



WOODPLUMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING TO BE HELD IN
THE PARISH ROOMS, REAR OF ST ANNE'S
CHURCH WOODPLUMPTON ROAD, PRESTON
ON MONDAY 15th Jan 2024 at 7.00pm

1 APOLOGIES

Members are requested to note any given apologies.

2 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES of the Parish Council Meeting held on 20th Nov 2023.
The Chairman is required to sign the Minutes as a true record.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS / WRITTEN DISPENSATIONS

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any interests in respect of matters contained in the agenda. A Councillor with a disclosable pecuniary interest or any other interest, as set out in the Council's Code of Conduct, is subject to statutory restrictions on the right to participate and vote on that matter – see Standing Order 2020 (13)

Members have a disclosable, pecuniary interest in setting the Precept (Agenda Item 11) however, subject to Members disclosing the interest at the meeting, Members benefit from an exemption under paragraph 10(5)(vi) of the Code of Conduct.

Dispensation forms were signed at the May 2023 Annual Parish Council meeting and Members are required to disclose their interest.

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public wishing to raise matters in accordance with **Standing Order 2020 (3g & h)**, should raise them here. The length of the adjournment will be at the Chairman's discretion. Matters requiring a Council decision must be included as a specific Agenda item.

An invitation to attend has been sent to the Police, County and City Councillors.

Members have been forwarded a letter and an email regarding concerns about the Newsham Hall Lane / Woodplumpton Road junction following the closure of Whittle Hill. **Residents will be given an opportunity to speak on the issue at this point.**

Following any other items raised by the public, the meeting will be reconvened and any decision taken by the Council will be documented under the agenda item.

5 NEWSHAM HALL / WOODPLUMPTON ROAD JUNCTION

The 16th October Minutes confirm that LCC responded to the concerns raised regarding the Newsham Hall Lane / Woodplumpton Road junction. Members noted the Infrastructure Delivery Team's reply - in particular the statements that the turn is no tighter than before and the visibility from all approaches is unchanged. Based on the above replies and the reassurance that there has not been an increase in accidents or complaints from other HGV drivers or bus companies, Members resolved not to pursue the concerns under the traffic calming scheme. MIN 23/24.80

However, Members noted that the Infrastructure Delivery team suggested that the Parish Council could contact LCC Highways District Lead if they were concerned about pre-existing maintenance issues. Consequently, further to MIN 23/24.81 an email was sent to ask if a post and rail type fence could replace some of the Newsham Hall Lane hedge to improve visibility.

Following the closure of Whittle Hill in December, a further email attaching a photograph of the damaged verge and a request to reduce the grassed area of the verge was also sent to LCC Highways. A response has not yet been received.

Members are requested to consider the content of the forwarded email and letter, along with any other comments expressed under public participation and determine if any further actions are required by the Parish Council.

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. Progress was reported to Council at the Oct and Nov meetings and a new Clerk – Mr Mills – was appointed at an interview on the 5th Dec 2023.

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

At the end of December 2023, NALC released a revised Contract of Employment and after checking with LALC, Mr Mills was advised to commence his employment on the new version which has been checked by the existing Clerk. Mr Mills will present the document and will answer any questions.

Members are required to read and approve the attached Contract of Employment and authorise signature by the Chairman. Mr Mills will then commence his employment as Clerk to Woodplumpton Parish Council.

The Clerk has full access to the website which has been updated to reflect his contact details. Since Sept, Mrs Buttle used the clerk@woodplumpton email address to ensure that current correspondence is accessible. Her access to this email address will now be switched off.

Mrs Buttle has met weekly with the Clerk to transfer electronic files / paper copies and 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 has already offered to complete the Audit and financial year end and will invoice the Council for her support at her current rate of pay.

Members are requested to confirm the above arrangements.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT AND RECEIPTS – 31st Dec 2023

Members are requested 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 N Ins	£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 April – Dec 23

The Chairman is requested to verify that the financial accounts and bank statements have been reconciled.

Members are requested to consider the attached progress against budgeted items following the completion of the 3rd Quarter April – December 2023.

Mrs Buttle will explain the figures and script in red.

