

Minutes of the meeting of Parbold Parish Council at 7.30pm on Friday 6th July 2012 at Parbold Women's Institute.

**Present: Cllr Bailey Chairman, Cllr Arnold Vice-Chairman, Cllr Bithell, Cllr Mrs Blake, Cllr Mrs Houlgrave, Cllr Mrs Wess (minute taker for the meeting)
Cllr Mrs Raju arrived at 20.05pm**

1. To record apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Mrs Butts and Mrs E A Broad clerk to the council

2. To receive declarations of Interest

The Chairman stated that as the new code of conduct had not yet been adopted, declarations should not be declared at this point.

3. To sign as a correct record minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2012

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting and were duly signed.

4. Public Participation:

The meeting will be adjourned for an appropriate time (four minutes maximum per speech) for members of the public to raise matters of concern or interest as notified to the Chairman.

There were no members of the public present.

5. To co-opt new member to fill vacancy created by resignation of councillor.

It was agreed that a cut off point of 20th July be set and if more than 2 candidates than a separate meeting be held to interview and co-opt. Otherwise to co-opt at the September meeting. All three candidates be sent Parbold Parish Council Standing orders and a copy of WLBC Code of Conduct prior to meeting.

6. Lancaster Lane Parking and Speeding Issues: report back from public meeting

It was noted that Our Lady & All Saints RC Primary School suffer from the problems rather than cause them. New 20mph signs are to be installed on Lancaster Lane, in the meantime other solutions will be looked into and a further meeting held in the Autumn. Parbold Douglas Church Academy are going to consult with parents with regards to extending the school day for KS2 pupils until 15.25pm.

7. To decide action on Lancaster Lane grass verges

West Lancashire Borough Council Environmental Services are now responsible for cutting the verges and have a contract to cut them three times a year. A meeting is to be arranged

with Lancashire County Council and West Lancashire Borough Council the clerk will notify councillors when date is known.

8. To decide whether to erect a gate across the alleyway at the back of the shops on The Common

After consultation with the fire officer it was agreed to defer for six months.

9. To consider application for up to £150 charitable donation for equipment for Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue Team.

It was agreed not to make a donation at this time, a named recorded vote was requested by Cllr Mrs Raju.

Against donation Cllr's Bailey, Arnold, Bithell, Cllr's Mrs Blake, Mrs Houlgrave, in favour Cllr Mrs Raju, Mrs Wess

10. The Common Car Park – Potholes – delegate action to the clerk

It was agreed to accept the quote from Lancashire County Council for a temporary repair until a more permanent covering can be completed.

11. To update Councillors on WLBC Capitol Grant Scheme.

The council are to receive a £500 grant and as agreed the Parish Council will match fund, it was agreed that two benches be purchased in recognition of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. One to be sited on the canal, the site for the second bench is to be decided.

12. Village Hall: Opportunity to raise any issues of concern to raise at August Liaison meeting

It was reported that the meeting held by Community Futures at Mere Sands Village Hall was very informative and that Parbold Community Association will continue to look into the possible benefits of Solar Panels and LED lighting.

13. Alder Lane

The Parish Council are to receive a grant of £10,000 from Grantscape towards the cost of re-surfacing the car park at Bramble Way. Whilst the work is in progress the storage containers will be moved to an area of the field that will not damage the present drainage system, a new drainage system will be needed for the car park.

It was suggested Lancashire County Council and West Lancashire Borough Council should be asked for assistance with the tender document process and with the possible need for a Project Manager.

The problem of parking on Bramble Way and Brookfield Avenue on Sunday 8th July was again reported and it was agreed that Shevington Sharks must comply with their licence agreement regarding traffic management.

The pot holes will be filled temporarily to help with parking problems.
There is no update at present regarding a changing room facility.

A license for use of the front field by Mr Powell will be drawn up and sent to councillors prior to discussion at the next meeting.

It was requested that the new goalposts be checked by a contractor.

14. To adopt Code of Conduct for Councillors and complete Declaration of Interest forms

The West Lancashire Borough Council Code of Conduct was adopted. It was agreed to change 'Borough' to 'Parbold Parish' in all instances on the declarations form. Cllr Mrs Raju asked for a named recorded voted on accepting the Code, in favour Cllr Bailey, Cllr Arnold, Cllr Bithell, Cllr Mrs Houlgrave, Cllr Mrs Blake, Abstention, Cllr's Mrs Raju and Wess.

