

Parish of Preston
PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Thursday 22nd July 2021 at 8 pm.

Present	Councillors	Mr M Burleigh Mrs J Clark Mr J Healey Miss A Marshall Mrs S Palmer Mrs P Stark Mrs M Trinder (Chairman)
In Attendance		District Councillor F Frost District Councillor C Strong

21.39) Apologies for absence

Mrs L Lathane (Clerk & Treasurer)
County Councillor David Barnard

21.40) Declaration of Interests

Councillor Palmer declared an interest for item 10.

21.41) To Receive Chairman's Remarks and Urgent Items

It was noted that the meeting was taking place in the Village Hall with Covid precautions in place.

21.42) Comments from the general public and press

No members of the public were present however a communication had been submitted regarding the maintenance of the pond. It was agreed at the April meeting that some work would be carried out later in the year. In view of the lack of funds the Parish Council are unable to carry out more extensive work. The Chairman will respond to the resident and explain that the shortage of funds is due to fewer grants being available.

Action: The Chairman to explain to the resident that lack of funds prevents more extensive maintenance of the pond.

21.43) County and District Update

Councillor Frost reported that she is now Chairman of the Southern Rural Committee and reminded the Parish Councillors that some funding is available.

Fly-tipping is still a problem as the Enforcement Team has a large area to cover. Where there is no opportunity to identify the person responsible Urbaser should be informed rather than the Enforcement Team.

The Local Plan is still with the inspector but no further comments are being accepted. Residents of Cockernhoe have approached MP Bim Afolami with a view to making a submission regarding the proposed East of Luton development. Councillor Frost pointed out that any development could have an impact on traffic passing through Preston.

At the Highways meeting on 21 July there was further discussion on reducing the speed limit to 20mph through villages and Councillor David Barnard has introduced a new initiative to look into the possibility of reducing the national limit from 60 to 40 mph on some country roads.

A cable has come down on the tree-lined road near Ley Green and NHDC are aware.

There have been complaints about overgrown verges and Councillor Frost advised that the twice-yearly cutting is behind schedule due to Covid and the problem has been exacerbated due to the weather conditions.

Councillor Strong, who is now Leader of the Conservative group at NHDC, advised that the inspector responsible for the Local Plan was likely to report back to NHDC around October or November 2021. The Plan will then be submitted to Cabinet, following which it will go to full Council for a final decision. Bedfordshire County Council got their report back last week. Delivery of the Local Plan will be hampered due to a shortage of personnel in the Planning Department which has led to Planning Control Meetings being cancelled due to delays in getting reports ready to go to Committee.

Refuse collection by Urbaser may be affected by a lack of drivers. The volume in the brown bins is higher at this time of year which necessitates additional trips back to base to empty vehicles. Councillor Strong advised that bins should be left out as Urbaser will complete their rounds but possibly the next day.

At the Highways meeting drainage and flooding were discussed with the most severe problem noted in Kimpton. Councillor Strong urged the Parish Council to report blocked drains and they will be cleared.

A Dial-a-Ride type transport service is being looked at, especially for villages with limited bus services.

Councillor Strong reported that many officers and staff are working remotely still.

21.44) To adopt minutes of the previous meeting

These were adopted and will be signed at the next meeting when the Clerk is present. Minutes of remote meetings will be signed at the same time.

21.45) To consider matters arising not already on the agenda

The owner of the new bench on The Green has asked if it can be moved to another location as it is currently under a tree and due to the amount of bird droppings members of the public are not using it. The Parish Council agreed that it could be moved, possibly nearer to the front of the Red Lion. The Chairman will discuss with the owner.

The Chairman has arranged for Mr Dawes to trim the grass around the fruit trees and has agreed that the grass can be piled into a bug hotel as removal of such a large amount will be difficult and costly. Mr Dawes has been reminded that the verge adjacent to Crunnells Green House should not be cut as this area is maintained by the residents of the house.

The Chairman advised that Councillor Barnard has approved a payment of £150 towards grass cutting.

21.46) Finance

Preston Parish Council - Summary Financial Report as at 19th July 2021

Community Account		£	£
Balance as at:	8th June 2021		<u>£ 1,360.87</u>
Payments authorised at meeting:			
Date	Recipient		
28th June 2021	E.on	£	32.11
7th July 2021	Redstripe	£	180.00
8th July 2021	Fire Guard Services	£	60.00
8th July 2021	Clerk Wages	£	304.19
		<u>£</u>	<u>576.30</u>
Monies received:			
Date	From		
		<u>£</u>	<u>-</u>
Balance as at:	19th July 2021		<u>£ 784.57</u>

Business Premium Account		
Balance as at:	8th June 2021	<u>£ 9,729.93</u>
Payments authorised at meeting:		
Date	Recipient	
		-
		<u>£ -</u>
Monies Received		
		-
		<u>£ -</u>
Balance as at:	19th July 2021	<u>£ 9,729.93</u>
Total bank balances £ 10,514.50		

The Chairman pointed out that the balance of the community account is under £800 and it may be necessary to transfer funds from the business account. It was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk could transfer funds if required.

