



Grindleton Parish Council

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Minutes of the meeting of Grindleton Parish Council on **Tuesday 5 December 2023** at the Pavilion, Grindleton.

Members present:	Parish Cllr Lorraine Halley (Chair) Parish Cllr Paul Atkinson Parish Cllr Megan Haslam Parish Cllr Susan Walsh
Apologies for absence:	Parish Cllr Glenn Wheeler Parish Cllr Tony Bramwell Parish Cllr Chris Brennan Borough Cllr Kevin Horkin MBE (RVBC)
Clerk present:	Andrew Glover
Members of the public present:	None

1.	Declarations of Interest a) Standing orders suspended Re minute 19b below, the Chair declared an Other Registrable Interest as she was working closely with the B4RN initiative. b) Standing orders resumed	
2.	Public Participation None	
3.	Minutes / matters arising a) <u>Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7 November 2023</u> The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2023 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record. (cont)	

	<p>Proposed by: Cllr Atkinson Seconded by: Cllr Walsh</p> <p>Resolved The Chair was authorised to sign off the minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2023, and it was agreed that the minutes of this meeting would be posted on the Parish Council website</p> <p>b) <u>Actions taken / matters arising since the last meeting (not covered elsewhere on the agenda)</u></p> <p>i) In an attempt to reduce the length of meetings, 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 of actions, which members agreed was a useful initiative and would be repeated at future meetings. In order to ensure continuity, any actions recorded as incomplete from one month would then roll forward to the next.</p>	Clerk
5.	<p>Overview of financial position</p> <p>a) <u>Monthly accounts – November 2023</u></p> <p>The Clerk presented details of income and expenditure for the month of November 2023 for approval by the Parish Council and signing-off by the acting Chair.</p> <p>Resolved That the record for November 2023 as presented would be signed off</p> <p>b) <u>Clerk’s salary (backpay / increased hourly rate)</u></p> <p>In early November, the Clerk had been advised that the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services had reached agreement on rates of pay for all local government employees applicable for the current municipal year (from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024).</p> <p>From 1 April 2023, the Clerk had been paid at SCP 18 (£14.44 per hour) and the NJC recommended that this amount should now rise to £15.21, an increase of £0.77 per hour.</p> <p>From 1 April 2023, up until the date of his salary claim for Q2 2023/24 (18 September 2023), the Clerk had worked the following hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April – 16.25 • May – 33.84 • June – 34.31 • July – 40.41 • August – 30.40 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sept – 13.98 <p>This gave an overall total of 169.19 hours, which at £0.77 per hour totalled £130.28 before tax.</p> <p>The Clerk offered to leave the room while members considered the proposal.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>Members agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • award the amount of £130.28 in gross back pay to the Clerk for the period from 1 April – 18 September 2023; and • increase his ongoing hourly remuneration for SCP 18 in 2023/24 from £14.44 to £15.21 from 19 September 2023, in accordance with the nationally-agreed pay settlement <p>c) <u>Lengthsman:</u></p> <p>The Lengthsman’s salary claim for October 2023 had been submitted, amounting to £187.50. Members noted that (i) the claim for October 2022 had been higher, at £240, and (ii) a timesheet had now been provided. Members felt that it would be preferable if future timesheets could be compiled and submitted electronically, a matter which the Chair agreed to raise with the Lengthsman.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>Chair to explore</p>	Chair
6.	<p>Improving Parish Council effectiveness</p> <p>a) Shared document storage</p> <p>i) <u>Presentation</u></p> <p>Following the discussion at the November meeting, Cllr Atkinson had proposed that serious consideration be given to the use of Office 365 and had therefore agreed to give a brief presentation on the merits of this facility. In the absence of a number of parish councillors, it was agreed that the presentation would be deferred until the next meeting. However, in a general discussion on the proposal, Cllr Atkinson confirmed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with its Sharepoint app, the facility allowed for easy circulation of / access to agendas and working documents; • separate sites could be set up for a range of topics, eg Parish Council routine business, allotments etc (with sub-folders available within each site). These could be populated through dragging and dropping files as appropriate; • the Teams facility would allow for the option of meeting remotely if required, and/or for any members unable to attend a scheduled meeting to “dial in” from outside; • historic documentation belonging to the Parish Council could be scanned or stored for safe keeping; and • the likely cost was £2.50 per user per month, equating to around £250pa. Whilst this was a significant outlay, it would hopefully improve the Parish 	

Council's working practices as well as offering greater resilience in terms of the clerking role.

