



## Grindleton Parish Council

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### Minutes of the meeting of Grindleton Parish Council on **Tuesday 2 January 2024** at the Pavilion, Grindleton.

Members present:	Parish Cllr Lorraine Halley (Chair) Parish Cllr Glenn Wheeler (Vice Chair) Parish Cllr Paul Atkinson Parish Cllr Tony Bramwell Parish Cllr Chris Brennan Parish Cllr Megan Haslam Parish Cllr Susan Walsh
Apologies for absence:	Borough Cllr Kevin Horkin MBE (RVBC)
Clerk present:	Andrew Glover
Members of the public present:	Sally Hutchinson and Rachel Wolfenden (for minute item 10a)

1.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  a) Standing orders suspended  Re minute item 15a below, Parish Cllr Atkinson declared an Other Registrable Interest as he had been a former employee of Bowland High School.  Re minute 19a below, the Chair declared an Other Registrable Interest as she was working closely with the B4RN initiative.  b) Standing orders resumed	
2.	<b>Public Participation</b>  None (other than for minute item 10a)	

<p>3.</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>i)</p>	<p><b>Minutes / matters arising</b></p> <p><u>Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5 December 2023</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2023 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.</p> <p>Proposed by: Cllr Atkinson Seconded by: Cllr Walsh</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> <b>The Chair was authorised to sign off the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2023, and it was agreed that the minutes of this meeting would be posted on the Parish Council website</b></p> <p><u>Actions taken / matters arising since the last meeting (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)</u></p> <p>The Clerk had compiled a list of actions for members to note / update briefly on progress since the last meeting.</p> <p>Subject to a guillotine of 30 minutes, members gave verbal updates on their respective actions. These were captured on the list retained by the Clerk.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>5.</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p>	<p><b>Overview of financial position</b></p> <p><u>Monthly accounts – December 2023</u></p> <p>The Clerk presented details of income and expenditure for the month of December 2023 for approval by the Parish Council and signing-off by the acting Chair.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> <b>That the record for December 2023 as presented would be signed off</b></p> <p><u>Budget monitoring – Q3</u></p> <p>The Clerk presented details of the quarterly budget monitoring exercise for Q3 2023/24. Key points arising from this were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• income was well above target, with over £11k brought in against an expected £9.7k. This was largely due to the receipt of additional grant funding (eg RVBC had provided Concurrent Functions funding at £268 above budget; LCC had provided £800 for PROWs and biodiversity; and RVBC had provided £95 for Xmas lights); and</li> <li>• the main budget discrepancies continued to relate to staff costs. With regard to the Lengthsman, spend in Q3 had fallen (in line with seasonal expectations) but remained £660 above budget. It was hoped that limited spend in Q4 would bring this further back into line. While the</li> </ul>	

	<p>Clerk's salary for Q3 was below budget, it did not include a claim for December 2023 and remained higher than scheduled overall. As an observation, it appeared that the move to monthly meetings had in fact led to increased salary costs, which may need to be factored into the draft budget for 2024/25; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some unanticipated spend had also been incurred, eg for replacement defibrillator batteries.</li> </ul> <p>Assets (excluding those held by the UT Bank) at the end of Q3 were approximately £7k.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b>  <b>Members agreed to approve the quarterly budget monitoring exercise for Q3 2023/24</b></p> <p>c) <u>Shares held by Equiniti</u></p> <p>At the conclusion of the December meeting, the Clerk had taken possession of historic documentation which appeared to indicate that the Parish Council may own a small number of shares in Lloyds Banking Group. Any such shareholding was managed on the Parish Council's behalf by Equiniti of West Sussex. The documentation suggested that the shares were held in the following names:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeffery Cowling</li> <li>• Frank Robinson</li> <li>• John Edward Pye</li> <li>• David Keith Hutton</li> </ul> <p>When the Clerk had telephoned Equiniti and explained the situation, he had been advised to submit a formal written letter outlining the nature of his enquiry; this had been sent on 8 December. A reply had subsequently been received from Equiniti, requiring written authorisation from the Parish Council for the Clerk to engage with Equiniti on this issue.</p> <p>With the prior agreement of the Chair, the Clerk had drafted a letter of authorisation which – with members' agreement – would be signed by the Chair and sent to Equiniti.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Members authorised the Chair to sign the draft letter to Equiniti on their behalf</b></li> <li>• <b>Clerk to send the letter and minute the discussion / decision accordingly</b></li> </ul>	<p>Chair Clerk</p>
<p>6. a) i)</p>	<p><b>Improving Parish Council effectiveness</b></p> <p><b>Shared document storage</b></p> <p><u>Presentation</u></p> <p>At the December meeting, Cllr Atkinson had offered to give a presentation on the possible use of Microsoft Office 365. Whilst members had then agreed to defer</p>	