It was noted that the budget for repairs at the Recreation ground had been exceeded. This was largely due to work carried out on the Pavilion shutters. The difference in the cost of the annual service of the fire extinguisher is due to VAT, which will be reclaimed.

Councillor Clark pointed out that dog waste can be placed in the general bins which the Parish Council does not have to meet the cost of emptying. Councillor Strong advised that if bins are regularly overflowing it is possible to request that they are emptied more frequently.

Action: The Chairman and the Clerk to arrange for a transfer of funds as necessary.

21.47) Planning

21.47.1: To consider any new planning applications

Reference 21/01843/FPH – Wedelee, Church Lane: The Parish Council supported this application.

Reference 21/01876/FP – Glebe House, Chequers Lane: This is a renewal of planning permission 18/01820/FP. A letter of support has been submitted.

Proposed Restoration at Vicar’s Grove: A no objection letter has been submitted.

Land Off Castlefield

The Chairman clarified that the purpose of the drop-in sessions was to listen to residents' concerns and to include valid comments from residents in the Parish Council response to NHDC. A reminder of the deadline for submissions will be included in the August newsletter.

The Chairman clarified the Section 106 criteria:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- Directly related to the development
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development
- Not repair and maintenance

Councillor Burleigh pointed out that it would be helpful to have an indication of the likely amount of the Section 106 funding as that would influence what projects could be considered. Councillor Strong recommended contacting Simon Ellis, head of the planning department, for guidance. Education, health service and village facilities tend to get priority. Once the application for projects is made NHDC will liaise with the developer, Osprey Homes on finalising the section 106 agreement.

After discussion the Parish Council agreed the following key areas of concern:

- The number of dwellings as the area for development has been significantly reduced due to the inclusion of a wildflower meadow/drainage pond.
- Any reduction in the number of dwellings should not reduce the number of affordable houses.
- The access via Chequers Lane is too narrow for large, heavy vehicles.
- There are concerns for the safety of children walking to school.
- If the roads within the development are adopted by the County Council, street lighting will be mandatory which is not in line with the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Burleigh will investigate options in preparation for submitting The Parish Council response to the application.

The Chairman advised that Anglian Water had visited properties on Chequers Lane recently and appeared to be using dye to assess the drainage. It was noted that Preston Trust is considering seeking professional advice from a transport consultant, as well as an independent planning consultant.

The Chairman will prepare a draft response to be finalised at the September meeting.

21.47.2: To note decisions and appeals

Dower House: It was noted that the Section 73 application for the removal of conditions 7 and 8 from planning permission 17/02800/1 (granted 09/05/2018) has been refused.

21/01174/LDCP: Westleigh Church Lane: The proposed extension will not be covered by permitted development and a full application will have to be submitted.

21.47.3: To consider any other planning matters pertinent to the Parish Council

None

Action: The Chairman to put a note in the August newsletter about the deadline for representations.

Action: The Chairman to liaise with NHDC officers on the amount of section 106 funding available, then with the Parish Council to consider possible projects.

Action: Councillor Burleigh to compile a response on street lighting.

Action: The Chairman to prepare the Parish Council response to the planning application.

21.48) Shared Ownership

When the shared ownership homes in Castlefield were built the criteria for ownership was set by NHDC and Howard Cottage. A cap of 80% ownership was agreed and this has not been altered. This cap is in line with national criteria in a rural designations site where the population is less than 3000 inhabitants.

The only avenue open to the resident is to appeal against the planning consent granted by NHDC with evidence of a precedent. NHDC are very stringent on keeping to the rules in a rural designations site.

The same criteria are in the pre-application advice for the proposed development, including a cap of 80% shared ownership. It was noted that the proposed new development will have 35% affordable housing, 8 properties, within which 65% will be for rent and 35% for shared ownership.

The Chairman will notify the resident who raised the issue that this is not a matter for the Parish Council.

Action: The Chairman to write to the resident regarding Shared Ownership.

21.49) Clerk's Report

Nothing to report

21.50) Playground Report

Nothing to report.

21.51) Hertfordshire Highways Report

Councillor Marshall was unable to attend the Highways Liaison Meeting on 21 July however Councillors Frost and Strong have provided feedback under item 5.

21.52) Parish Paths Partnership

Councillor Clark reported that many of the paths are overgrown. Councillor Strong advised that these will be dealt with as soon as resources permit.

21.53) Cricket Club Representation

The Chairman offered condolences from the Parish Council to the Cricket Club on the death of Paul Constantinidi. Councillor Burleigh had nothing to report.

21.54) Correspondence Received

No correspondence has been received.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Date and Time of next Meeting:

Parish Council Meeting: Thursday 9th September 2021 at 8pm in the Village Hall.