Loop Walk leaflets and the dispenser on the Village Green has been kept topped up. The dispenser in the Red Lion has been removed due to Covid-19.

It was agreed to investigate creating a QR code that could be pinned on to the noticeboard, to allow walkers to link straight to the walk map online. The Clerk will look into this for the next meeting.

Action: The Clerk to investigate how to create a QR code.

11) Chairman's Report

The Chairman and Clerk attended a virtual meeting with Bim Afolami on Friday 13 November. The Hertfordshire Drive Safe Scheme was promoted but as the Parish Council has registered Preston with County Councillor David Barnard's scheme to reduce speed limits in villages to 20mph, they said the Parish Council wouldn't follow Drive Safe up for the time being. The Parish Council has looked at this scheme previously and discounted it on grounds of safety. The Parish Council agreed with this course of action.

To offset the carbon from his office, Bim Afolami is promoting an Annual Tree Planting Programme and is working with the Woodland Trust who will provide native broadleaf trees for the cause. Trees will be available for planting on publicly owned land or on a site which would become a community resource. Stakes and deer guards will be provided but the on-going maintenance would be up to the Parish Council. The first deadline has passed but there will be an opportunity to register next November should the Parish Council wish to have more trees. The Parish Council agreed that there is no need to have more trees in the Parish at the present time.

12) Clerk's Report

None

13) Treasurer's Report

Preston Parish Council - Summary Financial Report as at 7th December 2020

Community Account

Balance as at: 22nd October 2020 £ 3,337.82

Payments authorised at meeting:

Date	Recipient		
27th October 2020	Clerk Wages	£	236.63
30th October 2020	E.on	£	36.66
12th November 2020	Preston Trust - Litter Pick	£	100.00
12th November 2020	Margaret Trinder for Children In Need re Litter Pick	£	100.00
26th November 2020	Clerk Wages	£	268.87
30th November 2020	E.on	£	44.51
30th November 2020	St Martin's Church - Grasscutting	£	450.00
7th December 2020	NHDC - Playground Reports	£	120.00
		<u>£</u>	<u>1,356.67</u>

Monies received:

Date	From		
		<u>£</u>	<u>-</u>

Balance as at: 7th December 2020 £ 1,981.15

Business Premium Account

Balance as at: 22nd October 2020 £ 10,229.41

Monies Received

7th December 2020	Interest	£	0.26
		<u>£</u>	<u>0.26</u>

Balance as at: 7th December 2020 £ 10,229.67

Total bank balances £ 12,210.82

13.1: Current budget: The current budget and the reasons for the overspend were discussed. It will be necessary to transfer a further amount from the Business Account to the Community Account before the end of the financial year to ensure that it doesn't become overdrawn.

13.2: Budget 2021 – 22:

The Chairman and Treasurer have worked on the budget for 2021 – 2022, starting with a precept of £8300 which is an increase of £1000. By reducing costs as much as possible, there is a balance of £62.04 left which gives no leeway for any unplanned or emergency items. To get to this point, some items are not included in the budget and the Parish Council agreed that it wasn't possible to undertake these items in the next financial year.

The Pond: Councillor Clark will talk to Max Boreham to find out how much maintenance the Parish Councillors could reasonably do themselves in the short term.

Fruit Trees in Church Meadow: The Parish Council will identify members of the public who could be asked to volunteer to prune the trees in the Spring, making sure that social distancing is adhered to. This will be organised at the next meeting.

The Green fertilisation: This will not be done next year.

Litter picking: The Parish Council decided that this was an appropriate time to stop paying Chris and Adrian Hardy £200 per annum for litter picking in the Parish. It was noted that, in normal circumstances, Preston Trust organise this twice a year with a group of volunteers. The Chairman will write to Mr and Mrs Hardy and thank them for all their work over the years.

Honorarium and Church Yard grass cutting: In order not to further reduce the Parish Council reserves which it is advised to have for unexpected expenditure, the Parish Council decided that they would no longer be able to pay the Honorarium of £300 to the Cricket Club and a contribution of £480 to grass cutting at the Church Yard. The Chairman will write to these organisations and inform them of this decision which will take effect in the 2021-22 financial year. The Parish Council will review these payments annually and will restart them as soon as it is in a better financial position.

It was also agreed that the Parish Council needs to make provision annually for the payments which are required on a 5 or 10 yearly basis such as the electricity inspection, the tree survey and replacing the fire extinguishers.

13.3: Precept

The final decision on the precept will be made at the next meeting by which time the information on this and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme should have been provided by NHDC. It was provisionally agreed that the precept will be £8300 which is an increase of approximately 13.7% overall.

13.4: Parish Council Assets

The Asset and Investment Register and The Public Land and Building Assets were agreed by the Parish Council. These will both be reviewed annually at the April meeting prior to the internal audit. The Public Land and Building Assets will be posted annually on the transparency section on the village website.

Action: Councillor Clark to talk to Max Boreham about pond maintenance.

Action: The Chairman to write to Mr and Mrs Hardy to thank them for all their work.

Action: The Chairman to write to the Cricket Club and St Martin's Church.

14) Playground Report

None.

15) Corona Virus Update

Parish Council meetings in January and March will be via Zoom.

16) Any Other Business

16.1: Leaf Clearing: Parish Councillors will meet on Saturday 12 December to clear the leaves from The Green and the pond area.

16.2: Salt bins: Councillor Healey has started to check on the salt bins around the village. He will refill as necessary.

16.3: Drains on Church Lane: Councillor Stark reported that the drains on Church Lane were blocked again and are starting to smell. She has reported this on the online system at Hertfordshire County Council. Councillor Marshall was asked to see if our contacts at the County Council could supply the name of someone who would deal with this matter. In the meantime it was suggested that all Parish Councillors could submit online requests for something to be done.

Action: Councillor Marshall to contact HCC about the blocked drains on Church lane.

17) Date and Time of next Meeting: Wednesday 13th January 2020 at 8 pm.

The meeting ended at 10.25pm.