	<p>the presentation (due to the significant numbers of members unable to be present), a discussion about the possible use of Microsoft 365 had taken place, with those members present initially enthusiastic about the concept.</p> <p>Cllr Atkinson now talked through the benefits to the Parish Council of adopting Microsoft 365, which would provide access to basic software as well as the Sharepoint storage facility. It was considered likely that a parish council would be classed as a “not for profit” organisation and could therefore use the Microsoft 365 facility free of charge.</p> <p>It was agreed that, subject to clarification about the cost implications, Cllr Atkinson would now progress this matter and report back to members in due course.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> <b>Cllr Atkinson to pursue</b></p> <p>ii) <u>External audit arrangements for 2023/24 - information from LALC</u></p> <p>Members had previously noted the pending requirement of the external auditors that each parish council should use an email address which it owned (eg <a href="mailto:clerk@grindleton.org.uk">clerk@grindleton.org.uk</a>) rather than one which did not belong to it (eg a Hotmail or gmail address).</p> <p>It was noted that – with the adoption of Microsoft 365 – a suitable email address could be acquired at minimal monthly cost. However, Cllr Wheeler indicated that as part of his earlier research into this matter he may have already acquired a suitable domain name.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> <b>Cllr Wheeler to revisit and liaise with Cllr Atkinson accordingly</b></p>	<p>PA</p> <p>GW /PA</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><b>Resurrection of LALC Area Committee for Ribble Valley</b></p> <p>At the December meeting, the Clerk had advised members that LALC had appointed a new Area Committee Support Officer, who now proposed to resurrect the dormant Ribble Valley Area Committee. Accordingly, the Parish Council had been invited to nominate a representative to sit on the Area Committee. Whilst Cllr Atkinson had indicated his provisional availability to attend a meeting in January, members were reluctant to commit to this additional workload without seeking further information from LALC about (i) the nature of the resurrected committee and (ii) whether its remit would overlap with that of the Parish Councils’ Liaison Committee.</p> <p>Following an email exchange with the Area Support Officer, the Clerk had ascertained that – in other areas of the county – the focus of the resurrected LALC area meetings was on those matters where the Parish / Town councils interact primarily with (i) Lancashire County Council (LCC) and (ii) any other relevant organisations. In contrast, the Parish Councils’ Liaison Committee tended to relate to matters in common with the Borough Council.</p>	