If adopted, Cllr Atkinson considered that this would also provide an opportunity to adopt a new email address (.org.uk, see minute item 6a) below) such as clerk@grindletonpc.org.uk. If desired, each parish councillor could then have their own dedicated email address.

Cllr Atkinson's senior work colleague had kindly offered to assist the Parish Council should it decide to proceed with the Microsoft approach.

Members thanked Cllr Atkinson for his efforts to date, which were considered very helpful in moving the Parish Council forward.

Resolved

Cllr Atkinson to give presentation at January meeting

PA

ii) External audit arrangements for 2023/24 - information from LALC

At the November meeting, members had discussed the impending audit requirement for parish councils to provide a dedicated email account for use by (i) their Clerk and/or (ii) members of the public who wished to approach the Parish Council; ideally this would be a .gov.uk or .org.uk address, or could be an address linked to the council website. Failure to comply with this "urgent" requirement would oblige the Parish Council to declare a non-compliance with the relevant provision of the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24. In considering this, members had initially concluded that – whilst the Clerk's email address currently used by him was his personal one – it was clearly "linked to" the Parish Council website, and was therefore seemingly compliant with the criteria as stipulated above. However, it had been commented that – at the recent training course on the Code of Conduct presented by RVBC – officers had been keen for a .gov.uk or .org.uk email address to be used by parish councils. It was therefore appropriate for the Clerk to contact RVBC and seek their guidance as to how a .gov.uk or .org.uk email address could be acquired, and at what cost.

As a result, the Clerk had contacted LALC for further guidance, and received further advice which he now asked members to consider. In LALC's opinion, as well as considering any domain name, it was equally important to note the external auditor's requirement that "every authority should have an email account that belongs to the council and to which the council has access." LALC officers considered that a hotmail address (such as the Clerk's current one) was "personal to" the Clerk and was not owned by the Parish Council.

In contrast, were the Parish Council to acquire an email address attached to its website name (eg clerk@grindletonpc.org.uk), this would then be owned by the Parish Council and accessible by it, as well as being transferable to a new Clerk if the need arose.

Members agreed to continue to consider acquiring a .org.uk email address in conjunction with the proposed move to Microsoft Office 365 outlined above.

7.	<p>Planning applications to be considered</p> <p>a) Planning Applications No: 3/2023/0912 and 0913 Proposal: Listed Building Consent and planning permission for demolition of existing conservatory and construction of replacement garden room to rear. Location: White Hall, Whitehall Lane, Grindleton Clitheroe BB7 4RL</p> <p>Details of the application had been circulated to members on 28 November 2023. The deadline for submission of any comments to RVBC was 19 December 2023. Members were largely supportive of the application and concluded that no submission to RVBC was required.</p>	
8.	<p>Haweswater Aqueduct Resilience Programme (HARP)</p> <p>a) <u>Planning application 3/2021/0661</u></p> <p>No update</p>	
9.	<p>Footpaths</p> <p>a) <u>Log of footpath concerns</u></p> <p>At the November meeting, it had been agreed that any member who walked a footpath and identified a problem with it should bring a report to the following meeting of the Parish Council. The Clerk would then capture this information and, as required, update the master copy of the spreadsheet kept to capture such matters. The Parish Council would then seek to pursue a solution to the issue with the landowner (whilst again acknowledging that it had no power to compel any action in this regard). Should no repair be forthcoming, the matter would then be referred to LCC PROW for officers to address.</p> <p>No new concerns relating to footpaths were reported at the meeting.</p> <p>b) <u>Potential funding - PNFS</u></p> <p>The Clerk reported that funding was now available from the Peaks and Northern Footpaths Society (PNFS) towards the cost of improving footpaths or open spaces. Grants could be used to replace stiles with gates; repair steps and board walks; improve drainage and ditch crossing (ie draining the path/digging a ditch alongside); and pitching/levelling.</p> <p>Members identified a number of footpaths which may be worthy of a potential funding bid, before settling on FP 37 (Herris' via Fellside / Broomhill to Higher Chapel Lane) as a suitable candidate; the stiles on it were rotten and the footpath eroded in places.</p> <p>Resolved Cllr Haslam to walk the footpath and take some illustrative photographs Photographs to be passed to the Clerk, who – in line with the PNFS email - would then seek initial guidance from PNFS as to whether a funding bid would be well received</p>	<p>MH Clerk</p>

