

Grimsargh Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held remotely on Thursday 1 April, 2021 at
7.30pm

Present:- Councillor David Hindle – Chairman

Councillor Mark Bell (Vice-Chairman); Councillor Mrs Joyce Chessell; Councillor Mrs Lynda Cryer; Councillor Terry Cryer and Councillor Mrs Lindsay Philipson.

In attendance:- Sue Whittam – Clerk to the Council
Councillor Ron Woollam – Preston City Council
5 members of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Peter Burton. The Chairman, Councillor David Hindle welcomed everyone to this first remote Annual Parish Meeting. It was noted that there had not been an Annual Parish Meeting in 2020 due to the coronavirus restrictions.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 5 April 2019

Resolved

That the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 5 April, 2019 were taken as read, confirmed and would be signed by the Chairman at the next face to face meeting.

3. Chairman's Report 2020/2021

The Chairman, Councillor David Hindle gave his report as Chairman for the last six months. It was noted that the previous Chairman, Councillor Mrs Lindsay Philipson had produced her report for printing in the June 2020 newsletter as an Annual Parish Meeting had not been held due to the coronavirus restrictions.

The Chairman Councillor David Hindle began by stating that at the October, 2020, meeting of Grimsargh Parish Council, he was unanimously voted Chairman and that he was delighted to accept the Office but said he had a 'hard act to follow as Councillor Mrs Lindsay Philipson, had done an excellent job of chairing the Parish Council over the last few years.' The Chairman thanked and paid tribute to Councillor Mrs Lindsay Philipson for her professional, dedicated and commitment to Grimsargh during her term of office as Chair.

At the same meeting Councillor Mark Bell was unanimously approved as Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council for 2020/2021.

The Chairman, Councillor David Hindle stated that Parish Council activities had naturally been restricted due to Corvid 19 but nevertheless all zoom meetings had been well attended, harmonious and productive and that we had still managed to get a lot of council business done, in the past six months.

Grimsargh village is, of course, a ward and is represented on the City Council by Councillor Ron Woollam. The Chairman thanked Councillor Ron Woollam for his commitment to Grimsargh and his interest in Parish Council meetings. The Chairman

said that Ron had been welcomed to all of our meetings and had made valid contributions on appropriate matters, by addressing them with the appropriate authorities at Preston City and Lancashire County Council; exemplified by the problems of flooding and pot holes on Preston Road which were reported directly to Lancashire County Council.

The Chairman reported that during the preceding six months the Parish Council consisting of 9 parish councillors, had been denuded by two of them namely Councillor Mrs Eileen Murray and Councillor Ian Liptrott. Consequently, there were two vacancies which had recently been advertised and it was anticipated that at least one very worthy candidate would be co-opted to the Council in May.

The Chairman focussed on ongoing examples of our work over the last 6 months despite covid, which by necessity, has been a quiet period for Grimsargh. However, the Christmas tree on the Green was well received by residents adding cheer to Christmas, despite the gloomy prospects ahead. Effective communication had been maintained with the excellent quarterly Newsletter, the Website and Facebook. Our Social Media Policy had now been approved by the Parish Council and Councillor Mark Bell, Councillor Mrs Lindsay Philipson and the Clerk were the administrators for the Parish Council's social media accounts.

The Chairman reported that once again, planning issues had featured during the year; with smaller routine applications and burgeoning housing development, notwithstanding possible constraints and ambiguities with the government's 5 year housing supply. One perhaps contentious application, was for housing at 329 Preston Road, which had been approved contrary to Officer recommendation. Action had been taken by the Council and Trustees in an endeavour to mitigate consequential damage to the adjacent Wetlands and its biodiversity. The Chairman said that whether we like it or not housing development continues to grow. Grimsargh was rapidly witnessing urban expansion on an unprecedented scale and gone were the days of it being a quiet agricultural village the last census in 2011 showed 2,653 residents but there had been significant developments since then.

The Chairman reported that 'The Wetlands Trust,' continued its upward and dynamic trend to become a well-known and important nature reserve with Biological Heritage Status and was loved and admired by naturalists and the general public alike. Recent developments and innovations had included the development of a professional website, the purchase of a storage container, the installation of a sluice, the completion of Phase 4, two new screens on the public footpath, the excavation of 3 new ponds and the construction and siting of 4 tern nesting rafts, and of crucial importance year-long funding from the Lancashire Environmental Fund. The Wetlands Trust had requested £15,000 of funding from the Parish Council for interim payments to contractors for the Phase 4 works on the Fen, funded by CiL money. In accordance with an established agreement the Parish Council unanimously agreed to give £15,000 to the Wetlands Trust from their CiL monies.

The Parish Council again agreed to appoint representatives to outside bodies, Sub-Committees and Working Groups. One new and important Working Group had been started to examine traffic and road safety issues in Grimsargh and Whittingham Lane in particular. This was spearheaded by Councillor Mrs Joyce Chessell, together with Councillor David Hindle and a local resident John Baron. Councillor Mrs Chessell had produced a report and action plan concerning the stretch of road in question between Whittingham Lane between Preston Road and the Houghton boundary. The Chairman, again thanked Councillor Mrs Chessell for the progress made thus far with her excellent paper on road safety issues on Whittingham Lane.