	<p>Members noted the above clarification, but felt it appropriate to adopt a watching brief on the work of the resurrected committee before committing to regular attendance.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b>  <b>Clerk to write to the LALC Area Support Officer and advise him of members' stance</b></p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p>
<p>8.</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>c)</p>	<p><b>Planning applications to be considered</b></p> <p>Planning Application No: 3/2023/0996  Proposal: erection of a side single storey kitchen and the refurbishment of the existing rear utility extension  Location: Fairhaven, Back Lane, Grindleton BB7 4RW</p> <p>The deadline for submission of any comments to RVBC was 2 January 2024. Details of the application (which related to a property within the Grindleton Conservation Area) had been circulated to members on 18 December 2023, and no adverse comments received. As a result, members noted that no submission had been made to RVBC with regard to this application.</p> <p><u>Planning Application No: 3/2023/0274 - Laneside Barn, Grindleton Road, Grindleton BB7 4QH</u></p> <p>On 4 August 2023, planning application 3/2023/0274 (submitted by Millbrook Development Ltd) had been rejected by RVBC. Representatives of Millbrook Development Ltd had indicated their intention to attend a future meeting of GPC, and it had been left that they would contact the Clerk in the new year to arrange this. However, members now noted that the property was back on sale with Atherton's estate agents.</p> <p><u>Borough Council – solar panels etc</u></p> <p>The Chair commented that she had recently sought to contact Cllr Horkin, with a view to establishing the Borough Council's views on solar panels and other environmental energy projects. (GPC had been receiving an increasing number of enquiries about regulations and acceptability of solar panels and air sourced heat pumps). However, it was understood that RVBC did not yet have a formal policy on this issue.</p>	
<p>9.</p> <p>a)</p>	<p><b>Haweswater Aqueduct Resilience Programme (HARP)</b></p> <p><u>Planning application 3/2021/0661</u></p> <p>No update</p>	

10.	<p><b>Footpaths</b></p> <p>a) <u>Log of footpath concerns</u></p> <p>The Clerk presented an updated version of the log, which now included a reference to 3 letters sent in December 2023 by the Parish Council. The letters had been sent to individual landowners and related to concerns about the condition of the Ribble Way (footpath FP0321057) and access to it. The problems identified had included defective gates; muddy points along the path; and the impact of erosion caused by the river.</p> <p>Whilst no response to two of the letters had been received by the time of the meeting, the third recipient (Ms Sally Hutchinson) had contacted the Clerk on the day of the meeting and provided him with photographs illustrating the condition of the riverbank. Following this conversation, Sally attended the meeting in the company of a family member (Rachel Wolfenden); collectively, Sally and Rachel were co-managers of a field through which the footpath passed. In a wide-ranging discussion, the following points were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Parish Council remained concerned at the condition of the Ribble Way as it passed through the co-managers’ field; due to erosion of the riverbank the path was now situated close to the edge of the river and posed a potential danger to the many people who walked this stretch of the Ribble Way;</li> <li>• in the opinion of the co-managers, the problem of riverbank erosion had been exacerbated over the past four decades (since the removal of a jetty upstream). It was claimed that the river now encroached some 40m inland from its historic course. Despite previous surveys carried out by the Environment Agency, no steps had been taken to prevent further erosion. With regard to possible shoring up of the riverbank, it was stated that Castle Cement had previously offered to provide a quantity of stone free of charge, but this still left the onus on the co-managers to move the stone into position. The co-managers now sought the support of the Parish Council in encouraging the Environment Agency to take measures to prevent further erosion of the northern bank. Members agreed to offer contact the Environment Agency in this regard, although it was noted that the co-managers may also wish to once again make their own representations to the Environment Agency on this matter;</li> </ul> <p><b>Resolved</b>  <b>Clerk to write to the Environment Agency and ask officers to reconsider the issue of erosion on the northern riverbank</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• members raised the issue of the (now defective) stile across the field boundary, which the co-managers pointed out they had replaced on previous occasions. The co-managers did not refuse to replace the stile once again, but pointed out that this could not be done immediately due to difficulty in accessing the site during the current wet weather; and</li> <li>• the co-managers indicated their possible intention to close the footpath to walkers on grounds of safety. Members later discussed this issue <i>in camera</i> and concluded that, given the importance of (i) public safety and (ii) preserving access to public rights of way, concerns about riverbank erosion and the condition of stiles etc should also be reported to LCC’s PROW team for officers there to take any action they considered appropriate.</li> </ul>	Clerk
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	<p><b>Resolved</b> <b>Clerk to report the above concerns to LCC PROW</b></p> <p>Members thanked the co-managers for their attendance and willingness to engage with the Parish Council on matters of real local significance.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> <b>Clerk to provide the co-managers with a written summary of the Parish Council's stance on the above</b></p> <p>Members also agreed that – given the lack of progress on other footpath issues drawn to the attention of local landowners – the Clerk should also now report these outstanding footpath-related matters to officers at LCC PROW team.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> <b>Clerk to report</b></p>	<p><b>Clerk</b></p> <p><b>Clerk</b></p> <p><b>Clerk</b></p>															
11.	<p><b>Other reports submitted to LCC</b></p> <p>The Chair confirmed that two other reports had been submitted to LCC:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>By</th> <th>Ref No</th> <th>Location</th> <th>Issue</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>13.12.23</td> <td>LH</td> <td>TPD 22548697 92</td> <td>Kayleigh Terrace, Main Street</td> <td>Trailing BT cable / trip hazard</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13.12.23</td> <td>LH</td> <td></td> <td>Grindleton Rd</td> <td>Flooding at field entrance during heavy rain</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>With regard to the second matter above (flooding on Grindleton Rd), LCC had subsequently indicated that its officers had been unable to consider the introduction of additional drainage at this time as there no effects to habitable areas had been identified in the vicinity. In addition, whilst there may not be any gully crates in the specific location detailed, there were two nearby which would prevent the road from completely flooding unless under exceptional conditions.</p> <p>Members noted the LCC response but agreed to continue to monitor the situation, ideally with the acquisition of photographs recording the extent to the problem.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b> <b>Any member in the vicinity at the relevant time to take photos as appropriate</b></p>	Date	By	Ref No	Location	Issue	13.12.23	LH	TPD 22548697 92	Kayleigh Terrace, Main Street	Trailing BT cable / trip hazard	13.12.23	LH		Grindleton Rd	Flooding at field entrance during heavy rain	<p><b>All</b></p>
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12.	<p><b>Lancashire Best Kept Village Competition 2023</b></p> <p>No update</p>																

