

Parish of Preston
PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Thursday 9th June 2022 at 8.00pm.

Present Councillors Mr M Burleigh
Mrs J Clark
Mr J Morley
Mrs S Palmer
Mrs P Stark
Mrs M Trinder (Chairman)

In Attendance Mrs L Lathane (Clerk and RFO)

2.1) To receive and accept apologies for absence

Councillor Marshall sent her apologies which were accepted by the Members.

2.2) Declaration of Interests

None

2.3) To receive Chairman's Remarks and Urgent Items

2.3.1: Platinum Jubilee: The Chairman thanked Councillor Clark for her work on the Platinum Jubilee Committee.

2.3.2: Climbing on the Well: The Chairman has contacted the Head Teacher at Preston Primary School asking her to write to parents to request that they make sure that children do not climb on the well, for their own safety.

2.4) Comments from the general public and press

None.

2.5) County and District Update

None.

2.6) To adopt minutes of the previous meeting

These were adopted and were signed by the Chairman.

2.7) To adopt minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

These were adopted and were signed by the Chairman.

2.8) To consider matters arising not already on the agenda

2.8.1: Platinum Jubilee Committee: The Chairman has written to the Platinum Jubilee Committee to thank them on behalf of the Parish Council for all their work and effort in organising a very successful weekend of events to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee. She will also put a note in the next newsletter.

2.8.2: Jubilee Guest Book: The Chairman has posted a message, agreed by the Parish Council in the Jubilee Guest Book created by the Hertfordshire Lord Lieutenancy Office.

2.8.3: Mobile Phone Providers: The Chairman has contacted mobile phone providers again asking them to consider putting their equipment on the local tower. A reply has been received from EE stating that they will look into the matter.

2.8.4: Pond Work: Councillor Clark will liaise with Max Boreham again to confirm his quote for the pond work.

Action: Councillor Clark to liaise with Max Boreham regarding the pond work quote.

2.9) To consider co-option of applicants to the council.

An application for co-option had been received from Mr James Morley who has lived in the village for almost two years. Members heard from Mr Morley about his reasons for wanting to join the council.

Members **RESOLVED** to co-opt Mr Morley as a councillor.

Mr Morley signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office in view of the Clerk and took his seat on the council.

2.10) Finance

2.10.1: To authorise non-contractual payments and note payments to date

Members noted the payments and bank reconciliation. This information can be seen in Annex 1.

- a) The Chairman informed the Members that the domain renewal payment for the Neighbourhood Plan was due and asked for agreement for this to continue. It was **AGREED** that this payment should be made.
- b) The Chairman has been looking at the Defibrillator Cabinet to purchase after the receipt of the Southern Rural Committee Grant which may be slightly higher in price now. The Members **AGREED** to the purchase.

2.10.2: To review the budget for 2022/23: Members reviewed and accepted the budget.

2.10.3: To complete the Annual Governance and Accountability Review: The accounts for the year ended March 31 2022 have been audited by Mr Nick Broughton, the Parish Council's internal auditor. The Parish Council reviewed the internal audit, considering scope of the audit, the independence and competence of the auditor, their own responsibilities in respect of the financial controls of the Council, and the report of the internal auditor. The Parish Council is satisfied that the internal control has been both thorough and effective.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended March 31 2022 was considered and approved by the Parish Council. Parts 1 and 2 were signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

Action: The payment to FastHosts for the domain renewal to be made by the Chairman.

Action: The Chairman to organise the purchase of the Defibrillator cabinet.

Action: The Clerk to submit the completed AGAR to the external auditor.

2.11) Planning

2.11.1: To consider any new planning applications:

- a) **22/01453/FPH 11 Chequers Lane, Preston. Full Permission Householder: Alterations to roof including hip to gable roof extension, raising of roof ridge height, insertion of rear dormer window, and single storey rear extension (variation of planning permission 21/02812/FPH granted 10.02.2022).**

Members agreed to support this application.

2.11.2: To note decisions and appeals:

- a) **22/00798/FPH Highways, Church Lane, Preston, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 7TP. Single storey rear extension following demolition of existing single storey rear extension. Erection of detached double garage with study room above.**

Permission has been granted.

- b) **22/00707/FP Sootfield Green, Charlton Road, Preston, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 7TB. Erection of agricultural building.**

Permission has been granted with the condition that it must be used as an agricultural building.