10.	<p>Drains</p> <p>a) <u>Tour of village with former Chair of the Parish Council</u></p> <p>As previously agreed, Cllrs Brennan and Walsh had undertaken an extensive tour of the village on foot with the former Chair Keith Hutton; the purpose of this had been to enable members to better understand the nature and location of drains which tended to become blocked, and the actions needed to keep them clear.</p> <p>The tour had identified a large number of drains where attention may be required. However, it was agreed that – rather than members immediately commit to carrying out a demanding programme of maintenance – a better starting point would be to identify the location of drains on a council map (thereby clarifying the position of those drains for which (i) the Borough Council or (ii) County Council as Highways Authority took responsibility). Once this was information had been gathered, members may wish to devise a shared programme of activity to keep any drains not managed by other councils clear during the autumn / winter months, possibly in conjunction with the Lengthsman.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Cllrs Walsh and Brennan for their considerable efforts on a matter of importance to the village.</p> <p>Resolved Cllr Walsh to make contact with RVBC (Alan Coar), who was believed to hold a map with drain locations set out on it Cllr Walsh to establish RVBC’s schedule / frequency of work to which it operated in keeping drains clear</p> <p>With regard to a drainage issue on Lower Chapel Lane, the Clerk had written to the person believed to be the landowner in order to seek a solution to the problem. Whilst no response to this letter had been received, it was possible that some remedial work had in fact been carried out to improve the situation.</p> <p>Resolved Chair to inspect site and assess situation</p> <p>b) <u>Drain on East View</u></p> <p>Cllr Bramwell had made the Clerk aware that a drain on East View (reported to LCC as blocked in August 2023) had not yet been cleaned out. The Chair understood that the work may in fact have been carried out in September 2023, but it was agreed that Cllr Walsh would seek clarification on this matter when she contacted RVBC on drainage issues (see above).</p> <p>Resolved Cllr Walsh to raise with RVBC</p>	<p>SW</p> <p>SW</p> <p>Chair</p> <p>SW</p>
11.	<p>Other reports submitted to LCC</p> <p>Members noted that a defective street lamp (located outside Prospect House, Sawley Rd, Grindleton) had been reported to LCC.</p>	

12.	<p>Lancashire Best Kept Village Competition 2023</p> <p>No update</p>	
13.	<p>Allotments</p> <p>a) <u>Request to erect shed on Plot 4</u></p> <p>In accordance with the tenancy agreement, the tenant of Plot 4 had sought permission from the Parish Council to erect a shed. Members were aware that the tenant had previously made a similar request (considered in September 2020 but the outcome had not been communicated to the applicant until March 2021). In refusing the application on grounds of the size and impact of any shed erected, the Parish Council had then indicated that it would only accept the tenant using “a tool store of no more than 1.3 metres high”.</p> <p>To assist members in their present deliberations, they were presented with the following documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a copy of the correspondence from the 2020 application; • a plan of the site showing the position of Plot 4 in relation to the other allotments; and • the tenant’s latest written request. <p>Members noted that the dimensions of the proposed shed were of a considerable size (stated to be “6’ x 6’ although it could be up to 7’ x 7”). It was considered that this description was somewhat imprecise, in that the dimensions cited were subject to variation and did not appear to give the overall height of the height of the structure (which seemed to be well over 2m from the accompanying photograph). It was noted that, whilst one other shed was already in situ on the allotments, this had been there for many years and would not necessarily be granted approval under the current tenancy agreement.</p> <p>After careful deliberation, members agreed that the proposal submitted would have a disproportionate impact on other allotment holders in terms of visual impact and potential loss of light, and could therefore not be supported. In accordance with its previous decision, the Parish Council would however agree to the use of a tool store of no more than 1.3 metres high.</p> <p>Resolved Clerk to write and communicate the Parish Council’s decision to the applicant</p> <p>b) <u>General issues</u></p> <p>Following the complaint received about a rodent being observed in a garden adjacent to the allotments (discussed at previous meetings), Cllr Bramwell had suggested that any revision of the tenancy agreement should preclude tenants from disposing of raw food in allotment composters.</p> <p>Resolved Clerk to draft an amendment to the tenancy agreement in recognition of this</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>

