

Parbold Parish Council

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Under the provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020, and The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 this Meeting of the Parish Council took place at **7.30 pm on Friday 8th January 2021** by Zoom conferencing.

MINUTES

Present: Cllr Arnold (Chairman), Cllr Bithell (Vice Chairman), Cllr Blake, Cllr Gill, Cllr Holland, Cllr Stopford, Cllr Schaffel.

1. To record apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Butts and Cllr Carruthers.

2. To receive declarations of interest

None declared.

3. Public Participation:

Any item raised by a member of the public via email will be discussed at this point.

- **Parish Council asked to address concerns about the planting of a laurel hedgerow on the corner of Millfield following WLBC approval of planning application 2020/0395/FUL at 8 Mill Lane**

A number of complaints about a newly planted laurel hedge on the very edge of the road at the corner of Mill Lane and Millfield had been received. Full discussion of this at Item 8 Planning matters (below).

4. To ratify as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held 4th December 2020

The Minutes were accepted as a correct record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chairman in due course.

5. Alder Lane Issues:-

- **Fencing in disrepair - update on WLBC correspondence suggesting Environment Agency may be responsible for this**

The meeting noted that WLBC will ask the Environment Agency if they erected the fencing and if so, can they return to repair it please. As this fencing is to protect water course and drainage from the landfill site, it is not a parish council responsibility.

- **Concern that this has become an even more popular site for dog walking during Lockdown restrictions, encouraging unnecessary travel**

The increasing popularity of the site during Lockdown periods is giving local residents cause for concern. Notices to remind people that there is a Dog Order for the fields requiring dogs be kept on leash and not exercised on the playing fields. ‘Is Your Journey Really Necessary’ posters may be put onto the noticeboard.

6. To ratify accounts and authorise payment of accounts presented

18122020	RBS	Bank charges	d.d.	£4.90
27122020	E A Broad	salary	s.o.	£906.85
29122020	NEST Pension (£30.17 from parish, rest is employee contribution)			£102.59
10122020	A W Park	Refurbishment Bramble Way Noticeboard	2960	£521.00*
10122020	Whitehill Direct Provision or new headerboard		2961	174.00*
080121	B Rawsthorne grass cutting contract		2962	£160.00
080121	Wrightington Windows	Cleaning Village Hall	2963	£20.00
	<i>reduced amount from £25 due to cleaning only outside</i>			
080121	Argus Fire & Security VH CCTV annual maintenance		2964	£96.00*
080121	E A Broad – re-imburse for postage stamps		2965	£19.11

*contains VAT

The accounts were ratified and authorised for payment.

7. To decide any project for WLBC Capital Grant application

It was resolved to apply to WLBC for £3k, with £2k commitment from parish funds to have a total budget of £5k for a further new item of play equipment at Burnside Play Area.

A local playground contractor will be asked for advice but wooden equipment will be avoided due to higher ongoing maintenance costs.

8. To conclude budget for Financial Year 2020/21

The budget figures were accepted and it was resolved that the figure for precept will remain the same as last year’s figure.

Precept	=	£ 33,638.00
Council Tax Support Grant	=	£ 1,368.00
Concurrent Grant	=	£ 2,011.00
Total for year	=	£ 37,017.00

9. To note Planning and Planning Applications

The following application was noted with no comment.

Reference No: 2020/1109/NMA

Proposal: Non-material amendment to planning permission 2015/0441/COU -
Alterations to change existing side door to a window and external alterations.
Location: 6-8 Station Road Parbold Wigan Lancashire WN8 7NU

Approved Application permitting the incorporation of land into a garden area of a residential property at 8 Mill Lane on the corner of Millfield2020/0395/FUL at 8 Mill Lane, Parbold.

Following concerns raised by members of the public (see Item 3 above) the following letter was sent to Catherine Thomas, Development, Heritage & Environment Manager, at WLBC Planning Department:-

Parbold Parish Council has received a volume of complaints about the decision to permit a hedge rather than a wall under the above application.

When Parish Councillors considered the application in October there was no mention of hedging along here and an extension of the stone walls, characteristic of that side of Mill Lane, was proposed.