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

The final consent to the West of Castlefield application was granted on 25 May. There will be no more work until the building process starts which will be early August at the earliest and the work is expected to take 18 months. Neighbours will receive a letter from the developer prior to the commencement of the work which will include contact details for the site manager should any issues arise.

Action: The Clerk to write and submit a letter of support for the application at 11 Chequers Lane.

2.12) Wastes of the Manor land sale

The application is following due process. The Chairman has responded to two representations about the application from Natural England and the Open Spaces Society. They have until 23 June to make any further response.

2.13) First Aid Course

Pam Biggs is willing to run a first aid course and defibrillator training for village residents. Her suggestion is 2 one and a half hour sessions with 10 people per session to get the best out of it. Suggested dates are: Thursday 7 July: 7.30 to 9.00pm and Saturday 9 July 10.30 to 12.00.

Members **AGREED** to accept this offer. The Chairman will liaise with Pam Biggs and ask about the possibility of running a date for older children / teenagers. Details will be in the July newsletter. Those interested in taking part will be asked to contact the Clerk and places will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Action: The Chairman will liaise with Pam Biggs to organise the First Aid Course.

2.14) Shop, Café and Village Hall

Councillor Palmer stated an interest in this item as she is part of the working group for the proposal. Members **AGREED** that Councillor Palmer will not take part in Council discussions and decisions on the matter to ensure complete transparency.

It was **AGREED** to discuss this item further at the end of the meeting once Councillor Palmer had left.

2.15) Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

Members **AGREED** to the minor amendments and adopted the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations with the agreed changes.

2.16) Review of Employment Policies

Members reviewed the Employment Policies and **AGREED** to adopt them for the next year.

2.17) Clerk's Report

None.

2.18) Playground Report

Councillor Palmer stated that all equipment is in good working order. There is an issue with strimming near the wooden play equipment in Church Meadow with the strimmer hitting the posts, which may cause them to get further damaged by being exposed to the weather.

It was **AGREED** that Councillor Palmer will look into products to use on the wood to maintain it, and for spray to use on the grass surrounding the posts to prevent the need for strimming.

Action: Councillor Palmer to look into products for maintenance in Church Meadow.

2.19) Hertfordshire Highways Update

2.19.1: Charlton Road: Councillor Marshall has reported surface degradation on a section of Charlton Road. However, Highways does not feel that it meets the criteria for repair at this time.

2.19.2: West Green Road Repair: Hertfordshire Highways has repaired the road outside West Green and neighbouring properties.

2.19.3: Sootfield Green Ditch: Councillor Marshall has contacted Derek Jerrard at Hertfordshire Highways to find out when the ditch will be cleared. He is currently on holiday so this will be followed up on his return.

2.19.4: Signpost on The Green: Councillor Clark noted that the signpost on The Green was out of alignment with the Hitchin sign pointing towards the ground. Councillor Marshall will be asked to contact Hertfordshire Highways to get it repaired.

Action: Councillor Marshall to follow up the ditch at Sootfield Green.

Action: Councillor Marshall to ask for the signpost on The Green to be repaired.

2.20) Parish Paths Partnership

2.20.1: Tree between Preston and Hitchwood: Pilkington Farms Partnership investigated the fallen tree and although it wasn't on their land, they arranged for it to be cleared from the footpath. The work has been carried out.

2.20.2: Sign at Dead Woman's Lane: Councillor Clark will liaise with Andrew Burton at Hertfordshire County Council regarding installing a sign post at the top of Dead Woman's Lane for walkers.

2.21) Cricket Club Representation

2.21.1: Shutter Repair: The shutter repair was carried out on Tuesday 31 May. We are yet to receive an invoice for the work.

2.21.2: Smart Meter: Councillor Burleigh had looked at the smart meter in the Pavilion and it appears to be working. He will forward photos of the working meter to the clerk who will liaise with E.on.

2.21.3: Cess Pit: The cess pit needs to be emptied and the cricket club are keen to use a different company this time. The Clerk will organise this.

Action: Councillor Burleigh to forward photos of the smart meter to the Clerk who will liaise with E.on.

Action: The Clerk to organise the emptying of the cess pit at the Recreation Ground.

2.22) Correspondence Received

None.

2.23) Matters for future consideration

Grass cutting at the Church

Councillor Palmer left the meeting.

2.24) Shop, Café and Village Hall

The Members looked at the information from the outcome of the Questionnaire provided by the Working Group.

Date and Time of next Meeting: Parish Council Meeting: Thursday 21st July 2022 at 8pm in the Village Hall.

Annex 1

Bank Reconciliation

DRAFT