

Grimsargh Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Grimsargh Village Hall on Thursday 7 April, 2022 at 7.00pm

Present:- Councillor David Hindle – Chairman

Councillor Peter Burton; Councillor Mrs Joyce Chessell; Councillor Mrs Agustina Oliver and Councillor Mrs Jayne Woollam.

In attendance:- Sue Whittam – Clerk to the Council
5 members of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs Lynda Cryer; Councillor Terry Cryer and City Councillor Ron Woollam. The Chairman, Councillor David Hindle welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting, and briefed the Parish Council on possible health and safety considerations for this evening's meeting.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 1 April 2021

Resolved

That the minutes of the remote Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 1 April 2021 were taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

3. Chairman's Report 2021/2022

The Chairman, Councillor David Hindle gave his report as Chairman for 2021/2022. He said that activities had been restricted once again during the past twelve months due to Covid 19. However, the Government restrictions regarding remote meetings was lifted last May, so we were pleased to be meeting once again at the Village Hall, albeit socially distanced. All meetings continue to be well attended, harmonious and productive and we had managed to get a lot of council business done during the preceding months. The Chairman reported that the Parish Council consisting of nine Councillors had seen the following changes: We had welcomed two new Councillors, Councillor Jayne Woollam and Councillor Agustina Oliver and we were pleased that they are part of our very proactive Parish Council. Unfortunately, our Vice-Chairman, Councillor Mark Bell resigned in December due to moving out of the village, so currently we had one vacancy at the time of writing the report which we hoped to fill shortly. However, the Chairman said that sadly Councillor Mrs Lindsay Philipson had decided to resign this week and the Chairman took the opportunity to thank Councillor Philipson for all her hard work and commitment she had given to the Parish Council over the last eight years. We therefore now had once again two vacancies on the Parish Council.

The Chairman reported that Grimsargh village was represented on the City Council by Councillor Ron Woollam who regularly attended our meetings and who had made valid contributions on appropriate matters, by addressing them with the appropriate authorities at Preston City and Lancashire County Council.

Community Involvement

The Chairman reported that there had been many ongoing examples of our work over the last 12 months. The Parish Council welcomed new residents to the village. They were

given a welcome pack with an introductory letter, previous newsletters, a heritage walk map and information about the farmer's market and community groups. Sporting interests were well represented in Grimsargh, especially with the established football and cricket teams. Consideration had also been given to the installation of an all-weather pitch for younger people residing in the village.

The Chairman said that unfortunately Grimsargh did not gain any positions in the Best Kept Village Competition but we were entering again this year along with an asset worthy of note by the judges; a splendid new mural, designed by the children of St Michael's C/E and Alston Lane R/C Schools. Specifically, the new mural featured the past, present and future of the village exemplified by the Norse influence, the railway which transformed the ancient agricultural hamlet and the current biodiversity and ornithological interest. The new mural would replace the mosaic on the Village Green.

The Christmas tree lights on the Green were well received by residents adding Christmas cheer when they were switched on Saturday, 27th November. Also embracing the spirit of Christmas, the annual Carols around the Crib Service took place on Friday the 10th December with refreshments kindly provided by Grimsargh Club after the service. Both Grimsargh St Michael's Church and the Field Day Committee supported the Carol singing and the switching on of the lights

The Chairman reported that serving the local and wider community, Grimsargh's Village Hall was given a new roof to replace the corrugated tin roof and to bring insulation up to modern standards. This was made possible with the payment of £70,000 by the Parish Council supplemented by a donation of £30,000 from the Lancashire Environmental Fund (LEF). Grimsargh Parish Council also continued to give smaller grants to support other worthy causes in the Parish.

On the 16th March, 2022, the Chairman reported that he had represented the Parish Council by attending the 'Queen's Green Canopy' tree planting event of an oak tree on Avenham Park, Preston, to commemorate her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee. Speeches were made by the Mayor of Preston, Councillor Javed Iqbal and the Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire, Mrs Louise Cooper BEM, who planted the tree.

Furthermore, the Chairman was pleased to report that a commemorative oak tree had now been planted on the Village Green at Grimsargh by Preston City Council in celebration of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee.

The Parish Council were pleased to support local resident Ruth Buckley with her book of ten family friendly walks in the Grimsargh area by funding the way markers. All profits from the book would go to Grimsargh St. Michael's Church.