<p>14.</p> <p>a)</p> <p>b)</p>	<p>Rural Prosperity Fund (RPF)</p> <p><u>Permissive footpath</u></p> <p>After further discussion, Cllr Atkinson agreed to draft an initial expression of interest form for consideration at the meeting in January 2024.</p> <p>Resolved Cllr Atkinson to draft</p> <p><u>Nature Recovery Network</u></p> <p>Cllr Haslam gave a Powerpoint presentation outlining her proposal, which would see the increased connection of local people to nature and the promotion of the village as “wildlife friendly”. These aims could be achieved through a number of means, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a hard copy map (akin to those used for heritage trails) marked with key points to indicate the presence of bee hotels, bat boxes etc; • an online interactive map to record environmental actions carried out by residents, such as steps taken to preserve hedgehog safety; and • the development of physical features such as “living walls” or sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS). <p>Members were supportive of the ideas put forward by Cllr Haslam and it was agreed that she would work on an initial expression of interest for potential submission to RVBC (although some assistance may be required with any financial information required).</p> <p>Resolved Cllr Haslam to draft an initial expression of interest form</p>	<p>PA</p> <p>MH</p>
<p>15.</p> <p>a)</p>	<p>Events held</p> <p><u>Remembrance Sunday</u></p> <p>Members reflected on the event held to commemorate Remembrance Sunday, and were pleased to note that it had been a considerable success.</p> <p>With regard to future event planning, Cllr Bramwell (who had laid a wreath on behalf of the Parish Council) had commented that wreathes lain by other organisations had borne a label indicating who had provided them. Cllr Bramwell would therefore produce a label for use at future Remembrance Services to show that the Parish Council had provided a wreath.</p> <p>Resolved Cllr Bramwell to produce a label for future use</p>	<p>TB</p>

b)	<p><u>Xmas lights switch-on</u></p> <p>This event was considered to have been a resounding success, with good public attendance and strong community participation.</p> <p>It was noted that the owner of the Rum Fox had kindly provided a number of items free of charge, including gluhwein, pigs in blankets and sausage rolls.</p> <p>Resolved Clerk to write to the owner and thank him for his support of the event</p> <p>In terms of learning points for future switch-on events, the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plastic boxes were needed in which to store the Xmas lights, as well as a new switch to facilitate the switch on; • the use of additional traffic marshals this year had been beneficial, and should be repeated at future events; and • as Bowland High School had been unable to attend this year, it was agreed that an early approach should be made to secure their presence at the 2024 event. <p>Resolved Chair to approach Helen Dakin</p> <p>It was agreed that a contribution would be made to the resident who provided the electricity to power the lights on the Xmas tree. In previous years that had been £10, but may be increased this year due to the rising cost of energy.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Chair</p>
16.	<p>Update from Ward Councillor</p> <p>None</p>	
17.	<p>Other meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>GRGC</u> – the Chair confirmed that the introduction of solar panels at the Pavilion was under discussion, due to the environmental benefits which would ensue. A planning application (reflecting the use of slimline panels to fit flush with the roof) would be required. Cllr Walsh queried whether a charging point for electric cycles would be feasible, a point which was generally supported and which the Chair agreed to feed back to GRGC. Resolved Chair to feed back to GRGC <p>The well-known musician Snake Davis was due to perform at the Pavilion this coming weekend, and the venue had been sold out. A Xmas party for adults was due to take place on 16 December.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Parish Councils’ Liaison Committee</u> – Cllr Atkinson had attended the meeting held on 9 November. This had featured two presentations, one by the operators of the Little Green Bus (see item 18b below) and another by the Citizens’ Advice Bureau. The latter’s branches in Clitheroe and 	<p>Chair</p>

