



WOODPLUMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

MEETING HELD IN THE LIBRARY,
WOODPLUMPTON PRIMARY SCHOOL
WOODPLUMPTON ROAD, PRESTON

ON MONDAY 15TH January 2024 at 7.00pm

PRESENT	Chairman	Matthew Greaves		
	Councillors:	Pauline Bamber	Paul Entwistle	Maureen Entwistle
		John Green	Barry Probin	Martin Stewart
		Daniel Guise		
		Mr D Mills (Parish Clerk)		
		Mrs J Buttle (Retiring Parish Clerk)		

11 members of the public as detailed on the attendance log.

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES of the Parish Council Meeting held on 20th Nov 2023.

MIN 23/24.106 Members **resolved** to approve the Minutes as a true record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS / WRITTEN DISPENSATIONS

As the level of the Parish Council Precept was to be set at the meeting it was confirmed that all Members had signed a Dispensation Request Form to allow them to participate in the discussion around the setting of the Precept.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

MIN 23/24.107 It was **resolved** that the meeting be adjourned for public participation.

During 2023 a scheme traffic calming and road junction changes has been implemented in and around Woodplumpton village. The scheme includes the closure of Whittle Hill at it's junction with Newsham Hall Lane and the reconfiguration of the junction between Woodplumpton Road and Newsham Hall Lane. Over a long period of time (around 5 years) Woodplumpton Parish Council has worked with Lancashire County Council (LCC) to implement a scheme that would improve safety in the village by both reducing the speed and quantity of traffic.

Woodplumpton Parish Council provided the requirements from the scheme, in terms of improved road safety and the funding for implementation. The layout of the final scheme, safety assessments and implementation were completed by LCC. The implementation was communicated via publication of the Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and inclusion in the Parish Newsletter, Parish Website and Parish Notice Boards.

LCC have confirmed that a Stage 2 Road Safety Audit was completed before implementation and that since implementation they have no safety concerns about the junction, with no collisions on record. They therefore would not propose any changes to the layout of the junction. With respect to damage to the grass verge on the eastern side of the junction between Woodplumpton Road and Newsham Hall Lane LCC suggested levelling and re-seeding, rather than any changes to the layout.

Residents expressed concerns that the junction between Newsham Hall Lane and Woodplumpton Road is unsafe. The view for traffic travelling east on Newsham Hall Lane is restricted by a hedge at the left side of the road and traffic travelling west would need to move onto the opposite side of the road to negotiate the sharp turn into Woodplumpton Road. This leads to the possibility of a head on collision on Newsham Hall Lane. The residents believed that this position is exacerbated by the closure of Whittle Hill, which requires traffic travelling west on Newsham Hall Lane to use the Woodplumpton Road junction in order to enter the village. The hedge is on private property and the owner has no wish for it to be replaced with a fence to improve visibility.

Residents had undertaken surveys and concluded that in a large lorry it is not possible when

15th January 2024 - Minutes

travelling West on Newsham Hall lane to negotiate the junction with Woodplumpton Road without travelling on the opposing side of the road on both Newsham Hall Lane and Woodplumpton Road.

Residents offered to work with Cllr Paul Entwistle to carry out some assessment of the junction between Woodplumpton Road and Newsham Hall Lane, the findings from which could be provided to LCC Highways.

Residents were requested to report any issues or concerns to the police/LCC Highways, as a large number of concerns promotes a faster response.

5. NEWSHAM HALL / WOODPLUMPTON ROAD JUNCTION

MIN 23/24.108 Members **resolved** to undertake the following Actions:

1. To write to LCC Highways to confirm the type of safety assessment that was undertaken and to request a copy of the assessment.
2. To ask LCC Highways why they have no concerns around the layout of the junction even though it is causing concern for residents.
3. Undertake some assessment of the junction and report the findings to LCC Highways.

6. NEW PARISH CLERK APPOINTMENT

Mrs Buttle the existing clerk announced plans to retire in September and Members approved a recruitment process under MIN 23/24.75. The new Clerk Mr Mills was appointed at an interview on 5th Dec 2023.

As Mrs Buttle's period of notice concluded in December, Mr Mills was therefore offered the role from 1st Jan 2024, with Terms and Conditions of Appointment to be approved by the Council at the January meeting.

After a discussion around the draft contract which follows the NALC standard pro-forma the Members agreed as follows.

MIN 23/24.109 Members **resolved** that the Contract is acceptable and should be signed by the Chairman.

The Clerk has full access to the website and clerk@woodplumpton email address, which has been updated to reflect his contact details. Access to this email address and ability to update the website will now be switched off for Mrs Buttle.

Mrs Buttle has met weekly with the Clerk to transfer electronic files / paper copies and to explain the procedures and requirements of the role. It is expected that the transfer will be completed by the end of January. After that, the Clerk and Mrs Buttle will work together on any historic or outstanding issues if required. Mrs Buttle will complete the Audit and financial year end.