Effective communication had been sustained with the excellent quarterly Newsletter, the Website and Facebook. The Chairman said that our social media Policy had now been approved by the Parish Council and currently it was Councillor Mrs Lindsay Philipson and the Clerk who were the administrators for the Parish Council's social media accounts. However, due to the resignation of Councillor Mrs Lindsay Philipson the Parish Council would now need another Councillor to take on this role.

Planning and development

The Chairman reported that 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 figures available from 2011 showed 2,653 residents but there had been significant developments since then.

Planning issues during the year had ranged from routine small routine applications to burgeoning housing developments, notwithstanding possible constraints and ambiguities with the government's 5-year housing supply. One perhaps contentious application, was for land adjacent to 329 Preston Road, Grimsargh (Planning Application 06/2020/1382), which was to increase the number of affordable homes from 30 to 35 and was approved by Preston City Council Planning Committee.

The housing development was immediately adjacent to the sensitive nature reserve and would be detrimental to the wildlife by impacting on a vital wildlife corridor and as a source of disturbance, trespass and intrusion by domestic dogs and cats. Moreover, action had been taken by the Council and Grimsargh's Wetland Trustees, in an endeavour to mitigate consequential damage to the adjacent Wetlands and its biodiversity.

Grimsargh Wetlands

The Grimsargh Wetlands Trust continues to manage day to day operations on the fabulous Grimsargh Wetlands Nature Reserve on behalf of the Parish Council. Two Parish Councillors hold office in the Grimsargh Wetlands Trust: Councillor Jayne Woollam holds the post of Honorary Secretary and Councillor David Hindle is the Chairman.

Grimsargh Wetlands are without doubt a haven for wildlife and pivotal to the local and wider community who derive great benefit from the reserve including local schoolchildren. For example, during February, 2022, a large group of children from Grimsargh St Michael's CE School visited Grimsargh Wetlands accompanied by their Head, Mr Stuart Booth and four teachers. Trustees Phil Atkinson, Mike Fisher and Councillor David Hindle pointed out the wildlife and showed them round the reserve to great acclaim from the Head, teacher colleagues and, of course, the children.

The Lancashire Environmental Fund awarded the sum of £10,000 to the Wetlands Trust. This enabled the trust to improve public access and to install additional viewing screens on the causeway and overlooking the Fen with required fencing and gates.

'The Wetlands Trust,' continues 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.

Road Safety considerations on Preston Road and Whittingham Lane,

The Parish Council again agreed to appoint representatives to outside bodies, Sub-Committees and Working Groups. One new and important working group continued to examine traffic and road safety issues in Grimsargh, and Whittingham Lane in particular. The Chairman reported that this was spearheaded by Councillor Mrs Joyce Chessell. 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.

In connection therewith the Chairman reported that serious consideration had been given to making the principal roads in Grimsargh safer in order to reduce speed including the provision of speed calming measures.

It had been resolved that the Clerk would contact LCC to look at suitable locations for a maximum of three permanent solar powered speed devices in Grimsargh, including

Whittingham Lane. This project, including the costs of the LCC licence and the installation of permanent posts, was to be funded from Parish Council CiL monies. A representative from Highways Department of L.C.C. carried out a site meeting and recommended the following locations for the installation of Speed Indicator Display Signs (Spids) :-

B6243 Preston Road: Alternative siting of a spid for east bound traffic near to the junction with The Hills

B 6243 - Siting of a spid for south bound traffic at commencement of restricted 30 mph near junction with Alston Lane

Whittingham Lane Alternative siting of a spid for traffic entering the village east bound traffic situate at grid reference 358072 OR opposite the Silver Birches development.

Road Safety meetings had taken place with the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Andy Pratt, to address speeding on Whittingham Lane and indiscriminate parking when football and cricket matches take and speed reduction. Mr Rennie Pinder subsequently met Councillor Joyce Chessell on Tuesday the 1/02/22 to discuss the collation of data on the road usage on both Whittingham Lane and the B8243, Preston Road.

Mr Rennie Pinder, Dexter Stubbs and Andy Pratt, the Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner attended the March meeting of the Parish Council to talk about traffic issues in the village and how data collection could help influence possible solutions. Mr Pinder explained that he would set up cameras with approval from Lancashire County Council and leave them in place for a week. The data would be collected and would include the number of vehicles and their speed. Mr Andy Pratt was the Chairman of the Road Safety Partnership and he explained that the majority of speeding was in rural areas and it was important to change drivers' attitudes and make them think about the impact of speeding.

