

Grimsargh Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 1 February, 2024 at Grimsargh Village Hall at 7.30pm.

Present:- Councillor Peter Burton (Chairman); Councillor Trevor Haines (Vice-Chairman); Councillor Mrs Joyce Chessell; Councillor David Hindle; Councillor Mrs Agustina Oliver; Councillor Simon Rusling and Councillor Mrs Jayne Woollam.

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

95. (23/24) Apologies for Absence/Chairman's Health & Safety announcements

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs Lynda Cryer and Councillor Terry Cryer.

The Chairman, Councillor Peter Burton welcomed everyone to the meeting and briefed the Parish Council on possible health and safety considerations for this evening's meeting.

96. (23/24) Declarations of Interest

Councillor David Hindle declared a prejudicial interest in Item 7, Grimsargh Wetlands as Chairman of Grimsargh Wetlands Trust.

Councillor Mrs Jayne Woollam declared a prejudicial interest in Item 7, Grimsargh Wetlands as Secretary to Grimsargh Wetlands Trust.

Councillor Stephen Whittam (Preston City Council) also declared a prejudicial interest in Item 7, Grimsargh Wetlands as a Trustee on Grimsargh Wetlands Trust.

97. (23/24) Minutes of the Last Meeting

Resolved

That the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 11th January 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

98. (23/24) Adjournment for Public Participation

The Chairman Councillor Peter Burton adjourned the meeting for public participation and asked if anyone had anything to raise under this item.

Councillor Stephen Whittam said that he had reported the defective lights on the Village Green and the replacement parts were being ordered, he would chase the Parks Department again to see when they were being repaired.

He also informed the Parish Council that the pedestrian/cycle ginnel from the new Storey Homes estate to Elston Lane was being used as a "rat run" by vehicles. He had spoken to a representative at Storey Homes and they would look at putting a

bollard or small barrier there to prevent vehicles driving through a pedestrian/cycle access.

Councillor Mrs Joyce Chessell highlighted a scheme being run by Essex County Council regarding slow down SIDS and they offered help to all Parish Councils within their County. It was noted that the Parish Council were awaiting a response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, County Councillor Rupert Swarbrick regarding the issues on Whittingham Lane and that this would be discussed further at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

The Chairman, Councillor Peter Burton reported that Recycling Lives had changed ownership to a Company based in Singapore and the Parish Council would keep an eye on this especially as the site had been subject to a number of issues, including fires, in the past.

Councillor Mrs Jayne Woollam asked about the missing sign on the Village Green, the Clerk said she would chase this with Preston City Council.

Councillor Mrs Jayne Woollam said that she had circulated a picture of a sign from John Baron. It was felt that John should approach Preston City Council to see if they were happy for a similar sign on Grimsargh Village Green, as they owned the land.

Councillor Mrs Jayne Woollam said that she had attended a meeting on the Lancashire Local Nature Strategy with Councillor David Hindle and this covered mapping all areas of green spaces and wildlife areas in Lancashire. This was being done in conjunction with UCLAN with the aim of promoting our green spaces.

Councillor Mrs Agustina Oliver asked about the tender for the work on the Redrow pond and fencing. The Clerk said she would ask for an update. She also asked about the bench on Old Railway Walk and the Clerk confirmed that the Lengthsman had taken this away for repair/restoration.

It was noted that a resident had asked about changing the gate to pedestrian access at Ribblesdale Drive where it leads to Brindle Place. The Clerk would contact Preston City Council about this.

The Chairman, Councillor Peter Burton then reconvened the meeting.

99. (23/24) Town and Country Planning Act, 1990

There were no new Planning Applications for discussion at the meeting.

100. (23/24) Biodiversity Grant

It was noted that the Wetlands Trust had discussed ideas for using the Biodiversity Grant of £300. However, the Sand Martin Colony would be expensive and the Wetlands Trust would have to fund the remainder of the project. The Wetlands Trust would discuss this again at their next meeting and report back to the March meeting of the Parish Council.

Resolved

That the Wetlands Trust are asked to consider projects to spend the £300 Biodiversity Grant at their next meeting and report back to the Parish Council in March.

101. (23/24) Grimsargh Wetlands

Councillor David Hindle as Chairman of Grimsargh Wetlands Trust said that there were some very special birds on the Wetlands including some that were declining in numbers, however concerns had been raised regarding predation and in particular foxes attacking the nesting birds. The Wetlands Trust had agreed that something needed to be done and were recommending that an electric fence is placed around the big island on the island lake. It was noted that this would be a low voltage electric fence which would cause a minor shock to foxes and other animals and was a deterrent and would provide protection to the nesting birds. There was currently no access for volunteers or the public to the big island and this would continue. Councillor David Hindle advised that he would need to apply to Natural England for a licence to disturb schedule one listed birds to enable these works to be undertaken. Councillor David Hindle assured the Parish Council that any necessary paperwork including Risk Assessments would be put in place as appropriate. The Clerk advised that the Wetlands Trust may need to include this on their insurance.