MIN 23/24.110 Members **resolved** that Mrs Buttle can continue to support the Council until April and will invoice the Council for her support at her current hourly rate of pay.

7. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT AND RECEIPTS – 31 Dec 2023

MIN 23/24.111 Members **resolved** to note and approve the following accounts already paid in accordance with Standing Order 15 (b) xii.

Lengthsman weeks 32 - 35	£1216.00	BACs	Ref 91
Clerk Salary Dec	£1316.14	BACs	Ref 92
PAYE	£132.75	BACs	Ref 93
Employer National Insurance	£100.68	BACs	Ref 94
LCC Gradients (CIL)	£11,216.40	BACs	Ref 95
Pension Dec	£67.69	BACs	Ref 96

7. FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND REVIEW OF 3rd QUARTER ACCOUNTS Apr - Dec 2023

The members discussed the financial statements and agreed the figures aligned with the current bank balances on the spreadsheet.

2023/24 FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1st April – 31st Dec 2023

The Chairman verified that the financial accounts and bank statements had been reconciled

REVIEW OF 3rd QUARTER ACCOUNTS 2023 / 2024

MIN 23/24.112 Members noted and **RESOLVED** to approve the 3rd quarter accounts.

8. UNITY BANK AND THE SIGNING OF MANDATES TO ADD THE NEW CLERK

The current banking arrangements do not meet the needs of the Council going forward as updates to arrangements are cumbersome and dual signing is not possible. A far more flexible service, which is used by many other Parish Councils is provided by Unity Trust Bank. Unity Trust Charges £6 per month and £0.15 per transaction on a zero interest account, which will result in an annual cost of around £100. This cost can be offset by keeping only a small balance in the current account and a larger balance in an associated deposit account, earning interest at 2.75%, which would provide an interest income of just over £2,000 per annum on an average balance of £75,000.

MIN 23/24.113 Members noted and **RESOLVED** that the bank accounts should be moved to Unity Trust Bank, with a Dual Signature arrangement.

The Council also invests CIL monies in the CCLA account. Any changes, including investments, withdrawals or alterations to the account holder's details, must be authorised by a mandate signed by 2 authorised Councillors.

MIN 23/24.114 Members noted and **RESOLVED** that the authorized signatories on the CCLA account can sign the mandate to update the Clerk's contact and correspondence address.

The Community Garden Account is with Barclays and Members are aware of the difficulties experienced in updating the mandate and recognising the existing account holders and the first statement is due in February. Once received the account can be balanced and the Annual Return to the Charity Commission can be completed. As this is an annual process it is suggested that Mrs Buttle completes this duty as part of the financial year end transfer. Once the paperwork has been completed and transferred, the Clerk will be advised and will make arrangements to update the correspondence mandate and transfer the account online.

MIN 23/24.115 Members **RESOLVED** that the above course of action with respect to the Community Garden Account with Barclays should be followed.

9. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS

The following payments for January are proposed.

Existing Clerk's Jan Salary & New Clerks Salary	TBA*	BACs
HMRC PAYE x 2	TBA*	BACs
Employer Nat Ins x 2	TBA*	BACs
Pension contributions x 2	TBA*	DD
Parish Lengthsman weeks 36 - 40	£1216.00	BACs
Purchase of bin bags	£19.20	BACs

*All of the salary commitments are changing in Jan 2024 due to new Clerk's appointment, changes to National Insurance rates and the requirement to close and set up pension accounts.

Furthermore, the HMRC software used to manage the above processes needs to be transferred to the new Clerk.

The Clerk is proposing to use the NEST pension scheme with Employer contributions set at the minimum level required by the Pensions Regulator.

MIN 23/24.116 Members **RESOLVED** to approve the proposed payments for January with amounts to be verified at the February Meeting, along with the use of the NEST pension scheme.

10. SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS MEMBERSHIP

Members were requested to fund the Clerk's membership of the SLCC which offers discounted training courses and webinars for Members including ILCA and CiLCA. SLCC Membership is based on the Clerk's salary. The current rate for 2024 is £188. As the previous Clerk worked for 2 Councils, the cost was discounted.

MIN 23/24.117 Members **RESOLVED** to approve the funding of the Clerk's membership of the SLCC.

11. 2024/25 BUDGET AND PRECEPT SUBMISSION

Under MIN 23/24.102 of the November meeting, Members resolved to approve a **draft** budget of **£52,555**. End of year expenditure estimates have since been increased to take account of the revised costs between now and the end of the financial year.

MIN 23/24.118 Members **RESOLVED** that despite some changes to the end of year expenditure estimates for 2023/4 the budget for 2024/5 would remain unchanged at **£52,555**.

The Precept is achieved by deducting the 2024/25 budget from the estimated 2024/25 income noting that CIL interest should be spent on CIL related expenses rather than revenue costs.