Improved lighting would be actioned by Mr Pratt with LCC. Andy explained about the work with schools and that pupils were taking part in projects to stop good drivers and say thank you, Andy said that Parish Councils, residents and volunteers could all get involved with this scheme. He also suggested that hand held speedometers could be used by schoolchildren accompanied by a police officer. The aforementioned general concerns would need to be incorporated in a Highways Dept. Strategic Plan for Grimsargh and the surrounding areas.

The Parish Council unanimously agreed to undertake a project to collect speeding data in Grimsargh so this could be used to influence any possible solutions to deal with speeding vehicles in the Parish. The estimated cost of this would be around £350, depending on the number of cameras involved. Although the proposed timescale was the week beginning 21st March, 2022, at the time of writing my report the data collection had been slightly delayed due to problems with the cameras.

The Platinum Jubilee Working Group

The Chairman said that the first meeting of the Platinum Jubilee Working Group was held on 20 January 2022. Councillor Mrs Joyce Chessell explained that the Working Group was recommending that a street style party celebration should be held on the Village Green on Sunday 5th June 2022, and this could be based on a 1950's theme. Everyone would be encouraged to dress in 1950's style, such as Queens, Princesses, Princes and spivs. The entertainment would consist of a sing along of older songs and a band/singer representing the 1950's. There would also be donkey rides, period horse drawn carriage rides and street vendors and children's games. A marquee would have themed 1950s

exhibits and photos - indeed unashamed nostalgia! The new mural would be unveiled on this occasion by Councillor Joyce Chessell who for many years has contributed so much to the Village Green. At a meeting of the Council the Clerk reported that as the village green was owned by Preston City Council, she had completed the paperwork to apply to use the land for the event. It had been agreed that the Village Hall should be booked for the event in case of inclement weather and for the convenience of people getting changed. All agreed this was an excellent idea and the Parish Council agreed to contribute up to £5,000 towards this event from Parish Council CiL monies.

Financial Matters

On matters of finance, it has been documented that we currently had an estimated £142,919.60 in the Nat West bank as the 4th February 2022. It was further noted that the Parish Council had CiL money payments remaining as at 31st March 2021 of £48,073.46. The Parish Council gave consideration to the precept for 2022/2023 and it was unanimously agreed to set the precept the same as last year at £42,000.

Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to thank all fellow Councillors for their loyal support and regular and punctual attendance at meetings, notwithstanding the problems of covid. I acknowledge that in normal times all Councillors are proactive in all matters concerning the village and remain confident that with or without the pandemic, this will be sustained in the future. Finally, I would like to thank our Parish Clerk, Sue Whittam, for the professional way she carries out her duties and indeed all my fellow councillors.

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 thank the Parish Council for supporting the book on 10 walks in Grimsargh and to ask if the Parish Council could consider including a copy of the book in each resident's pack. The Parish Council confirmed that they had been happy to support the book and would be happy to promote the book in their resident's pack, by way of a flyer, but agreed not to put a copy of the book in each pack. They also agreed that they could promote the walks on the Parish Council website. The member of the public also raised concerns regarding some of the stiles while out walking and the Clerk confirmed that any issues could be reported directly to the Public Rights of Way Team at Lancashire County Council. She explained that it would be helpful to the County Council if a picture of the damaged stile or public rights of way issue could be included in the online complaint to Lancashire County Council.

One member of the public also raised his concern regarding a planning application regarding land at Roman Road Farm, Longridge Road Preston (reference 06/2022/0033). The Clerk explained that this was an application to determine what would be required as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment when the full application was submitted to Preston City Council. The Parish Council reassured the member of the public that there would be full consultation when the full application was submitted.

One member of the public referred to the newly installed footpath at Story Homes on Elston Lane and that the lack of signage was dangerous, as the resident had witnessed a number of "near misses" involving children. The Clerk agreed to look into this and see what could be done.

Another member of the public raised the issue of speeding on Elston Lane and that the speed changes from a 60 mph to a 20 mph close to the new houses. She asked if the speed could be reduced on the 60 mph bit or at least move the signage further up the road away from the new houses to give a longer stretch of 20 mph. The Clerk agreed to look into this and see what could be done.

Councillor Mrs Jayne Woollam also mentioned the Platinum Jubilee event being organised by the Parish Council on Monday 5th June which would be a picnic on the Village Green. She also asked about the bench in memory of former Councillor Tom Davies and if this could be cleaned and if the planters at either end of the village could be refurbished. The Clerk agreed to discuss this with the Lengthsman.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00 pm.

Councillor David Hindle
Chairman Grimsargh Parish Council