

Grimsargh Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 6 April, 2017 in the Village Hall, Preston Road, Grimsargh at 7.00pm

Present:- Councillor Mrs Lindsay Philipson – Chairman

Councillor Peter Burton (Vice-Chairman); Councillor Mrs Lynda Cryer; Councillor Terry Cryer; Councillor Keith Middlebrough and Councillor Mrs Eileen Murray.

In attendance:- Sue Whittam – Clerk to the Council
Councillor Neil Cartwright – Preston City Council

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ian Liptrot.

2. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 7 April 2016

Resolved

That the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Thursday 7 April, 2016 were taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman

3. Chairman's Report 2015/2016

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Lindsay Philipson gave her report on the Parish Council's activities over the last 12 months. She said that her second year as Chairman had been an extremely eventful one.

The Chairman said that we were fortunate in May to be able to co-opt Ian Liptrot into our final vacancy so we were now fielding a full team. Ian had lived with his family in the village for 20 years and his 40 years experience in Local Government with Lancashire County Council would be a real asset.

The Chairman reported that we had improved our ranking in the Lancashire Best Kept Village competition from 6th place in 2015 to 3rd place in 2016. But the real praise went to Grimsargh Village Green – judged Best Public Playing Field, and to Grimsargh Cricket Club – judged Best Cricket Ground and surrounds. Congratulations again went to St Michael's school as runner up in the schools section for the second year running.

In August we had a very enjoyable afternoon tea and presentation for our Best Planter competition, hosted at The Potting Shed. Prizes were presented by our independent judge Michelle Unsworth of So Plants. The winner's trophy this year went to Grimsargh Players with second prize to Grimsargh Brownies and third to Grimsargh Gardening Club. The Chairman thanked all those who put so much effort into keeping the planters around the village looking so lovely.

The Chairman reported that work had also been done to make general improvements around the village using our small share of the Community Infrastructure Levy or money from the Solar Farm donation. The project to extend Old Railway Walk under Skew Bridge right up to St Michael's school – joint funded with Longridge and North Preston Rotary Club, who undertook all the work – was finished in time for the children going

back to school at the start of the summer term and was hugely valued by carers and children who could now walk, cycle and scoot to school in safety. It had also helped relieve some of the traffic congestion outside the school.

The Chairman also said that our second big project of the year was the purchase and installation of four defibrillators – placed at the Village Hall, The Club, The Cricket Pavilion on the Green, and at St Michael's school and that our thanks went to those establishments who agreed to joint fund this potentially lifesaving initiative. All were now registered with the Ambulance Service and training sessions had been provided by the North West Ambulance Service at the Village Hall and at the Club.

We had also placed new benches in the Nellie Carbis Woodland and on the main road outside the Village Hall and were in the process of replacing/installing new bins along Old Railway Walk.

The Chairman said that unfortunately, despite the best efforts of Councillor Terry Cryer who has led on this, the CCTV installation in the village had once again stalled at the last hurdle – ironically, the sticking point was Lancashire Constabulary, whose original idea this was.

The Chairman also reported that once again, planning issues had featured strongly during the year.

In May we were devastated to receive the decision of the Inspector who allowed the appeal by Gladman Developments against Preston City Council's refusal to grant planning permission for the 150 home development off Elston Lane. The Chairman said we had fought very hard against this. Although Preston City Council subsequently sought to take this erroneous decision to the High Court their application didn't succeed so the development would still go ahead at some point; and the Chairman said to the best of our knowledge the land hadn't yet been sold to a developer.

The Chairman also said that later on in the year, and despite our strong objections and representations made to the Planning Committee, Wainhomes were given permission for Phase 11 of their Churchfields development off Ribblesdale Avenue and later for a 34 home development at Park House Farm on Whittingham Lane.

There was, however, some wonderful news. After the shock in November 2015 when Preston City Council refused the application from United Utilities that would have assured the future security of the Wetlands, it went back to the Planning Committee in June and was finally approved. Since then progress had been swift; that part of the site fronting the main road and retained by United Utilities was sold to Eccleston Homes in December and building of the 12 properties has already begun. The sale of the Wetlands part of the site to the Parish Council was finally completed in January and the dowry was now safely in our bank account ready for investment and measured use to improve and maintain the Wetlands in perpetuity. The Chairman reported that we had granted a licence to Eccleston Homes for the use of a small part of the site for construction vehicles and storage and this was another source of income generation for us.