	<p>Longridge had now closed, with local services provided by the Accrington branch of the CAB (which had a physical presence in Clitheroe for 2 hours per fortnight).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>WASP</u> – a meeting was now due to be held in January 2024. 	
18.	<p>Correspondence received</p> <p>a) <u>Resurrection of LALC Area Committee for Ribble Valley</u></p> <p>Members noted that LALC had appointed a new Area Committee Support Officer, who now proposed to resurrect the dormant Ribble Valley Area Committee (with a likely meeting date of 9 January 2024).</p> <p>The Parish Council was now invited to nominate a representative to sit on the Area Committee. Members were conscious of the increased demand on their workload which attendance at this meeting would bring, and it was agreed that the Clerk would make further enquiries with LALC as to how the restored body would differ from the PCLC (which the Parish Council already attended).</p> <p>Resolved Clerk to make further enquiries with LALC</p> <p>Subject to the Clerk reporting to the January meeting, Cllr Atkinson confirmed his provisional availability to attend on 9 January if members so wished.</p> <p>b) <u>Request for funding – Little Green Bus</u></p> <p>The Parish Council had received a request for funding from the providers of the Little Green Bus service, which aimed to provide door-to-door, safe transport services for the most elderly and often vulnerable members of the community.</p> <p>Members noted that the Parish Council had previously contributed to the work of the Little Green Bus, and wished to do so once more. However, rather than give a lump sum, members would prefer to fund a certain number of trips for residents of the village to take advantage of.</p> <p>Resolved Chair to approach organisers and establish the typical unit cost of a journey by a Grindleton resident, before formulating a suitable donation to be made</p> <p>c) <u>Register of electors 2023</u></p> <p>RVBC had written to the Clerk inviting him to apply for a copy of the full register, to which the Parish Council was entitled. (This document was only to be used for specified purposes, eg electoral or the prevention / detection of crime; it was a criminal offence for it to be used for other purposes or for its content to be disclosed). However, members concluded that a copy of the register was not required.</p> <p>(cont)</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Chair</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what specification / timetable applied to the provision of such services at this present time, with particular regard to the frequency with which they should be carried out within the parish; and • what funding would be available from LCC should the Parish Council seek to assume responsibility for the provision of such services itself. <p>Resolved Chair to contact Alan Coar for any information available from RVBC Clerk to make a similar approach to LCC</p>	<p>Chair Clerk</p>
<p>d)</p>	<p><u>Repairs to wall – Woodland Trust</u></p> <p>The Chair had liaised with the Woodland Trust in order to secure repairs to the wall either side of the entrance to Buck St. As a result of her intervention, the Trust had commissioned its contractors to spend two days repairing the wall.</p>	
<p>e)</p>	<p><u>Commemorative biographies</u></p> <p>The Chair confirmed that some 12-18 biographies currently in her possession were in poor condition and in need of suitable storage. Members discussed whether the biographies could be reprinted, and - if so - whether any local printing facilities were available. It was proposed that, to ensure the future viability of the biographies, they could potentially be engraved onto a metal film.</p> <p>Members agreed, that prior to any money being spent on reprinting, the Chair would revisit the biographies to establish (i) whether all were still required or (ii) whether any were of greater significance than others. There could then be a further discussion on next steps at the next meeting.</p> <p>Resolved Chair to re-assess / prioritise the significance of the biographies Clerk to diary a discussion at the January meeting</p>	<p>Chair Clerk</p>
<p>f)</p>	<p><u>Defibrillator batteries</u></p> <p>A local resident (Georgie Hutton) was kindly acting as custodian of 3 defibrillators within the village. These were located at Bowland High School, the flats on Lower Chapel Lane and the bus stop on Greendale (with a fourth defibrillator at the Pavilion maintained by Anne Huson). The Chair had been advised that these defibrillators required maintenance as the battery capacity indicator may not in fact be giving a true reading. This problem was not specific to defibrillators situated in Grindleton, but was common to those located across the Ribble Valley. Georgie was in the process of sending the defibrillators to the providing company for assessment; this was to be undertaken one at a time, so as not to leave the village short of operational units. The first defibrillator to be dispatched had now been repaired, requiring a replacement battery at a cost of £192. (This cost was higher than paid for other batteries, but the Chair’s attempts to reduce the sum charged had been unsuccessful).</p>	

	<p>The next meeting of Grindleton Parish Council will take place at 7.30pm on Tuesday 2 January 2024 at Grindleton Pavilion</p>	
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The meeting closed at 9.46pm.

Signed by:		
	Date: 2.1.24	Cllr L Halley Chair