13.	<p><b>Allotments</b></p> <p>a) <u>Request to erect shed on Plot 4</u></p> <p>At the December meeting, members had rejected the application from the tenant of Plot 4 for erection of a shed. A copy of the refusal letter sent to the applicant was presented for members' information.</p> <p>b) <u>General issues</u></p> <p>None, other than discussed above / below.</p> <p>c) <u>Rental fees 2024/25</u></p> <p>The Clerk reported that all 9 allotments were currently let, with letters for contract renewal to be sent to all tenants in the second half of January.</p> <p>Prior to then, members were invited to revisit the fees charged for use of an allotment. Members were reminded that, in 2023/24, rental fees had been raised by 25%; the combined income from all 9 allotments let now equated to £260.44.</p> <p>Offset against this, it was estimated that the following costs had been incurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• water charges (12 x £13.36, or £160);</li> <li>• nominal rent to RVBC - £10pa;</li> <li>• with regard to administration, the Clerk's fees were harder to assess but over the course of a year must have amounted to a minimum of 10 hours @ £15.21 = £152.10.</li> </ul> <p>In essence, the cost of providing the allotments for residents' benefit was likely to exceed £320. The Parish Council was therefore running the allotments at an annual loss of at least £50.</p> <p>The CPI inflation rate was 3.9 percent in November 2023, down from 4.6 percent in the previous month.</p> <p>Members considered that it was wrong for the cost of allotment provision to be subsidised by the Parish Council. A further rise in fees of 25% was therefore approved, this increase being spread across all tenancies pro rata and would ensure that the Parish Council provided allotments on a cost neutral basis.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b>  <b>Clerk to inform all tenants of the agreed 25% fee increase for 2024 tenancies when renewal letters were sent out in the second half of January 2024</b></p> <p>d) <u>Review of tenancy agreement</u></p> <p>Members had previously agreed that the Clerk (in conjunction with the lead member for allotments) would review the tenancy agreement currently in use. As a result, the Clerk had perused a number of tenancy agreements used by other parish councils, elements of which he had captured for possible adoption by GPC.</p>	Clerk
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	<p>With input from the Chair and lead member, a revised tenancy agreement was now put forward for members’ consideration. Key changes in this latest draft included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• formal reference to the use of a waiting list (Clause 9);</li> <li>• Clause 12b set out the need for plots to be at least 75% cultivated;</li> <li>• Clause 12l established the need to maintain standards for animal welfare;</li> <li>• Clause 12m revisited the rules governing the erection of sheds;</li> <li>• Clause 12s formalised the introduction of “green” / sustainable controls in the section on waste and pesticides;</li> <li>• Clause 13d referred to the site inspections and the annual tenants’ meeting; and</li> <li>• Clause 18 clarified rules around the termination process (should it be needed).</li> </ul> <p>Members were generally supportive of the draft but pointed out a number of aspects where clarification / amendment was required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in order to ensure that adequate notice for the agreed rent increase was given, the start date for the tenancy agreement (Clause 1) should be revised to 1 March;</li> <li>• Clauses 12a and b – the ratio of land used for cultivation : recreational use to be standardised at 70% : 30%;</li> <li>• add the words “according to the tenancy agreement” to Clause 13div after the final bullet point; and</li> <li>• ensure that all statutory dates in Clause 18 refer to April and September.</li> </ul> <p><b>Resolved</b>  <b>Clerk to amend draft tenancy agreement in accordance with above comments</b>  <b>Once amended, the revised draft would be formally adopted and circulated to tenants in January 2024 for the coming year</b></p>	<p>Clerk Clerk</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p><b>Review of 2023</b></p> <p>The Clerk had pulled together a list of parish council activities which had taken place during the calendar year 2023. The list was intended to illustrate the considerable number of tasks which members had undertaken in their duties over the previous 12 months, as well as providing a baseline for future assessment / comparison.</p> <p>Members thanked the Clerk for compiling the list, which was felt to have been a useful and informative exercise.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b>  <b>Clerk to produce a summary of the list of parish council activities and arrange for its display on the website</b></p>	<p>Clerk</p>