Reserves should also be assessed annually as part of the Audit regime and should be relevant to the Council's size, situation and prepared budget plans. The Practitioner's Guide *states the smaller the authority, the closer the figure may be to 12 months expenditure*.

After reviewing the spreadsheet for 2024/5 the Members resolved as follows:

MIN 23/24.119 Members **RESOLVED** that the Precept for 2024/5 should be set at **£48,065**, which should require no increase in the level of payment for residents.

12. MAINTENANCE ISSUES ON THE NEW ESTATES

Under **MIN 23/24.97** of the November meeting, it was resolved that the Lengthsman will use the additional 4hrs approved under MIN 22/172 to carry out litter picking and information gathering on the new estates. Photographic evidence was collected to illustrate the extent of the problem.

Members debated the following Motion.

"Given the substantial evidence of inadequate maintenance across new housing estates, as detailed by the Parish Lengthsman, and the responsibility falling on Developers / Land Management Companies, this motion seeks immediate and direct Council intervention. Residents' concerns have been inadequately addressed by these companies, leading to persistent issues.

The following specific actions are proposed

- 1. Database Creation: A councillor will be assigned to create a database identifying the responsible parties for each estate's maintenance.*
- 2. Research Enforcement Procedures: Investigate and establish the Council's enforcement options, including planning regulations and legal actions, against non-compliant parties.*
- 3. Maintenance Issue Identification: Residents are encouraged to report maintenance issues to the Clerk of the Council. The Parish Lengthsman will then verify these issues during his routine litter-picking inspections as well as any other issues identified independently.*

4. *Developer Contact: Formulate a protocol for promptly contacting Developers / Land Management Companies regarding maintenance issues, demanding timely action.*
5. *Follow-up and Enforcement: The Parish Lengthsman will re-check the reported issues in subsequent inspections to ensure compliance. Implement a follow-up system, including sending chaser letters if initial communications are unheeded. If issues remain unresolved within the agreed timeline, the Council will proceed with any available enforcement actions outlined in step 2. These steps are designed to ensure rigorous oversight and resolution of maintenance issues on the new housing estates and provide useful resources for other issues that may arise on the new developments.”*

There was uncertainty among the Members around taking actual enforcement action and the role of the Parish Council in this process as the contractual link is between the residents and the Land Management Companies. There was also concern around the role that the residents or groups of residents should play in the process. It was therefore resolved as follows:

MIN 23/24.120 Members **RESOLVED** that Councillor Green, with the assistance of the Clerk should undertake Actions 1 “Database Creation” and 2 “Research Enforcement Procedures”, then report back to the Council with a proposal for next steps which may include steps 3, 4 and 5 above.

13. PLANNING APPLICATIONS BEFORE COUNCIL

MIN 23/24.121 Members **RESOLVED** to approve the delegated comments made by the Clerk in respect of the December/January applications and to leave delegated responsibility for making comments on behalf of the Council with the Clerk, to be reviewed in May 2024.

14. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - REFERENDUM

The Referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan took place on the 11th January, with the plan being approved with 87% of the votes cast in favour. Members agreed that the Clerk should liaise with the City Council regarding the next steps, which should include tracking of compliance with the plan going forward.

MIN 23/24.122 Members **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should liaise with the City Council to discuss next steps regarding the Neighbourhood Plan

15. NEWSLETTER

MIN 23/24.123 Members **RESOLVED** that a newsletter should be drafted, when time allows, for issue in the early part of the New Year, including the following topics.

- Change of the Clerk’s details.
- Referendum result and what happens next.
- Coffee morning at Woodplumpton Parish Rooms (MIN 23/24.43)
- Update on CIL items.
- Update on actions relating to the new estates (litter picking and the next steps).
- Update on Newsham Hall Road/Woodplumpton Road traffic measures.

16. UPDATE ON ISSUES FOR INFORMATION

Standards Complaint – As reported at the November meeting, the City Council’s Monitoring Officer received a complaint that a Member used the Cllr title in a capacity not related to Woodplumpton Parish Council. The action was considered to be misleading and as such the Councillors integrity was called into question which constituted a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members. The City Council does not propose to progress the complaint, however all Members are reminded that they should only use the title “Cllr” when representing Woodplumpton Parish Council, or carrying out business on behalf of the Parish Council.

Cllr Martin Stewart raised a concern that no update has been provided from the Environment Agency with regard to Ambrose Hall Farm.

17. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members agreed that the next meeting will be held on **Monday 12th Feb 2024** in the Parish Rooms
15th January 2024 - Minutes

attached to St Annes Church Woodplumpton. The revised date and location will be advertised via the website and agenda for the meeting.

MIN 23/24.124 Members **RESOLVED** to fund the cost of the hire of the room at £50 per meeting.

END