Councillor Mrs Jayne Woollam as Secretary to Grimsargh Wetlands Trust informed the Parish Council that the Trust were pulling together a bid to the Lancashire Environmental Fund (LEF) for replacement fencing, handrails and gates and as part of the bid they needed support from the Parish Council to third party funding as in previous bids. The Wetlands Trust was currently obtaining costs for the works which was quite extensive due to the amount of fencing required and the estimated cost of the third party funding would be around £6,000. A letter would also be required from the Parish Council as the landowner to agree to the works taking place and a further letter to give approval as a third party funder would also be needed. Both letters would be required by 28th March 2024. It was noted that the LEF panel would meet in July and if successful the works would start in October, subject to contractor availability and the weather.

Councillor Mrs Jayne Woollam also asked the Parish Council about the money that had been ringfenced to the Wetlands Trust as this had been raised at their recent Trust meeting. She explained that the Trust were concerned about the cost of projects and also the costs associated with insurance for the site, as the insurance now cost around £4k per annum. The Chairman, Councillor Peter Burton explained that the Wetlands Trust could request monies from the Parish Council at any time by writing to the Clerk, and then approved by the Parish Council at their next available meeting. The current amount still available was an estimated £133,000.

Councillor Mrs Jayne Woollam also informed the Parish Council that Andy Small's memorial had been agreed by the Wetlands Trust and that they were waiting for the family to get in touch regarding putting the memorial in place.

Councillor David Hindle, Councillor Mrs Jayne Woollam and Councillor Stephen Whittam (Preston City Council) then left the meeting while the Parish Council discussed the requests outlined above.

A discussion was held about the electric fencing, and if it would cause injury to the nesting birds. It was noted that the fence was of small height with a low voltage current that was designed to deter and not to kill any animal. The Parish Council agreed to support the Wetlands Trust to install an electric fence on the big island on the island lake. This was unanimously agreed.

With regard to the LEF bid and the request for the Parish Council to approve the application as the landowner and to support the application as the third party funder, this was unanimously agreed.

Resolved

i) That the Parish Council agree to support the Wetlands Trust to install an electric fence on the big island on the island lake.

ii) That the Parish Council also agrees to support the bid to LEF as outlined above, both as the landowner and as the third party funder.

Councillor David Hindle, Councillor Mrs Jayne Woollam and Councillor Stephen Whittam (Preston City Council) returned to the meeting.

102. (23/24) Best Kept Village Competition

The Parish Council gave consideration to entering the Best Kept Village Competition for 2024 at a cost of £25.00. This was unanimously agreed by the Parish Council.

Resolved

That approval is given to entering the Best Kept Village Competition for 2024 at a cost of £25.00.

103. (23/24) Financial Rules and Regulations

The Parish Council reviewed their current Financial Rules and Regulations. The Clerk had suggested one amendment to section 2.2 relating to the budget timescales. The Parish Council unanimously agreed the Financial Rules and Regulations including the amendment to section 2.2 and a copy is presented in the Minute Book.

Resolved

That the updated Financial Rules and Regulations as now presented are approved by the Parish Council, and that a copy is placed in the Minute Book.

104. (23/24) Financial Risk Assessment

The Parish Council gave consideration to the Financial Risk Assessment. The Clerk advised that there were no recommendations for any changes to the Risk Assessment. The Parish Council unanimously agreed the Financial Risk Assessment and a copy is presented in the Minute Book.

Resolved

That the Financial Risk Assessment as now presented is approved by the Parish Council, and that a copy is placed in the Minute Book.

105. (23/24) Financial Matters and banking

It was noted that we currently had an estimated £200,162.84 in the Nat West bank as at 5 January 2024.

It was also noted that the following invoices had been paid since last meeting: -

Sue Whittam, Clerk's Salary January new rate of £17.16 per hour as per LALC pay scales and back dated to 1st April 2023 £1,882.67.

Preston City Council for newsletter design and printing - £736.20 (Cheque no 1250)

We had also paid Nest pension Clerk £48.88 on 7 December and 4 January - direct debits. We had been advised that bank charges up to 31 December 2023 were £3.50.

Resolved

1) The following invoices were approved for payment: -

- i) Sue Whittam, Clerk's Salary February £1333.15.
- ii) Adam Cooper Contractor – to be confirmed at the next meeting.

2) Appointment of Internal Auditor

The Parish Council agreed to the appointment of Donna Kidd as the Internal Auditor at a cost of £70 (same as last year).

106. (23/24) Clerk's report – for information only

The Clerk reminded the Parish Council that our Neighbourhood Planning Workshop would be held on Thursday 29th February between 10 am – 12 noon at the village hall.

The Clerk further reminded the Parish Council that we needed to find a new location for the defibrillator collected from Grimsargh St Michael's School.

107. (23/24) Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next Parish Council meeting would be held on Thursday 7th March 2024 at 7.30 pm at Grimsargh Village Hall.