

# Parish of Preston

## PRESTON PARISH COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 8.00pm.

**Present:** Councillors: Sharon Anderson, Matt Burleigh, Julie Buckland, Jane Clark, Andy Hill, Ali Morecroft, Margaret Trinder (Chairman)

**In Attendance:** 19 member of public and Lisa Lathane (Clerk and RFO)

**8.1) (Agenda 1) To receive and accept apologies for absence**  
None.

**8.2) (Agenda 2) To receive Chairman's Remarks and Urgent Items**  
The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded them that polite debate will be expected from all. Any comments will be made through the Chairman.

Members were reminded to make Declarations of Pecuniary Interest, if appropriate.

**8.3) (Agenda 3) Declarations of Interest**  
None.

**8.4) (Agenda 4) To adopt minutes of the previous meeting**  
These were adopted and were signed by the Chairman.

**8.5) (Agenda 5) To consider matters arising not already on the agenda (information only)**

1. Community Drive Safe: The application has been approved with 2 sites on School lane, one in each direction and the layby on Church Lane. An alternative location on Church Lane will be the verge outside St Martins Place. The next step is the vetting of the lead volunteers which is in hand but can take considerable time.
2. Subsidence on Crunnells Green: This has been reported to HCC using the online system and the reply is that the work will be completed by Tuesday 2 April.
3. Give Way Markings: The reply from Highways is: This request for give way junction marking renewal has been added to the list for consideration for funding from the Countywide 2024/25 Cat 6 road marking programme. The request will be considered and assessed against other submissions across the County (and against the available budget) and if progressed, the marking should be renewed before the end of summer 2024.
4. Dead Branch: This has been removed.
5. Road markings at bus stop on The Green: The following details have been supplied by Highways: The planned bus stop works will involve installing raised Kassel Kerbs, which service to significantly reduce the stepping height for passengers boarding and/or alighting the bus. The markings on the other side of the road, indicate plans to change the radius of the kerb line to add in a dropped crossing point. The bus stop pole is being relocated to the edge of the raised kerbs to encourage the bus to line up correctly. This site is currently on hold within our wider programme of works and unfortunately, at this time, we are unable to provide a date on when this work will be undertaken.
6. Bus stop on Hitchin Road: A second site visit is required to this bus stop as it is not as straightforward as the stop at The Green. An update on what work will be required will be provided after the site visit has taken place. The Bus Infrastructure team indicated that they do not currently have a date for when this visit is going to take place.
7. Pond: Works have been completed - Max Boreham took away 3 trailer loads of leaf mulch and cuttings from in and around the pond. He cleared the brambles at the back, planted some Dog Wood plants and installed a small willow weave retaining fence to

hold the bark chips in place. Max advised that we need to try to keep the grass verge opposite school house cleared of leaves as they just blow into the pond.

## **8.6) (Agenda 6) Proposed Community Facilities**

### **1. Working Group Business Plan**

The Parish Council asked the Working Group questions on the Business Plan, the following is a brief summary of the discussion.

- The planning application for the shop and café will be separate to the one for PHC and won't be submitted until the PHC application has been determined.
- A Planning Officer has advised the Working Group to submit a pre-application for its proposal.
- The pedestrian path leading from the pond down to the shop will be improved by Russell Prince for residents of the Dower House and will take into consideration extra footfall for the shop.
- The shop will take up half the footprint of the tennis court. Also provided will be 15 parking spaces and 15 cycle racks. A turning circle will be included.
- There will be a sign indicating that the car park is for the use of shop and café customers only to deter walkers from parking and going to the woods.
- Some trees will be removed although some are already dead.
- The number of potential volunteer numbers has not been revisited. However there have been some people from outside the village offering to volunteer. There will be two paid members of staff in addition to volunteers.
- There is a plan to offer a free and super quick delivery service, using a Whatsapp ordering service and volunteers on bikes.
- The shop will complement what is already on offer in the village e.g. the school, the church and the pub and will offer a different range of products and services and an alternative place to meet people.
- CCTV for staff and customer safety is included in the setting up budget.
- £25,000 towards the start-up costs have already been pledged from 5 members of the community. Some, but not all, are members of the Working Group.
- Build costs – the figures in the business plan are fairly accurate. They are calculated on a figure per square metre. Costs include road access and solar panels.
- Residents can become members of the Community Benefit Society. A minimum of 10 shares at a cost of £10 per share must be bought. Members must live in the parish.
- No modification will be made to Hitchin Road to provide vehicular access.. The Working Group will liaise with Highways about what is required in regards to splays and visibility.
- No trial pop up shop has been attempted as a suitable location wasn't available.

### **2. Parish Council Due Diligence Report**

- The Chair asked if there were any questions about the Due Diligence Report.
- A question was asked as to how the project meets the very special circumstances for building on Green Belt Land. The Working Group responded that they are: Improving community facilities, social interaction and providing employment.

### **3. Statement from the Red Lion**

A statement from the Red Lion was read out by the Chairman.

### **4. Parish Council discussion and decision on next steps.**

- Members **AGREED** that another survey should be carried out to hear the community's views.

- The survey would consist of two questions: asking if residents support the proposal on the PHC site or if they don't support the proposal on the PHC site or anywhere in the parish.
- It was **AGREED** to carry out the survey collection from the end of March and into April, with the count booked for the 24th April.

*19 members of public left meeting.*

**8.7) (Agenda 7) Comments from the general public and press (15 mins)**  
None.

**8.8) (Agenda 8) County and District Update**  
None.

**8.9) (Agenda 9) Planning**

**1. To receive and consider responses to planning applications**

- 24/00327/FPH – 1 Lodge Temple Dinsley, St Albans Highway. Members **AGREED** to support this application.
- 24/00047/LBC & 24/00046/FPH – 5 Dower House, Hitchin Road. Members **AGREED** to object to this application due to the negative impact on the neighbouring properties.

**2. To note decisions and appeals**

None.

**3. To consider any other planning matters pertinent to the Parish Council**

None.

**8.10) (Agenda 10) Finance**  
Due to a lack of time this item was deferred.

**8.11) (Agenda 11) Information Boards**  
Cllr Hill gave out initial drafts for members to look over before the next meeting.

**8.12) (Agenda 12) Tree Work on School Lane**  
Due to a lack of time this item was deferred.

**8.13) (Agenda 13) Playground Report**  
Due to a lack of time this item was deferred.

**8.14) (Agenda 14) Clerks Report**  
Due to a lack of time this item was deferred.

**8.15) (Agenda 15) Hertfordshire Highways Update**  
Members **AGREED** to request that a barrier is installed at the bend at the bottom of Preston Hill on the left hand side going into Hitchin, to prevent more vehicles going into the field.

**8.16) (Agenda 16) Parish Paths Partnership**  
Due to a lack of time this item was deferred.

**8.17) (Agenda 17) Cricket Club Representation**  
Due to a lack of time this item was deferred.

**8.18) (Agenda 18) Correspondence received**

None.

**8.19) (Agenda 19) Matters for future consideration**

Playground equipment for Church Meadow and the Recreation Ground, Extension to the pavilion, Work to The Green: The Chairman to get quotes from the previous contractor in preparation for making a decision.

The meeting closed at 10.05pm.

**Date and Time of next Meeting:** Thursday 18th April 2024 at 8pm in the Village Hall