The Chairman said that we were also well on the way to establishing the Charitable Trust that would manage the Wetlands on a long lease from the Parish Council, and we had recruited 8 eminently qualified, experienced and enthusiastic potential Trustees.

Another of our major undertakings this year had been to begin the process of establishing a Neighbourhood Plan. The Chairman said that we did not underestimate the amount of work that has, and will continue to, go into this. We were fortunate to have an enthusiastic Steering Group made up of Councillors and residents. We've

established a new dedicated website and Facebook page, held an introductory information and engagement session at the Village Hall, a Business breakfast, and spoken individually to several of the community Groups. Although it's proving harder to engage the community in this than I think we initially anticipated, we had a very rough initial steer about what matters to the village and we were currently working in small themed groups towards developing our whole village Questionnaire.

The Chairman also said that we continue to try to improve our communications with residents; we had our twice yearly newsletter, our Website is full of up to date information and our Facebook page had increased in following from 225 to 342 over this year. We had also appeared on a local TV channel responding to Preston City Council's proposal to involve Parish Councils more heavily in the maintenance of our green spaces.

The Chairman said that we continued to be active in regular Preston Area Committee meetings and had attended LALC conferences and Annual meetings – keeping us up to date with local and national issues.

Finally, the Chairman said she would like to say a huge thank you to all those without whose support our job would be so much more difficult. Our City Councillor Neil Cartwright, always there to offer support and to intervene on our behalf. The local police, PC Chris Banks and PCSO Dave Reid, who attend our meetings as often as they are able and give us vital information in helping to keep the village safe and secure. The members of the Neighbourhood Planning Steering group – both Councillors and residents – who are giving up so much of their time to progress this vital piece of work.

My fellow Councillors, always ready to step up to the mark, fight our corner, and help with last minute tasks; and last but by no means least, the Chairman thanked our Clerk Sue Whittam, who once again had provided her personally and the Council with so much support and advice. The Chairman said we were really fortunate to have such a strong team.

Finally, the Chairman said that she couldn't round off our year without a tribute to a gentleman who sadly left us last November. Our City Councillor, Tom Davies, who died very suddenly, has been missed very much. Tom was our Councillor for 12 years and a local policeman before that, and was very well known, liked and respected in the village. Tom rarely missed a meeting of the Parish Council and was always keen to take up any issues on our behalf. He was a very genuine and down to earth man, and a good friend to many. In tribute to Tom we had placed a new bench next to the Village Hall, facing the road; the inscription - suggested by Tom's family – read; "*Don't just sit there, do something useful*". The Chairman said we should probably adopt this as our mantra!

Councillor Mrs Eileen Murray then gave a vote of thanks to the Chairman for all her hard work and commitment she had given to the Parish Council over the last year and this was seconded by Councillor Peter Burton.

Councillor Neil Cartwright took the opportunity to say that the Parish Council did a good job and was highly regarded, and he thought the bench for Tom was a lovely gesture and it was very much appreciated.

4. Matters raised by the Electors

There were no matters raised by the Electors but the Chairman took the opportunity to mention the trees that had been planted on the village green which formed part of the proposed landscaping plan by Preston City Council. Reference was also made to the

huge sign that had appeared in a garden on Preston Road, Grimsargh advertising the Wainhomes Development. The Parish Council had previously received complaints about unofficial signs and banners in the village and this large sign was another example of a sign that had not got planning permission. Councillor Mrs Eileen Murray said she would go and speak to Wainhomes about this sign.

Councillor Peter Burton mentioned that a local resident on The Hills had been in touch with the Environment Agency about the odour emanating from a site on the industrial estate next to The Hills, and that the Environment Agency said they would come and discuss this issue with the resident. Councillor Terry Cryer agreed to go round to the resident's house when the meeting with the Environment Agency was taking place.

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

Chairman Grimsargh Parish Council