15. To ratify accounts and authorise payment of accounts presented

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|--------|----------------|--|------|----------|
| 280612 | David Secrett | Cleaning & Gardening services | s.o. | £128.00 |
| 28061 | E A Broad | Salary | s.o. | £690.46 |
| 260612 | Lancs CTP | Training course 25 th July 2012 | 2237 | £25.00 |
| 260612 | Parbold WI | Room hire during May 2012 | 2238 | £47.00 |
| 260612 | UK Host 4 U | website costs | 2239 | £119.99* |
| 060712 | UK Host 4 U | website costs | 2240 | £47.99* |
| 060712 | Inland Revenue | tax and national insurance | 2241 | £67.60 |
| 060712 | Rawsthornes | Grass cutting | 2242 | £802.80* |
| 060712 | Parbold WI | Room hire | 2243 | £44.00 |
| 060712 | E A Broad | Spare keys cutting and sundries | 2244 | £15.24 |

*VAT included

The accounts presented were authorised for payment.

16. To receive response from Royal Bank of Scotland bank manager regarding Santander.

The transfer to Santander is not yet complete and it was agreed that the cheque account remain at RBS and to look for another savings account with higher interest.

ITEM 17

ACCOUNTING

I note that, despite previous recommendations, a dual system of computerised and manual ledger accounting is still maintained. There would appear to be no point in this, merely increasing the work of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and increasing the risk of errors. I would urge the Council to adopt a single system immediately upon the recommendation of the RFO.

It was agreed that electronic files only will be kept with a back up done monthly with a copy sent to the Chairman.

It was noted that a "Balance Sheet" was included in the accounts; such a document does not have any place in Cash Accounting and is meaningless; it is simply the product of Accrual Accounting. For this reason accrued debtors such as VAT should not be shown. The only year-end documents required are an Income and Expenditure account and a full Bank reconciliation

Agreed with auditor manual system to cease

Noted – VAT will cease to be shown. However, manual and Excel sheets will be run together as a check upon each other.

AGENDA

The practice of having an Agenda item of "*Urgent Business at the discretion of the Chairman*" is only permissible at meetings of Principal Authorities and should be ceased.

Noted and changed already

MINUTES

It was noted that both Chairman and Clerk sign Minutes. The Chairman alone should sign, not in his own capacity but to signify the Council's passing of a Resolution approving the Minutes as an accurate legal record.

The verbatim reporting of words used in meeting by Members or members of the public must be avoided as the truthfulness or otherwise of statements made cannot be verified. The Council could be liable for reproducing inaccurate statements made in meetings.

Noted and changed already

COMMITTEES

It was noted that the Clerk was appointed to various Committees; this is not legal as only Councillors can be voted to serve on Committees. Committees can of course subsequently co-opt non-voting persons to their number.

Clerk attends meetings but in her role as clerk only.

It was also noted that pursuant to last year's audit "*Cllr Bithell agreed to review bank reconciliations*". Matters cannot be delegated to individual Councillors and all decisions should be by Resolution of the Council. In this case it is recommended that the review be undertaken by a Finance Committee as part of the Council's on-going Internal Audit of itself.

Whilst agreed that the finance committee will review bank reconciliations, Council remains happy that individuals take the time to review first.

PROPOSITIONS & VOTING

It was noted that Councillors' names were used extensively as Proposers and Seconders. Names (*unless a named vote is requested*) and verbatim detail should be avoided in Minutes; recording of abstentions is also undesirable as such are failures to vote. Best practice is to record the decision only with Councillors subsequently conforming to the concept of collective responsibility.

Noted and changed already

BALANCES

Cash balances carried forward from one year to the next should be against specific works or purchases and not generalities. The high balances at the end of the year in question and the previous two years has resulted in the Council being significantly under insured against the recommended levels for Fidelity Guarantee. Recommended Fidelity Cover is the year-end balance plus 50% of Precept.

Cash balances are listed on the excel sheets at the bottom of the page with budget amounts at the top of the page (Auditor missed them because he looked first at manual system) so they are against specific items, not generalities.