We now understand that the Conservation Officer suggested hedgerow alternative, which was accepted by the Planning Department, but this has presented issues. There will be a reduction in the visibility splay for vehicles leaving Millfield that a low stone wall wouldn't have raised. The choice to plant a laurel hedge has exacerbated this as it is evergreen and large and totally out of keeping with a conservation area. Surrounding residents are angered by the decision taken which challenges the integrity of the Mill Lane Conservation Area.

It seems obvious that the hedge has been planted far too close to the carriageway edge. Laurel is very vigorous, evergreen and in that position the hedge would require frequent maintenance to prevent it overhanging the highway. Almost certainly it would not be sufficiently well maintained, not least because the person doing the maintenance would have to stand in the carriageway on the bend at the entry to Millfield - a fairly unsafe position. Since it appears that there is a condition on the planning permission which governs the hedge, is it possible to have the hedge line repositioned and replaced with an indigenous species?

To summarise, other local residents are asking for a wall rather than a hedge, is this possible? We appreciate a hedge is a condition of the planning permission so could the position and variety be re-visited?

We seek your intervention and expertise to come up with a solution to this.

The following response was received:

Thank you for your email, Catherine Thomas has asked me to respond as I was the case officer for this application.

We have received a complaint in regard to the laurel hedge and the matter has already been referred to our enforcement team for investigation.

I can advise that we have not yet discharged the planning condition (3) which relates to landscaping. However as the approved plan shows a privet hedge not a laurel hedge the Council will require details of a privet hedge and its location as part of that condition. In the first instance the Council will request that the developer submits an application for the discharge of conditions for assessment.

In terms of impact on highway safety condition 4 limits the height of the hedgerow which provides appropriate safeguards in order to prevent any adverse impacts on visibility.

I hope the above answers your queries

Kind regards

Mrs Nicola Cook BA (Hons) MSc
Senior Planning Officer

The main thing that has surprised councillors is that they were never aware that a hedge was suggested for this site. It wasn't on the initial consultation. There would definitely have been objection to this because there are already complaints about the hedge nearby encroaching the pavement. A low wall, like the other homes in Mill Lane have, was not seen as a problem at all, as it would be at a fixed height reducing impact on driver's visibility splay exiting Millfield.

The Clerk was instructed to ask Mrs Cook if it is now too late to request a wall rather than a hedge? Also, crucially, once the hedgerow rather than a wall was introduced to the plans, were LCC Highways consulted as there is clear impact on highway safety now?

10. To apprise Members of WLBC response regarding overflowing public bins

The meeting noted that the public bins have been emptied this week, though the problem began in November. Close liaison with WLBC is necessary to ensure the parish council is aware of any operational difficulties so that they can respond to members of the public. Borough Councillors Blake and Whittington will assist when possible.

11. Councillors' agenda items for future meetings

Cllr Blake – a Member of the Public requested more assistance with access during cold weather with icy conditions on Broadmead and Burnside. There is only one grit bin serving the whole estate. It was agreed to ask LCC Highways to consider more grit bins for that estate.

Cllr Arnold - Additionally, on behalf of the residents, request that LCC Highways take a small gritter onto the estates to maintain access for the homes there. It is not acceptable to be told that funds are too low and only main throughfares will be cleared. Residents ought to be able to expect maintenance of their streets so that they can reach the major road network.

The Clerk was asked to point out that grit bins are for public highway and not for people's drives. Perhaps there could be signs on the grit bin to this effect and the issue be included in the next newsletter.

Cllr Schaffel – concern that there is a vacancy on the Council with three applicants awaiting a decision. The Parish Council determined it impracticable to decide between applicants without meeting them face-to-face. However, the pandemic continues and now even May elections are no longer certain. Add to the next agenda to decide if there is an alternative: socially-distanced meeting in village hall or arrange a Zoom meeting and use the poll system for voting.

Cllr Bithell – Can we please purchase another 12 litter-pickers?

12. Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press, leave the meeting during the consideration of the remaining items on the agenda. Any members of the public viewing the proceedings will now be removed from the Zoom meeting.

Unnecessary as no members of the public present.

13. Agree how to move forward with parish council website

It was agreed that the parish council needs a professionally run website from a company with experience of running parish council websites. Information from Easy Websites; parish councilwebsite.co.uk, and myparishcouncil.co.uk will be distributed and considered.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45 pm.

*Cllr Brian Arnold
Chairman*

5th February 2021