

Grimsargh Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 5 April, 2012 in the Village Hall, Preston Road, Grimsargh at 7.00pm

Present:- Councillor Mrs E Murray – Chairman

Councillors

Mr Peter Burton Mrs Lynda Cryer
Mrs J Chessell Mr David Nicholson
Mrs Lynn McCann

In attendance:- Sue Whittam – Clerk to the Council
Councillor N Cartwright – Preston Rural East
Councillor T Davies – Preston Rural East

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Andy Ellis, Councillor David Hindle, Councillor Ron Woollam and Reverend Halliwell.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 7 April 2011

Resolved

That the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on Thursday 7 April, 2011 were taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman

3. Chairman's Report 2011/2012

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Eileen Murray gave her report on the Parish Council's activities over the last 12 months.

Councillor Mrs Eileen Murray said that this year had been another one of significant change on the Council with the very welcome arrival of three new Councillors in the persons of Peter Burton, David Nicholson and Lynda Cryer. They were co-opted early in the year and are bringing valuable new views and input to Parish Council operations. A considerable amount of time and effort has been given to the proposal by Hallam Land Management for a major development on land north of The Hills. The latest news was that Hallam had reduced the scale of their proposals. This, combined with the just emerging information on the Preferred Options Paper meant that we perhaps have many more hours ahead of studying proposals and policies.

It was reported that a new Working Group had been established to define and evaluate the possibilities and implications for certain sections of the Village to acquire Conservation Area Status. It was early days yet, as this is a complex issue, but more information would be forthcoming though our Newsletters, as available.

Councillor Mrs Eileen Murray also reported that we were developing proposals for establishing a new "Parish Plan" and looking at this against the new Neighbourhood

Planning system. The latter was a very new government initiative, still undergoing pilot studies, but might enable some increased level of local determination on certain aspects of planning.

It was noted that there were a number of new schemes that had recently been implemented to encourage residents into communications with the Parish Council: a suggestion box in the Village Store, surgeries before each Parish Council meeting and free internet drop-in sessions at the Village Hall to enable people to be able to browse websites – including ours. So far these initiatives had seen little take-up. The Chairman hoped that residents would make the most of these facilities as they were designed to increase awareness of what we do and encourage more feedback and communication with us.

The Chairman said that a marvellous amount of effort and support had been given by the Guild Working Group this last year and prior to that. The resultant programme of activities looked wonderfully varied and packed full of things to provide interest across all ages and interests. She thanked the group for their hard work. We were particularly grateful to Patricia Tucker who continued in the role of Co-ordinator, despite stepping down from the Parish Council last year and has done a great job of pulling everything together.

It was a delight to see the play area on the Green being built and the feedback from parents and grandparents shows that is being greatly appreciated. We were pleased to see the drainage work taking place just recently and we hope that the grass around the area will soon recover. There just remains now the car park for some remedial work, which Preston City Councillors have advised will be completed shortly.

Councillor Mrs Murray referred to Our Best Kept Village results which were a bit of a triumph, coming third in our class, considering where we used to get placed a couple of years or so ago. A challenge for us for 2012 is to win?!

It was noted that the Nellie Carbis Millennium woodland continues to be a charming and valuable asset to the Village and we shall be placing a new bench in there shortly, in memory of former Parish Councillor Sam Sellers.

A new Residents Association had been formed for the Redrow estate, arising out of an initial meeting called by Preston City and Grimsargh Parish Councils. They had already had a number of positive results with the Redrow developers who were still responsible for public elements of the estate – getting grass cut and ponds maintained and we wish the group continued success.

The Chairman commented that some of you may have noticed that the precept (the amount in your Council Tax for the Village) had been raised significantly this year. We did forewarn about this in our January Newsletter. In percentage terms it looks like a huge increase, but in cash terms it amounts to an average of just £6 per household over the year. There were four elements contributing to the increase: a) we have been advised by a third party that our reserves are below what is considered prudent; b) a sum has been included as contingency to cover the Guild festivities; c) an amount has been budgeted to cover initial work on a new Parish Plan and d) the cancellation of the Lengthsman's Scheme payment from Lancashire County Council which has reduced our income. Items a) and d) are somewhat out of our hands and we hope that you will agree with the other two activities.

We thank those groups and individuals who came forward to adopt our planters which have provided wonderful splashes of colour throughout the year. We are looking forward to what they are planning for this summer of Guild 2012!

Thanks also to the members of the Friends of Grimsargh Green who organised the hedge laying activity and other works that have brought about delightful changes to the western side of the green. We look forward also to the results of their project for a mosaic on the Green, in celebration of Preston Guild.

It was noted that there was currently a spate of crime in the rural areas. We continue to have excellent relationships with our local police with Chris Banks and David Reid regular attendees at our Parish Council meetings. We hope to meet the new recruit PCSO Ashley Lawton soon. We heartily support their new Neighbourhood Watch initiative, which gives email alerts to everyone signed up so you can be aware of the latest news on the crimes and suspicious incidents that have just occurred and can perhaps have the chance to help in their resolution.

Finally the Chairman commented that there had been a myriad of other matters the Parish Council have given time to, considered and dealt with over the past year – far too numerous to mention and I give my sincere thanks to my fellow Parish Councillors and our Clerk for their hard work and diligence in the application of their duties with Grimsargh Parish Council through 2011-12.

4. Matters raised by the Electors

There being no further business raised the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.20pm.

Chairman Grimsargh Parish Council