<p>15.</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p>	<p><b>Rural Prosperity Fund (RPF)</b></p> <p><u>Permissive footpath</u></p> <p>As agreed at the December meeting, Cllr Atkinson had prepared an initial expression of interest form for members’ consideration and which he now presented to the meeting. The draft was not fully complete in that additional information was required from Bowland High School, but Cllr Atkinson would obtain this if members approved in principle his work to date.</p> <p>Furthermore, the final version of the document would require details of all grant funding received by the Parish Council over the past 5 years. It was agreed that the Clerk would seek to obtain this information on Cllr Atkinson’s behalf.</p> <p>Members thanked Cllr Atkinson for his efforts, and agreed that - once completed – he should submit the document to RVBC for officers’ consideration.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b>  <b>Cllr Atkinson to complete the draft document and submit to RVBC Clerk to research details of grant funding received over the past 5 years and forward this information to Cllr Atkinson</b></p> <p><u>Nature Recovery Network</u></p> <p>Cllr Haslam confirmed that – whilst she had also commenced an expression of interest relating to the proposed Nature Recovery Network – her efforts were not as advanced as those of Cllr Atkinson. Cllr Haslam had also struggled with the requested information on grant funding (as well as on auditing information), and it was agreed that the Clerk would also look at these relevant sections and forward any information to Cllrs Atkinson and Haslam as appropriate.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b>  <b>Clerk to pursue</b></p>	<p>PA Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>16.</p>	<p><b>Commemorative biographies</b></p> <p>Members had previously agreed that, prior to any money being spent on reprinting the biographies, the Chair would revisit them to establish (i) whether all were still required or (ii) whether any were of greater significance than others. This matter would then be brought back to members at a future meeting.</p> <p>In the meantime, the Chair had removed the damaged backing from the 25 commemorative biographies (which she was now able to store).</p> <p><b>Resolved</b>  <b>Chair to report to future meeting</b></p>	<p>Chair</p>
<p>17.</p>	<p><b>Complaint made against Parish Council</b></p> <p>The Chair had previously advised members that she had received a complaint from a local resident who was unhappy that gravel from the permissive footpath on</p>	