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

Due to the change in Clerk, the Council should review and change **all** of its passwords and logins including those relating to the bank accounts. Historically, this has been a cumbersome process and having spoken to LALC and many other Clerks, the Council is recommended to change the bank account to Unity Trust which specialises in Parish Council accounts and offers a dual signing authorisation. There is a monthly banking charge, however this can be financed from the bank interest.

Members are required to confirm that the Royal Bank of Scotland Account should be changed to Unity Trust with immediate effect.

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.

The authorised signatories are requested to sign the mandate to update the Clerk's contact and correspondence address.

The Community Garden Account is with Barclays and Members will be 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 is advised to make arrangements to update the correspondence mandate and transfer the account online.

Members are requested to approve the above.

9 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT AND RECEIPTS

Members are requested to approve the following accounts for payment.

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 need to be transferred to the new Clerk.

The Clerk is proposing to use the NEST pension scheme and Members are requested to approve this arrangement noting that the costs will be presented to the February meeting.

10 SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS MEMBERSHIP

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.

Members are requested to fund the Clerk's membership to the SLCC which offers discounted training courses and webinars for Members including ILCA and CiCLA.

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.

Members are requested to consider if any of the end of year estimates in red will have an impact on the approved draft budget.

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*.

Mrs Buttle has prepared a spreadsheet illustrating the predicted income, the approved budget and suggested Precept for 2024/25.

Members are required to consider the attached spreadsheet and agree a Precept for 2024/25.

12 LENGTHSMAN PROPOSAL

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 maintenance on the new estates. Photographic evidence will be collected to illustrate the extent of the problem, partly so that new bins can be requested and partly so that the Land Management Agencies can be approached to ask why they are not providing the service residents are paying for.

Further to the above resolution, Cllr Green has put forward 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.

Members are requested to consider the Motion and determine if a Working Group should be set up to include the Clerk, Lengthsman and nominated Council Members.

The Group will be required to agree who will take the tasks forward and the mechanism for reporting the findings to Council - noting that Working Groups do not have decision making powers. To assist with timescales, the Lengthsman's procedures and Contract details will be transferred to the Clerk by the end of January along with assets and insurance information.

13 PLANNING APPLICATIONS BEFORE COUNCIL

Members are requested to consider and approve the attached delegated comments for Dec and January. Applications can be viewed at www.preston.gov.uk

Members are also requested to consider if the Clerk should retain the delegated authority to comment on planning applications.

14 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - REFERENDUM

The Referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan will take place on the 11th January so the results will be known prior to the meeting. Mrs Buttle will process any questions or outstanding actions relating to the Referendum and will ensure the Consultant is advised of the outcome.

Members are requested to comment on the outcome and confirm that the Clerk should liaise with the City Council regarding the next steps. Members are reminded that the Referendum expense form should be submitted to the City Council – see email forwarded on the 8th January 2024.

15 NEWSLETTER

Due to Mrs Buttle's hospital admission, Members agreed by email that the December issue of the Newsletter should be postponed so a New Year issue seems appropriate. The suggested content includes

- 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 proposed Motion)

Members are requested to advise of any other issues.

16 UPDATE ON ISSUES FOR INFORMATION

CIL - The City Council have requested a discussion regarding '*the delivery and maintenance of the Linear Park planned for NW Preston*'. The Clerk, Cllr Bamber and Mrs Buttle will attend a meeting on the 19th January. Prior to then, the Clerk will pass all the CIL papers to the Clerk and will email a summary of the actions required to progress the 'quick hit list' to all Members.

Catforth Traffic Calming - LCC are yet to respond to the query regarding the Catforth invoice, consequently the CCLA transfer is still on hold and the Catforth invoice has not yet been paid. As the scheme is currently paused, the Clerk and Cllr Entwistle will liaise with LCC to progress the matter - after any revised costs have been reported to Council.

Councillor email addresses – Mrs Buttle has explained the position regarding Cllr identifiable email addresses to the Clerk and he will decide when it is appropriate to place the matter on an agenda.

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.

17 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members are requested to note that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on **Monday 19th February 2024** at 7.00 in the Parish Rooms. Unfortunately, due to pre-arranged holiday, the Clerk is not available and **Members are requested to confirm and advertise the new date.**

END