As residents have repeatedly reported drivers speeding along Whittingham Lane informing that the 30 MPH limit is often ignored, it had been resolved that the Clerk would contact LCC to look at suitable locations for a maximum of three permanent solar powered SPiDs in Grimsargh, including Whittingham Lane. Funding for this project, including the costs of the SPiDs, LCC licence and the installation of permanent posts, was to be funded from Parish Council CiL monies.

On matters of finance, it was noted that we currently had an estimated £139,084.82 in the Nat West bank as at 5 November 2020. It was further noted that the Parish Council had received the CiL payment of £49,821.10 and this was credited on 27 October 2020. The Parish Council gave consideration to the precept for 2021/2022 and it was unanimously agreed to set the precept at the same level as last year at £42,000 for 2021/2022.

The Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking and paying tribute to all fellow Councillors for their loyal support and regular and punctual attendance at meetings, notwithstanding the problems of covid. He acknowledged that in normal times all Councillors were very proactive in all matters concerning the village and remained confident that this will be sustained in the future. More work would be done to make general improvements around the village using our small share of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL) money.

The Chairman said that hopefully a state of near normality might prevail after the 21st June, 2021, when most government guidelines were listed and put into effect. He thanked Sue Whittam, who he regarded as knowledgeable, professional and very efficient in her role as Clerk; Sue had given him helpful advice and a good working relationship had been established.

4. Matters raised by the Electors

The Chairman, Councillor David Hindle welcomed a member of the public to the meeting who had come along to discuss a book that she was producing on 10 walks in the Grimsargh area. Any profits from the book would be given to St Michael's Church and the lady explained that she was hoping to put way markers in place to help people with the walking routes. The lady explained that during lock down people had been walking more and everyone recognised the importance of walking for health and well-being. Each walk would be under two hours and around 3 miles in distance. The lady was seeking some support and funding from the Parish Council. The Chairman, Councillor David Hindle said that as the lady was looking at donating any profits to St Michael's Church then he would need to declare a personal and prejudicial interest as a member of the Parochial Church Council. The Chairman, Councillor David Hindle then left the meeting while the Parish Council discussed this possible project.

Councillor Mrs Lindsay Philipson said that previous walks had been very popular and she felt that the Parish Council should support such a worthwhile project. The Clerk asked if the lady had contacted Lancashire County Council who had responsibility for public rights of way as they would need to give permission for any additional way markers. The lady explained that she had not contacted Lancashire County Council but would do so to seek any appropriate approval. Councillor Mrs Joyce Chessell said that the project did seem worthy of support, but the Parish Council had a grants process and suggested that may be the way forward and that the Parish Council could then consider this in detail at their next meeting. The Clerk agreed to speak to the lady outside the meeting and supply her with the relevant contacts and information to enable her to

submit a grant application to the Parish Council. The Chairman, Councillor David Hindle returned to the meeting.

The Chairman, Councillor David Hindle then welcomed some members of the public from The Hills Estate who had come to discuss some issues regarding the green space close to their homes. A number of issues were raised including the car park at the top of the estate which had been subjected to fly tipping and possible drug dealing; the lack of bins; flooding issues, particularly on the paths; the lack of play equipment and the possibility of a gate being installed near the car park. The Clerk confirmed that over a number of months all these issues had been raised with the Parish Council but unfortunately there was not a lot the Parish Council could do due to the land being privately owned by the original developer of the homes, Persimmon. It was noted that a number of residents had formed a Facebook Group and currently had around 167 members. It was suggested that as a way forward that the residents form a resident's group and liaise with Persimmon and others to try and make some positive changes to the estate. Councillor Mrs Lindsay Philipson said that a similar group had been formed on the Redrow Estate, and although it was not in existence now, one of the founding members still lived there and she was sure that he would be willing to give some useful help and advice if the residents on The Hills wished to set up a similar group. Councillor Mrs Joyce Chessell said she thought that a resident's group for The Hills would be a good step forward and the group would need to appoint a Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary and develop a basic constitution. She was sure that forming such a group would have more influence with Persimmon and it would show that the community was working together to improve their local environment.

The Chairman, Councillor David Hindle also said that if a resident's group was established it would enable them to also apply for funding. However, the first step was to look at establishing a group. The members of the public appreciated the detailed discussion regarding their concerns and would try and take forward the suggested idea to set up a resident's group. Councillor Ron Woollam also said that he would try and arrange a meeting between Persimmon and local residents on site so they could look at the issues and come up with possible solutions. This was also appreciated by the residents.

The Chairman, Councillor David Hindle asked if anyone else had anything to raise under this item. One member of the public informed the Parish Council that St Michael's Church would be holding a festival of Angels on 24th - 26th September and that further information about this would be included in the Parish Council newsletter.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.50 pm.

Councillor David Hindle
Chairman Grimsargh Parish Council