	<p>Grindleton Brow had, in adverse weather, washed down towards her property. As a result, the resident had felt obliged to sweep the road clear of gravel. The resident had also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contacted LCC to complain about gravel entering the drainage system; and</li> <li>• asked that the Parish Council did not put down any more gravel on the path in future.</li> </ul> <p>Members were conscious that relations with the complainant were already strained, and did not want to exacerbate the situation in any way. Members considered a number of options which could prevent a reoccurrence of the problem, including using a deflection system and/or stabilising any gravel with cement. However, it was agreed that an appropriate first step would be to establish whether the original contractor had agreed to deploy a deflector system (and if so whether this was still operational).</p> <p><b>Resolved</b>  <b>Clerk to try and find the original documentation provided by the contractor and report back to members</b></p>	<b>Clerk</b>
18.	<p><b>Update from Ward Councillor</b></p> <p>None</p>	
19.	<p><b>Other meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>GRGC</u> – Cllr Wheeler had attended the last meeting of GRGC, which he commented had been very well run. Much of the discussion had been on B4RN related issues. The MUGA was due to be resurfaced in March, and a social event (featuring the music of John Denver) was to be held on 2 February;</li> <li>• <u>Parish Councils’ Liaison Committee</u> – next meeting on 1 February 2024 (Chair / Cllr Atkinson to attend); and</li> <li>• <u>WASP</u> – a meeting was now due to be held in late January 2024 (Chair / Cllr Bramwell to attend).</li> </ul>	
18.	<p><b>Correspondence received</b></p> <p>a) <u>Youth Bus</u></p> <p>On 21 December, Youth Bus representatives had confirmed that sessions had now ceased for the festive period but would resume on 10 January 2024. Cllr Wheeler reported that sessions had been going well, with some 7-8 children from Grindleton and adjacent villages now in attendance. It was understood that some of the children had joined in with the table tennis sessions at the Pavilion, and the Pavilion’s kitchen had been available to youth workers at these times.</p>	

19.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>a) <u>B4RN</u></p> <p>The Chair had previously circulated to members a recently-published summary of B4RN progress.</p> <p>b) <u>LCC - Public Realm Agreement</u></p> <p>At the December meeting, members had considered a proposal from LCC regarding the prospect of parish councils delivering more services themselves. Enquiries into this matter were still being conducted by the Clerk and Cllr Walsh.</p> <p>c) <u>Defibrillator batteries</u></p> <p>The Chair confirmed that all 3 defibrillators owned by the Parish Council had now been sent back to the manufacturers on recall in turn. This exercise had proved expensive, in that all 3 had been found to require new batteries at a cost of £192 each (totalling £576). Georgie Hutton, as custodian of the units, had dealt with the process of returning them to the manufacturer and replacing them in situ. The one defibrillator at the Pavilion (maintained by GRGC) had been fitted with a new battery in recent months. Therefore, the village now had a full set of operational defibrillators.</p> <p>As the batteries had an expected 3-year lifespan, it was agreed that the potential expense of battery replacement should be captured and factored into the Parish Council's financial planning.</p> <p><b>Resolved</b>  <b>Clerk to add this scheduled expense to the Parish Council's budget</b></p> <p>d) <u>Xmas lights</u></p> <p>After the success of the Xmas lights switch-on, the Chair confirmed that the lights would hopefully be taken down from the village Xmas tree on Thursday 4 January. It was anticipated that some further equipment would be required for the 2024 event, and details of this would be presented to members in due course. Members again discussed certain practical issues arising from this year's event, such as the importance of traffic control with regard to public safety.</p>	Clerk
	<p><b>The next meeting of Grindleton Parish Council will take place at 7.30pm on Tuesday 6 February 2024 at Grindleton Pavilion</b></p>	

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

Signed by:		
	Date: 6.2.24	Cllr L Halley (Chair)