Fidelity Guarantee takes into account high balances are value is £125,000. Under rules stated above perhaps cover of £140,000 could be considered but would incur higher premium. Three insurance companies considered this and two stated that the amount of fidelity guarantee was already raised and was sufficient so we are not under-insured. It would be preferable for the council to spend the money collected in precept to keep the reserves lower rather than increasing reserve and paying higher premium to protect them. Clerk to check this further

RESERVES

The amount of Reserves carried by the Council appears to be a "remainder" figure after calculating all receipts and expenditure. There should be a specific "Reserves Policy" and this figure included in Expenditure; the recommended level is 50% of precept.

Recommended level of reserve is £15,000. Currently we have £60,000 set aside for Alder Lane but with approximately £40,000 "remainder" figure rather than £15,000.

Agree with auditor

STANDING ORDERS

SO 62(a) - It is recommended that the amount specified in Standing Orders (£250) requiring three tenders be reviewed and increased to at least £1,000.

Resolution: That up to £1,000 be authorised by the Clerk and Chairman together, £1,000 - £5,000 – require three quotations for comparison and over £5,000 – require tender process as described in Standing Orders.

SO 46(b) - The Clerk should be authorised to carry out Emergency work up to an agreed value to cover Health and Safety issues without reference to the Council. The Council could be regarded as negligent if a system is not in place to deal with such urgent matters.

Resolution: *A Standing Order be inserted to read - Where it is necessary to make a payment before it has been authorised by the Council, such payment, of up to £500, shall be certified as to its correctness and urgency by the Clerk.*

CHEQUES – Whilst last year’s Internal Audit suggested that the Clerk should not be a signatory on cheques, this should be a matter for the Clerk to decide as being the Responsible Officer she should have in place such procedures as she thinks necessary providing these are not in contravention of the law.

Cheques need to be signed by two councillors and myself under the current mandate. There are only three councillors now on the mandate (and one is leaving in August). It is impracticable to have only Councillors sign because there are too few willing to do so.
Agreed

CO-OPTIONS – It is recommended that a Standing Order is put in place as to the procedure to be adopted for the filling of Casual Vacancies.

May I propose the following procedure be adopted and added to Standing Orders. It mostly closely describes the way co-options have been dealt with in the past:

Proposed Co-Option Procedure:

When a Casual Vacancy occurs within the Council as a result of a Member’s resignation, death or disqualification, the Council shall, but not within the last six months of a Council’s term, at the earliest opportunity pass a Resolution to formally declare a Vacancy. The vacancy must then be publicly notified in the usual manner and the Returning Officer at the District Council notified. If a Poll is not claimed in the prescribed manner, the Council will consider nominee(s) put forward and may conduct interview(s) with the nominee(s).

Where more than 2 persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. Any tie may be settled by the Chairman’s casting vote.

In considering nominees, Members shall not have regard to the nominees’ age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religious beliefs or ethnic origin.
Agreed

GRATUITY

Unless a contractual liability exists (*which I am given to believe does not*) The “*Local Government (Discretionary Payments) Regulations 2011*” which came into force on 16 January 2012 prevent the Council paying any Gratuity. This item should be removed from the budget. Council should be aware of the provisions of “*The Pensions Act 2008*” which will require the Council to join or set up a qualifying scheme in 2015.

Set aside accrued amount for a future pension scheme, defer until September
It was noted that the last page of the report was missing re Village Hall, it was agreed to look further into insurance and also to ask the auditor where exactly it states in law regarding Land Registration.

18. Quality Parish Council – Outstanding Issues

Defer until September

19. To note Planning Applications

2012/0697/FUL - No objections

20. Update on Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Project

This is a work in progress but it has been requested that the post next to the stone be removed, all agreed.

21. Update on Mill Leat drainage work

The project has not yet been signed off by WLBC and the kick about area has been re-seeded. A plastic chair has been thrown into the brook at the back of Station Road and debris is building up behind it. Cllr Mrs Wess has contacted WLBC who said it would be cleared by the Rangers.

22. Update on WLBC cctv work from Cllr Mrs Blake

The present camera works well in a fixed position but when the camera moves the picture is very poor. It was reported that the camera will be upgraded.

23. To determine representations at forthcoming meetings

PC/PCA Liaison meeting August

24. Councillors’ agenda item for next meeting

Festival on Alder Lane 2013 Insurance – Cllr Mrs Wess
Weeding Passageway to Fairhurst Drive – Cllr Mrs Wess
Hedges overgrown onto pavements – Cllr Mrs Wess
WLBC cctv - Cllr Mrs Blake

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 21.50pm.

Chairman: Cllr R M Bailey

Date: 7th September 2012