

Preston Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
held on Thursday 23rd May 2024
at 8.00pm at Village Hall, Preston

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

In attendance: Five members of public and Lisa Lathane (Clerk & RFO)

1) Apologies: None.

2) Minutes of the 2023 APM:

The minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 27 April 2023 were approved by members and signed by the Chair..

3) Annual Report

There have been 10 Parish Council Meetings in the last year with an overall attendance of 93% which shows commitment and dedication from members.

One of the main areas of work for the Parish Council is responding to Planning Applications. This year, from May 2023 to April 2024, we have had 6 householder applications. The Parish Council responds to all planning applications and often has to ask the planning officer for an extension so that the application can be discussed at a meeting.

Responses usually go on to the Planning Portal but if the Parish Council is responding after the original deadline the Portal has closed so our comments go directly to the planning officer and aren't recorded online. Although Parish Council decisions may not always be on the Planning Portal, they are in the meeting minutes and on the Parish Council section of the village website.

The Parish Council has developed a good relationship with Russell Prince, the owner of The Door UK. Drop in sessions are being held in the village hall next week so that the community can view the plans for the development of the Temple Dinsley site.

A considerable amount of Parish Council time has been spent on the Working Group's proposals for a shop and coffee house in the village. The Parish Council has acted in good faith throughout and has listened to all sides of the debate since this project was introduced to the village over 2 years ago.

Two surveys have been conducted followed by two extraordinary meetings to count the returned papers. The recent survey indicated that 31% were in favour of a shop and coffee house and 66% were against it.

At an earlier meeting this evening, the Parish Council voted on 2 resolutions:

The first was:

After consideration of the results of the recent survey of Preston residents and all other available information, the Parish Council will support the Working Group's proposal for a shop/café.

The outcome of this was 1 for and 6 against the resolution.

The second was:

After consideration of the results of the recent survey, and the proposed new site at Pond Farm, the Parish Council will apply for Section 106 funding, associated with the re-development of PHC, for the Working Group's proposed shop/café.

The outcome of this was 1 for and 6 against the resolution.

The Parish Council appreciates that the views of the community on these decisions will be dependent on whether they wanted facilities or not.

The Parish Council realises that the Working Group will continue to pursue its latest proposal for converting the barn on Pond Farm and has informed it of how it can update the Parish Council of its progress, if it wishes to do so.

The Parish Council introduced the Voluntary Emergency Telephone System in which a volunteer would take the defibrillator from the Red Lion car park to the place where it was needed as soon as possible. It is a best endeavours system with no guarantee that a volunteer will be available.

Since it was established on August 1st, there have been 2 calls. One was successfully answered on August 3rd. Unfortunately, when the second call came in 30 April, none of the volunteers were able to respond as they were not in the village. The Parish Council will attempt to add some more volunteers to the system in the next few weeks.

The Parish Council is introducing Community Drive Safe to monitor the speed of traffic in the village. Two locations on School Lane and Church Lane have been agreed by the Police. We are now waiting for the completion of the Police administration to enable the monitoring to begin.

Both VETS and Community Drive Safe rely on volunteers. We have 10 for VETS, 2 of whom are Parish Councillors and 12 for Community Drive Safe, 6 of whom are Parish Councillors. It is important to recognise that 4 of these people are volunteers for both initiatives which shows commitment and dedication to the community in which they live.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Pam Biggs who undertakes the monthly checks on the defibrillator in the Red Lion carpark to ensure that it is always in working order. Pam also provides annual training for the VETS volunteers. Pam is not a Preston resident but comes to the village to support us.

The Parish Council is grateful to the many volunteers from the village who work hard and often unnoticed in a variety of ways, in particular by litter picking, to protect the local environment, which is organised twice a year by The Preston Trust.

I am very grateful to Lisa, our Clerk, who is also Responsible Financial Officer, for all her work and support this year. I am grateful too for the support and commitment of all the Parish Councillors in the last year.

The Parish Council is a corporate body and none of the initiatives and activities I have described here could take place without everyone playing their part and contributing to the democratic decision making process. The decisions taken by the Parish Council are what it believes to be in the best interests of the wider community at that particular time.

The Parish Council will continue to work for the benefit of Preston residents in the next year to the best of its abilities.

4) Treasurer's Report

At the start of the 2023/24 financial year the Parish Council had funds of £52,376 which were later supplemented by income of £76,784. The largest part of which came from the receipt of Section 106 funding from the Back Lane housing development. This funding has been granted for specific projects, including:

- The re-wiring and refurbishment of the kitchen at the Village Hall, including the purchase of new chairs. This has already been carried out.
- A contribution towards new play equipment for the Church Meadow and Recreation Ground playgrounds.
- A contribution towards the extension of the Pavilion.

In the last financial year an amount of £13,184 was received as precept from NHDC. We also claimed back £581.89 in VAT. Also received was £1,817.13 from Preston Cricket Club for agreed costs at the Pavilion.

We spent £1,239.60 on grass cutting on the Village Green and at Church Meadow. We spent £850 on pond maintenance this year, ensuring it remains an attractive spot in the village.

At the end of the financial year the Parish Council had £97,892 in the bank. The majority of this amount is ring-fenced for specific future projects.

5) Reports from County and District Councillors

None

6) Police Report

The clerk read out a report sent by PCSO Heather Burrows.

7) Reports by Local Organisations

The following organisations addressed the meeting in person:

Neighbourhood Watch
Friends of St Martin's Church
Preston Cricket Club
Preston Trust
Village Hall Committee
Preston Village Society
The Red Lion

8) Open Forum

A question was asked whether Section 106 funding could be used to install solar panels at the Village Hall to help with costs. The parish council will look into this.

10) Date and time of next ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: Thursday 22nd May 2025.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.